



BLM NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Lower Sonoran and Sonoran Desert National Monument Finalizes Resource Management Plans

(PHOENIX, AZ) –The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Arizona announces the release of Records of Decision (RODs) and Approved Resource Management Plans for the Lower Sonoran Field Office, including the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

The plans set a framework for management of 1.4 million acres of public lands located in south central Arizona in parts of Maricopa, Pinal, Pima, Gila and Yuma Counties. Management decisions are made for issues including: livestock grazing, hunting, target shooting, off highway travel and access management, wilderness characteristics, wildlife, and utility-scale renewable energy and utility corridors.

Approximately 157,210 acres of the Sonoran Desert National Monument and 830,000 acres of the Lower Sonoran area will remain available for livestock grazing. The Sonoran Desert National Monument will see 411 miles of road designated open. Future travel management planning for the Lower Sonoran area will engage the public in similar decisions. In addition, 107,800 acres and 91,200 acres will be allocated as lands to protect wilderness characteristics in the Sonoran Desert National Monument and the Lower Sonoran, respectively.

On September 14, 2012, BLM Arizona State Director Ray Suazo released the RODs electronically to the public. The documents are available at: www.blm.gov/az

The BLM staff from the Lower Sonoran Field Office and Sonoran Desert National Monument sincerely appreciates all public comments and participation received since the planning process began. Consideration of more than 10,000 letters, emails, and conversations at public meetings helped improve the planning document produced.

The Draft RMP and Environmental Impact Statement were released on August 26, 2011, for a 90-day public comment period. The Proposed RMP/Final Environmental Impact Statement was released for a 30-day protest period on June 15, 2012. Nine protests were received, all of which were carefully considered, though ultimately denied or dismissed, clearing the way for the Approved Resource Management Plans.

For more information or to request the plans on Compact Disc, call the BLM at 623-580-5500 between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday or send an email to blm_az_ls_sdnm_plan@blm.gov. Paper copies of the plans will be printed later and will be available in the beginning of November.

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land – the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, recreational and other activities on BLM-managed land contributed more than \$130 billion to the U.S. economy and supported more than 600,000 American jobs. The Bureau is also one of a handful of agencies that collects more revenue than it spends. In FY 2012, nearly \$5.7 billion will be generated on lands managed by the BLM, which operates on a \$1.1 billion budget. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.