



*United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management*

**LAS CRUCES DISTRICT OFFICE
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA**



December 1993

**MIMBRES
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
PLAN**

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the balanced management of the Public Land and resources and their various values so that they are considered in the combination that will best serve the needs of the American people. BLM management is based upon the principles of multiple use and sustained yield; a combination of uses that takes 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 historical values.

BLM-NM-PT-93-009-4410



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005



1600 (036)

December 1993

Dear Reader:

This document is the culmination of the Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP) preparation process. It contains both the Approved Resource Management Plan and the Record of Decision (ROD). Although this may mark the completion of the land use planning stage, it denotes the beginning of the plan implementation stage.

Signed on April 30, 1993, the ROD for the Mimbres RMP records the acceptance of the Proposed RMP (with some modification) as the land use plan for the Mimbres Resource Area, and will shape the management direction of its resources for the next 20 years. Since the approval of the ROD, we have begun implementing the RMP.

The Approved RMP as presented in this document will serve as a basis from which both the BLM and the public can track the implementation of the Plan. You will continue to be informed of the progress in implementation through the publication of an Annual RMP Update. This annual update will identify completed actions, as well as actions planned for the coming year, thus enabling you to be involved in specific land management actions.

Your continuing interest and involvement in BLM's management of the public land and resources within the Mimbres Resource Area will be the key to successful implementation of the RMP. We look forward to our continued partnership in managing your public land. If you desire more specific information or would like to become more involved in the resource management process, we encourage you to write to the above address or call (505) 525-4352.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Calkins
Acting Area Manager
Mimbres Resource Area

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***RECORD OF
DECISION***



RECORD OF DECISION

INTRODUCTION

This document formally records the Bureau of Land Management's decisions for managing approximately 3 million surface acres of public land and 4.1 million subsurface acres in the Mimbres Resource Area. The Mimbres Resource Area encompasses BLM-administered public land in Dona Ana, Luna, Hidalgo, and Grant Counties in southwestern New Mexico.

DECISION

The proposed decisions as described in the Proposed Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), dated October 1992 (as modified in the Modifications and Corrections Section, ROD page 4 and 5) are selected as the Approved Plan.

The RMP was prepared under the regulations for implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 [43 CFR 1600]. The EIS was prepared for this plan in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

Approval of this plan constitutes formal designation of 21 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), 4 Section 202 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), 4 Research Natural Areas (RNAs), and 2 Wild and Scenic River Study Areas. The plan also makes decisions concerning land ownership adjustments, vehicle designations, access, rights-of-way, minerals, recreation, cultural resources, wildlife, watershed, and vegetation management.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Four Alternatives were described and analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS. These Alternatives outlined the management of resources or programs that were considered issues or concerns by BLM and the public. The Alternatives in the Draft Plan represented a reasonable range of possible management options to resolve the identified issues and concerns.

The management of resources and programs not at issue was described in the Continuing Management Guidance section of the plan. The Continuing Management Guidance described how these resources and programs would continue to be managed, regardless of the Alternative selected.

Current Management (No Action) Alternative

This Alternative described the current management of resources and programs at issue, based upon existing land use plans. This Alternative would continue current management, however it does not resolve identified issues and concerns.

Resource Preservation Alternative

This Alternative described the resolution of issues and concerns in a manner that placed primary emphasis on maintaining or improving environmental values. This Alternative would have changed current management to emphasize noncommodity resources and programs such as wilderness, cultural resources, wildlife, and visual resources.

Resource Production Alternative

This Alternative described the resolution of issues and concerns in a manner that placed primary emphasis on making public land available for use and development. This Alternative would have changed current management to emphasize commodity production of resources and programs such as livestock grazing and mining.

Resource Conservation Alternative

This Alternative was the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS and with modification became the Proposed Plan. This Alternative described the resolution of issues and concerns in a manner that provides for a combination of resource uses that allows for economic development and commodity production while protecting important environmental values.

