

Guide to Good Public Comments

Lower Sonoran and Sonoran Desert National Monument Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

WHY PUBLIC COMMENTS ARE IMPORTANT

This is an opportunity for you to be involved in the decision-making process of the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and to offer your thoughts on alternative ways for the agency to accomplish what it is proposing, and to offer your comments on the agency’s analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed action and possible mitigation of potential harmful effects of such actions.

The National Environmental Policy Act “... is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on the understanding of environmental consequences...” (40 CFR 1501 (c).) To achieve this, the EIS considers the effects of our actions on social, economic and natural resources within the planning area. Citizens, such as yourself, often have valuable information about places and resources they consider important and the potential effects proposed federal actions may have on those places and resources. This is your opportunity to work with us so we can take your information into account.

The BLM is responsible for managing public lands in the public interest. Comments that provide relevant and new information with sufficient detail are most useful and are referred to as substantive comments. The BLM reviews all comments and identifies the topics that are substantive for consideration in the final published document. A substantive comment is a comment that does one or more of the following:

- Questions, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the RMP and EIS;
- Questions, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the environmental analysis;
- Presents new information relevant to the analysis;
- Presents reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the EIS; or
- Causes changes or revisions in one or more of the alternatives.

TIPS FOR PROVIDING HELPFUL COMMENTS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide <u>specific</u> and <u>detailed</u> text changes. Include the section, management action or page number to help us find the exact location of the subject of your comment. Clearly identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Where the issue or error is located; ◆ Why you believe there is an error; and ◆ Alternative ideas to address the issue/errors. • Provide constructive solutions with documentation or resources to support your recommendations. • Include any knowledge, experience or evidence as it relates to your observations and comments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide GPS readings if possible when referring to specific locations. • Avoid vague statements or concerns. These don't give the BLM something on which to act. • Comments are not votes for or against a decision. BLM must rely on supporting information, not the number of comments received. Multiple comments / topics with the same concern are considered one comment. • Avoid using form letters to convey your opinion. Your unique way of writing a comment helps the BLM understand your point of view.
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EXAMPLE OF HELPFUL COMMENT	EXAMPLE OF UNHELPFUL COMMENT
I disagree with closing Route 245A in Alternative E. I need this road to access my private land!	Stop closing our roads!

REMEMBER TO SUBMIT ALL COMMENTS BY NOVEMBER 25, 2011!

