



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Lower Sonoran Field Office
21605 North 7th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85027-2929



In reply refer to: 1610-5.G.1.4

June 8, 2012

Dear Reader:

Enclosed is the Proposed Resource Management Plan (PRMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Lower Sonoran-Sonoran Desert National Monument planning area. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared the PRMP/FEIS in consultation with cooperating agencies, taking into account public comments received during this planning effort. The PRMP provides a framework for the future management direction and appropriate use of the Lower Sonoran-Sonoran Desert National Monument planning area, located southwest of Phoenix in parts of Maricopa, Pinal, Pima, Gila and Yuma Counties, Arizona. The document contains land use planning decisions and implementation decisions to guide the BLM's management of the Lower Sonoran-Sonoran Desert National Monument planning area.

This PRMP and FEIS have been developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended. The PRMP is largely based on Alternative E, the preferred alternative in the Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (DRMP/EIS), which was released on August 26, 2011. The PRMP/FEIS contains the Proposed Plan, a summary of changes made between the DRMP/EIS and PRMP/FEIS, impacts of the Proposed Plan, a summary of the written and verbal comments received during the public review period for the DRMP/EIS, and responses to the comments.

Pursuant to BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the planning process for this PRMP and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the planning decisions may protest approval of the planning decisions within 30 days from date the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register. For further information on filing a protest, please see the accompanying protest regulations in the pages that follow (labeled as Attachment # 1). The regulations specify the required elements of your protest. Take care to document all relevant facts. As much as possible, reference or cite the planning documents or available planning records (e.g. meeting minutes or summaries, correspondence, etc.).

Emailed 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. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the emailed or faxed protest as an advance copy and will afford it full consideration. If you wish to provide the BLM with such advance notification, please direct faxed protests to the attention of Brenda Hudgens-Williams-BLM protest coordinator at 202-452-5112, and emailed protests to: bhudgens@blm.gov.

All protests, including the follow-up letter to emails or faxes, must be in writing and mailed to one of the following addresses:

Regular Mail:

Director (210)

Attn: Brenda Hudgens-Williams

P.O. Box 71383

Washington, D.C. 20024-1383

Overnight Mail:

Director (210)

Attn: Brenda Hudgens-Williams

20 M Street SE, Room 2134LM

Washington, D.C. 20003

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your protest, be advised that your entire protest – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your protest to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The BLM Director will make every attempt to promptly render a decision on each 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 BLM Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior. Responses to protest issues will be compiled and formalized in a Director's Protest Decision Report made available following issuance of the decisions.

Upon resolution of all land use plan protests, the BLM will issue the Approved RMPs and Records of Decision (RODs). The Approved RMPs and RODs will be mailed or made available electronically to all who participated in the planning process and will be available to all parties through the "Planning" page of the BLM national website (<http://www.blm.gov/planning>), or by mail upon request.

Unlike land use planning decisions, implementation decisions included in this PRMP/FEIS are not subject to protest under the BLM planning regulations, but are subject to an administrative review process, through appeals to the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA), Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) pursuant to 43 CFR, Part 4 Subpart E. Implementation decisions generally constitute the BLM's final approval allowing on-the-ground actions to proceed. Once the BLM resolves protests to land use planning decisions and issues the Approved RMPs and RODs, implementation decisions made in the land use plan are still subject to the appeals process or other administrative review as prescribed by specific resource program regulations. The Approved RMPs and RODs will therefore identify implementation decisions made in the plan that may be appealed to the Office of Hearing and Appeals..

Sincerely,



Emily Garber

Field Manager, Lower Sonoran Field Office

Protest Regulations

[CITE: 43CFR1610.5-2]

TITLE 43--PUBLIC LANDS: INTERIOR
CHAPTER II--BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PART 1600--PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING--Table of Contents
Subpart 1610--Resource Management Planning
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. 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.
- (b) 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. The decision of the Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior.

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