



SONORAN DESERT NATIONAL MONUMENT *Providing Substantive Comments*

The United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lower Sonoran Field Office, is developing a resource management plan amendment (RMPA) and environmental impact statement (EIS) consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) to address the management of recreational target shooting in the Sonoran Desert National Monument. The BLM is currently offering the public the opportunity to offer feedback on the preliminary draft alternatives being considered in the Draft RMPA/EIS.

Note: This is not a formal comment period. Therefore, the BLM will not be responding to these comments. Comments are welcomed throughout the RMPA/EIS process. Comments provided during the RMPA/EIS will be considered and incorporated as appropriate.

WHY PUBLIC COMMENTS ARE IMPORTANT

Public comment periods offer the opportunity for you, the public, to be involved in the BLM's decision-making process and to offer your thoughts on alternative ways for the agency to accomplish what it is proposing. This is also an opportunity for the public to offer data that the agency can use in its analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed alternatives, as well as possible mitigation of potential harmful effects of such actions.

The National Environmental Policy Act "... is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on the understanding of environmental consequences..." [40 CFR 1501(e)]. To achieve this, the RMPA/EIS will consider the effects of the BLM's actions on economic and natural resources within the planning area. Citizens such as yourself often have valuable information about places and resources they consider important, and the potential effects proposed federal actions may have on those places and resources.

PROVIDING EFFECTIVE COMMENTS

Comments that provide relevant and new information with sufficient detail are the most useful and are referred to as substantive comments. The BLM reviews all comments and identifies topics that are substantive for consideration in the final published document. Try not to provide comments that offer opinion only.

Substantive comments do one or more of the following:

- Raise issues the BLM has not considered or reinforce issues the BLM has already identified.
- Present information that can be used when developing alternatives and when the BLM considers impacts of alternatives.
- Present reasonable alternatives within the scope of the decisions being made.
- Recommend specific changes to current management.
- Question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in a report already created.

Comments that are not substantive include:

- Comments in favor of or against an action without any reasoning (such as "I do/don't like ____" without providing any rationale).
- Comments that only agree or disagree with BLM policy.
- Comments that take the form of vague, open-ended questions.