



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Phoenix District
Hassayampa Field Office
21605 North 7th Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85027
www.blm.gov/az/

Dear interested member of the public,

The Bureau of Land Management Hassayampa Field Office is pleased to announce that the Table Mesa Recreation and Travel Management Plan and related Environmental Assessment(EA) are available for your review. The recreation and travel management plan describes actions for managing access, travel and recreation developments on approximately 11,500 acres of public land administered by the BLM near New River and Black Canyon City, Arizona. The EA provides an analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed plan, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. After the environmental examination was conducted, the BLM has concluded that the preferred action will not have a significant effect on the human environment.

This combined recreation and travel management plan represents the integration of public collaboration and input over the two years. The BLM wishes to express its appreciation to all who contributed their time, knowledge and expertise to this effort by participating in both this planning process and the Resource Management Plan process, which began in 2001. This area has the potential to become a nationally recognized recreation area where diverse recreation is embraced. We welcome and encourage your continued participation as this plan is implemented.

The release of the signed EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with Decisions Record begins a 30 day appeal period. During this period, you may examine the BLM's finding that the proposed action will not result in significant impacts to the environment. BLM's analysis and FONSI are based on the best information available at this time. Appeals must be post marked by July 20, 2010.

The plan and EA are available online at

http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/info/nepa/environmental_library/rec_mgmt_plans/table_mesa.html.

Copies are available for review at the Phoenix District Office, Tucson Field Office and the Arizona State Office. Your questions can be answered by calling Thomas Bickauskas at 623-580-5502, or via email at Thomas_Bickauskas@blm.gov.

We appreciate your interest and encourage your continued involvement as BLM completes similar plans throughout the Hassayampa Field Office.

Sincerely,

/s/ Steven Cohn

Field Manager, Hassayampa Field Office

DECISION RECORD

Environmental Assessment

DOI-BLM-AZ-PDO-2009-022-EA

Table Mesa Recreation and Travel Management Plan

DECISION

It is my decision to approve the *Table Mesa Recreation Management Zone Recreation and Travel Management Plan*, as described in the Proposed Action.

RATIONALE FOR DECISION

The *Table Mesa Recreation Management Zone Recreation and Travel Management Plan* represents our best attempt to improve the management of recreation in this popular area. It draws a reasonable balance between strong demands for diverse types of recreation and the resources that need protection.

Unmanaged recreation use in the Table Mesa area over the last thirty years has resulted in impacts to soils, vegetation, wildlife, and historical and archaeological resources. Under this Plan, recreation use at the Table Mesa Recreation Area will provide positive contributions to the human environment, add to the quality of life enjoyed by residents of and visitors to public lands north of Phoenix, and protect associated natural and cultural resources.

In this Plan, we outline a direction for recreation management, including the establishment of a route system. The Proposed Action focuses on many of the BLM priorities for managing recreation, including:

- Managing lands for desirable recreation experiences that contribute to quality of life
- Establishing a comprehensive approach to travel management
- Minimizing the effects of vehicular use on other forms of recreation, natural and cultural resources
- Enhancing visitor services
- Ensuring public health and safety

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public has been informed of the process and has provided us with valuable input on how the area should be managed to address a wide variety of issues, such as target shooting, technical 4x4 vehicle use, motorcycle riding, non-motorized trail use surrounding the Black Canyon Trail, mining, camping, commercial tour operation, and private land owner desires.

While this is not an exhaustive list of the activities occurring in the area, the plan attempts to address the issues in a way that minimizes conflicts, offers as much personal freedom as possible and seeks to put a framework for management on an area where none has existed previously.

Through the scoping process, which included a total of six public meetings, many of the recommendations presented by the public were incorporated into the plan. We have taken extra care to explain why some recommendations were not incorporated. This Plan is stronger as a result of extensive public involvement.

MITIGATION

In attempting to balance public use with resource conservation, we must address Sonoran Desert Tortoise, a priority species. We have developed a method of balancing habitat quantity and quality on a field office level by considering Tortoise Habitat Banking. This allows for improved access and diversity of use in the Table Mesa area while conserving key tortoise habitat in other portions of the Field Office.

Mitigation measures for Desert Tortoise include:

1. 19.0 acres of Category 2 Tortoise Habitat needs to be reclaimed, equating to 15.7 miles of 10ft wide primitive roads. This will offset the losses associated with new route construction proposed in the Table Mesa area. Other areas within the Hassayampa Field Office will provide this offset. Two specific areas will be targeted:
 - A. Sheep Mountain Recreation Management Zone
 - B. Belmont/Big Horn Mountains Wildlife Habitat Area
2. Prior to construction of new vehicle routes, the alignment must be cleared of desert tortoises. Any tortoises found in the road path should be carefully moved out of the path and released unharmed. If feasible, construction should avoid shelter sites. Where a shelter site is found to be occupied, the tortoise would be removed by someone with appropriate training, and moved a safe distance away from the construction site.
3. All tortoise shelter sites in the path must be examined and once verified as empty, the site would be rendered unusable by covering the entry (thus preventing reentry), at which time, construction may continue.

Other Mitigation Measures include:

1. Route construction should be conducted between August 1st and February 15th to avoid potential destruction of active migratory bird nests.
2. Obtain legal public access across private land for route system connectivity, where not already secured, to avoid trespass onto private lands. While the designated route

system minimizes crossing private lands, public access is not yet secured along all designated routes.

APPEALS

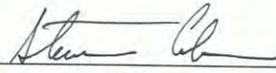
This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4. Your notice of appeal must be filed in this office, located at 21605 North 7th Avenue, Phoenix Arizona, 85027, within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition (request) pursuant to regulation 43 CFR Part 4.21(b) for a stay (suspension) of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice to appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and the petition for a stay must also be submitted to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Standards for Obtaining a Stay

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
2. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted,
4. Whether the public interest favors a granting the stay.



Authorized Officer

June 21, 2010
Date

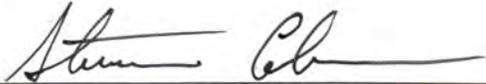
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Environmental Assessment

DOI-BLM-AZ-PDO-2009-022-EA

Table Mesa Recreation and Travel Management Plan

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that implementing the *Table Mesa Recreation Management Zone Recreation and Travel Management Plan* – with appropriate measures – would result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.



Authorized Officer

June 21, 2010

Date

TABLE MESA RECREATION MANAGEMENT ZONE

RECREATION AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN

&

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

DOI-BLM-AZ-PDO-2009-022-EA

PREPARED BY:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
PHOENIX DISTRICT OFFICE
HASSAYAMPA FIELD OFFICE

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

JUNE 2010



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1 INTRODUCTION

The Table Mesa planning area is located on the northern edge of the rapidly urbanizing Phoenix Metropolitan area in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Bradshaw-Harquahala planning area. It pertains to the Hassayampa Field Office, located within the BLM Phoenix District Office. Population growth from 1990 to 2000 exceeded 40 percent in the region. As the population grows, so does the demand for recreational opportunities. The Table Mesa area is used for motorized recreation, target shooting, hiking, biking, equestrian use, recreational mining, camping, and site seeing. The area also contains a major utility corridor, permitted grazing allotments, active mining operations, and private land in holdings.

As use increases in this finite space, conflict can occur between users seeking differing recreation experiences. Additionally, as urban development encroaches upon public lands, recreation pressures can negatively impact natural and cultural resources, as well as other authorized uses, such as grazing and mining.

The Table Mesa Recreation and Travel Management Plan and is written in conformance with the *Bradshaw-Harquahala Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision* (BH ARMP/ROD). For the Table Mesa area, the BH ARMP/ROD offers a mix of recreational opportunities that attempt to meet a wide variety of recreation demands, while reducing conflict among users with natural resources, cultural resources, and traditional public land uses. The BH ARMP/ROD emphasizes community partnerships to develop recreational opportunities in support of resource protection and public education. Within the Bradshaw-Harquahala planning area, the Table Mesa Recreation Management Zone (RMZ) is part of the Black Canyon Management Unit and Black Canyon Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). SRMAs are areas that require special management and/or have increased recreation use and demand. SRMAs are areas of intensive recreation use and are managed to retain recreation opportunities while protecting resources and reducing user conflicts. Portions of the Black Canyon Hiking and Equestrian Trail RMZ coincide with the Table Mesa RMZ. RMZs are located within SRMAs and have a particular recreation management focus or resource challenges.

This document is the product of extensive public and agency input and consists of background information, proposals received and considered from members of the public and governmental agencies, a proposed plan, plan alternatives, and an environmental assessment.

The goal of the **Table Mesa Recreation and Travel Management Plan** is to propose a management framework that allows for both current and future recreation needs in the Table Mesa area, while ensuring protection of resources. Specifically, this plan intends to reduce conflict among hikers, equestrian users, mountain bikers, recreational shooters, Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) users, private land owners, and other users of the area. It identifies the BLM

system of roads, primitive roads and trails, and the designations for their use and maintenance; it outlines facilities to be developed in support of recreation; defines buffered areas closed to recreational target shooting; and it discusses visitor management and plan implementation. The plan includes establishment of facilities, staging areas, creation of new motorized and non-motorized routes, and closure of some motorized routes.

The **Environmental Assessment (EA)** analyzes the Table Mesa Recreation Area plan and its alternative. The NEPA Number for this EA is DOI-BLM-AZ-PDO-2009-022-EA. Publication of this EA will which will be followed by a 15-day public review period, specifically seeking additional data or information that may fundamentally alter the proposed plan. Upon completion of the review period, and pending no fundamental alteration to the plan, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued along with a Decision Record. Following approval of the decision by the Hassayampa Field Manager, a notice of use restrictions pursuant 43CFR8342 and 43CFR8365 will be published in the Federal Register to establish rules necessary to implement the final Recreation and Travel Management plan and associated designations.

1.1 PLANNING AREA LOCATION

The Table Mesa RMZ is comprised of approximately 11,557 acres located within the Black Canyon Management Unit of the BLM's Bradshaw-Harquahala Planning Area (Figure 1). In addition to the BLM acreage, the planning area includes private land in-holdings. Its primary access point is from Interstate-17 at the Table Mesa Road Exit. It's located north of New River, south of Black Canyon City, and west of I-17. The southwestern boundary of the RMZ is adjacent to the Lake Pleasant Regional Park.

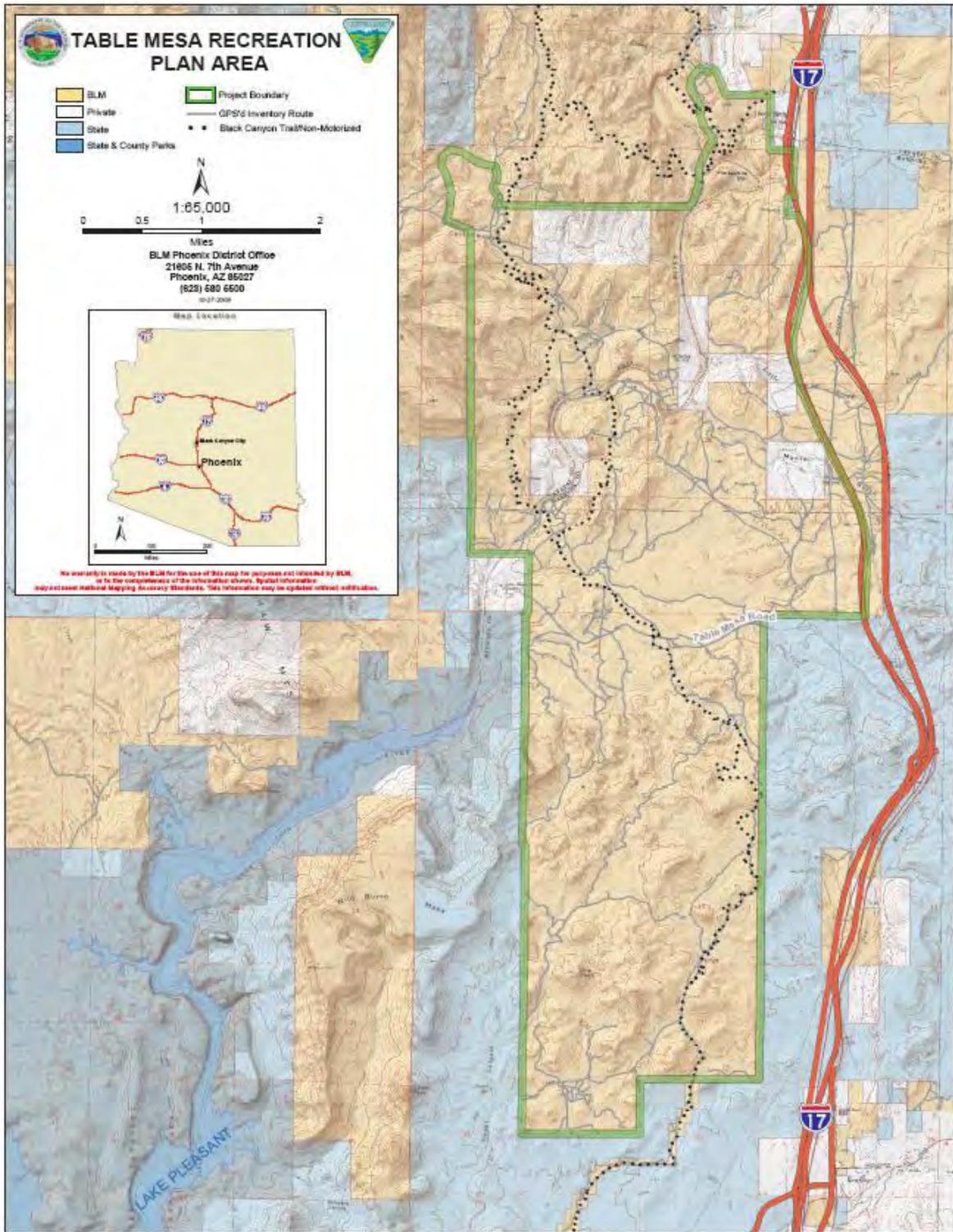


FIGURE 1: TABLE MESA PLANNING AREA MAP

1.2 INVENTORIES

1.2.1 ROUTE INVENTORY AND EVALUATION

A route inventory was conducted in the Table Mesa RMZ area during 2002 under an interagency project involving the State of Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) program, Arizona State Land Department, BLM and U.S. Forest Service. Interested user groups helped identify hard-to-find routes prior to the inventory (see Chapter 3 of the BH ARMP/ROD). Participants involved in route evaluation included representatives of the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the BLM. OHV user organizations and other interested groups and individuals submitted comments during meetings and associated comment periods, providing additional information on the use and need for particular roads and trails. The evaluation identified goals and objectives for the planning area, which addresses multiple use and resource protection concerns relating to recreation access and travel management. The evaluation was conducted using the *Route Evaluation Tree*[™] procedure and was facilitated by an independent contractor. Based on the route evaluation and public meetings, the route system alternatives were created and are discussed in this plan.

1.2.2 TARGET SHOOTING SITE INVENTORY AND EVALUATION

A target shooting site inventory began in 2002, was updated in 2008, and was completed in 2009 in conjunction with the Arizona Department of Game and Fish and the National Rifle Association (see Appendix A). The purpose of the assessment was to determine the locations and suitability of existing shooting sites within the Table Mesa area. The assessment considered 40 sites currently being used for target shooting. Most existing shooting sites in the Table Mesa RMZ occur along roads. Based on this evaluation, a plan to conserve natural and cultural resources, improve visitor experiences and public safety was deemed necessary.

1.3 BENEFITS BASED RECREATION MANAGEMENT

Benefits Based Management (BBM) is a recreation management philosophy that focuses on the positive and beneficial outcomes derived from recreational activities, rather than emphasizing the recreation activities themselves. It promotes quality recreation experiences from the visitors' or users' perspectives. BBM provides the conceptual recreation framework to view, plan and collaboratively deliver recreation services as a means to a larger end – an end in which outcomes benefit individuals, communities, economies and the environment. By conducting BBM analysis, recreational settings can be better delineated and managed. In BBM, priority is given to resource dependent recreation. Resource dependent recreation is that which can only be done where the natural resource or setting exists. An example is running for fitness versus nature hiking. Fitness running can be done on a treadmill or anywhere a suitable surface exists. Nature hiking requires a natural setting and things to observe along the way. Hiking would not be suitable indoors or in unnatural settings, thus it is a resource dependent recreation.

BBM analysis was conducted for recreational uses in the Bradshaw-Harquahala planning process and it was determined that – while recognizing other forms of recreation in the area – the primary niche for the Table Mesa RMZ is intensive motorized recreation for single and two-track routes with camping related to OHV use. OHV recreation is closely associated with the use of specialized two, three and four wheel vehicles, intended for recreation or racing uses. Vehicles include dirt bikes, quads, go-carts, utility terrain vehicles (UTVs or side-by-sides), and specially prepared 4x4 vehicles.

1.4 SCOPING & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This Table Mesa Recreation and Travel Management Plan has been crafted with considerable input from individual citizens and groups who utilize the area for recreation activities, interested landowners, other interested members of the public, and government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels. Feedback has been received in writing and in public scoping meetings.

In an effort to collaborate with individuals and groups interested in the outcome of the Table Mesa RMZ planning effort, six formal public meetings were held in Phoenix and Anthem, including three scoping meetings (November 18th and 20th, 2008 and June 30th, 2009) and three core strategy meetings (January 20th, February 3rd and 17th, 2009). Notes from each of these meetings can be found in Appendix C. Communication has been encouraged by establishing dedicated public scoping websites containing meeting notes, planning processes, and maps on the BLM website at the following address:

http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/info/nepa/environmental_library/rec_mgmt_plans/table_mesa.html.

Scoping revealed that the Table Mesa area is utilized by the public for a variety of recreational purposes, including:

- Target Shooting
- Off-Highway vehicle driving and Rock Crawling
- Hiking on the Black Canyon Trail and other trails
- Rock Hounding
- Equestrian activities
- Camping
- Hunting
- Mining and Gold Panning
- Access to fishing and other activities provided in adjacent Lake Pleasant Regional Park

The RMZ is heavily used for recreational target shooting and OHV driving but demand for all recreation types mentioned above is increasing as the Phoenix metropolitan urban area grows

closer to public lands. Some of the recreation uses engender solitude experiences with little non-natural noise, while others are amenable to large groups, with heavy mechanized use heavy noise.

In an attempt to encourage compatible recreation use within the Table Mesa RMZ and to accommodate resource protection, a zoned approach (see Figure 2) was derived for the proposed plan. Emphasis areas focus on hunting and habitat preservation, four-wheeling and technical vehicle driving, single track trails (for motorized and non-motorized use), and target shooting.

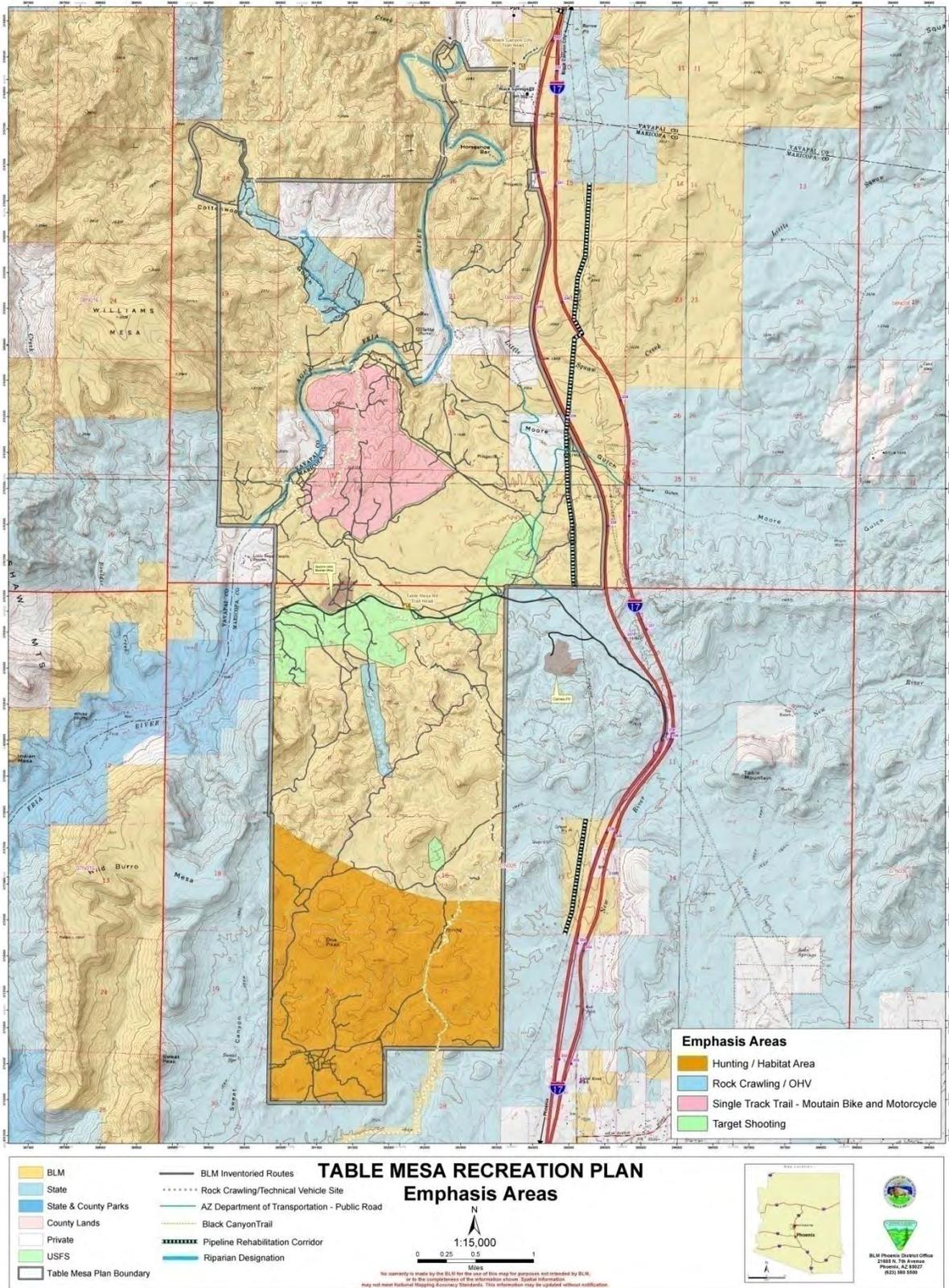


FIGURE 2: RECREATION EMPHASIS AREA MAP

1.5 ISSUES & CONCERNS

The following issues and concerns were identified during the scoping process. These issues and concerns help frame the purpose and need for the planning effort and shape the alternatives presented later in this document.