DECISION RATIONALE

The decision to choose the Proposed Plan is based on: 1) the need to resolve the issues and management concerns identified through the planning process, 2) input received from the public, other Federal and State agencies, and State and local governments, 3) planning criteria listed in Chapter 1 of the Proposed Plan, and 4) the environmental analysis of each Alternative considered (contained in Chapter 4 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The Proposed Plan is considered by BLM to best meet the legal mandate of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act for management of the public land under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

MONITORING

The Approved RMP will provide the framework and guidelines for making specific management decisions in the Resource Area for the next 15-20 years. A monitoring program will be developed and included in the Approved RMP. The monitoring program will include evaluation standards for implementing the plan, ensuring conformance with the plan, and determining whether mitigation measures which have been built into the plan are effective in minimizing environmental impacts. A formal evaluation will be conducted every 5 years to determine the adequacy of the RMP and the need for revision. The plan may be amended as needed at any time with full public involvement.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public opinion and input have been sought throughout the planning and decision-making process. In order to continue this process during plan implementation, an annual RMP/Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) Update will be prepared to inform the public of the progress made in implementation of the RMP. This document will also provide information on planned actions for the coming year and explain how the public can become involved in specific land management activities. A public meeting or open house may be held in conjunction with issuing the annual Update. In addition, BLM plans to brief each County Commission on a quarterly basis to discuss the RMP or any other issues affecting the Counties.

PROTEST RESOLUTION

A total of 16 "letters of protest" was received by the Director. Three were determined to be invalid for failure to follow the requirements for protests in the planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.5-2). One letter was withdrawn by the protester following agreement with the Mimbres Resource Area on text changes for the Approved Plan.

The Director then addressed issues in the 12 remaining letters, dismissing the protests with only minor text changes for the Approved Plan. Several protesters raised valid concerns which were addressed by the New Mexico State Director in a written response.

CONSISTENCY

There are no known or identified inconsistencies with the plans, programs, and policies of other Federal agencies and of State and local governments.

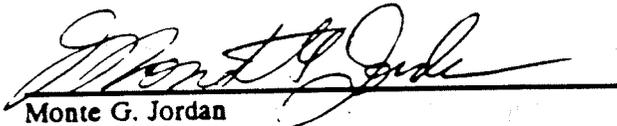
PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF THIS DOCUMENT

All those names on the current RMP mailing list were mailed copies of this ROD and will also be mailed copies of the Approved RMP. In addition, review copies of these documents will be available at all BLM offices in New Mexico as well as most public libraries. Additional copies of the documents are available upon request at the address at the top of the cover letter.

CONCLUSION

This Record of Decision constitutes the final Bureau action on approving the Mimbres RMP. Any person adversely affected by a decision of the Bureau Officer in implementing any portion of this RMP may appeal such action to the Interior Board of Land Appeals pursuant to 43 CFR 4.400 at the time the action is proposed for implementation.

APPROVAL



Monte G. Jordan
Acting State Director, New Mexico
Bureau of Land Management

APR 30 1993

Date

MODIFICATIONS AND CORRECTIONS

The following modifications and corrections are a result of comments and protests received on the Proposed Plan. These changes will be carried forward in the Approved Plan.

Summary

P. S-14, Column 1, Proposed Plan, Recreation. Delete "acquisition of six State Parks."

Purpose and Need

P. 1-6, Access, Column 2, last two lines. Delete "and as a last resort, condemnation."

Chapter 2 - Continuing Management Guidance

P. 2-37, Column 1, paragraph 2, line 27. Add the following paragraph:

"The specific land disposal area described as T. 20 S., R. 3 E., Sections 28 S1/2, 33, and 34; T. 21 S., R. 3 E., Sections 3, 4, 7 SE1/4, 8, 9, 10, 14 N1/2, 15 N1/2, 17, and 18 will be retained. A right-of-way (NMNM66383) has been granted to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and a subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (NM-030-45) was signed in April 1990 reserving the public land for ground water monitoring wells. Based on the ground water studies, these lands may need to be withdrawn from multiple use management to protect public safety."

P. 2-38, Column 1, paragraph 5, last line. After "Appendix H-2", add:

"The route identified would be adhered to as much as possible in the development of the trail, but trail development would not necessarily be limited to the corridor. If deviation from the identified corridor is necessary because of water needs or to facilitate easement acquisition, this would be addressed through the plan amendment process."

