



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

New Mexico State Office  
301 Dinosaur Trail  
P.O. Box 27115  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-0115  
www.blm.gov/nm

In Reply Refer To:

6100 (930) P  
6840  
8372  
8380

July 2, 2014

EMS Transmission: 07/07/2014  
Instruction Memorandum No. NM-2014-023  
Expires: 09/30/2015

To: DM's and FM's (except Oklahoma and Amarillo)  
Attention: Wildlife, Recreation and Law Enforcement Staff

From: State Director

Subject: Interim Management Policies and Procedures with Regard to the Management of Those Caves Having Significant Bat Roosts Through the Issuance of Special Recreation Permits (SRP)

**Program Area:** National Landscape Conservation System, Special Status Species Management, Special Recreation Permits, Cave Resource Management

**Purpose:** This Instruction Memorandum (IM) provides interim conservation policies and procedures to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) New Mexico field officials to be applied to ongoing and proposed authorizations and activities that affect bat species and their cave habitats. This direction ensures that interim conservation policies and procedures are implemented when field offices authorize or carry out activities on public land while the BLM develops and decides how to best incorporate long-term conservation measures for bat habitat into applicable Land Use Plans (LUP). This direction promotes sustainable bat populations and conservation of habitat while not closing any future options before the planning processes can be completed. Specifically, this IM requires regulating access to those caves having significant bat roosts through the issuance of SRPs.

**Policy/Action:** Under 43 CFR 2932.11(b)(iii), BLM may require the issuance of an SRP for "use of special areas." The NMSO has determined that caves with significant bat habitat are special areas requiring protection, based on the risk of White Nose Syndrome (WNS) infection to those bat populations (43 CFR 2932.5). Therefore, SRPs will be required for all activities in caves with significant bat roosts. Whether to issue an SRP is discretionary, and should be considered under the criteria described in 43 CFR 2932.26.

Access for administrative, safety or scientific research will continue to be authorized during this interim management period as those activities will inform future decisions with regard to long-term management of these special area cave resources.

**Timeframe:** Effective immediately.

**Budget Impact:** None

**Background:** The BLM's 2011 federal register notice (January 25, 2011) of temporary closure of 28 caves having "significant bat roosts" has expired. The purpose of the expired closure and ongoing concern is the threat of WNS infecting the bats that occupy those caves. WNS has spread rapidly from the east coast westward, and is now confirmed in 25 states and five Canadian provinces. At this time, the western-most incidence of *Psuedogymnoascus destructans* (*Pd*) (the causative fungus) is at the Arkansas-Oklahoma border. Research findings have determined that the microclimate in several southwestern caves is consistent with the temperature and humidity conditions for *Pd* to persist and/or grow. Research findings and data also support the potential for human transmission of *Pd* from one site to another. Additionally, there is a presence of a "karst corridor" from a WNS positive area to New Mexico.

**Manual/Handbook Sections Affected:** None

**Coordination:** This IM was coordinated with the BLM Washington Office Senior Cave and Karst Resources Specialist

**Contact:** Questions regarding this policy may be referred to Terry Heslin, Acting Lead for Recreation, at (505) 954-2184.

Authenticated by:  
Veronica Maldonado  
Staff Assistant

Signed by:  
Jesse J. Juen  
State Director

1 Attachment

1 - List of New Mexico Caves with Significant Bat Resources (1p)

Distribution

WO230, Sally Butts - 1  
WO250, D. Ballenger - 1  
WO250, James Goodbar - 1  
WO400, Douglas Herrema -1  
NM930, T. Heslin - 1  
NM955, Records - 1

## **List of New Mexico Caves With Significant Bat Resources**

This Instruction Memorandum affects the following sites with significant bat resources on lands administered by the respective offices of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM):

Billy the Kid, Endless, McKittrick, Rusty Hinge, Adobe, and Yellowjacket caves administered by the Carlsbad Field Office;

U-Bar and Lepto Splat caves administered by Las Cruces District Office;

Whut (also spelled "What") cave in the Pronoun Cave Complex administered by the Rio Puerco Field Office;

Bat Hole, Big-eared, Corn Sinkhole, Crockett's, Crystal, Feather, Fly, Fort Stanton, Malpais Madness, Smiley, Sun Spot, Torgac's, Torgac's Annex, Tres Ninos caves, and Martin-Antelope Gyp Cave Complex administered by the Roswell Field Office,

Ladrone Cave administered by the Socorro Field Office.

Because of the provisions of the Federal Cave Resource Protection Act of 1988, legal descriptions of these sites are not presented in this attachment. Additional information on each affected site is available at the respective BLM offices listed above.