- Recreational shooting in unsafe locations and in high volume endangers other users, damages existing flora, and creates litter.
- OHV driving occurs off of routes, on county roads, cross country, and in sensitive riparian areas.
- The Black Canyon Trail (BCT) use is increasing but parking and staging areas are not sufficient.
- Access to some popular BLM recreation sites currently requires crossing private or state trust land, which the BLM may not endorse.
- OHV and Rock Crawling use is increasing and has damaged some desert tortoise habitat and riparian areas.
- Mining clubs have claims along the Agua Fria River riparian corridor, requiring access and staging locations.
- Rock Hounding use is increasing.
- Access across the Agua Fria River is dependent upon water levels, and during heavy rains, puts some users in danger and possibly harms river resources.
- State Lands will be closing the service road gas pipeline parallel to I-17 to vehicle traffic and is requesting BLM to do the same.
- Increasing recreation use requires larger staging and camping areas.
- Gravel pit operations in TR5NR2E Sec. 5 have unique concerns and may interrupt other uses and be interrupted by recreation.
- Access to popular recreation sites outside of the planning area should be considered.
- Grazing allotments throughout the RMZ are still active and require access.
- Wilderness characteristic areas are located immediately north of and adjacent to the RMZ.
- Arizona Department of Transportation is planning to widen Interstate Highway 17 along the eastern boundary of the RMZ and is concerned that the plan will conflict with future highway improvements.
- Parts of the RMZ occur within Maricopa County and are required to comply with state laws on dust pollution (PM10) Area A Particulate Matter 10 Dust Management protocols.
- Table Mesa Road is the main access route to the north arm of Lake Pleasant County Park. Conservation and recreational uses of the park's Agua Fria Conservation Area need to be considered to ensure that the management plans for the park and the Table Mesa

area complement each other, while allowing for a wide range of activities in diverse locations.

- Some private land owners are concerned about target shooting in areas adjacent to their land, planned for future housing development.
- Utilities need continued access.
- Access to BLM lands sometimes crosses county and state lands where such access may not be consistent with their management mission.

1.6 PROPOSALS CONSIDERED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Given the level of public and agency participation in the RMZ planning effort, many proposals were considered in the planning process. Each proposal from members of the public was considered in detail and in light of the desired future conditions and *Bradshaw-Harquahala ARMP/ROD* decisions for the Black Canyon SRMA, Table Mesa RMZ, and Black Canyon Hiking and Equestrian Trails RMZ.

ROUTES

- Ensure unlicensed vehicular access from Black Canyon City on both sides of I-17, South of Rusty Rock Mine and on gas line east of I-17 under Moore's Gulch.
- With passage of a state law that requires a type of OHV License (decal), proposed route closures across state land may be appropriate. Reconsider proposed closures.
- Maintain open the routes that connect to state land, thus allowing loops.
- Maintain open the dead-end routes for cell phone access (thus improving safety) and to offer hilltop viewpoints. Monitor these places for route proliferation.
- Maintain open the dead-end route overlooking Gillette.
- Connect a loop in the south area to allow vehicle driving to be spread out and to improve trail riding. Make a loop route around the south end of the Table Mesa RMZ.
- Open routes to create loop trails.
- Add additional hiking and biking trails for various skill levels.
- Keep Old Stage Route open for access from Black Canyon City to "Collateral Damage" Rock Crawling area.
- Make a new route on the west side of the Gillette Property.
- Maintain access to Lake Pleasant Regional Park
- OHV and horse trails should be separate
- Need improved roads for cars
- Emphasize motorized use in this area with non-motorized emphasis in adjacent area
- Maintain access to Tip Top Mine
- Reopen old mining roads, specifically in the southern area (Bonnie Bell Mine)
- Allow motorized access from New River

- Evaluate and designate a sand run in the Agua Fria River
- Create a new route on BLM, parallel to the power line road and to allow loop route in south end of RMZ
- Conduct separate NEPA (environmental) analysis for each proposed route change
- Do not improve Table Mesa Road
- Consider at least 100 miles of OHV routes
- Consider allowing route 17B/19K for day use only
- Add single track mountain bike trails in Doe Peak area
- Consider allowing route 16P/16N to be designated as open for single track use only
- Driving in washes/ river should be allowed
- Add a long-distance motor cycle route from Table Mesa to Bumble Bee
- Consider separating trails by speed limit instead of vehicle/ use
- Do not limit public to existing trails.

ROCK CRAWLING / TECHNICAL VEHICLE SITES

- Close the egress road near tortoise habitat and use the egress road that “Anaconda” Rock Crawling site uses (12I).
- Need good, surface-hardened staging area to access rock crawling sites.
- Resurvey the “Collateral Damage” Rock Crawling site and provide access to it.
- Keep the “Die Hard” rock crawling site open and regulate shooting if necessary.
- Consider a northern access route (skirting private land) for “Collateral Damage” Rock Crawling site.
- Maintain as open all existing rock crawling routes.
- Open the “Armageddon” rock crawling site on a limited basis.

RECREATIONAL TARGET SHOOTING

- Consider access for disabled people in the shooting buffer proposal.
- If safe shooting areas are established, ensure that more than five or six are created to spread out the shooters.
- Close area north of Table Mesa Road to shooting since most of the OHV activity and camping occurs north of the road.
- Reevaluate the proposed closing of shooting site S-5 (maintain as open).
- Do not develop shooting sites or allow shooting to occur along the AZCO road.
- Do not identify safe shooting sites near private property that is planned for future residential development.
- Reevaluate the safe shooting area philosophy, since dispersed shooting keeps each group safe from other groups of shooters who may use poor judgment.
- Reconsider proposed closure of S22 and S29

- Reconsider proposed shooting closures at sites within washes as some users feel that lead migration concerns are unfounded and wash banks provide safe backstops (This proposal also included water quality data from the City of Phoenix Water Plant)
- Create mini ranges and require their use – the Doe Peak area would be good for this
- Develop many smaller shooting areas instead of a few larger ones
- Retain shooting site S-29 as a shotgun range
- Develop shooting sites
- Do not close any of the RMZ to shooting
- Ban shooting in entire Table Mesa Planning Area
- Create safety fan areas to improve shooting safety

HUNTING

- Include game hunting access to riparian areas.
- Consider adding game birds for better hunting.

RIGHTS OF WAY & REALTY

- Pursue access across the Lake Pleasant Regional Park for long distance trails.
- Pursue access across state and private lands to minimize the need for new routes to bypass these lands.
- Partner with Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition to pursue legal access as necessary.
- Add old roads on topographical maps into the system for later use.
- Purchase the “Gillette” private property in holding and make it a camp/picnic area.
- Require key access to the area from I-17

EDUCATION, OUTREACH, ADMINISTRATION & ENFORCEMENT

- Work with public volunteer groups to educate public and clean/improve the area.
- Unsafe shooting is better addressed through education and enforcement, change the philosophy to do this.
- Allow OHV groups to adopt/sponsor areas/sites for monitoring and care.
- Allow shooting site S-28 to be adopted by the Honeywell Sportsmen.
- Communications need improvement via local cell tower.
- Maintain kiosks with paper targets for users.
- Ensure safety on Black Canyon Trail.
- Enforcement and regulation must become a priority -- More patrols by rangers.
- Ensure enforcement of dumping/littering laws.
- Name the 4X4 Trails on a map
- Work with Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and the Department of Public Safety to conduct sweeps of shooting users.

- Adopt an enforcement plan. First offense leads to a ticket. Second offense leads to banishment from area.
- Allow hunting of nuisance Burros.
- Consider a reasonably-priced use permit
- Consider a uniform access pass for recreation areas.
- Consider trail use rotation.
- Include water stations for recreationalists

FACILITIES

- Create more camping areas along the Agua Fria River.
- Mark trailheads and roads
- Ensure sufficient signage to avoid getting lost.
- For Rock Crawling sites, create a gatekeeper or limiter device to restrict access by smaller vehicles.
- Include signage indicating where private lands occur.
- Ensure training lot is located away from target shooting.
- Signage with jurisdictional safety emergency contact numbers
- Add a helipad to the Table Mesa planning area.
- Add an airstrip to Table Mesa planning area
- Create a gold panning area in Agua Fria River.
- Erect a bridge over the Agua Fria River to protect it while allowing access to the other side.
- Add camp sites near shooting areas.
- Add trash receptacles, enforce their use, and remove trash.

1.7 CONFORMANCE

1.7.1 LAND USE PLAN

The BLM's planning process is governed by Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) (43 USC 1711) and 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1600, which governs the administrative review process for most of BLM's decisions. Land use plans ensure that BLM-administered public lands are managed in accordance with the intent of Congress as stated in FLPMA and under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. As required by FLPMA, public lands must be managed in a manner that protects the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values; that, where appropriate, preserves and protects certain public lands in their natural condition and provides food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; and that provides for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use by encouraging collaboration and public participation throughout the planning process. In addition, public lands must be managed to

help meet the nation's needs for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from public lands.

Land use plans are the main mechanism for guiding BLM's activities to achieve the mission and goals outlined in the BLM's Strategic Plan (BLM 2000). BLM currently manages the Table Mesa RMZ under the *Bradshaw-Harquahala Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision* (2010).

The *Bradshaw-Harquahala ARMP/ROD* contains Desired Future Conditions for several resources and resource uses within the Black Canyon SRMA and the Table Mesa RMZ. These Desired Future Conditions drive management direction and serve as a basis for the Plan for Recreation, Lands and Realty, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Wilderness Characteristics, Visual Resources, Rangeland Management, Travel Management, and Mineral Resource Management. A brief summary of some of these resources is presented below.

BLACK CANYON SRMA DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

- Preserve scenic and open space values and provide an array of public opportunities for trail-based recreation within diverse and healthy landscapes.
- Provide an assortment of intensively managed, intensively used trail-based motorized and non-motorized recreation uses within the SRMA. Emphasize motorized and non-motorized trail links east and west of I-17, links with Prescott and Tonto National Forests, Lake Pleasant Regional Park, the Castle Hot Springs area, the Great Western Trail, and connections to all communities.
- Manage the recreation area to function as an open space gateway into Maricopa County from the north, managed for viewsheds and long-range vistas of valleys, hills, and the Bradshaw Mountains. Connect the Maricopa County Park System with a regional non-motorized trail system between Lake Pleasant Regional Park, the Cave Creek Recreation Area, and the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area.
- Facilitate preserving a scenic open space corridor along I-17 between Yavapai and Maricopa Counties, welcoming visitors to Maricopa County and promoting area tourism.
- Maintain recreation settings identified through inventory as shown on the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (see Map 3-11 of the *Bradshaw-Harquahala PRMP/FEIS*), except where otherwise stipulated in prescriptions of other allocations.
- Secure more law enforcement and public user group involvement as a high priority to promote environmentally responsible recreation, discourage vandalism, protect the public, and protect the public investment in public lands.

TABLE MESA RMZ DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

- Manage for intensive motorized single and two-track routes and general motorized recreation.
- Manage activities for acceptable dust control and compatibility with neighboring communities and landowners.
- Maintain semi-primitive motorized and roaded-natural settings. Users will occasionally be concentrated in developed sites, but recreation use will generally be dispersed.
- Construct and maintain facilities to meet the basic needs of visitors and to enhance resource protection. Maintain clear yet nonintrusive signing in most of the RMZ.

BLACK CANYON HIKING AND EQUESTRIAN TRAILS RMZ DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

- Design and build new trail segments with community and citizen participation.
- Provide high-quality non-motorized recreation experiences for hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers through the Black Canyon corridor.
- Incorporate loops, links, and trailheads. Link the communities of Black Canyon City, New River, Anthem, and Phoenix.

LONG DISTANCE ROUTE CORRIDORS

- Complete the designation of long distance route corridors to establish the importance of such routes for further planning and connectivity with surrounding towns and jurisdictions.

LANDS & REALTY

The Table Mesa RMZ also contains a utility corridor with both electrical power lines and natural gas pipelines. The corridor flanks the eastern boundary of the RMZ and most users pass through the corridor to access recreation sites from the Table Mesa Road exit of I-17. Future maintenance of this corridor is required.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Table Mesa RMZ supports several important wildlife habitats, including riparian zones along the Agua Fria River and desert tortoise habitat. The RMP makes specific provisions for the protection of the habitat for special status species such as desert tortoise and yellow-billed cuckoo. The RMP also outlines goals of protecting other priority habitats for game species, other special status species, birds of conservation concern, and raptors. Specific RMP decisions are as follows: TE- 1,2,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14; WF- 1,7,16,18,20; VM -1; LH- 1,2,3; WS- 1; TM -21, 27.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Black Canyon Corridor Special Cultural Resource Management Area (SCRMA) exists within the RMZ. This management area includes diverse types of prehistoric archaeological sites, along

with sites associated with historic ranching and mining. The historic Black Canyon Sheep Driveway passed through the area. The *Bradshaw-Harquahala ARMP/ROD* emphasizes the continued monitoring and protection of sites in the SCRMA, and it allows for interpretive development at selected sites as identified. Tribal consultation for protection of cultural resources has occurred and will continue to occur for the SCRMA.

OTHER SPECIAL RECREATION USES – BLACK CANYON HIKING AND EQUESTRIAN TRAILS RMZ

The Black Canyon Trail (a *National Recreation Trail*) RMZ bisects the Table Mesa RMZ. The Black Canyon Trail RMZ shares many of the Desired Future Conditions with the Table Mesa RMZ. The Recreation Area Management Plan for the Table Mesa RMZ must ensure that the Black Canyon Trail RMZ can be successfully managed to meet its prescribed DFCs.

1.7.2 OTHER LAWS, REGULATIONS, POLICIES & PROGRAM GUIDANCE

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Clean Water Act of 1977
- Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, May 24, 1977.
- Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, May 24, 1977
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended
- Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended
- Clean Air Act of 1963, as amended
- Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, February 11, 1994
- Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites, 1996
- Executive Order 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds, January 10, 2001
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990)
- 43CFR9268 Law Enforcement – Recreation Programs
- BLM Instruction Memorandum 2006-173, *Implementation of Roads and Trails Terminology Report*
- BLM Instruction Memorandum 2008-174, Road Maintenance Agreements

- BLM Instruction Memorandum 2008-074, *Methods for Authorizing Shooting Ranges and Areas on Public Lands*
- BLM Instruction Memorandum 2008-014, *Clarification of Guidance and Integration of Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Planning into the Land Use Planning*
- BLM Instruction Memorandum 2008-091, *Guidance for Signing When Implementing Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Planning*
- BLM Instruction Memorandum 2007-041, *Federal Lands Hunting, Fishing and Shooting Sports Roundtable Memorandum of Understanding*
- BLM Instruction memorandum 2007-030, *Clarification of Cultural Resource Considerations for Off-highway Vehicle(OHV) Designation and Travel Management*
- BLM Instruction Memorandum AZ2009-017, *State Specific Guidance for Implementation of the Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Law*
- Arizona Revised Statute Title 49 sections 400-500 governing air quality
- Memos of communication between Arizona State Land Department and Arizona State Office BLM regarding access across state trust lands.

1.8 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN AND DECISION TO BE MADE

The purpose of the Table Mesa RMZ Recreation Area Management Plan is to identify, promote, and establish compatible recreation use of the RMZ, while protecting natural resources, cultural resources, and public safety.

Currently, no formal management framework exists for the Table Mesa RMZ. Public demand for recreational uses is on the rise, use conflict is increasing, ecosystem health is affected, and public safety is of concern. Given the Desired Future Conditions for recreation and other resources located within the planning area, a holistic management framework is needed to respond to increased use, to ensure that the objectives of two co-located RMZs are met, and to protect valuable cultural and natural resources.

The BLM will decide whether or not to implement the Table Mesa Recreation and Travel Management Plan.

2 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Several alternatives were considered and refined throughout the planning process. Given the extensive period allotted for public scoping and outreach on this plan, only two alternatives will be considered in detail and include the No Action Alternative and the Plan. Alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed analysis are also discussed in this chapter.

2.1 PROPOSED RECREATION AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The plan is categorized by management actions related to routes, technical vehicle sites, facilities, shooting area buffer closures, and implementation. Each of these components is discussed in detail in the following sections.

2.1.1 ROUTES

A comprehensive route system is sought in this plan. The route system has been designed to create loop trails, maximize recreation while protecting resources, and concentrate much of the trail-based recreation activity in a hub north of Table Mesa Road. To meet these design goals, some routes identified during the route inventory are designated as closed or are reserved for administrative or permitted access only. Other routes remain open and other new routes are proposed. Routes include new primitive roads, new motorized single-track trails, new non-motorized single track trails for mountain bikes, and non-motorized trails. Table 1 and Table 2 summarize basic route information in this plan. Detailed designation information for each route is contained in Appendix E: Route Designations Table & Maps.

TABLE 1: EXISTING ROUTES SUMMARY

Description of Existing Routes	Miles
<i>Total Inventoried Routes in RMZ</i> <i>Includes All routes, both motorized and non-motorized</i>	91.8
Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Roads Open to All Use	73.3
Primary, Secondary or Tertiary Roads Closed to All Use	0
Primary, Secondary or Tertiary Roads Limited to Administrative/Permitted Use	0
Trails Limited to Non-Motorized Use <i>Includes Black Canyon Trail and its side loop trails</i>	18.5

TABLE 2: FINAL ROUTE DESIGNATION FOR EXISTING AND NEW ROUTES

Description of Final Route Designation	Miles
<i>Total Miles of Roads, Primitive Roads and Trails Being Designated</i>	85.5
Roads Open to All Uses	9.8
Primitive Roads Open to All Uses	32.7
Primitive Roads Limited to Administrative/Permitted Uses Only	5.8
Trails Limited to Non-motorized Use	20.5
New Primitive Roads Open to All Uses	3.6
New Motorized Trails (Open to all vehicles 24" wide or less)	7.5
New Non-Motorized Trails	5.6

Specific route information for the plan, such as asset types, functional classes, and maintenance intensities, is discussed in the following sections.

2.1.1.1 ASSET TYPES

BLM classifies its routes as roads, primitive roads, or trails.

Roads are linear routes managed for use by low clearance vehicles having four or more wheels, and are maintained for regular and continuous use. Roads that are located within the RMZ and under BLM management include the *Table Mesa Road*, *Little Pan Mine Road* and the *AZCO Mine Road*. Table Mesa Road is also a county road and is regularly maintained by Maricopa County. Improvements to these roads will be made to ensure that both roads meet requirements of high-intensity usage and provide year-round access to high-clearance vehicles, RVs and trailers. Both roads will be open to unlicensed vehicles.

- *Table Mesa Road*
Improvements will include surface-hardening or gravel overlay to aid in dust suppression, and drainage management, while maintaining a natural appearance. Primary maintenance will be conducted by Maricopa County Department of Transportation. Dry Season passage of vehicles towing trailers with a total vehicle length of 45 feet is the desired condition. Culverts may be installed at major wash crossings to improve wet-weather safety and reduce maintenance needs between rain events. This BLM road will be maintained at a Maintenance Intensity level 3 or comparable standard by Maricopa County as allowed by their right-of-way.
- *Little Pan Mine Road*
Improvements will include surface-hardening, dust suppression, and drainage management, while maintaining a natural appearance. On the mountain pass leading to the Agua Fria River, a concrete apron, or similar hardening, may be added to slopes greater than 10% to prevent erosion and improve drivability. Dry season passage of vehicles towing trailers with a total vehicle length of 45 feet is the desired condition. This BLM road will be maintained at a Maintenance Intensity level 3.
- *AZCO Mine Road*
Improvements will include grading, dust suppression, or surface hardening on the Maricopa County side of the road. The road may be improved with gravel or larger aggregate for dust control. Arizona Department of Transportation will be the primary road manager between Table Mesa road and private land at T8E, R2E Sections 27 NW1/4, SW1/4, NW1/4. BLM will assume primary maintenance of the road from approximately T8N R2E Sec 27 NW1/4, SW1/4 and Sec28 NE1/4, S1/2 to the Agua Fria River in Maricopa County. West of the Agua Fria River in Yavapai County, BLM will

assume primary maintenance responsibility. This BLM road will be maintained at a Maintenance Intensity level 3.

Primitive Roads are linear routes managed for use by four-wheel drive or high-clearance vehicles. They do not normally meet BLM design standards and are existing unimproved routes. They are typically eight to ten ft wide and accommodate full size 4WD vehicles. They will generally accommodate single lane travel, with passing turnouts or widening as needed. They may be passable by passenger car, but rough between many spots. Typically these are routes with a Local or Resource functional class, and Level 1 maintenance intensity. State vehicle safety and equipment laws apply to motor vehicle use on these routes. Licensing for street use is generally not required. Primitive roads will be open to all motorized vehicle use year-round.

Trails are linear routes managed for human-powered, stock, or off-highway vehicle forms of transportation or for historical or heritage values. Trails are not generally managed for use by four-wheel drive or high-clearance vehicles. They include locally known non-motorized trails, and very rough roads intended to be kept in that condition. Special use restrictions may be established for these routes to require minimum equipment standards following public notification via Federal Register Notice. Physical barriers or restrictive devices and signing may be installed. Monitoring will be carried out to detect change and take corrective action. Trails will be open year round.

The asset type summary for the plan is shown in Table 3, and for each route in Appendix D. While Tables 1 and 2 discuss general route information, Table 3 specifically outlines asset types. Transportation asset definitions are in accordance with *BLM Instruction Memorandum 2006-173- Implementation of Roads and Trails Terminology Report*.