P. 2-44, Column 2 under Land Treatments, line 7. Beginning with the word "Creosotebush", delete all text through line 18 ending with "breaks". Replace with the following:

"Chemical herbicides will be used for control of noxious weeds, during ROW maintenance, and control of competing or unwanted vegetation consistent with the New Mexico Record of Decision (ROD) for Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in the Thirteen Western States (August 1991). Such actions will be identified in site-specific environmental analysis on proposed vegetation control plans, which will be documented using an interdisciplinary approach.

Minimum width buffer strips and other criteria stipulated in the New Mexico ROD (see page 10) will provide an adequate level of protection in almost all situations. For those situations when additional protection is warranted, the buffer may be extended or other criteria developed that is appropriate to the local area.

Within the Mimbres Resource Area, additional protection of perennial streams will be provided by utilizing a 0.5 mile buffer when pelletized Tebuthiuron is used to treat creosotebush, mesquite, and mixed desert shrub, except during ROW maintenance operations. For economic reasons, usually only areas two sections in size or greater (1,240 acres) would be treated. Pelleted Tebuthiuron is also not effective and would not be used on the following range sites: bottomland, draw, clay, salt flats, salty bottomland, igneous hills, limestone hills, malpais, and breaks."

P. 2-47, Column 1, paragraph 2. Delete the last six lines.

Chapter 3 - Affected Environment

P. 3-2, Column 1, paragraph 2, line 4. Add in parentheses "volcanic tuff, granite, monzonite."

P. 3-9, Column 1, paragraph 3, line 10. "Harky" should be "Harkey."

P. 3-10, Column 1, paragraph 3, line 5. Add "Uvas and Chaparral."

P. 3-24, Column 2, paragraph 2, line 4. "12,000 B.C." should be "9,500 B.C."

P. 3-26, Column 2, paragraph 2, line 18. "chamisa" should be "rabbitbrush."

Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences

P. 4-28, Table 4-7. Add the following: "Allotment Number 15001, W. F. Blythe, 1024."

Appendix H

P. H-12, Central Peloncillo Mountains ACEC map. This map has several land status and boundary errors which will be corrected in the Approved Plan.

P. H-25, Gila Middle Box ACEC map. "T-18W and T-17W" should be "R-18W and R-17W."

Page following H-36, Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC map. Add lands acquired from New Mexico State University to base map and amend boundary. The Range numbers at the bottom of the map should be R2E, R3E, R4E, and R5E.

P. H-38, Robledo Mountains ACEC, Column 2, last line. Add "semi-primitive motorized."

Page following H-41, Uvas Valley ACEC map. Delete the Luna/Dona Ana County line from the map.

