

El Centro Field Office

Eastern San Diego County

Proposed Resource Management Plan

and Final Environmental Impact Statement

Volume I

El Centro Field Office

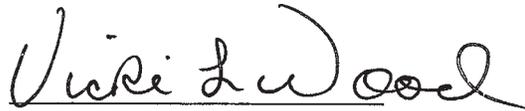
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
November 2007



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**Eastern San Diego County
Proposed Resource Management Plan
and
Final Environmental Impact Statement**

Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
El Centro Field Office
California



Vicki L. Wood
Field Manager, El Centro



Steve J. Borchard
District Manager, California Desert



Mike Pool
State Director

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ABSTRACT

The Eastern San Diego County Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) describes and analyzes five alternatives for managing approximately 102,869 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered land in Eastern San Diego County, California. Information provided by the public, other agencies and organizations, and BLM personnel has been used to develop and analyze the alternatives in the PRMP/FEIS. *Alternative A* is the No-action Alternative and represents continuation of current management. *Alternative B*, the Mixed Alternative, provides for visitation and development within the Planning Area, while ensuring that resource protection is not compromised. *Alternative C*, the Conservation Alternative, generally places emphasis on the preservation of the Planning Area's natural and cultural resources through limited public use and discontinuation of livestock grazing. *Alternative D*, the Development Alternative, generally provides more opportunities for development such as renewable energy, transportation, and utility rights-of-way, as well as enhanced recreational opportunities. *Alternative E*, the Proposed Alternative (BLM Preferred), provides for a balance between authorized resource use and the protection and long-term sustainability of sensitive resources. Major issues addressed in the PRMP/FEIS include management of recreation and public access, designation and management of Special Area Designations, management of visual resources, and protection of cultural resources.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the balanced management of the BLM-administered lands and resources and their various values so that they are considered in a combination that will best serve the needs of the American people. Management is based upon the principles of multiple use and sustained yield; a combination of uses that take into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources. These resources include recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, fish and wildlife, wilderness and natural, scenic, scientific, and cultural values.

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United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
El Centro Field Office
1661 S. 4th Street
El Centro, CA 92243
www.ca.blm.gov/elcentro

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Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review and comment is the Eastern San Diego County Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS). The BLM wishes to express its appreciation to all who contributed their time and expertise to this planning effort, other governmental agencies, public organizations, state and tribal entities, and interested individuals. Public collaboration through the scoping and comment process led to shaping of issues covering off-highway vehicle (OHV) use and access to public lands, livestock grazing, recreation, special status species, vegetation management, and renewable energy production.

The PRMP/FEIS revises the Eastern San Diego County Draft RMP/DEIS, which was published for public review and comment in February 2007. This document incorporates and responds to the input of government agencies, tribal governments, organizations, and individuals received on the Draft RMP/DEIS. Public comments resulted in corrections, text clarifications, and revisions to proposed decisions related to the Visual Resource Management (VRM) classification of McCain Valley.

In addition to revisions made in response to public comments, revisions were made to correct errors or oversights in the DRMP/DEIS including:

- The most current BLM ownership boundaries were incorporated, including two new parcels.
- All Geographic Information System (GIS) data analysis was conducted in the NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_11N Projection (BLM's native projection). This resulted in more accurate area calculations; based on this the total acreage of the planning area has been slightly reduced.
- Revisions were made to ACEC boundaries. Under Alternatives B, C, and E the In-Ko-Pah ACEC boundary was extended south, and the Table Mountain ACEC was extended to the north to encompass the adjacent BLM lands within Big Horn Sheep Critical Habitat.

- Impact analysis discussion of State Listed and BLM Sensitive Species were added to the Special Status Species Section in Chapter 4.

Release of the PRMP/FEIS initiates a 30-day protest period for proposed land use plan level decisions. The 30-day protest period begins on the date the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes its notice of availability for the PRMP/FEIS in the *Federal Register*. All proposed decisions in the PRMP/FEIS are land use plan level decisions except decisions to designate routes of travel. During this protest period, any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest that may be adversely affected by approval of the land use planning level decisions may submit a protest.

Instructions for filing a protest regarding the PRMP/FEIS are provided in 43 CFR 1610.5-2. A protest may only raise those issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process. E-mailed and faxed protests will not be accepted as valid protests, unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular or overnight mail postmarked by the close of the protest period. In such a case, the faxed and/or e-mailed correspondence will be considered an advance copy of the protest. If you wish to provide BLM with such an advance notification, please direct faxed protests to the attention of the BLM protest coordinator at 202-452-5112, and e-mails to Brenda_Hudgens-Williams@blm.gov. Please direct the follow-up letter to the appropriate address provided below. The protest must contain:

1. The name, mailing address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest;
2. A statement of the issue or issues being protested;
3. A statement of the part or parts of the plan or amendment being protested;
4. A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the record; and
5. A concise statement explaining why the State Director's decision is believed to be wrong.

All protests must be in writing and mailed to one of the following addresses:

Regular Mail:
Director (210)
Attention: Brenda Williams
P.O. Box 66538
Washington, D.C. 20035

Overnight Mail:
Director (210)
Attention: Brenda Williams
1620 L Street, N.W., Suite 1075
Washington, D.C. 20036

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any

time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The Director will promptly render a decision on the protest. The decision will be in writing and will be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the Director is the final decision of the Department of the Interior.

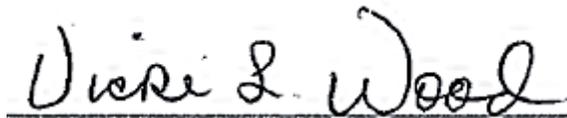
Potential decisions related to the classification of particular routes as motorized or non-motorized are implementation level decisions. As such, these proposed decisions are not protestable but are appealable to the Interior Board of Land Appeals upon adoption. Decisions on route selection will be adopted in the Record of Decision (ROD) which is published following the protest period on the PRMP/FEIS. BLM will accept comments on proposed route decisions for 30 days from the date the EPA publishes the notice of availability for the PRMP/FEIS in the *Federal Register*. These comments should be submitted to the El Centro Field Office at the address below:

BLM El Centro Field Office	phone:	1-760-337-4400
ESDC RMP Team Lead	website:	www.ca.blm.gov
1661 South 4 th Street	e-mail:	caesdrmp@ca.blm.gov
El Centro, CA 92243		

To request a printed copy of the PRMP/FEIS, please contact us at the above address. The PRMP/FEIS will also be posted on our website.

We appreciate your interest and encourage your continued involvement in the planning process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicki L. Wood". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Vicki L. Wood
Field Manager

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43 CFR Sec. 1610.5-2 Protest procedures

(a) Any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval or amendment of a resource management plan may protest such approval or amendment. A protest may raise only those issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process.

(1) The protest shall be in writing and shall be filed with the Director [of the BLM]. The protest shall be filed within 30 days of the date the Environmental Protection Agency published the notice of receipt of the final environmental impact statement containing the plan or amendment in the *Federal Register*. For an amendment not requiring the preparation of an environmental impact statement, the protest shall be filed within 30 days of the publication of the notice of its effective date.

(2) The protest shall contain:

- (i) The name, mailing address, telephone number and interest of the person filing the protest;
- (ii) A statement of the issue or issues being protested;
- (iii) A statement of the part or parts of the plan or amendment being protested;
- (iv) A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the record; and
- (v) A concise statement explaining why the State Director's decision is believed to be wrong.

(3) The Director shall promptly render a decision on the protest. The decision shall be in writing and shall set forth the reasons for the decision. The decision shall be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested.

(b) The decision of the Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior.

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