TABLE 3: ASSET TYPE SUMMARY

ASSET TYPE	DESIGNATION	MILES	TOTAL MILES
Road	Open	9.8	9.8
	Closed	0	
	Limited	0	
Primitive Road	Open	32.7	65.0
	Closed	22.9	
	Limited Admin	5.8	
	New	3.6	
Trail	Open Non-Motor (2)	20.5	33.6
	Closed	0	
	New Non-Motor (2)	5.6	
	New Motor (3)	7.5	

Total	108.4
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2.1.1.2 FUNCTIONAL CLASS

Functional classes indicate the relative importance of a route’s transportation and access functions, and are the basis for geometric design standards and maintenance guidelines. The functional classifications are determined according to guidance in *BLM Manual 9113 Roads*. Functional class is defined by collector roads, local roads, and resource roads.

Collector Roads are the highest standard of BLM road. They provide primary access to large blocks of land and connect with or are extensions of a public road system. Collector roads accommodate mixed traffic and serve many uses. They generally receive the highest volume of traffic within the BLM road system. User cost, safety, comfort, and travel time are primary road management considerations. Collector roads usually require application of the highest standards used by BLM. As a result, they have the potential for creating substantial environmental impacts and often require complex mitigation procedures.

Local Roads normally serve a smaller area than collector roads and connect to collector roads or public road systems. Local roads receive lower volumes, carry fewer traffic types, and generally serve fewer users. User cost, comfort, and travel time are secondary to construction and maintenance cost considerations. Low volume local roads in mountainous terrain, where operating speed is reduced by effort of terrain, may be single land roads with turnouts.

Resource Roads are usually spur roads that provide point access and connect to local or collector roads. They carry very low volume and accommodate only one or two types of uses. Use restrictions are applied to prevent conflicts between users needing the road and users attracted to the road. The location and design of these roads are governed by environmental compatibility and minimizing BLM costs, with minimal consideration for user cost, comfort, or travel time.

The proposed functional class designations summary is shown on the table below, and for each route in Appendix D. Most of the routes in the planning area are designated as Resource Roads, unpaved, single lane, with very low traffic volume (Average Daily Traffic \leq 150 vehicle passes) and very low traffic speeds.

TABLE 4: PROPOSED FUNCTIONAL CLASSES -- MILEAGE SUMMARY

FUNCTIONAL CLASS	MILES
Collector	0
Local	9.8
Resource	42.1
None (Decommission or Trails)	56.5
Total	108.4

2.1.1.3 MAINTENANCE INTENSITIES

No existing BLM transportation assets are presently identified for the Table Mesa planning area and maintenance on roads and trails over the past ten years has been minimal. Authorized users (mineral materials operations, grazing permits, utilities) also perform intermittent road maintenance on routes needed for their permitted activities.

Maintenance intensity classes help direct maintenance work to needs based on route importance, route conditions, access objectives, or resource conditions on adjacent lands. Maintenance intensity is broken down into four classes, discussed below.

Level 0 routes are existing routes that will no longer be maintained and no longer be declared a route. Routes identified as Level 0 are identified for removal from the transportation system entirely.

Level 1 routes require minimum (low intensity) maintenance to protect adjacent lands and resource values. These roads may be impassable for extended periods of time

Level 3 routes require more moderate maintenance due to low volume use (such as seasonal or year-round for commercial, recreation, or administrative access). Maintenance intensities may not provide year-round access but are intended to provide resources appropriate to maintain a usable route for most of the year.

Level 5 routes require high (maximum) maintenance due to year-round needs, high-volume traffic, or significant use. Level 5 designation may also include routes identified through management objectives are requiring high intensities of maintenance or to be maintained open on a year-round basis.

The proposed maintenance intensity class summary is shown in Table 5 and for each route in Appendix E. These will provide the basis for updating the BLM Facility Asset Maintenance System (FAMS) database for the project area. Under BLM policy, transportation maintenance and repairs may be conducted on Bureau routes on a case by case basis depending on need and following NEPA analysis.

Table 5: Maintenance Intensities

Maintenance Intensity	Total Miles
Level 5	0
Level 3 (Roads)	9.8
Level 1 (Primitive roads/Trails)	75.7
Level 0 (Decommission)	22.9
Total	108.4

2.1.1.4 ACCESS VEHICLE TYPE

The typical vehicle for a given route largely dictates the physical characteristics required for a route to be passable by that vehicle and others with similar or lesser requirements. The route width, roughness, grade, curve radius, side clearance, and associated physical parameters vary depending on the type of access vehicle and the use desired for a route. Presently, nearly all the existing routes on public land are primitive roads, unimproved, receive very low volume, and require very low speed.

TYPICAL VEHICLES

Vehicles used on the travel routes (all three asset categories) in the planning area include haul trucks; motor homes; passenger cars; high-clearance 2WD, 4WD, ATV<50", UTV>50" vehicles; trail motorcycles; extreme 4WD vehicles; mountain bikes; riding horses; and foot hikers.

ROAD CONDITION AND DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Standards exist for BLM roads based on average daily traffic, functional classification and terrain type and can be found in *BLM Manual 9113 - Roads*. Standards also exist for trails based on hiking and equestrian user needs which are found in *BLM Manual 9114 - Trails*. No geometric standards or guidelines exist for BLM primitive roads. For the purposes of managing dust, road and trail maintenance will emphasize improving drainage so that silt does not accumulate on the tread. Additionally, 1"-2" diameter gravel may be applied to problem areas where dust generation is especially high. Liquid dust suppressants will be applied as short term measures to improve air quality.

SPEED AND DUST MANAGEMENT

Speed limits may be enacted through a supplemental rule making process, if consultation with the Maricopa County Environmental Quality Division determines that doing so would improve air quality. Speed Limit Recommendation signs will be placed where doing so would improve public safety and air quality.

Driving to create excessive dust through spin turns, also known as doughnuts, is prohibited. This prohibition is deemed necessary to improve air quality in Maricopa County. Future limitations

on driving vehicles, such as, but not limited to, speed limitations could be necessary and would be implemented through a supplemental rule making process.

Figure 3 displays the network of open roads, primitive roads and trails, approved new primitive roads and trails and the location of routes to be closed and rehabilitated.

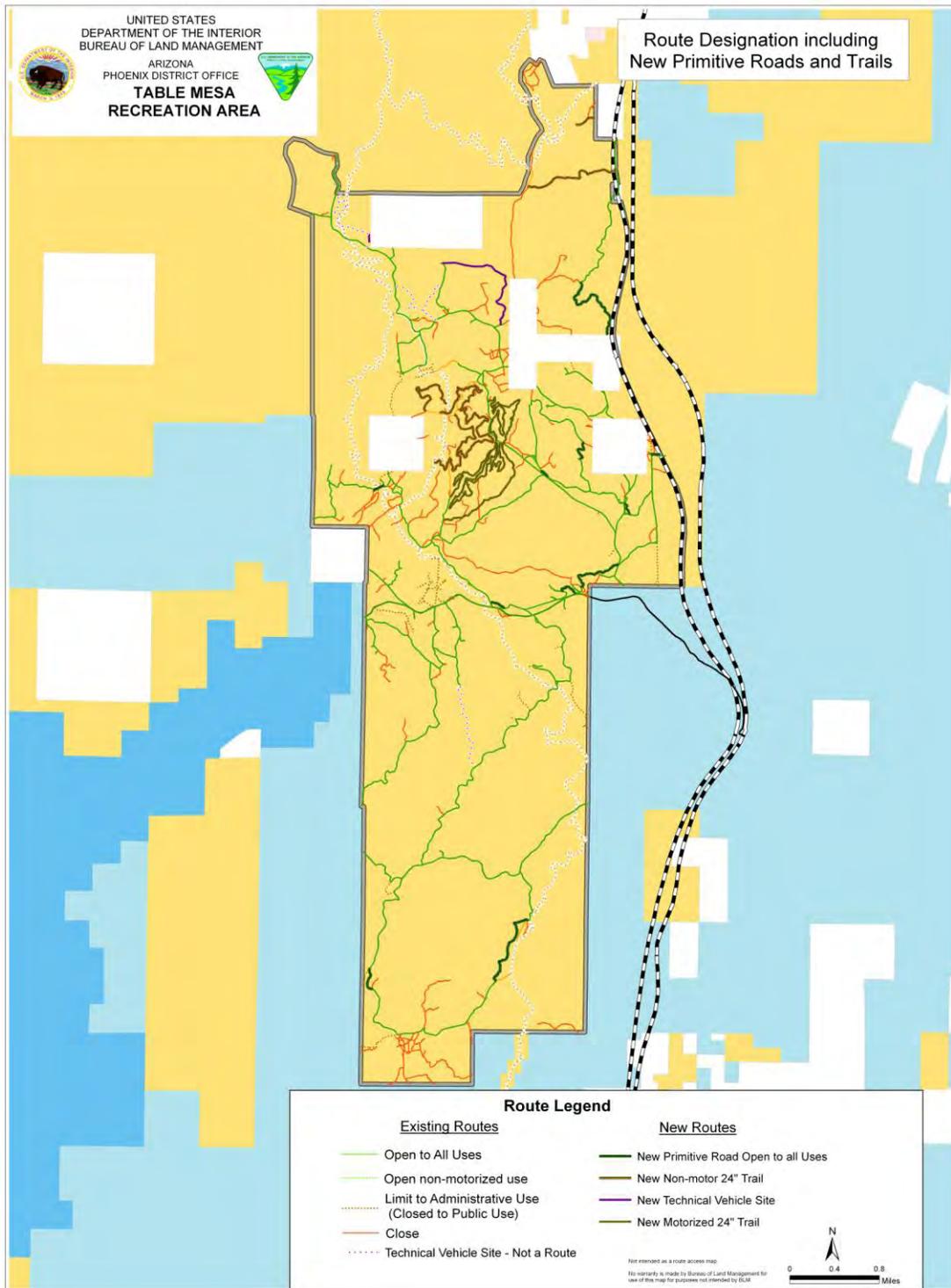


FIGURE 3: ROUTE DESIGNATION INCLUDING NEW PRIMITIVE ROADS AND TRAILS

Figure 4 displays the designation of route asset and maintenance intensity. Assets will be entered into the BLM Facility and Asset Management System (FAMS) for continued management.

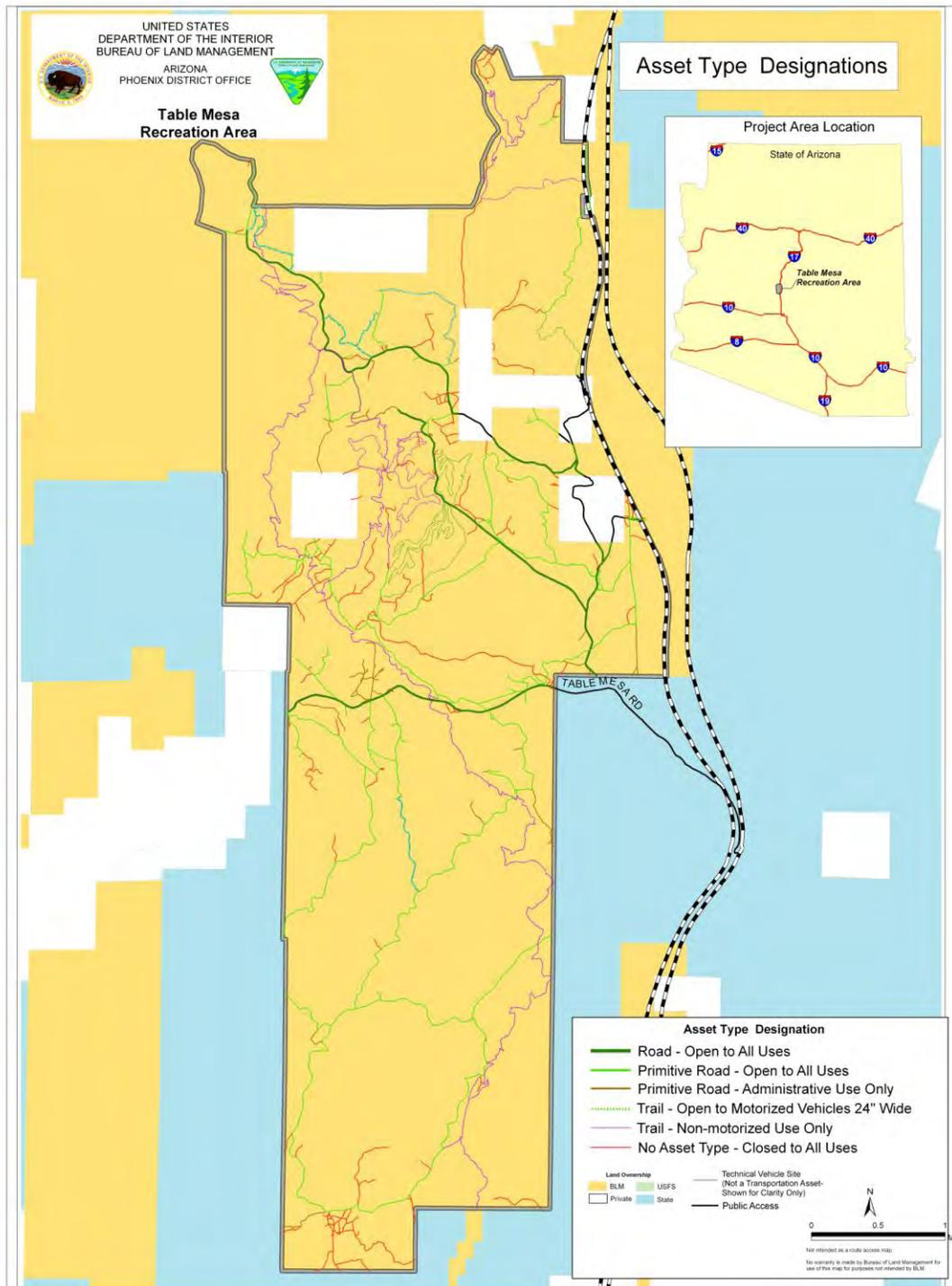


FIGURE 4: LINEAR ASSET TYPE AND ASSOCIATED MAINTENANCE INTENSITY

Figure 5 (Table Mesa North) and Figure 6 (Table Mesa South) displays the official final route designation. The two public use maps may change slightly prior to printing to facilitate understanding and communicate specific messages about the area. The route numbers and allowable uses will remain unchanged.

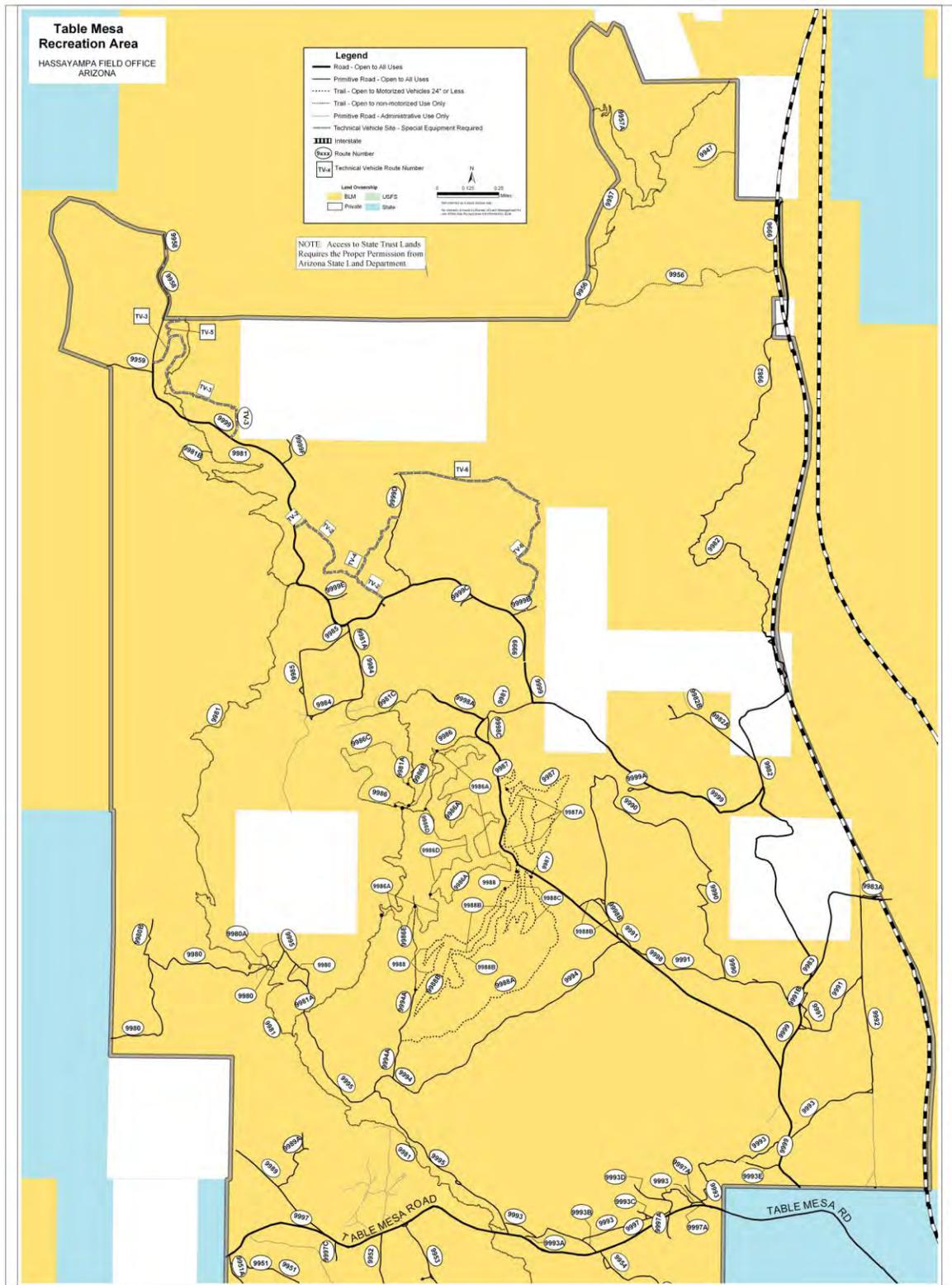


FIGURE 5: TABLE MESA NORTH FINAL ROUTE DESIGNATION

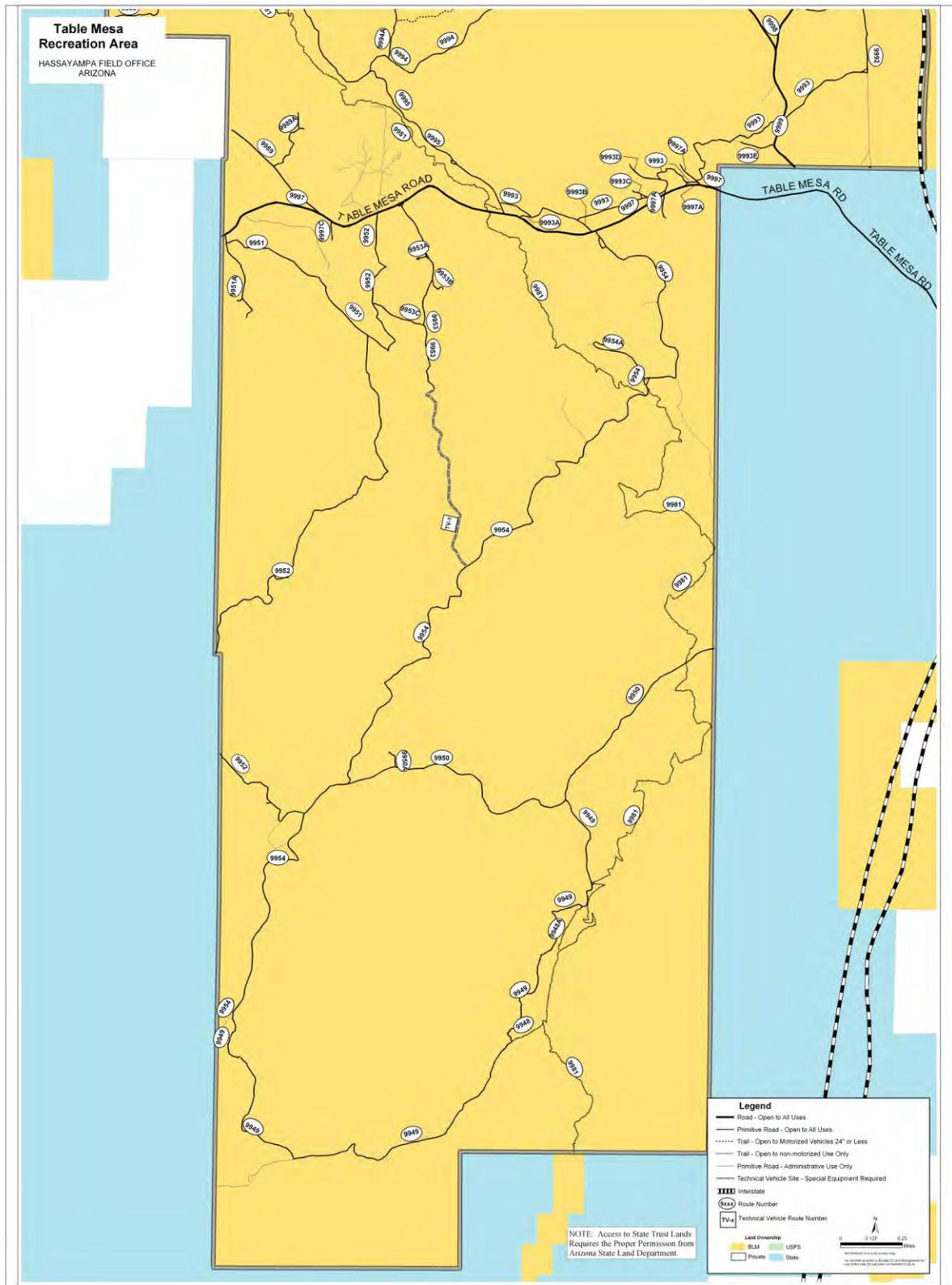


FIGURE 6: TABLE MESA SOUTH FINAL ROUTE DESIGNATION

2.1.2 TECHNICAL VEHICLE SITES

Technical Vehicle Sites, also known as Rock Crawling 4wd trails, are designated as sites, rather than routes. A recreation site plan will be created for each site. Rock Crawling sites within the Table Mesa RMZ will have special rules of use, may contain vehicle limiter devices, and may require limited/permitted use. The proposed plan includes 1.1 miles of new technical vehicle sites, closure of 1.4 miles of existing sites. Table 6 demonstrates the proposed plan mileage for rock crawling/technical vehicle sites.