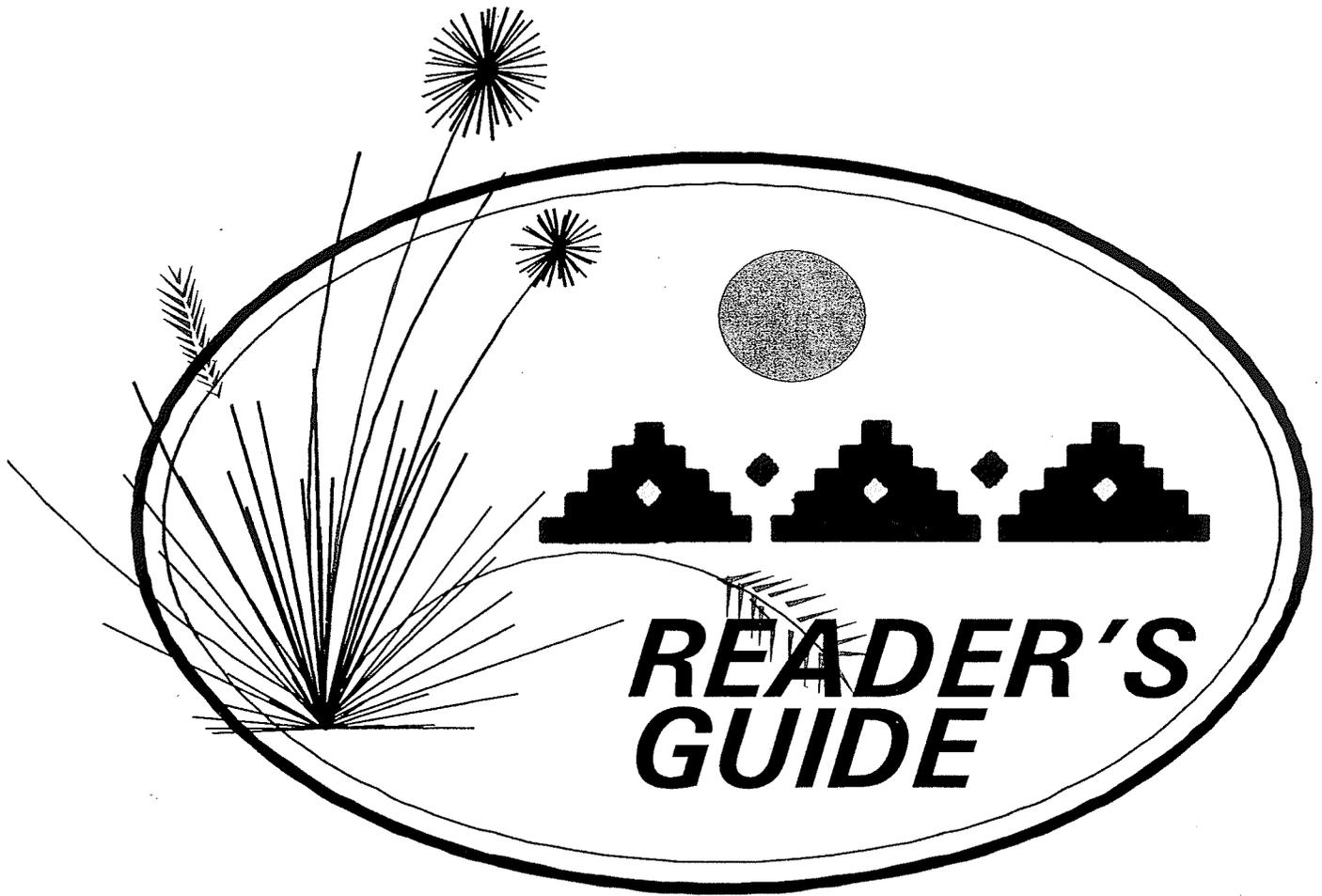
P. H-50, Aden Lava Flow RNA, Column 2. Add "Develop grazing activity plan."

P. H-53, Antelope Pass RNA map. Section numbers are shifted incorrectly 1 mile to the north.

Appendix I

P. I-4, Pena Blanca and Organ Needles WSA map. The Range numbers at the bottom of the map should be R3E, R4E, and R5E.

P. I-11, Gray Peak WSA map. This map has several land status errors which will be corrected in the Approved Plan.



***READER'S
GUIDE***

READER'S GUIDE

The Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP) represents the work of many Bureau of Land Management (BLM) employees and members of the public over the past 5 years. The intent is to provide general management direction for public land in the Mimbres Resource Area over the next 10-20 years and guide all land and resource actions to achieve plan decisions.

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Provides background information on the planning area, the planning process, the planning issues, public involvement, and consistency with other plans.

SECTION 2 MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Describes the management philosophy for administering public land in the Mimbres Resource Area. Each resource program is profiled through a written program objective, description, continuing management guidance and actions of each program, and specific land-use decisions, if applicable.

SECTION 3 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Describes the procedure through which the RMP will be implemented and monitored to track decision implementation.

SECTION 4 PLAN MAINTENANCE AND EVALUATION

Describes how the RMP will be managed to extend its usefulness by updating the text with new information. Procedures are also identified for evaluating how effective plan implementation is in accomplishing plan decisions. Forms are included in this section to be used in facilitating the tracking process.

SECTION 5 AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACECs)/ SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS (SMAs)

Identifies unique areas designated through planning. Each narrative provides a description of the ACEC/SMA, primary management goals and management actions as well as a corresponding location map. Some ACECs/SMAs are specifically not shown due to the sensitive nature of resource values in the area.

APPENDICES

A - Planning Issues,
Criteria and
Management Concerns
B - Mineral Resources
C - Lands
D - Livestock Grazing
E - Desired Plant Community
F - Cultural Resources

G - Recreation
H - Visual Resource Management
I - Wilderness
J - Gila River Wild and Scenic River
Inventory Report Summary
K - Major Soil Types in the Mimbres Resource Area
L - Special Status Species