TABLE 6: ROCK CRAWLING / TECHNICAL VEHICLE SITES

Open Technical Vehicle Sites	2.7 Miles
Closed Technical Vehicle Sites	1.4 Miles
Proposed new Technical Vehicle Sites	1.1 Miles

2.1.3 FACILITIES

To support multiple recreation uses, this plan proposes several new facilities, including campsites, staging areas, protective fencing, barriers, information kiosks, administrative gates, a nature trail, and development of the Black Canyon Trail Trailhead. Site-specific designs will be developed to avoid or mitigate impact to natural and cultural resources. Specific descriptions of each facility can be found in Table 7.

TABLE 7: PROPOSED FACILITIES

Facility	Facility Description
F-1	<p>Campsite Designated camping locations and camping length of stay limits (14 days) would be developed as needed for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting resources • ensuring visitor safety • avoiding social conflicts • improving recreation experiences • increasing recreation opportunities <p>Other Characteristics include:</p>

Facility	Facility Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fire pan requirement for campfires • requirement to use only firewood without nails • consider vendor applications for firewood sales • campsite cleanup requirements including placement of campfire ashes in provided bins • no water or toilet facilities provided • flat areas for small group camping • dust suppression or gravel to reduce dust on upper camp area <p>Site-specific rules (such as quiet hours, pet limitations, etc.) may be addressed through Supplemental Rule Making Process.</p>
F-2	<p>Protective Fence</p> <p>Protective fencing will be erected to prevent travel from Route 12W into the Riparian zone of the Agua Fria River. This is to ensure conformance with the Land Health Standards and wildlife habitat.</p>
F-3	<p>Campsite</p> <p>Designated camping locations and camping length of stay limits (long- and short-term) would be developed as needed for the following purposes (refer to F-1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting resources • ensuring visitor safety • avoiding social conflicts • improving recreation experiences • increasing recreation opportunities • improving group/partner permit opportunities
F-4	<p>Black Canyon Trail Trailhead</p> <p>The trailhead will include a parking area (with dust control to comply with PM10 regulations). The new trailhead will accommodate up to thirty cars. Trash barrels may be provided if area partnerships can be developed to defray costs. A vault toilet will be provided.</p>
F-5	<p>Information Kiosk</p> <p>Kiosk to include information such as map of area, emergency contact information, area rules of use, recreation etiquette, etc.</p>
F-6	<p>Information Kiosk</p> <p>Kiosk to include information such as map of area, emergency contact information,</p>

Facility	Facility Description
	area rules of use, recreation etiquette, and other important messages.
F-7	<p>Protective Fence</p> <p>Protective fencing will be erected to prevent travel from Route 16H into the Riparian zone of the Agua Fria River. This is to ensure that vehicles do not traverse the riparian zone and to ensure conformance with the Land Health Standards and wildlife habitat established in the <i>Bradshaw-Harquahala ARMP/ROD</i>.</p>
F-8	<p>Two Group Campsites- Old AZCO mine</p> <p>Designated camping locations and camping length of stay limits (14 days) would be developed as needed for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting resources • ensuring visitor safety • avoiding social conflicts • improving recreation experiences in an undeveloped setting • increasing recreation opportunities <p>Other Characteristics would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flat areas for small groups to camp together • camp fire allowance requiring fire pan use and using dead and down wood only
F-9	<p>Campsite</p> <p>Designated camping locations and camping length of stay limits (long- and short-term) would be developed as needed for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting resources • ensuring visitor safety • avoiding social conflicts • improving recreation experiences • increasing recreation opportunities <p>Site-specific rules (such as quiet hours, pet limitations, etc.) may be addressed through Supplemental Rule Making Process.</p>

Facility	Facility Description
F-10	<p>Campsite/Staging Area</p> <p>Designated camping locations and camping length of stay limits (14 days) would be established for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting resources, • ensuring visitor safety, • avoiding social conflicts, • improving recreation experiences, and • increasing recreation opportunities. • Could accommodate overflow from campsite/staging area located at F-11 <p>Other characteristics of this campsite/staging area may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development as an OHV-centered campsite/staging area to include Special Recreation Permits (SRP) for OHV events • Hardened surface • Enclosure via pipe rail fencing • Vault toilet • Camp host site • Dust mitigation measures will be applied <p>Site-specific rules (such as quiet hours, pet limitations, etc.) may be addressed through Supplemental Rule Making Process.</p>
F-11	<p>Campsite/Staging Area</p> <p>Designated camping locations and camping length of stay limits (14 days) would be established for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting resources, • ensuring visitor safety, • avoiding social conflicts, • improving recreation experiences, and • increasing recreation opportunities. • Could accommodate overflow from campsite/staging area located at F-10 <p>Other characteristics of this campsite/staging area may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of quiet recreation area with access to the Black Canyon Trail

Facility	Facility Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vault toilet • Camp host site <p>Dust mitigation measures will be applied.</p>
F-12	<p>Nature Trail</p> <p>A short nature one-way or loop trail would exit from the Rock Springs Café area to BLM land. Trail would serve as a walking opportunity for a shorter experience on BLM land and could be developed in accordance with the Architectural Barriers Act/universal access requirements to increase accessibility. This trail would be developed in partnership with the land owners at the Rock Springs Café area.</p>
F-13	<p>Staging Area</p> <p>This staging area would be developed for OHV and equestrian access to areas to the south. It would provide access to the RMZ for Black Canyon City residents and be managed for day use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wire perimeter fence • Single panel information kiosk • Dust suppressant or gravel for Maricopa county dust rule compliance
F-14	<p>OHV Training Area</p> <p>The OHV training area will be developed to support a safe place to practice/learn safe OHV handling and driving. Speeds will be limited to under 20 MPH. This area may feature the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct access to OHV loop trails and primitive roads • Developed features such as drills to practice safe OHV handling • A permitted <i>All Terrain Vehicle Safety Institute</i> (ASI) training site • Dust abatement • Protective Fencing for beginners and children
F-15	<p>Protective Fence</p> <p>Protective fencing would be erected to prevent OHV use on closed Routes 22AAc, 22N, 22V, 22M, and 22AAA. Doing so will limit access to closed routes, including the Black Canyon Trail; encourage OHV enthusiasts to enter the Table Mesa Recreation Management Zone from the main portal at Table Mesa Road, thereby controlling unmanaged growth of OHV routes along the southern boundary of the Table Mesa Recreation Management Zone; and ensure conformance with the Land Health Standards and wildlife habitat goals in the RMP.</p>

Facility	Facility Description
F-16	<p>Administrative Gate</p> <p>This gate would limit access via Route 20 to a private land in-holding within the Table Mesa Recreation Management Zone. Access would be granted for administrative purposes and to permitted parties.</p>
F-17	<p>Barrier</p> <p>These barriers would prevent access via Route 13BB to private land in-holdings within the Table Mesa Recreation Management Zone. Barriers may feature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete bollards with break-away cable • Fence railing • Break-away water gaps
F-18	<p>Horseshoe Bar Trailhead</p> <p>The trailhead will include a parking area with dust control to comply with Maricopa county dust regulations. The new trailhead will accommodate up to 15 cars and will not have water or restroom facilities. Trash barrels may be provided if area partnerships can be developed to defray costs.</p>

In addition to the facilities noted above, BLM will encourage the placement of trash receptacles in the Table Mesa planning area. BLM will encourage a partnership to maintain and manage these receptacles.

2.1.4 RECREATIONAL TARGET SHOOTING

Under this plan, recreational target shooting will be restricted in certain areas of the planning area. Target shooting is allowed on 6969 acres of the Table Mesa RMZ, provided that shooters abide by the guidelines in Appendix A. These areas are delineated by four buffer closures that include:

- A one-quarter mile buffer on either side of the National Black Canyon Trail
- A one-quarter mile buffer radius around all developed facility sites
- A one-quarter mile buffer at the western park boundary with the Lake Pleasant Regional Park boundary, where the park boundary is immediately adjacent to the Table Mesa RMZ
- A 200 foot buffer on either one or both sides of major travel routes.

Figure 7 shows the buffer zones in relations to the route system.

Recreational target shooting will be restricted to areas outside of the aforementioned buffer areas.

Other Rules/ Restrictions that apply to this area:

- No shooting from or into buffer areas.
- Target Shooters must abide by safe shooting standards in Appendix A.
- No target shooting from sunset to sunrise.

Hunting in the Table Mesa RMZ remains open, in accordance with the State of Arizona rules and regulations.

2.1.5 NATURAL AREAS

An area along the Agua Fria River will be managed as a natural area where riparian condition is in proper function condition (PFC). This area is adjacent to an old placer mine site at bend in the Agua Fria River called Horseshoe Bar. As shown on map “No Shooting Buffer Zones with Facility locations,” the area follows the Agua Fria River and comprises 16 acres. A faint remnant of a mining road exists in the river flood plain, yet periodic flooding makes the development of any trails in this area unfeasible. The ease of access to the area makes it suitable for nature walks for school children, visitors to Black Canyon City and travelers seeking a respite from interstate travel. Careful monitoring of the riparian condition will ensure that standards are met and action taken to prevent further degradation if condition declines.

Figure 7 displays the no shooting zone buffers with facilities.

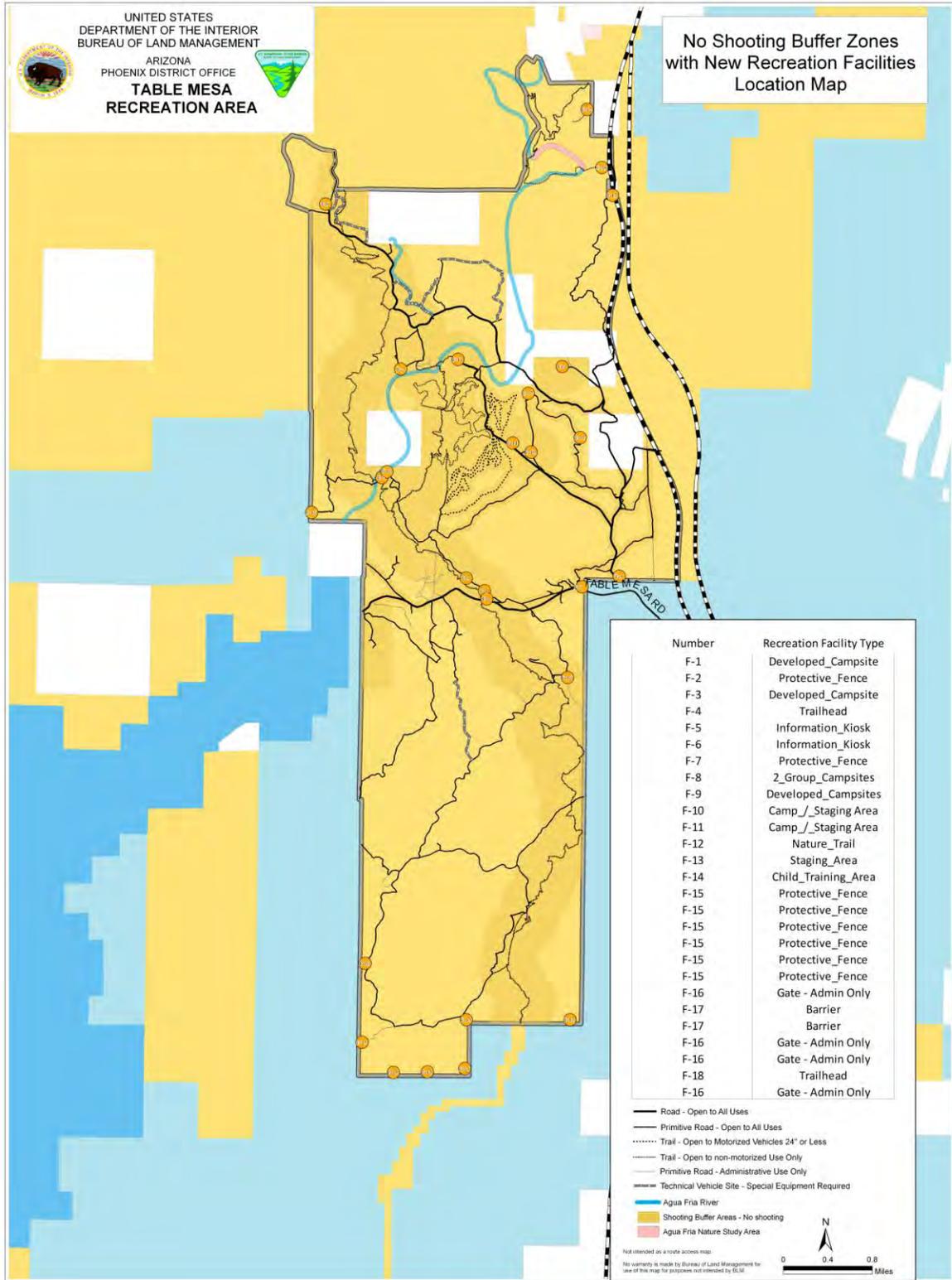


FIGURE 7: NO SHOOTING BUFFER ZONES WITH NEW RECREATION FACILITIES MAP

2.1.6 LAND OWNER ACCESS / ACCESS NEEDED

Private lands are contained within the planning boundary. High use recreation sites have been located to minimize effects to private land owners. Identifying existing rights-of-way to private lands and establishing the location for future rights-of-way issuance is one way to minimize the effects of recreation and recreational travel on land owners. Figure 8 shows the approved routes to private property that exist today or those that will be granted for future rights-of-way. All private property within the planning area either has legal access or is in progress to acquire access. Properties to the west of the planning area will be granted access using the identified roads on this map. Long distance corridors are identified on this map and are important to connecting large blocks of BLM managed land and also connecting to adjacent jurisdictions.

To ensure long term access to two routes south of Table Mesa Road, 9950 and 9952, the BLM should acquire access across Arizona State Trust Lands. BLM can directly secure access through easement or seek temporary access through a special land use permit, which conveys no rights, but would remove a requirement for the public to possess a state trust land recreation permit to use the connecting primitive roads on trust land. Access could be acquired by BLM or a partner of BLM.

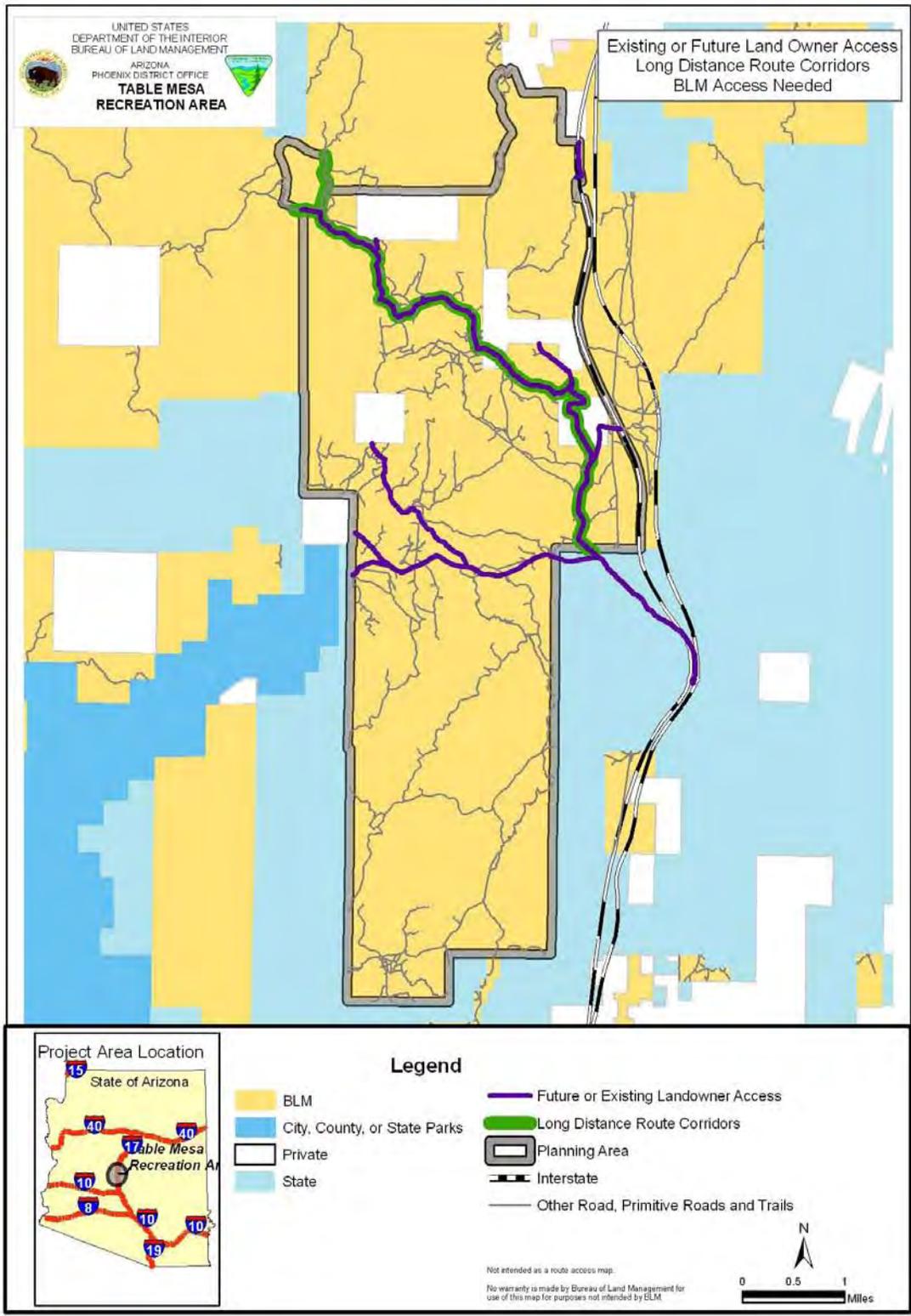


Figure 8: LAND OWNER ACCESS AND LONG DISTANCE ROUTE CORRIDOR MAP

2.1.7 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

2.1.7.1 EDUCATION

Currently the Table Mesa RMZ lacks a formalized educational program, though safety information and area maps can be obtained from the Hassayampa Field Office and online from the BLM website. Formal signage placed in the RMZ is often destroyed or vandalized. The BLM promotes education through the Arizona OHV Ambassador Program and through community events.

Because the Table Mesa RMZ will be managed for multiple recreation uses and because of the other resources in the area, messaging about accepted uses and rules of use is very important. In particular, information about routes and target shooting opportunities, along with closures, is imperative to communicate to users. Interpretive programs will be developed as a tool to help in this public education effort. These programs may include the natural and cultural history of the area, such as historic mining activities, historic stage coach routes, etc. These messages will be conveyed through the concepts of ethics, safety, and courtesy. Outdoor ethics such as *Tread Lightly* and *Leave No Trace* will be communicated.

Use levels are expected to be moderate to high and research supports the separation of uses. (Andereck, 2001). Since the minimization of conflict among the various recreation uses of BLM land is required, most motorized and non-motorized trail use will be separated to minimize the number of contacts between these recreational uses. Messaging on kiosks and literature encouraging tolerance and respect will be developed.

Interpretive and or interactive programs will be developed to foster appreciation of the natural, historic, and cultural elements of the area and to attract urban youth to the greater outdoors.

The Table Mesa educational and outreach program will be developed in collaboration with federal, state, and county entities, established and emerging organizations and programs, and with public participation.

The Field Office endeavors to use emerging technology and up-to-date communication methods to convey information and obtain public participation and stewardship in on-the-ground management and evaluation of the Plan.

KEY MESSAGES TO COMMUNICATE

- Table Mesa is an area for multi recreational opportunities, enjoyed by varied users.
- The area promotes shared use and has some specific designations.
- Resource protection, land ethics are important in this area.
- The National Recreation Trail -- Black Canyon Trail – is a non-motorized trail and is buffered by a quarter mile zone in which recreational target shooting is prohibited.
- 61 percent of the area remains open to recreational shooting where it can be safely achieved for marksmen and other shooting enthusiasts.

TARGETED METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

- POD-casts including downloadable items such as: maps, land use ethics, rules, historic and cultural settings, maps, rules, air quality alerts, fire prevention restrictions, emergency announcements, etc.
- Electronic Kiosks: Including downloadable items such trail track logs, audio story telling for cultural, historic, natural interpretative information
- Web Video & Focus Surveys: produce interactive sites for user info and feedback to BLM
- Speakers Bureau
- School Presentations: promoting the BLM messages and outdoor multiple land uses, land ethics, leading to invitations for field tours.
- Website: updated regularly and designed to give viewers something new each time they view the page.
- Organized Tours: Regular/routine schedules for schools, local organizations, elected leaders, parent and teacher groups, etc. *Use inner city partners and events that already include minorities and new residents, gateway cities*
- Onsite Workshops: emphasizing urban youth activities in greater outdoors
- Public Service Announcements: via radio, TV, sports organizations, Friends, OHV, Shooting Roundtable, Equestrian, Black Canyon City organizations web sites and gateway facilities, etc.
- Media Field Trips
- Cable access (TV) shows: including Spanish speaking channels for maximum outreach
- Morning TV talk shows
- Marketing: Foreign media; travel channel, green TV; the Amazing Race, Animal, Discovery, etc.
- Exhibits
- Traditional Brochures and Guides
- Organized Education: Use new and alternate ASU sources (marketing, journalism, recreation), formalized law enforcement activities and non formal law enforcement peer to peer education, youth and outdoor organizations, etc.

In order to achieve the aforementioned outreach and education objectives, it is imperative to create sustainable partnerships with private groups and governmental organizations, such as: OHV dealerships, the AZ OHV Coalition, the Friends of Table Mesa Recreation Area, and other OHV and Shooting Sports enthusiasts, hiking and equestrian clubs, schools, media organizations, Az. Game & Fish, Maricopa County Parks, Maricopa and Yavapai County Sheriff departments, American Indian tribes, local utilities and private businesses that hold permits within or adjacent to Table Mesa, etc.

Financial resources for many outreach programs need to be identified. Moreover, it will be increasingly important to create an annual calendar of events and prioritize activities with the responsible personnel/organizations and the funding sources in order to ensure sustainability.

2.1.7.2 ENFORCEMENT

Currently, law enforcement coverage in the RMZ is provided by BLM Phoenix District Rangers. Enforcement actions are typically in response to complaints, and patrols are conducted on a periodic basis depending on priorities throughout the Phoenix District. Illegal activities have occurred within the RMZ in the past.

BLM Law enforcement patrol on public lands in the planning area is provided by HFO BLM Rangers stationed in the HFO Office, Maricopa and Yavapai County Sheriffs, Arizona Game and Fish Department and Arizona State Land Department trespass officers. The Maricopa County Sheriff also provides law enforcement on public lands in the area on a regular basis, primarily while patrolling the adjacent Lake Pleasant Regional Park or as a result of a call for service. Yavapai County provides occasional presence and their participation will be requested for specific operations. The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) provides enforcement related to hunting laws and off-highway vehicle use. Law enforcement concerns with public use in the area include accidents, DUI, firearm violations, cross country motorized vehicle use and creation of new routes and trails by visitors.

As with education, enforcement efforts can be multiplied through coordinated multi-jurisdictional management efforts. Educational and monitoring efforts by volunteer user groups can leverage formal law enforcement efforts. Volunteer user groups can educate users on rules and etiquette for the area.

Goals for a successful enforcement plan include:

- Increase the presence of BLM law enforcement staff and BLM law enforcement in the area. BLM park rangers will conduct high profile, routine patrols into the area to enforce laws and regulations. They may initiate emergency or law enforcement response simply by being first on-scene.
- Improve and expand interagency cooperation in the area
- Concentrate efforts on high use periods such as weekends and holidays
- Focus targeted enforcement in “hot spots”
- Increase enforcement capacity, including the use of new technology
- Support of volunteer efforts to educate public on rules and etiquette
- Expand interagency cooperation in the area.

- Encourage educational and monitoring efforts by volunteer user groups and citizen-based education groups, which can leverage formal law enforcement efforts. Volunteer user groups will educate users on rules and etiquette for the area.

Partnerships with private groups such as area OHV dealerships, the AZ OHV Coalition, the Friends of Table Mesa group, and other OHV and Shooting Sports enthusiasts groups will be encouraged to promote safe OHV use and safe shooting practices. Volunteer groups, such as the members of the OHV Ambassador Program, may assist with monitoring, public education and special events.

Cooperation with adjoining local and state jurisdictions is important for educating the public. Given its proximity to the Phoenix Metropolitan area and other recreation areas (such as the Lake Pleasant Regional Park and the Ben Avery Shooting range), concerted regional recreation messages/education can improve recreational expectations and outcomes at all sites.

Implementation of the plan may require installation of gates and barriers to prevent vehicle traffic in areas not designated for motorized travel. The location and design of gates and barriers will depend on site conditions where they are needed. Typically, gates will be made of steel and designed to be vandal resistant. Fencing may be used, including barb wire, post and cable, or other materials. Barriers or barricades may be temporary or permanent, and may be made of stone, boulders, concrete, steel or wood.

2.1.7.3 SIGNAGE

A signing plan map is shown in Figure 12. Presently, very little signing is found throughout the planning area; however some standard BLM signing is found at gates and several locations for special purposes. Various types of signs and markers will be installed according to current BLM policy and guidance for recreation and travel management signing. Signs will be placed along roads, primitive roads and trails, and will include:

- Area and public land identification
- Entry kiosks and informational kiosks
- Bulletin boards
- Route numbers and the designation status of a route.
- Shooting area closures
- Area map boards

Signing will be kept to the minimum necessary for visitor management and assistance and as a tool for resource protection, regulatory and informational purposes.

Initially, all routes will be signed at intersections, then every one-half mile beyond that and other points which may be confusing to visitors. Signing for shooting area buffer closures will be

placed at reasonable intervals to ensure that users understand where closures exist. Signing will be designed to provide the public with clear and correct information to avoid off-network travel, avoid shooting in buffered areas, and to prevent use conflict. In order to issue citations, law enforcement staff must be able to prove to a magistrate there was ample information readily available for the visitor to do the right thing. Through monitoring and ongoing public group input, strategies will be developed to constantly improve the effectiveness of signing.

Maintenance procedures and schedules will be developed for signs and markers. This will include anticipated replacement needs. A sign inventory and database will be created to facilitate tracking of sign location and maintenance. It is expected that during the first five years many signs will be removed or destroyed, and will be replaced or updated with a new communication or engineering technique.



FIGURE 9: ENTRY SIGNAGE & ROUTE MARKER EXAMPLES

Specific sign or communication/engineering may include:

- “Open” route signing and signage on “open” routes adjacent to private property indicating private property boundary.
- “Open” route maintenance, with an emphasis on making the “open” network of routes more obvious and attractive to use than the “closed” routes. Existing park ranger and maintenance staff would do this work during route signing and sign maintenance.
- Designated Routes will be marked with brown flexible markers with standard decals.

- “Open” routes will be marked with “Designated Route” or white arrow and route number decals at intersections and at one half mile intervals along the route as necessary to indicate routes that are “open” for vehicle travel.
- Where there is a potential for an “open” route to be extended past its current end point by vehicle travel, “Motorized Route Ends” signs decals may be used.
- “Non-Motorized Use Only” routes will be marked with standard symbol decals, indicating that the route is “closed” to motor vehicles.
- “Administrative Use Only” routes will be marked with standard “Closed” route signs most prominent then the standard Admin use only sign will be shown.
- “Closed” routes will be marked with “No Motor Vehicle” or “Route Closed” decals with standard vehicle symbols. As “closed” routes heal through natural re-vegetation or reclamation efforts, and markers are no longer necessary, they will be removed. “Closed” route markers will be sited only where absolutely necessary for resource protection or public safety.
- Shooting area closure signage will be kept to the minimum while ensuring clear delineation of the area closures. Information signs with positive messages will be used and are preferred over limitation signage. The BLM is prohibited from signing areas “open” to shooting.
- To implement the target shooting buffer area approach, a red/green sign system will be devised and installed (see Figure 10: Example Signs). Simple red and green signs indicating when entering or leaving a buffer zone will be placed back-to-back on the same post. A message will be posted directly below the red or green sign stating the buffer width, and thus how far from the route a person would have to go to target shoot. A sample sign is shown below. Actual signs may vary slightly.
- Additional target shooting and route messages likely to be used include:
 - “Keep it Clean, Keep it Open” (Duba, 2008)
 - “You can be fined for irresponsible behavior”
 - Tread Lightly!



FIGURE 10: EXAMPLE SIGNS TO CONTROL SHOOTING

Figure 11 displays the type and location of signs necessary to implement the travel and recreation management decisions made in this plan.

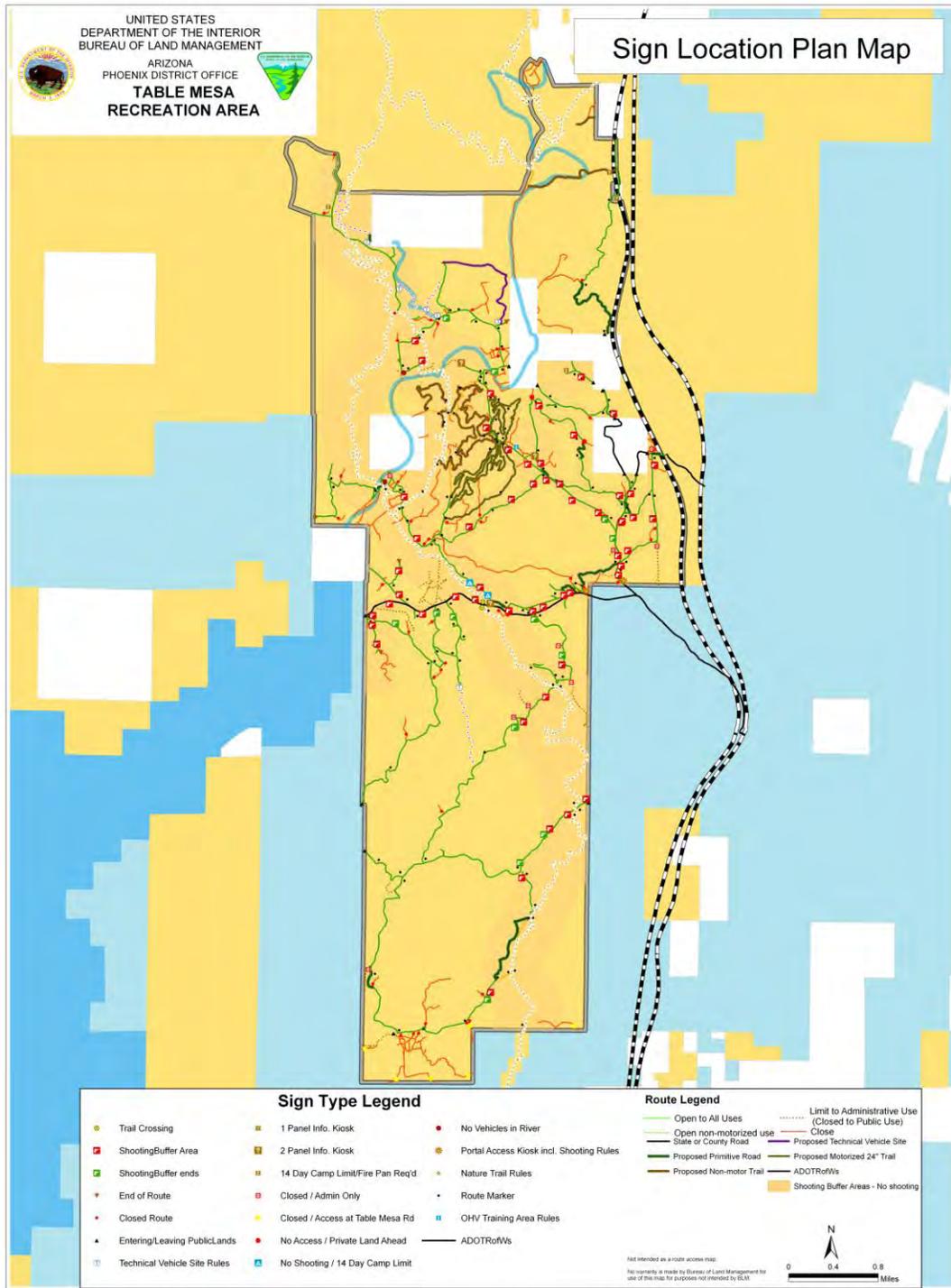


FIGURE 11: SIGN PLAN MAP

2.1.7.4 REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation of target shooting sites, closed primitive roads and disturbed areas would include the following:

- 1) Removal of foreign debris and trash
- 2) Ripping compacted soil and seeding with a native seed mixture
- 3) Planting high value vegetation such as native trees and cactus
- 4) Fencing the area to prevent driving, cattle trampling or grazing of saplings
- 5) Irrigation of trees and cactus as necessary

High value vegetation will be transplanted to the degree feasible. Vegetation growing in the path of new primitive roads or trails will be salvaged and relocated to the immediate area or other areas in need of such vegetation.

2.1.7.5 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Following approval of the proposed plan, a notice will be published in the Federal Register in accordance with 43CFR8365 to establish new use restrictions needed to implement and enforce the plan. The notice will specify the shooting area closures, and other use restrictions to be enforced.

PRIORITIZATION OF WORK

Specific prioritization of work will be guided by five factors/questions. The highest priority would be given to areas for which all factors apply.

1. Does it maintain/enhance public safety?
2. Is it located within an area of high resource value?
3. Does it have above-average density of important sensitive species?
4. Does it have above-average disturbance?
5. Does it have significant urban interface issues?

Past agency experience, such as that obtained through the implementation of the *Ord Mountain Route Designation Pilot Project* in the California Desert District CDCA, can give valuable insight into not only effective implementation actions, but also the order in which they should occur. Implementation of the Ord Mountain Pilot plan revealed that the most effective short-term action taken was an increase in enforcement and visitor service patrolling, which resulted in a commensurate increase in visitor contacts. Through this increased number of contacts, visitors realized that BLM was aggressively and successfully implementing a new route network. Visitors generally responded to this in one of two ways. Those who were seeking a cross-country driving experience – and did not want to be limited to routes – gradually moved to the designated “Open Areas” where they could continue to recreate in a more unrestricted

manner. Others continued to recreate in the Ord Mountains, generally staying on “open” routes.

The least effective short-term action taken in the Ord Mountains was signing the “closed” route network. This effort consumed a lot of staff time and signs were removed almost as quickly as they were put up. The need to resign routes placed additional demands on scarce staff time and materials.

Given the lessons learned, the successful implementation of a new route network and shooting closures should proceed in the following order:

1. Pursue funding for outreach literature, signage and staff necessary to implement the route/facility signing effort (i.e. law enforcement, non-law enforcement type park rangers and maintenance staff).
2. Pursue funding for route and site rehabilitation.
3. Sign the “open” route network (limit signing the “closed” route network).
4. Maintain the “open” route network with the principal goal being to make the “open” route network more attractive than the “closed” route network.
5. Install informational kiosks and signing where they would be most effective. Site these facilities where it would reach the greatest number of visitors and where it would target an audience that might be the most receptive to such facilities. For example such facilities might be most beneficial at major trailheads and campgrounds that are heavily visited by camping families/groups.
6. Develop and publish up-to-date, readily available, and easy-to-understand maps. Consider using the USGFS quadrangle format.
7. Regularly maintain signs, kiosks, routes, maps and brochures.

Once funding is available for law enforcement and rehabilitation, the following steps should be taken:

1. Begin area and route rehabilitation in priority areas such as riparian zones and along main roads.
2. Area and route rehabilitation would require active maintenance for at least one year to prevent reestablishment of routes and areas and the growth of seed and plants.

Initiate enforcement and visitor service patrols with the following caveats:

1. Do not over commit; funding must be available to sustain the new patrol for a period of at least two years. Additional funding will be sought through BLM channels and also through partnering to leverage grants or other available funds.

2. As enforcement efforts move into new areas, inappropriate use could migrate back to areas where it is not desired. Therefore, this behavior pattern will be monitored by volunteers.

TABLE 8: IMPLEMENTATION TIME TABLE

ACTION	COMPLETION TIME	COMMENTS
Information campaign with on-the-ground presence Sign open route network Close Agua Fria river to vehicles Implement shooting restriction	Year 1	Grant funding secured Hire a contract park ranger Begin partnerships / volunteer projects
Install informational kiosks and interpretive signing	Year 1	Grant funding secured Use BLM and volunteer labor
Develop and publish maps and brochures	Year 1 - Ongoing	Grant funding secured Use maps in this plan first, then create new public map.
Begin maintaining tread on open route network	Year 1 - Ongoing	Grant funding secured. Use partnership agreement to complete.
Begin development of area facilities and campground Routinely maintain signs, kiosks, routes, maps and brochures	Year 2 - Ongoing	Some grant funding secured. Apply for additional grants / appropriated funding
Pursue funding for route rehabilitation	Year 2 - Ongoing	This would likely come from both federal appropriations and external sources
Pursue funding and Full Time Employee for enforcement, visitor services and maintenance	Year 3 - Ongoing	BLM works on a three-year budget cycle – Apply for appropriated funds in FY 2011. Partnerships may be required.

FORESEEABLE PROJECTS

The following projects could be necessary in the future to meet plan objectives and desire future conditions.

1. Installation of hardened, low water crossings on the Agua Fria River. Two locations could be improved including private land on BLM Road 9999 and on BLM land on BLM Road 9998.
2. Installation of additional kiosk message boards to facilitate increased use of the area.
3. Implementation of new technology to improve area monitoring such as aerial surveys by aircraft of unmanned aerial vehicle.

FUNDING STRATEGY

Significant funding will be needed for labor costs to provide law enforcement, recreation visitor services, and to cover maintenance and operational costs (supplies, materials, tools, equipment, vehicles, communications etc). Operations funding for cultural surveys, land health assessments, wildlife surveys, transportation maintenance and related costs will be determined on an ongoing project basis, and planned annually. A preliminary engineering summary indicates that the facilities and road improvements will total approximately \$2,000,000 if contracted out entirely. BLM will strive to lower the costs through partnerships, in-house labor and careful engineering.

Funds for labor, supplies and equipment will be pursued through the BLM budget process, and will be subject to appropriation of funds. Funding sources may include BLM Damaged Lands accounts, State OHV gas tax funds, and grant monies available to non-profit groups. Funding will be pursued through Challenge Cost Share (CCS) projects, an agency program that matches other funding sources, assistance agreements, or plans to leverage external contributions to the greatest extent possible. Grants from various sources will be pursued, including state, federal, and private funding sources. Appropriate agreements will need to be created.

2.1.8 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The following Standard operating procedures will be implemented during all phases of plan implementation.

GENERAL

- Any significant future modifications of this plan could only occur through NEPA compliance, public involvement, interagency coordination, and the preparation of a decision document for the amendment.
- A visitor access guide will be published and made available as full size hard copy maps for sale, smaller maps available for free and posted virtually on the internet.
- Appropriate NEPA analysis will be obtained prior to any ground disturbance not discussed in this plan, and impacts to cultural resources, or other resource values, that may be discovered will be mitigated or avoided.

ROUTES

- Standards and guidelines will be developed for BLM road and primitive road maintenance, new construction or reconstruction. The standards and guidelines for primitive roads will be based on the functional requirements of the various types of recreational motorized users. BLM will not develop, endorse or publish road or trail ratings. BLM will simply describe the physical aspects of a route or recreation site such as those for technical vehicles.
- Maintenance standards for each designated route will be documented and route modifications will be identified and recommended if necessary. Maintenance will be completed only to the identified maintenance intensity level to support resource and public protection.
- Maintenance of routes may be done to minimize soil erosion and other resource degradation. This maintenance will be done on a case-by-case basis, depending upon annual maintenance funding.
- Maintenance procedures for physical barriers will be developed, once the number and type of barriers is determined.
- Minor modifications of the road network during plan implementation is allowed without a plan amendment. FLPMA allows BLM resource management plans (such as the ARMP/ROD) to be “maintained as necessary to reflect minor changes in data” (Section 1610.5-4). Plan maintenance is limited in that it cannot result in the expansion of the scope of resource uses or restrictions or change the terms, conditions, and decisions of the ARMP/ROD. It is limited to further refining or documenting a previously approved decision incorporated in the plan. In view of these limitations, “minor realignments” of the route network would be considered to be Plan Maintenance. The term “minor realignment” refers to a change of no more than one quarter (1/4) mile of one designated route. It could include the opening of an existing, but previously “closed” route that serves the same access need as the “open” route that is to be “realigned”. It does not include the construction of a new route involving new ground disturbance, except where new construction is necessary to avoid a cultural resource site or sensitive species. “Minor realignments” include the following:
 - Minor realignments of a route where necessary to minimize effects on cultural resources.
 - Minor realignments of a route necessary to reduce impact on sensitive species or their habitats.
 - Minor realignments of a route that would substantially increase the quality of a recreational experience, while not affecting sensitive species or their habitat, or any other sensitive resource value.
- Minor realignments must be documented in the official record. The reason for the alignment change shall be recorded and kept on file in the HFO.

- Opening or “limited” opening of a route where valid rights of way or easements of record were not accurately identified in the route designation process.
- Any person, organization or governmental body may propose that any current route designations be changed to another designation. This means from “open”, “closed” or “limited” to another designation of “open,” “closed” or “limited.” Until such time that specific application materials are developed, request to change route designations must be submitted in writing to the field manager.
- Upon receipt of a route change proposal, it will be reviewed by the authorized officer. Since the designation of routes is a discretionary action the authorized officer may determine whether or not the proposal has merit and whether or not the proposal constitutes a significant or minor modification. If the application is rejected, a letter will be sent to the applicant indicating the reasons for rejection. If accepted, the application will be forwarded to the appropriate BLM staff. The application will be reviewed and a recommendation shall be made to the authorized officer as to appropriateness of the proposal and magnitude of NEPA requirements. Further, a recommendation shall be forwarded as to whether or not the proposed action is significant or minor. If the authorized officer determines that staffing/funding is lacking, the authorized officer may reject one or all proposals.
- The proposed BLM Roads consist of roads or primitive roads that provide the principal access from the public highway system to public lands in the planning area. These routes are the main connectors of the planning area’s existing travel route network under current and foreseeable traffic patterns. These routes function as BLM Local, although road standards may vary depending on type of use or to meet specific management objectives. These routes will generally be the priorities for pursuing legal access acquisition (or adjudicating existing access rights) across non-federal land, and for completing maintenance to ensure long term, legal public access to the public lands in the planning area. These routes will generally be the highest transportation maintenance priority. Road segments from the public highways to the public land may be posted with ‘Public Land Access Route’ signs.
- When accepting a proposal the authorized officer should consider cost recovery. Only after NEPA analysis has occurred will a formal decision to accept or reject a specific route change be made.
- Hand raking and disguise of prominent “closed” routes, including planting commonly found plants on “closed” routes will be employed to help discourage use.
- Proactive route rehabilitation work would be utilized where the first phase has not proven to be successful or where route conditions were clearly beyond the capability of the first phase to address.

- Having route designations in place enhances the availability of funds, and would allow the BLM to pursue external sources of rehabilitation funding such as State OHV Grants, the National Fish and Wildlife Habitat Fund (USFWS), and contributions of volunteer labor from local, state, and national interest organizations.
- Focus on signing of the open route network so that it stands out well, thus discouraging interest in closed routes. The signing of closed routes will be done very infrequently, since they have been found to be more of an attractant than a deterrent to unauthorized use.

EASEMENTS, RIGHTS OF WAY, AND PERMISSIVE ACCESS LICENSE AGREEMENTS

- Acquisition of road or trail easement, or issuance of a right-of-way on an existing or historic physical access, will be pursued only in areas where those actions will contribute to the protection of natural resources, and not for the sole enhancement of recreation opportunity.
- Easements may be acquired through donation following the procedures set forth in *BLM Manual 2100- Acquisition*.

TARGET SHOOTING BUFFER CLOSURES

Closed shooting sites will be rehabilitated and returned to a natural condition. This will be achieved by one or more of the following actions;

- Ripping compacted soils with a tractor and sowing native seed.
- Placing a physical barrier such as three strand wire fence, concrete “jersey” barriers or dirt ditch/berm. There will be removed when the area is reclaimed and no longer needed.
- Signage including “entering/ leaving shooting buffer zone.” Signs redirecting shooters to open areas will be employed; closed area signs will be used sparingly. Reference to accepted messages will be used (*Responsive Management, 2006*).

SPECIAL RECREATION PERMITS

A Special Recreation Permit (SRP) is required for use of public land in connection with commercial, competitive, and organized group activities in accordance with public land regulations. Permits are not required for private, non-commercial recreational use.

RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION

- One or multiple techniques described will be used to restore routes and areas.
- “Closed” routes on BLM land will typically be allowed to reclaim naturally, when at all feasible. Most of these routes include lightly travelled routes that serve “limited” access purpose. The HFO recognizes that simply posting a “closed” sign has little effect on user

behavior and that for a route closure to be most effective, the specific route should be obliterated from public view to at least the visual horizon, as seen from the intersection with an “open” route. The application of rehabilitation techniques to “closed” routes, may be used where necessary, to speed the healing process, discourage use of “closed” routes, and minimize the impact on visual resources. Monitoring will drive the need for heavier forms of restoration.

- “Closed” routes in sensitive areas, or those that are causing unacceptable impacts will generally receive a higher priority for reclaiming the route to the visual horizon. Some of these routes may be ripped, ditched, re-graded or re-contoured entirely or in part to aid reclamation, if indicated by site conditions. In only rare situations will a “closed” route be rehabilitated beyond the visual horizon.
- Other methods to close routes may include techniques as posting with signs and/or blocking with barriers to prevent vehicle entry as determined reasonable. In a low desert environment it is difficult to block a route with simple barriers or tank traps because the terrain allows for circumvention of the barrier.
- Install some form of barrier and reclaim the portion of the route that is visible from all intersections with “open” routes.
- Seeding will be done where necessary to aid rehabilitation of “closed” routes. Appropriate seed mixtures will be selected for each site based on individual site conditions. Native species only are allowed for reclamation. Vegetation may be transplanted from other nearby areas.
- Recommended reclamation techniques include ripping the road surface with a small dozer to break up compacted soil and allow maximum moisture retention. Broadcast seeding will generally be conducted in the fall. After the seed has been distributed uniformly over the area by mechanical broadcasting devices, the ground would be raked or dragged to cover the seed. After the first year, seeded areas would be fertilized if seedling establishment is sparse. Techniques such as hydraulic seeding, seed drilling, mulching, water barring, pitting, roughening, contour furrowing, or similar methods may be used as appropriate on a case-by-case basis.
- Vegetation removed during the construction of new roads/ trails may be transplanted to disturbed areas. Depending upon size and access to remove vegetation, not all will be transplanted.
- Weed treatment and control measures would be implemented as needed to promote re-vegetation with native plants and prevent any new weed establishment and/or control of existing weed sources.

2.1.8.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The success of the Table Mesa RMZ Recreation and Travel Management Plan is best determined through monitoring and evaluation. BLM will develop and implement a monitoring

and evaluation program for the area. It will be designed to identify and address emerging issues that may adversely impact the resource and/or visitor experience. The data monitoring will be used to evaluate implementation progress and the effectiveness of the Plan in achieving desired outcomes and conditions and to identify adaptive measures should adverse impacts be discovered. The monitoring effort shall identify specific actions, including timeframes, methods, and anticipated resource needs for environmental monitoring. The evaluation and monitoring program will be used for the following:

- Determine if recreation objectives are being met.
- Determine visitor satisfaction.
- Determine use patterns and volumes.
- Determine the condition of roads and trails, the condition of public use areas, and compliance with planned designations and use restrictions.
- Determine efficacy of cross-jurisdictional enforcement.

Limits of Acceptable Change indicators, or triggers, requiring adjustments to this management plan are as follows:

- Desired recreation experiences over a five year period are not being met as determined by surveys, visitor sign in logs or other data gathering process conducted in the planning area.
- Unauthorized routes, whether created by motor vehicle or non-motorized means, cannot be rehabilitated at the same rate as their creation with available funding or personnel.
- Priority / Special Status species habitat conditions are in a downward trend over a five year period and is determined to be a result of recreation or travel impacts.
- Riparian condition trend is not improving over a five year period and is determined to be a result of recreation or travel impacts.
- Visitor safety and assumed risk for non-shooters is determined by BLM to be unacceptable as determined by data collection and surveys conducted in the planning area.

Some features of the monitoring plan will include:

- BLM employees and volunteers will be encouraged to use the OHV Observation report booklets while in the field to document vehicle use and assist in monitoring and compliance.
- Photo-monitoring points will be established in key locations to monitor implementation actions and their effectiveness. For example, photo points can be established to monitor where cross-country travel has occurred, activity on “closed” routes has occurred,

success of rehabilitation projects, extent of erosion mitigation areas, as well as areas of good road quality for future reference. Photo monitoring points will be documented using GPS and a monitoring schedule will be established.

- The monitoring data collected will be used to assess the effectiveness of the plan and associated implementation actions.
- “Closed” routes would be monitored for indications of use, rehabilitated routes will be monitored to determine effectiveness of seeding and water drainage and the plan area will be monitored for signing conditions. Modifications to the plan would be considered if monitoring indicates that the goals and objectives are not being met.
- Recreation demand/preference will be captured by survey as funding and staffing allow. This type of project is well-suited.
- Upland health assessments will be conducted as warranted
- Riparian health assessments will be conducted every 3-5 years.
- To maintain simplicity, hard copy binders backed up with digital data will be created and stored for a period of ten consecutive years. After ten years, only select photos and data will be retained for long term monitoring.
- Surveys would be conducted in the planning area to ensure accurate feedback and may be conducted by BLM staff or contracted to an appropriate entity. Surveys may not be conducted on a regular basis unless part of a larger survey effort such as National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM).

BLM maintains the authority to temporarily or permanently, partially, or completely suspend any activity at the Table Mesa RMZ based on safety issues and adverse resource impacts. All open routes and shooting areas remain under a "conditionally open" status. Acceptable uses will be allowed only if the use does not degrade the condition and health of the land.

2.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative (Figure 12) represents the current management conditions at the Table Mesa RMZ. In this alternative, 100 percent of routes existing at the time of the route inventory would remain open to motorized use. Existing target shooting sites would be unaffected. No facilities would be constructed to support recreation, resource protection, and public safety.

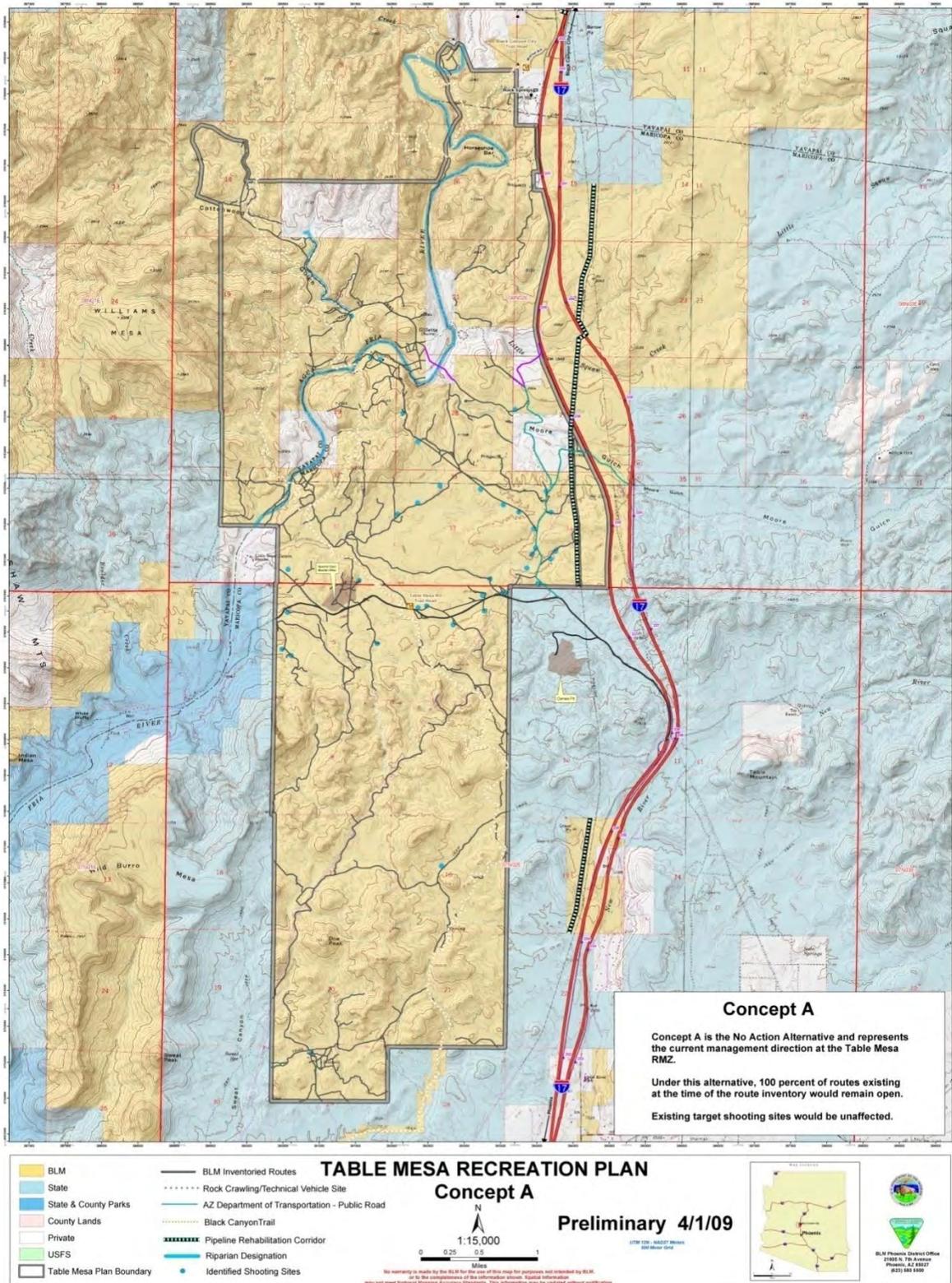


FIGURE 12: NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

2.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANALYZED FURTHER

Several proposals/alternatives received by BLM have been considered but have been eliminated from detailed analysis. Individual proposals/alternatives can be eliminated from further analysis.

Each proposal considered but not analyzed further is discussed below.

ROUTES

Emphasize motorized use in this area with non-motorized emphasis in adjacent area.

The Black Canyon Trail is a nationally recognized non-motorized recreation trail and traverses the Table Mesa planning area. Additionally, according to the RMP, the Black Canyon Trail Hiking and Equestrian RMZ splits the Table Mesa RMZ, thus the area will be managed for both motorized and non-motorized use.

Maintain access to Tip Top Mine

The Tip Top mine is located out of the planning area. However, this plan is setting the stage for access in forthcoming planning efforts for other areas.

Reopen old mining roads, specifically in the southern area (Bonnie Bell Mine).

This area contains wildlife habitat, has access management issues, and also contains many abandoned mines, which pose a risk to public safety.

Allow motorized access from New River.

The southern end of Table Mesa provides good wildlife habitat and is emphasized as a hunting area. Allowing access leads to unauthorized trail proliferation and is contrary to protection of wildlife areas. Additionally, this area is surrounded by state land and poses an access management challenge for BLM.

Evaluate and designate a sand run in the Agua Fria River.

Three specific areas along the river were evaluated for sand runs and were determined to that allowing use in the river bottom would make improvement of the riparian condition much more difficult or impossible. The Bradshaw Harquahala Resource Management Plan, of which Table Mesa is part, indicates that the riparian areas within the Agua Fria River corridor are not meeting land health standards. In order to bring these areas up to standard, motorized use will be tightly controlled in riparian areas. Furthermore, containing vehicle traffic to specific areas within the floodplain would be difficult to achieve due to the seasonal flow of the river.

Create a new route on BLM, parallel to the power line road and to allow loop route in south end of RMZ.

A loop route is included in the plan.

Conduct separate NEPA (environmental) analysis for each proposed route change.

NEPA regulations allow the BLM to conduct programmatic planning area analyses. Accordingly, we plan to do so for Table Mesa. Each route in this plan represents an individual decision and the result can be reviewed in appendix E.

Do not improve Table Mesa Road.

This road is maintained by Maricopa County under a right-of-way grant. Maintenance and improvements will be determined by the county.

Consider at least 100 miles of OHV routes.

The plan includes approximately 54 miles of routes for multiple vehicle types, enough to provide for at least 2 days of scenic trail rides for users, while protecting resources. Additionally, coordination of routes allows for loop trails not previously available making better use of open routes.

Consider allowing route 17B/19K for day use only.

Route is located through an important spring water source for wildlife. The avian wildlife uses this water source throughout the day, so there is little value of a day use only restriction. Further, canyon walls prevent rerouting this technical vehicle site.

Add single track mountain bike trails in Doe Peak area.

New mountain bike trails are proposed north of Table Mesa Road. Locating these trails north of Table Mesa Road allows for more access to more users.

Consider allowing route 16P/16N to be designated as open for single track use only.

Other proposed single-track routes are very close to this proposal and include a larger, more comprehensive single-track trail system.

Driving in washes should be allowed.

Some washes coincide with designated routes and will be open for use. Such routes will be shown on maps and signed on the ground.

Add a long-distance motor cycle route from Table Mesa to Bumble Bee.

While Bumble Bee is outside of the Table Mesa Planning area, this plan sets the stage for creating access in forthcoming planning efforts for other areas, such as Bumble Bee. Long distance route corridors will be designated by this plan.

Consider separating trails by speed limit instead of use type.

Enforcing speed limits is difficult given different modes of transportation, law enforcement access, and individual user speed preferences. Minimizing conflict will be achieved by engineering – building barriers that bar entry of inappropriate vehicles .

Don't limit us to existing trails.

BLM policy requires route designation.

ROCK CRAWLING/TECHNICAL VEHICLE SITES

Consider a northern access route (skirting private land) for “Collateral Damage” Rock Crawling site.

The area was surveyed and is not technically feasible route could be determined. There is a 20 foot drop to the river which would require extensive excavation and stabilization. A southern route has been identified in the plan to allow access.

Maintain as open all existing rock crawling routes.

Some existing rock crawling routes are located in important wildlife habitat and or cross unsecured private land. Each route has been evaluated for its merits and effects. It is our intent to allow as much access as possible, while balancing area conservation.

Open the “Armageddon” rock crawling site on a limited basis.

This site runs through a riparian spring area.. Use of the area as a rock crawling site would degrade the riparian conditions and would be inconsistent with RMP objectives.

RECREATIONAL TARGET SHOOTING

Reconsider proposed closure of S22 and S29

These sites fall within 200 feet (60 meters) of each side of the roads with heavy use, which are proposed to be buffered with shooting closures to enhance safety. Additionally, these sites have unsafe shooting conditions.

Reconsider proposed shooting closures at sites within washes as some users feel that lead migration concerns are unfounded and wash banks provide safe backstops (This proposal also included a testimonial of water quality data from the City of Phoenix.).

Shooting is allowed anywhere outside of closure buffer as long as safe shooting practices are employed, which includes selecting an adequate back stop, not shooting across roads or depressions in the landscape.

Create mini ranges and require their use – the Doe Peak area would be good for this.

BLM Policy prohibits designating shooting sites.

Develop many smaller shooting areas instead of a few larger ones.

BLM Policy prohibits designating shooting sites.

Retain shooting site S-29 as a shotgun range.

S-29 falls within the shooting closure buffer. BLM Policy prohibits designating shooting sites.

Develop shooting sites.

BLM policy expressly prohibits the development of shooting sites.

Do not close any of the RMZ to shooting.

Shooting buffer closures (sixty percent (60%) of the 11,557 will remain open to shooting) are designed to improve safety and to enable all types of recreation in the area.

Ban shooting in entire Table Mesa Planning Area.

The BLM mission is to manage for multiple uses, including multiple recreation uses. The shooting closure buffer was designed to maximize safety and multiple recreation opportunities, including target shooting. The AF H RMP defined TM as opened for/ to recreational shooting, as long as managed safely.

Create a Landing Zone for shooting

BLM policy expressly prohibits the development of shooting sites.

HUNTING**Consider adding game birds for better hunting.**

The Arizona Game and Fish Department has authority for wildlife population management, including stocking of game species. standards.

RIGHTS OF WAY AND REALTY**Add old roads on topographical maps into the system for later use.**

The BLM Route Inventory serves as the baseline. Old roads may be old alignments or may no longer exist.

Purchase the “Gillette” private property and make it a camp/picnic area.

Land acquisition is not defined in the Resource Management Plan, to which the Table Mesa planning area must conform.

Require key access to the area from I-17.

While adaptive management for recreation access will be utilized to ensure resource protection and public safety, restricting access to keyed entry points may restrict user community from taking advantage of the recreation area.

EDUCATION, OUTREACH, ADMINISTRATION & ENFORCEMENT**Work with Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and the Department of Public Safety to conduct sweeps of shooting users.**

BATF and DPS are able to work with BLM for enforcement. BLM will work with any pertinent jurisdictional authorities to enforce the plan, existing laws and educate the public.

Adopt an enforcement plan. First offense leads to a ticket. Second offense leads to banishment from area.

Removal of use privileges is under the jurisdiction of the Federal Court, not BLM. Future disciplinary actions may include opportunities for offenders to complete responsible use training in lieu of fines/restricted use, or to conduct work and improvements in Table Mesa.

Allow hunting of nuisance Burros.

Burros are protected under The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195).

Consider a reasonably-priced permit fee

While a fee was initially considered, it will not be implemented at this time to maximize benefit to general public.

Consider a uniform access pass for recreation areas.

This idea has been presented in many forums but is outside the scope of this planning effort.

Consider trail use rotation.

The planning area is too small, and the use is too high for trail rotation to be effective.

Include water stations for recreationalists.

Because of the back-country nature of the planning area, providing drinking water is outside of the scope of this planning effort.

FACILITIES

Add a helipad to the Table Mesa planning area.

In the small planning area, recreational helicopter landing poses safety risks and the utility corridor is another factor. Safety officials may land a helicopter outside of landing pads for emergency response.

Add an airstrip to Table Mesa planning area.

In the small planning area, recreational flying could pose a public safety risk and a threat to wildlife such as desert tortoise.

Create a gold panning area in Agua Fria River.

Casual panning is allowed wherever there is no existing mining claim. Most of the River, however, is already claimed.

Erect a bridge over the Agua Fria River to protect it.

River crossings will be improved by concrete aprons. Access over the river to the back country of the planning area will reduce protection efforts.

Add camp sites near shooting areas.

While the plan does not include camping facilities specifically for shooters, dispersed camping can occur anywhere in the planning area, as long as vehicles remain within 100 feet of roads.

3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter focuses on the environmental analysis of the proposed action (the Table Mesa Recreation and Travel Management Plan) and no action alternatives presented in the previous chapter. In many cases, impacts are assessed qualitatively but, when possible, quantitative impacts are evaluated. Evaluation focuses on direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of both the no action and proposed action alternatives.

Common impact terms are defined below:

- **Negligible Impacts** are those impacts that occur or may occur and have little or no visible trace on the resource or for which mitigation actions exist and acceptable.
- **Minor Impacts** are those impacts that occur or may occur and have some visible trace on the resource or for which mitigation actions exist and are not acceptable or for which no mitigation impacts exist.
- **Moderate Impacts** are those impacts that occur or may occur and have some visible trace on the resource or for which mitigation actions exist and are not acceptable or for which no mitigation impacts exist.
- **Major Impacts** are those impacts that occur or may occur and have a large visible trace on the resource or may even eradicate the resource or cause its value as a resource to deteriorate to such a level that the resource may no longer qualify for protection or use.
- **Short-Term Impacts** are those effects that are not permanent or can be changed/remediated back to a prior condition in a short amount of time.
- **Long-Term Impacts** are those permanent or unchangeable effects such as the loss of a resource and other than permanent or unchangeable that cannot be changed/-remediated back to a prior condition in a short amount of time.

Table 9 summarizes potential resources analyzed further in this environmental analysis.

TABLE 9: AFFECTED RESOURCES

Resource	Present In Table Mesa Planning Area?	Potentially Impacted by Action or No Action Alternatives?
Air Quality	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Abandoned Mine Lands	Yes	There are several known abandoned mine sites within the Table Mesa RMZ. No further

Resource	Present In Table Mesa Planning Area?	Potentially Impacted by Action or No Action Alternatives?
		analysis is conducted in the EA as it is expected that the recreation plan (or lack thereof), will not adversely impact sites. Several of these sites are planned for remediation/backfill in order to protect public safety in this heavily recreated area.
Cultural	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Fish and Wildlife	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Geology	Yes	No. There are no issues associated with geologic resources in the planning area and no potential impact to important geologic resources expected from. Therefore, no further analysis is conducted.
Lands and Realty	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Livestock Grazing	Yes	(see further discussion below)
Minerals	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Paleontological Resources	No	No
Public Safety	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Recreation	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Riparian Areas and Wetlands	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Socioeconomic Resources	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Soil	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Special Designations	Yes – National Trails	Yes (see further discussion below)

Resource	Present In Table Mesa Planning Area?	Potentially Impacted by Action or No Action Alternatives?
Special Status Species	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Travel/Transportation and Access	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Tribal Interests	No	At this time, there are no known TCPs within the project area according to an AZSITE site search and BLM cultural resources map check.
Visual Resources	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Water Resources	Yes	Yes (see further discussion below)
Wild and Scenic Rivers	No	No
Wild Burros	No	There is no Herd Management Area (HMA) in the Table Mesa Planning area, the Lake Pleasant HMA is located nearby. Any transient burros belonging to this herd would be moved and any non-herd, wild burros managed by BLM would be rounded for eventual adoption.

3.1 AIR QUALITY

3.1.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Phoenix area, including much of Maricopa county, is exceeding PM 10 standards. Primary sources of pollution contributing to this non-attainment are windblown dust from construction sites, agricultural fields, unpaved roads and parking lots, and disturbed vacant lots.

Based on 1997 air quality standards, the entire state of Arizona is in attainment of the PM2.5 standard.

Air quality agencies are working on more stringent control measures to decrease particulate matter, both PM10 and PM2.5, including aiming to decrease PM2.5 emissions by 5 percent per year. Most areas where standards are exceeded are in the immediate vicinity of and to the northeast of the metropolitan Phoenix area. It is reasonable to assume that emission sources located within or near the planning areas could potentially contribute to exceeding the PM10

NAAQS standard, although insufficient information is available to identify specific causes or sources of the measured levels in excess of standards, except (in some cases) high winds.

As identified above in the overview, vehicle travel on paved roads, especially in the metropolitan Phoenix area, represents the largest single emission source category in and surrounding the Planning Area. In addition, travel on unpaved roads throughout the planning area results in particulate emissions in the form of fugitive dust.

3.1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.1.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Vehicle driving and the use of vehicles on un-stabilized surfaces will contribute directly to localized fugitive dust through dust creation at a negligible to minor level.

Under the No-Action Alternative, the Table Mesa RMZ would not be developed, routes would not be designated, and activity that could negatively affect long-term air quality would continue unmanaged. It is likely that fugitive dust would indirectly contribute to the exceedence of Maricopa County air quality standards.

3.1.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

Under the proposed action, dust from construction of the plan facilities is expected to create temporary air quality impacts. Roads, parking/staging areas would be stabilized. Other dust control mechanisms such as speed limits would be employed to help reduce fugitive dust. Additional dust abatement may occur with the assistance of education and enforcement of speed limits. While use of fugitive-dust generating devices may increase due to the developed nature of the area, it is expected that dust will be better managed and overall air quality will not decline in the area, having an overall negligible to minor impact to local air quality.

3.1.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under the no action alternative, fugitive dust would continue to contribute to air quality exceedence within the MCAD, especially given the anticipated increase in use due to population growth. Cumulative impacts are anticipated to be negligible to minor.

Under the proposed action, increased management along with reduced routes would reduce the geographic extent of potential fugitive dust sources on BLM land. Cumulative impacts are anticipated to be negligible to minor.

3.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The following impact indicators are commonly used for cultural resources:

- Number of National Register of Historic Places eligible sites within one quarter of a mile of major existing roads and/or trails and/or proposed roads and or trails
- Number of uses a road is accessed for - Proposed use of analyzed roads or trails as well as unintended but reasonably foreseeable uses (positive and negative impacts - for example, unsafe shooting, trash dumping, OHV use, Horseback riding, outdoor recreation i.e. - hiking)
- Number of impacted sites and number of negative impacts - Looting, driving through sites, impact of increased visitation on sites
- Number of National Register Eligible or AML sites affected by proposed activities
- Impacts of increased visitation to the area via new routes on known cultural sites considered for interpretation at a future date
- Impacts from unsafe shooting
- Impacts from trash dumping

Under Section 106, a project adversely affects a historic property if it alters the characteristics that qualify the property for inclusion in the National Register in a manner that would diminish the integrity of the property. "Integrity" is the ability of a property to convey its significance, based on its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Adverse effects can be direct or indirect. They include reasonably foreseeable impacts that may occur later in time, be farther removed in distance, or be cumulative. Examples of adverse effects include:

- physical destruction or damage;
- alteration inconsistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties;
- relocation of the property;
- change in the character of the property's use or setting;
- introduction of incompatible visual, atmospheric, or audible elements;
- neglect and deterioration;
- transfer, lease, or sale out of federal control without adequate preservation restrictions

3.2.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

BLM conducted cultural resource surveys to identify sites that could be adversely affected by the management actions proposed in the Table Mesa plan. The objective is to avoid developing recreational facilities, or allowing surface-disturbing activities in areas where they could pose adverse impacts to sites that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or traditional cultural places if any are identified to BLM by tribes in consultation.

Cultural resource management involves many different activities including cultural resources survey for the purposes of identification and evaluation, scientific research, public education, site protection and interpretive development. The Hassayampa Field Office 2009 Route Evaluation Areas for the Table Mesa RMZ occur in an area of approximately 258.18 acres. Within that acreage, there is approximately 73 miles total of roads and trails. Within these 73 miles, there were approximately 5 isolates found during this survey, and one site, N: 16:187(ASM), a National Register eligible site on a small bench above the Agua Fria River measuring 120 meters N/S x 80 meters E/W previously recorded. The completed trail section of Arrastre Creek segment contained native bunch grass species known to be beneficial to the Hohokam for basket weaving material. The community of grasses lines the left bank of the creek and is undisturbed by trail building and traffic activity. The exact species was not determined, but is believed to be in the Muhlenbergia family. The noted findings of this deergrass are in the southwest corner and eastern border of Arizona. Verification of the species would be required.

Existing information from cultural resource surveys indicates that the area contains dispersed prehistoric and historic sites, consisting primarily of low-density artifact scatters, old mining sites, the historic Gillette mining town(also known as Gillette or Gillette Gleeson Town site, AZ N:16:188(ASM)), and historic trails. Surveys in the Lake Pleasant County Park, just west of this area, revealed a relatively high density of sites close to the Agua Fria River. The Table Mesa planning area includes approximately seven miles of the river north of the park boundary, where the BLM will strive to protect riparian areas, water quality and any associated archaeological sites.

3.2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.2.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Currently, any archaeological and historic resources that may exist in the area are in danger of impacts from unmanaged OHV activity and shooting, construction of impromptu staging areas and camp sites, and the potential creation of new roads and trails. Impacts are expected from increased visitation and include damage from driving over sites and looting. If activities associated with these impacts were allowed to continue unchecked, it could result in the loss of historic and cultural resources in and thus the loss of an opportunity for public education and interpretation as specified for certain resources as mentioned in the ARMP/ROD.

The Agua Fria Fort and Gillette/ Gillette Gleeson Town site, the five isolates found during this survey, and the one site previously recorded, currently undisturbed bunch grass species found near Arrastre Creek, could all be potentially negatively impacted by steadily increasing uncontrolled and unchecked OHV and shooting activities. Even though no archaeological sites were discovered within 200 feet of either side of the proposed trail segments, the locating of

these isolates and natural resources known to have been used prehistorically indicates areas that would be left unprotected from potentially negative impacts in this alternative.

The no action alternative could preclude BLM from complying with Federal laws for the protection of cultural and historic resources.

Cumulative impacts on cultural resources are anticipated to be negligible to minor.

3.2.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

Under this alternative, increased management may protect cultural resources. In both the short and long term, restricting visitation to sensitive areas would protect these resources more than in the no action alternative. No archaeological or historical sites were discovered within 200 feet of either side of the proposed trail segments.

Proactive planning such as the route closures proposed in this plan are a vital step in keeping cultural resources undamaged by limiting access and knowledge of the resource locations to the general public unless/until they are interpreted. Through interpretation of the more feasible cultural resource sites, BLM would hope to increase public knowledge and appreciation of the cultural resources and prevent future damage to sites by creating more advocacy in the public mind in regard to these resources.

Despite its potential for increased protection of cultural resources, under the proposed action, direct and indirect impacts from increased visitation could occur via creation of unauthorized routes (potentially through known and unknown cultural resources); increased potential for illegal activities related to cultural resources such as looting, digging within sites without permits or permission; and unsafe shooting and/or trash dumping. Indirect Impacts from this Alternative could include a loss of resources significant to or of value to Native American concerns or practices, an action that is out of compliance with American Indian Religious Freedom Act as well as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

Saving the Agua Fria river corridor from Dewey to Lake Pleasant could have an long term effect of preventing the loss of archaeological evidence of prehistoric and historic use of the area as either a corridor used for movement from one place to another or as a place of occupation and settlement. Additionally, in the short term it would have potential to allow the previously impacted areas a chance to recover from impacts already done in the past although because cultural resources are irretrievable once lost, the effect on cultural resources would be negligible except where no previous damage has occurred.

Because of the increased protection afforded by the proposed action, contributions to cumulative impacts on cultural resources are anticipated to be negligible.

3.2.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under the no action alternative, cumulative impacts to cultural resources are anticipated to be greater than those under the proposed action, due to increased potential for off-road incursion on cultural resources and increased potential for vandalism. Site specific surveys are required for federal action taken under each alternative, which would reduce potential impacts to each site. Under both alternatives, cumulative impacts are anticipated to be negligible to minor.

3.3 FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

3.3.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Wildlife species that occur in the planning area vary depending on the vegetation, substrate type and topography. The riparian area along the Agua Fria River is used by a number of fish and wildlife species. Fish present in the area include longfin dace, desert sucker, fathead minnow, common carp, mosquitofish, and green sunfish. The riparian area is also used by many migratory birds including yellow warblers, summer tanagers, Bell's vireo, and many other species.

Wildlife species that can be found in the upland areas include but are not limited to mule deer, javelina, coyote, gray fox, bobcat, striped skunk, kangaroo rats, wood rats, pocket mice, western diamondback rattlesnakes and various other snakes, lizards, small mammals and birds.

3.3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.3.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Motorized use of riparian areas would degrade habitat by impeding regeneration of plants, frequently disturbing aquatic habitat and disrupting breeding and feeding behavior of wildlife using the area.

In upland areas, motorized use of existing routes would continue and route proliferation is likely as new routes continue to be established. Habitat loss and fragmentation are likely to result from increased vehicle route abundance and use.

In both riparian and upland areas, motorized use in addition to disturbing the areas can introduce and facilitate the expansion of invasive plant species. Exotic and invasive plant species degrade habitat quality for numerous species and can increase fire frequency which can alter the vegetative communities, having major impacts on wildlife that exist in these areas.

The cumulative impacts on area fish and wildlife habitat are anticipated to be minor.

3.3.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

In riparian areas, 6.6 miles of stream channel would be closed to motorized vehicles, eliminating associated impacts to the vegetation. Limiting vehicle use to designated crossings

would limit associated disturbances to these sites and allow recovery of wildlife habitat within the riparian areas.

In upland areas, a total of 30.3 acres, would be closed and reclaimed while 11.9 acres of new disturbance would occur to develop new motorized and non-motorized routes. A net decrease in 18.4 acres of disturbed areas would result from the proposed action. Vehicle route abundance would be decreased with closed routes being actively or passively reclaimed as wildlife habitat. Reduced route abundance would reduce the potential spread of invasive plants.

Under this alternative, greater protection of fish and wildlife habitat would occur as compared to the no action alternative and impacts are anticipated to be negligible to minor.

The cumulative impacts of the proposed action are anticipated to be minor.

3.3.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under the proposed action, activity on designated routes and camping/staging areas would disturb habitat to varying degrees depending on the level of activity. Wildlife habitat could change in quality along heavily used routes. Impacts in riparian areas – along the Agua Fria River – and in washes would be reduced from the no action alternative. Under the no action alternative, cumulative impacts to fish and wildlife habitat are expected to increase, given the anticipated increases in visitation over time.

3.4 LANDS & REALTY

3.4.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Within the planning area there are 38 authorized actions and nine pending actions. Most of these actions are rights of way and include authorization for public roads, utilities (such as pipelines, communication, and powerlines) private land access, special recreation permits, agreements with Yavapai and Maricopa County, and an apiary site. Legal access for the public across private lands needs resolution. Public use has been occurring across most private land parcels, yet is not authorized. A summary of the type and number of authorized and pending actions for the planning area is shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10: LAND USE AUTHORIZATIONS

Type of Authorization	Authorized	Pending
Utility	15	
Private Land Access	4	3
Special Recreation Permit	7	4
County/State Public Roads	7	1

BLM	2	1
Maricopa County Board of Supervisors	1	
Yavapai County Board of Supervisors	1	
Apiary	1	

3.4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.4.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action alternative is not expected to have impacts on existing land use authorizations. Throughout the planning area, the existing roads and trails provide a route network to access utilities, private land and conduct approved permit activities. Access for the public would remain unauthorized and access would likely be blocked over time due to development or assertion of private property rights. Access to and from adjoining state land would remain open with all gates unlocked, allowing unlimited numbers of visitors to access the area on powerline maintenance primitive roads from the south and west.

3.4.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is not expected to have a negligible to minor impact on existing land use authorizations. A redistribution of area visitors and designation of routes should have the effect of reducing maintenance needed on authorized public roads, utility structures and access roads. Two gates bordering state land on the southwest end of the planning area would be locked causing right-of-way holders and permittees to seek a key or add their own lock to the chain on the gate. BLM is addressing public access across private lands through actions that include Arizona Game and Fish Department and private land owners. Long term access license agreements will be pursued and land owner access needs addressed through right-of-way issuance in a cooperative manner. Arizona Department of Transportation is also in process of acquiring access for a public road in the area. When combined with BLM's agreements for access, public access will be allowed on the designated route network, including one road on three different parcels of private land.

3.4.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under the no action alternative, no cumulative impact to lands and realty are anticipated. Under the proposed action, acquisition of legal rights-of-way would occur, potentially resolving trespass concerns and having a positive impact overall to lands and realty in the planning area.

3.5 LIVESTOCK GRAZING

3.5.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Four grazing permits are potentially affected by the Table Mesa Recreation Plan, including the Tee Allotment, Boulder Creek, Rock Springs, and the Black Canyon Allotment. These allotments include existing range improvements.

3.5.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.5.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The no action alternative is expected to have a negligible to minor impact on grazing permits within the Table Mesa Plan boundary. Users are responsible for maintaining the integrity of fence lines and must respect gate closures. Range improvements will remain accessible to permittees. Grazing permits would not be altered by any actions of this plan.

3.5.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

Affects are expected to be similar to the No Action Alternative.

The proposed plan is also not expected have a major impact on grazing permits within the Table Mesa Plan boundary. Users are responsible for maintaining the integrity of fence lines and must respect gate closures. Range improvements will remain accessible to permittees via the designation of certain routes as administrative. Grazing permits would not be altered by any actions of this plan.

In the southern portion of the planning area, some (approximately 100 feet) fence line adjustment may be needed in other to align with routes and eliminate the need for gates and cattle guards.

3.5.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under both alternatives, cumulative impacts to livestock grazing are anticipated to be negligible.

3.6 MINERALS

3.6.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Current mineral development in the area is limited to one mineral materials contract located in section 5, T7N, R2E and a part of section 32, T8N, R2E. To date, the operation has produced an approximate 4,500 tons of material, most of which were used as fill material. This contract is due to expire in November 2009 but will be extended for one additional year. To the immediate east of the planning area in section 3, T7N-R2E, is another mineral materials contract. This operation is also a quarry-type operation producing material for the landscape market. To date the company has produced approximately 1.33 million tons valued at \$1,363,030. This mineral materials contract is located on split estate land and is due to expire in November 2012. Other mineral related activity in the planning area is casual use and primarily consists of gold panning, metal detecting, and sluicing or suction dredging. These latter activities are commonly

associated with local gold prospecting clubs or groups of people holding association placer claims. It is primarily a recreational activity and the Hassayampa Field Office has authorized Special Recreation Permits for these club activities.

The Table Mesa RMZ encompasses an approximate 11,500 acres with approximately half of this acreage held under federal mining claims. The majority of claims is located in T8N-R2E and is broken down as follows: 28 placer claims totaling 3,140 acres; 47 lode claims totaling 940 acres; and 12 mill-site claims totaling 240 acres. In T7N-R2E the claim breakdown is 27 placer claims totaling 828 acres and 6 lode claims totaling 120 acres. Access to most of these claims is along what has been identified as a "Resource Road." It can generally be characterized as a "cross country," "ranch road" or "two tracker" which in most cases was the result of continued use and not actual road construction. They typically form a spur from one of the more heavily traveled routes in the area and generally are used to gain access to ephemeral washes or the Aqua Fria River. They do in some instances also serve as access to hard rock prospect held under a lode mining claim. With the exception of the two mineral material quarries however, none of these access routes has been authorized under a Notice or Mining Plan of Operation.

3.6.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.6.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The no action alternative would have little impact on locatable or salable minerals. Because of increasing recreational pressures along the urban interface, the development of mineral material resources will most likely witness a natural decrease in the planning area.

3.6.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

Because the mining operation located in section 5, T7N-R2E and section 32, T8N-R2E is very near the Black Canyon Trail, a National Recreation Trail, continued mining in this area will likely conflict with this and other increasing recreational uses of the land. In order to meet the intent of the Recreation and Travel Management Plan, which is to specifically reduce conflicts, development of this mineral resource will be directed to areas outside of the Table Mesa planning area.

Other mineral related activities, primarily gold panning and other similar casual use activities, are not expected to be majorly/moderately impacted by the Recreation and Travel Management Plan. The closure of primitive routes in sections 16, 21, and 29, T8N-R2E, and section 29, T8N-R2E will leave mining claimants without vehicular access to their claims unless the claimants submit a Notice of Intent or Mining Plan of Operation. The route closures in this instance will impact a total of 22 mining claims encompassing an approximate 1,840 acres. This represents approximately 35% of the area covered by mining claims and because of the apparent need for access; it is likely the permanent closure of these routes may be delayed.

3.6.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts on mineral resources under the no action alternative are expected to be negligible. Under the proposed action, cumulative impacts to the mineral resource from will most likely negatively affect the development and sale of mineral materials because of conflict with the intent of the plan, especially when combined with exclusions in place on the Black Canyon Trail.

3.7 PUBLIC SAFETY

3.7.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Currently the planning area has several public safety issues occurring. An inventory of existing target shooting sites was conducted in 2008. 42 sites were inventoried at that time. Stray bullets from target shooting are the main safety concern and affects users of both vehicle routes and the non-motorized Black Canyon National Recreation Trail. Trail users and staff in proximity to target shooting sites have reported hearing ricochets and bullets fly overhead. In one location along Table Mesa Road, visitors shoot at and across the Black Canyon Trail, rendering this part of the trail unusable. Night time machine gun fire using tracer rounds has been observed as well as the use of small explosive devices in area causing audible disturbance and alarm to staff and visitors. Excessive trash, some of which is hazardous material or can lead to injury when encountered and conflicts involving verbal exchanges are the notable other safety concerns in the area. No deaths attributable to target shooting have been reported. One death has been investigated and appears to be an act of violence elsewhere resulting in the victim being left in the Table Mesa area. Reports, to BLM of conflict with target shooting have remained steady since approximately 2005. Law enforcement presence is not sufficient to enforce existing laws.

3.7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.7.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Continuing the current management of the area would allow dangerous conditions to remain. Target shooting would continue as a dominant use of the central part of the area and would continue to increase in the southern end of the planning area near the old Bonnie Bell mine site where visitors access from New River road.

3.7.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action would improve safety conditions through the application of defined buffer zones where shooting would only be allowed at a specified distance from the road where safe conditions exist. The three largest and most popular sites would remain available. Two other known sites would fall outside the buffer zones. The closure and rehabilitation of 38 sites along high use roads and adding a buffers of 200ft along main roads and 1/4mile either side of

Black Canyon trail would provide better assurance of safety to non-shooters. Total area closed to shooting would be 4,583 acres(39%) of the 11,557 acres of BLM land. An indirect effect of implementing the buffers is the displacement of shooters, who may go to other areas or jurisdictions.

3.7.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts from the no action alternative are likely to have negligible to minor negative impacts on public safety. Cumulative impacts should be more positive under the proposed plan, due to increased management of public use activities.

3.8 RECREATION

3.8.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The planning area is the highest visitation area in the Phoenix District. A diversity of recreation activities coexist in this area adding to congestion and safety concerns. The northward movement of the Phoenix metro area combined with a dramatic increase in OHV use, rock crawling and target shooting have overlapped the use of the non-motorized Black Canyon National Recreation Trail. Target shooting is the most prevalent activity along the area's main roads, and recedes quickly away from good roads. Trail based recreation abounds throughout the area and conflicts between non-motor trail users and motorized trail users is increasing throughout this zone.

3.8.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.8.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Continuing with the current management framework recreation experiences of trail based users would decline, while target shooting would continue and may even increase in use resulting in displacement of other recreation pursuits. New route proliferation would continue and feelings of unfettered access would continue, largely due to a lack of on-the-ground management in ways of dispensing information and enforcement. Trail based recreation experiences would not be maximized due to the uncoordinated existing route system. Target shooters would continue to shoot across roads and trails due to lack of firearm education and not knowing what assets exist within the firearm trajectory. Parking and staging areas are informal and left to the user to define these areas on their own terms and needs, thus expanding the desert footprint. Access to the Agua Fria River would continue and access to Black Canyon City would be maintained via Horseshoe Bar mine road and the stage road south of Rock Springs. The overall recreation experience would not be achieved due to social and physical limitations.

3.8.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

Implementing the proposed action would allow trail based recreation to be maximized. Target shooting would be allowed on 61% of the area while in more sustainable and safe locations. The designation of a route system would organize and direct trail users to coordinated loops where desired experiences could be obtained. Distance from trailheads would be minimized, requiring less travel and time required by visitors, adding to satisfactory recreation experiences. Parking and staging areas would reduce the desert footprint. Camping and picnicking opportunities would provide for more people to enjoy the outdoors in a natural appearing landscape. Technical Vehicle Users, also known as rock crawlers, would receive most of the trails they currently enjoy with exception of those of private land and one known as Armageddon, which goes through a spring. Some area visitors would be displaced due to the increase in management presence through signage, law enforcement and facilities.

3.8.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

A reduction of the desert footprint in an ever expanding use area would accommodate most activities in parking and staging areas placed in strategic areas that would enable safe and easy access to recreation opportunities. More visitors would be attracted to this area as unsafe and non-sustainable conditions would be minimized. Sustainable areas established for specific activities would congregate those of like recreation pursuits in similar areas, thus maximizing these areas and increasing contacts with others.

3.9 RIPARIAN AREAS AND WETLANDS

3.9.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Table Mesa planning area includes 6.6 miles of riparian habitat along the Agua Fria River and 0.9 miles along Cottonwood Gulch as well as riparian habitat associated with several springs and seeps.

3.9.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.9.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

OHV use of riparian areas can impact riparian functional condition by breaking down stream banks, destabilizing the stream channel, destabilizing vegetation, destroying vegetation and potentially introducing exotic plant species. These impacts would continue to degrade the functional condition along 6.6 miles of riparian habitat along the Agua Fria River and Cottonwood Gulch precluding achievement of the Desired Future Conditions and Land Health Standards identified in the Resource Management Plan.

3.9.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action would restrict motorized use in the riparian areas to established fords along 6.6 miles of riparian areas. Eliminating motorized use of the stream channels would allow vegetative recruitment, stream channel development and stabilization initiating a trend toward

proper functioning condition, having a greater positive impact on riparian areas and wetlands than in the no action alternative.

3.9.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under the proposed action, potential cumulative impacts from motorized vehicle use and recreation activity in areas with riparian resources would be reduced. Under the no action alternative, routes in riparian areas would remain, contributing to the overall degradation of the Agua Fria River riparian corridors.

3.10 SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES

3.10.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Table Mesa planning area currently plays hosts to many individual recreationists and it is also a common site for visitation by 7 desert off-road tour operators. OHV recreation provides approximately 1.8 billion dollars in taxable income to Maricopa County each year and a total of \$223 million dollars of impact in Yavapai County. (Arizona State Parks, 2003)

It is assumed that there are positive economic impacts from hiking, biking, target shooting and other recreational activities in the communities near the Table Mesa Planning area, though none of which are as great as those from OHV-based recreation. No specific revenue data is available for ranching and mining operations located within the planning area.

3.10.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.10.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the no action alternative, it is expected that tour-related permit holders may request permits in areas north and west to improve customer experiences. Approving permits further from Phoenix could have the effect of reducing tourism income through reduced visitation in New River and Black Canyon City.

Revenue sources generated from mining and ranching activities are expected to remain unchanged under the no action alternative.

3.10.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action would have the effect of generally increasing recreation capacity in the planning area, making visitor experiences better and offering the possibility of increasing tourism income for surrounding communities. Overall, the implementation of a comprehensive recreation plan in the table mesa area is expected to provide negligible to minor increases in recreation-related income in both counties. The local communities of Black Canyon City and New River may see small injections of tourist-related income.

Revenue related to ranching is expected to remain similar to the no action alternative.

Revenue related to mining of mineral materials is expected to decline as development of this mineral resource will most likely be directed to areas outside of the Table Mesa planning area in order to avoid conflict with recreation opportunities, especially near the Black Canyon Trail. Revenue related to locatable minerals is expected to remain roughly the same as the no action alternative. The proposed action is not anticipated to have disproportionate effects on low income and minority populations.

3.10.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under both alternatives, cumulative impacts on social and economic conditions are anticipated to be positive for the surrounding communities, primarily due to increased interest in recreation in the planning area and surrounding communities.

3.11 SOIL RESOURCES

3.11.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Soils in the planning area are very diverse, with the area hosting 31 soil types. Seven soil types comprise 78% of the area. The most common soil types are schist hills, clay loam upland, very gravelly sandy loam, limy upland and loamy hills. Currently, disturbance due to the existing route network (including roads, primitive roads, and trails) totals approximately 100 acres.

Many of the routes in the area exhibit erosion on slopes over 10%. Disturbed areas are not recovering due to high use in the area with a trend towards increasing use. Target shooting occurs intensively in areas along main roads. The proliferation of target shooting sites has de-vegetated approximately 40 sites varying from 0.1 to 2 acres in size. Residual lead and other contaminants are present. The extent of deposits is unknown, but is expected to be localized to the sites.

3.11.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.11.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The effect of continuing the current management would be a slow, continuous loss of soil and productivity due to route proliferation and unmanaged recreation site expansion throughout the area. Soil loss rates are unknown at this time, but the effects are evident on the area routes. Lead and other potential contaminants represent an indirect impact to soils since migration of these materials may occur over time. However, no data on this trend is currently available.

3.11.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

Implementing the proposed action would have the effect of closing and rehabilitation most of the target shooting sites in existence today. Approximately 30 of the 40 known sites would be closed, re-contoured and re-vegetated, thus returning areas to productivity. Addressing

drainage on the designated route system would halt soil loss due to erosion and also stop route proliferation due to the creation of bypass routes around eroded areas. Hardening and fencing high-use recreation sites would eliminate further growth of these sites. Adjacent areas with minimal damage would be allowed to recover and return to productivity.

3.11.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under both alternatives, cumulative impacts to soils are likely to be negligible.

3.12 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS – NATIONAL TRAILS

3.12.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Black Canyon Trail, a National Recreation Trail, runs the entire length of the planning area. The trail is limited to non-motorized uses only. Staging for the trail occurs at Emery Henderson Trailhead, the informal Table Mesa Road Trailhead and occasionally at the old Little Pan Mine site. Use levels on the trail are expected to increase over the next five years due to population growth of the area and marketing of the trail regionally. Target shooting across the trail and driving motor vehicles on southern road alignments occur frequently. While shooting across the trail is not legal, other legal shooting areas affect trail users by changing the recreation setting near the trail.

3.12.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.12.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Implementing the no-action alternative would have the effect of continuing to allow vehicles to share the road with the Black Canyon Trail in the southern part of the RMZ. This is inconsistent with overall management objectives of this trail, as outlined in the *Bradshaw-Harquahala ARMP/ROD*. Target shooting would continue near the trail and where it is legal to shoot, the proximity would diminish the experience of many trail users. Many of the conflicts resulting from the trail-user /shooter interface occur as a result of poor target backstop selection, increasing safety risks for area visitors, including Black Canyon Trail users. Two shooting areas off of Table Mesa be closed and rehabilitated as a result of the 2004 EA for BCT realignment. The Little Pan Loop would be the only loop opportunity in the area. Occasional motorized use of the BCT would likely continue.

3.12.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

Implementing the proposed action would structure the area's recreation setting, making it more favorable for trail users. Target shooters would be directed to available areas, all of which are located at least a quarter mile from the trail. Vehicle users would be directed to open routes away from the trail. Trailheads would be improved and two new areas would be developed to increase capacity and define the footprint of staging and camping for long term

sustainability. The overall state of the National Trail is expected to be improved under the plan, as compared to the no action alternative.

3.12.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts on the National Trail would be similar to those described for each action alternative.

3.13 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

3.13.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), a listed threatened species, nest at the northern end of Lake Pleasant, approximately 5 miles downstream of the planning area. Bald eagles may be infrequently seen along the Agua Fria River in the planning area.

The southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), a listed endangered species, has not been documented using the riparian areas within the planning area and are unlikely to occur there. The Agua Fria River through the planning area is subject to frequent scouring flood events and the vegetated floodplain is generally too narrow to develop suitable habitat for the species.

The yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), a Federal candidate for listing as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act is found along the Agua Fria River within the planning area. The yellow-billed cuckoo is a migratory bird that occupies cottonwood and willow riparian habitat for nesting and foraging between June and September.

Other Bureau sensitive species likely to occur in the Table Mesa area include Sonoran desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), lowland leopard frog (*Rana yavapaiensis*), Arizona toad (*Bufo microscaphus*) and Hohokam agave (*Agave murpheyii*). The lowland leopard frog is found around permanent water sources. The Arizona toad may be found along the riparian corridors or associated with any ephemeral water sources in the area. Hohokam agave is generally found in upland areas, often associated with prehistoric, Native American sites.

The tortoise inhabits the rocky slopes and incised washes within the area. The entire planning area has been classified as Category 2 desert tortoise habitat but site specific evaluation of the area has determined that much of the flatter area is not occupied, and likely not used by tortoises.

3.13.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.13.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Unrestricted motorized use of riparian areas would degrade vegetation and habitat quality for migratory birds, including the yellow-billed cuckoo. Motorized use of the riparian area would

likely disturb birds during the critical nesting season thereby reducing nesting success and recruitment. Motorized use impacts to stream channel stability would degrade the quality of the aquatic habitat used by native fishes and amphibians like the lowland leopard frog and Arizona toad.

In upland areas, motorized routes in tortoise habitat would continue to be a source of mortality and habitat fragmentation. Abundant routes in tortoise habitat also facilitate human interaction with tortoises and increase the potential for illegal collection of these animals, thereby reducing population viability.

This alternative would have no effect on the southwestern willow flycatcher because the area currently does not contain suitable habitat and is unlikely to develop suitable habitat due to the linear nature of the riparian habitat.

3.13.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The absence of motorized use along the riparian areas would allow vegetative conditions to improve, benefiting migratory birds, including the yellow-billed cuckoo and aquatic species, like the lowland leopard frog and native fish, furthering the conservation of these sensitive species. Limiting vehicle use in the riparian area to designated crossings would substantially reduce disturbance to nesting birds.

Designating motorized routes in upland areas would reduce the degradation of habitat quality for the desert tortoise and allow the natural regeneration of vegetation along closed routes that traverse tortoise habitat. Approximately 3.96 miles of existing 10 foot wide motorized vehicle routes, 4.69 acres, within desert tortoise habitat would be closed and reclaimed. Approximately 1.78 miles of new 10 foot wide motorized routes, 3.55 miles of 3 foot wide single track motorized routes and 5.3 miles of 3 foot wide non-motorized bicycle/equestrian routes, totaling 5.26 acres, would be constructed in desert tortoise habitat. BLM has a no net loss policy for Categories 1 and 2 desert tortoise habitat to the extent practicable, in order to conserve the species. Policy guidance is outlined in IM No. AZ-91-16, *Strategy for Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on Public Lands in Arizona*, IM No. AZ-92-46, the *Strategy for Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on Public Lands in Arizona -- New Guidance on Compensation for the Desert Tortoise* (Compensation Report), IM No. AZ-96-007, *Desert Tortoise Mitigation Policy*, IM No. AZ-99-008, *Supplemental Guidance for Desert Tortoise Compensation*, and IM No. AZ-2009-010, *Desert Tortoise Mitigation Policy. Desert tortoise habitat and mitigation requirements*. Refer to Appendix G: Desert Tortoise Policy and Mitigation, for a detailed account of policy and mitigation formula calculations. Mitigation will be necessary to comply with policy.

Route designation described in the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect the bald eagle or the southwestern willow flycatcher. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with this finding in Biological Opinion #22410-05-F-0785, dated December 18, 2006.

3.13.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts on special status species – when considering mitigation for tortoise habitat under the proposed action – are likely to be less under the proposed action than under the no action as the proposed plan provides for better protection of wildlife.

3.14 TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

3.14.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The existing route network consists of 73 miles of existing roads, primitive roads and trails. Public roads in the area include Table Mesa Road and an unnamed road under I-17 at Moore's Gulch. The entrance into the planning area on Table Mesa Road crosses approximately 1.5 miles of Arizona State Trust Land. Table Mesa Road is the primary access to Little Grand Canyon Rancho on private land and Lake Pleasant Regional Park. Access to the planning area from the southeast, south and southwest require crossing Arizona State Trust Land where proper permission to use state trust land is required.

AZCO Mine road provides access to private land and to areas north of this planning area. ADOT has applied for a right-of-way on part of the AZCO Mine road, which would make it a public road. Additionally, ADOT currently holds a right-of-way to develop a public road under I-17 at Moore's Gulch. Only roads authorized under right-of-way grants to land owners or permittees are authorized for regular maintenance. BLM does not maintain any routes in this area. Currently, access across the Agua Fria River is limited to three places, two of which are well known. The crossing near the Gillette townsite is the most popular. It crosses private land owned by two different owners. The second popular crossing is near the Little Pan Mine site and uses only BLM land. This route is rougher and not easily travelled. The third crossing is a lesser known site north of Little Grand Canyon Rancho. The importance of this route is its role in connecting this area with BLM lands immediately west.

Visitors access the Table Mesa from their homes in Black Canyon City (BCC) and New River. Two routes from BCC are currently used and include the Agua Fria River between Black Canyon City and the Gillette Townsite and a mining road due south of Rock Springs. Both routes convene in the Agua Fria River. From New River, visitors access from a New River road on natural gas pipeline road and old mining roads that access a major powerline maintenance road.

The existing route system offers a range of experiences for both motorized and non-motorized users alike. While many of the experiences people seek on the route system are beneficial,

none of the experiences are maximized due to a lack of coordinated looping routes, poor condition and interaction with other visitors that interferes with achievement their desired experience.

3.14.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.14.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Continuing the current management would allow route proliferation to continue, contribute to resource degradation, and continue the underachievement of visitor experiences. Access across private property would eventually be lost without public access agreements. Areas adjacent to routes where camping and staging occur would become overused due to a lack of hardened sites, resulting in resource impacts and poor visitor experiences. Routes would erode and become increasingly difficult to use over time due to lack of water runoff control and increasing use. Single track motorized users would not have any narrow trails to use under this alternative.

3.14.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

Implementing the travel management and recreation plan would have the effect of managing uses that have a high potential to damage the area resources. With the popularization of the Black Canyon Trail and Off-highway vehicle use, managed, coordinated loop routes would reduce visitor conflict by separating uses. New experiences for all trail based recreation would become available. Building new trails in the core of the area, adjacent to high use camp areas, would improve experiences even as old routes are closed. The proposed action would close 22.9 miles of primitive roads while opening 3.6 miles of new primitive roads, making a loop route of 12-15miles accessible to all vehicles in the central and southern most part of the area. Black Canyon Trail users could also use the new loops to add mileage and interest. 7.5miles of new trail for motorcycles would be opened leading to new motorcycle singletrack experiences in the area. A new Technical Vehicle Site comprising approximately 4.3 acres would be opened, offering a new recreational driving opportunity for specialized 4wd drivers and motorcycle trials.

3.14.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under the proposed action, the recreation facilities and route system would be established and related management and maintenance would increase. Use restrictions will be established to protect identified resource values. Impacts of motorized use, traffic, and recreational activity would occur on the designated routes. Growth of the route system through proliferation of user created tracks will be controlled. Under the no action alternative, the route network would not be designated.

3.15 WATER RESOURCES

3.15.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Table Mesa Planning area is part of the Middle Gila Watershed. 6.6 miles of the Agua Fria River traverse the northern half of the planning area. The Agua Fria River drains an area of approximately 2,700 square miles in Yavapai and Maricopa counties (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1982). The Agua Fria River is perennial at four places above Lake Pleasant with a combined distance of approximately 21 miles (Arizona Department of Water Quality). Heavy metals contamination and turbidity in the Agua Fria River appear to be caused by abandoned mines and unpermitted sand and gravel operations (Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, 1990). The Agua Fria River feeds into the Lake Pleasant Reservoir, which is a municipal water source. Lake Pleasant has been tested for lead and other pollutants approximately 15-20 times between 2000 and 2004. In tests, it was determined that lead levels did not exceed acceptable lead standards (Interview with AZDWR Water Quality Expert, Steve Pawlowski, 4.15.2009).

Within the Table Mesa planning area, there are two major river crossings on the Agua Fria River, near Gillette and Little Pan Road. In addition to the major river crossings, there are several “sand run” areas where vehicles access the river, along with numerous other access points in which vehicles drive through the river for access or recreation and traverse the river to connect roads.

3.15.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.15.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative, proliferation of river access and potential contamination of water, along with river-bank alteration is expected to continue and is expected to have a negligible to minor impact on local water resources. Lead shot will continue to accumulate in unmanaged target shooting areas, including ephemeral washes.

3.15.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

Under the proposed plan, unregulated river crossings would be reduced and only three river crossings (the two existing crossings and one third crossing) would reduce access to driving in the river, thereby reducing potential contamination and damage to river banks.

The overall negative impacts to local water resources are expected to be negligible under this alternative.

3.15.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under both alternatives, cumulative impacts to water resources are anticipated to be negligible.

3.16 VEGETATIVE COMMUNITIES

3.16.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The planning area is within the Arizona Upland Sonoran Desertscrub vegetative community but includes a wetland vegetative community along riparian areas and other water sources. The dominant vegetation in upland areas varies slightly from site to site depending on geology, soils and slope. Common plants present within these areas include, but are not limited to: saguaro, ocotillo, creosote bush, triangle-leaf bursage, ironwood, mesquite, littleleaf paloverde, catclaw acacia, wolfberry, brittlebush, jojoba, barrel cactus, fairy duster, burro bush, white ratany, pencil cholla, hedgehog cactus, desert marigold, prickly pear cactus, flattop buckwheat, mormon tea, staghorn cholla, crucifixion thorn, big galleta grass and various 3-awn grasses. Wetland plants associated with streams and springs include Fremont cottonwood, Goodding's willow, seep willow, bulrush and sedges.

Invasive plant species present in the planning area include Bermuda grass, fountain grass, rabbit's foot grass and salt cedar, in riparian areas and near springs, Sahara mustard in disturbed areas and buffleggrass along roadways.

3.16.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.16.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Motorized use of riparian areas would continue to destabilize soils and destroy vegetation along 6.6 miles of stream channels.

In upland areas, motorized use of existing routes would continue and route proliferation is likely as new routes continue to be established.

In both riparian and upland areas, motorized use in addition to disturbing the areas can introduce and facilitate the expansion of invasive plant species.

3.16.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

In riparian areas, 6.6 miles of stream channel would be closed to motorized vehicles, eliminating associated impacts to the vegetation.

In upland areas, a total of 30.3 acres, would be closed and reclaimed while 11.9 acres of new disturbance would occur to develop new motorized and non-motorized routes. A net decrease in 18.4 acres of disturbed areas would result from the proposed action.

Parking and staging areas are located in previously disturbed areas, hence new vegetative destruction would be minimal.

3.16.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under both alternatives, cumulative impacts to vegetation resources are anticipated to be negligible.

3.17 VISUAL RESOURCES

BLM Visual Resources are classified into four categories:

- Class I: The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.
- Class II: The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
- Class III: The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
- Class IV: The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modifications of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

3.17.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Table Mesa Planning is classified as VRM Class II and Class III. Class II visual resources occur near the Agua Fria River, in the northern and western portion of the planning area. Additional Class II visual resources occur in the southern portion of the planning area. Land classified as Class III within the planning area occurs closest to Table Mesa Road and the preponderance of existing popular target shooting areas.

VRM analysis was conducted and can be found in Appendix F: Visual Resource Inventory. Three key observation points (KOP) were chosen to provide a view of the project area from Table Mesa Road and the southernmost section of the Mica Mine Road. Table Mesa Road leads to

the upper arm of Lake Pleasant County Park, the Upper Agua Fria Conservation Area which will attract motorists and the Mica Mine Road provides access to the major portions of this RMZ. Global Positioning technology was used to record UTM's and elevation.

3.17.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.17.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative, negligible to minimal negative impacts to visual resources may be seen in the Class II areas in the southern portion of the planning area, where some target shooting sites are proliferating. Impacts would be in the form of trash and degradation of vegetation and the landscape from target shooting.

3.17.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action would include construction of some facilities, all within visual resource Class III classifications. The presence of these facilities is expected to have a negligible to minor impact on visual resource Class II. The overall visual landscape of the planning area is expected to be improved under this alternative, as compared to the no action alternative.

3.17.2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Construction of amenities would be minimized mainly to the Class III. Overall, the desert landscape would be maintained because visitors would be directed to concentrate use rather than spreading it out over the landscape. The least cumulative impact is anticipated to come from this alternative and would be compatible with the character of the zone.

4 TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

- Ak-Chin Indian Community
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
- Arizona Department of Transportation
- Arizona Department of Water Resources
- Arizona Game and Fish Department
- Arizona OHV Coalition
- Arizona Rock Crawlers
- Arizona State Lands Department
- Arizona Virtual Jeep Club
- Black Canyon Trail Coalition
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
- Mr. Greg Gearing – Interested Citizen
- Mr. Tim Grant – Landowner
- Mr. Nate Holland – Advanced Resource Solutions
- Mr. Ben Kugler – Interested Citizen
- Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department
- Mr. Robert Morales – Landowner
- Mr. Zev Nadler – Desert Wolf Tours
- The National Rifle Association
- Mr. Richard Shaw – Rock Springs Cafe
- Table Mesa Area Coalition
- Tohono O’odham Nation
- Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe

5 LIST OF PREPARERS

- Jim Andersen Lead Realty Specialist
- Leah Baker Planning & Environmental Coordinator
- Jameson Belke GIS Specialist
- Thomas Bickauskus Project Manager
- Steve Cohn Manager, Hassayampa Field Office
- Andrea Felton Range Specialist
- JoAnn Goodlow Realty Specialist
- Tim Hughes Wildlife Biologist
- Amanda James Natural Resource Specialist
- Byron Lambeth Lead Range Specialist
- Teresa Makinen Facilitator
- Pamela Mathis Public Affairs Specialist
- Chris McLaughlin Archaeologist
- Hillary Conner Realty Specialist
- Mike Rice Geologist
- Mary Skordinsky Outdoor Recreation Planner
- Connie Stone Associate Manager, Hassayampa Field Office
- J.A. Vacca Wildlife Biologist

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