

APPENDIX L
SIGNING PLAN
Ironwood Forest National Monument
Travel Management Plan

1. Description of the Area

The IFNM includes approximately 128,759 acres of BLM administered Monument lands¹, intermingled with non-federal lands within the proclaimed Monument boundary. The Monument route designations established concurrently with the IFNM RMP decisions approved in February 2013 identify management objectives for approx. 349 miles, including 124 miles to provide motorized access (including roads and primitive roads), 118 miles to provide administrative motorized access and also provide public non-motorized access (consisting of primitive roads), 90 miles of trails to provide non-motorized non-mechanized access, and 17 miles to be decommissioned and restored to natural conditions.

Monument lands are intermingled with non-federal land inholdings, predominantly Arizona State trust lands, private lands, county land, and a military reservation. Monument lands are used for multiple purposes, including livestock grazing, utilities, wildlife habitat, and public outdoor recreation. Monument inholdings are used for similar purposes as Monument lands, but also include agricultural and residential land uses.

The Monument is accessed from Interstate 10 and Interstate 8, and State highway 86, by Pinal and Pima county maintained roads. Interior access to Monument lands from the county maintained roads is provided by the designated network of Monument roads, and primitive roads and trails. It is located in a rural and remote area within a one hour to two hour's drive from Tucson and Phoenix metropolitan areas.

Public recreational use of the Monument and its transportation system occurs year round, and has increased since its Proclamation. Recreational use is expected to continue gradually growing, leading to potential safety issues, resource damage or land use conflicts involving Monument users unfamiliar with the Monument, its remote natural desert environment, hazards, land use and land use ethic, regulations, and primitive conditions usually encountered in the area. The Monument signing plan will be a key tool in communicating to Monument users conditions to be expected, and precautions to be taken to promote safety, protect Monument objects, minimize land use conflicts, and achieve desired conditions described in the IFNM RMP land use allocation and related decisions.

2. Scope of Signing Plan

The scope of this signing plan is limited to Monument lands along the designated access routes system, as shown on Map 1 of the TMP. Subject to acquisition of legal access on existing routes essential for the use, maintenance and operation of the Monument transportation system, the signing plan will be implemented on rights of ways or easements held by the BLM. Also, subject to cooperative agreements with Pima and Pinal counties and necessary permits, signing will also be installed along designated county maintained roads to direct Monument-bound visitors from the local public highways. Signing along county-maintained roads across Monument lands will be according to the terms and conditions of the right of way; BLM signing along these routes will be coordinated with the counties.

The signing plan addresses on-the-ground signs and markers needed to implement the travel management designations and implementation actions described in the TMP. The signs will communicate regulatory,

¹ Monument land acreage summary includes approximately 361.1 acres of non-federal land re-conveyed under the Waterman Acquisition, Environmental Assessment # DOI-BLM-AZ-G020-2013-0037-EA, Decision Record July 2014.

safety, land use, and resource protection messages to Monument recreational visitors and other land users. The signing plan will be key tool in providing visitor information to promote awareness of, and compliance with, travel management designations, visitor use regulations and appropriate use ethics, transportation and access conditions, area hazards and visitor safety, and resource protection concerns to achieve the resource management objectives established in the IFNM RMP. The signing plan will be one element of the Monument visitor information efforts to implement the on the ground actions identified in the TMP, which will provide the same or complementary information through a Monument access guide and map, and the official Monument web site on the internet. The Monument access guide and map will be published, and updates to the web site will be made, following approval of the TMP.

Installation, design, fabrication and procurement of signs will be in accordance with current BLM sign policies² and procedures.

3. Signing Plan Objectives

- A. Develop visitor awareness of the Monument and its protected status; the allowable land and route uses; and the use restriction put in place to protect Monument objects, and promote participation in Monument management efforts.
- B. Guide travelers to use the designated route system and the available parking areas and turnouts to support recreational and other purposes.
- C. Orient travelers to conditions usually encountered along the Monument travel routes; promote preparedness and safety, respect for Monument objects and allowable uses, promote compliance with use restrictions.
- D. Integrate the information communicated on the signs with the information made available on the Monument Visitor Guide and Map, special purpose fact sheets or brochures, and the official Monument web page.

4. Sign Planning Criteria

- A. The Monument's travel route network is used year round for administrative purposes and public use. Overall traffic volumes and public visitation are low (less than 200 visitors per day), and dispersed throughout the Monument with concentrations along the county-maintained roads (i.e. Silverbell, Sasco, Avra Valley, Pump Station, and Night Sky roads). Visitation is highest during the cooler fall, winter and spring months, with peaks occurring during weekends and holidays.
- B. Monument visitors predominantly originate in the local communities, but include seasonal 'snowbird' winter visitors from other states, and visitors from international origins. Some Monument visitors are unfamiliar with the area, conditions encountered in remote desert environments, or land use designations and regulations.
- C. The area has been prone to illegal activities related to domestic trash dumping and vandalism.
- D. The area has been subject to intensive law enforcement related to illegal smuggling and trafficking activity along the US-Mexico border, presenting safety and security concerns for Monument visitors and staff.
- E. The area has been used in the past for activities that are now prohibited, and activities subject to special use restrictions established in the land use plan (no target shooting, all vehicle use and operation is limited to designated routes, motorized camping is limited to designated sites). These use restrictions will be described in Supplementary Rules that will be published in the Federal Register.
- F. Signing will be provided concurrent with site improvements for Monument portal sites, group recreation sites, dispersed campsites, and other management sites identified in the TMP.
- G. Monument recreation management allocations objectives identify the area's undeveloped character as important, and establish Recreation Management Zones aimed at preserving this

² BLM 2004 National Sign Handbook, Bureau of Land Management, Denver , Colorado June 2004.

undeveloped character, and to providing only minimal improvements and facilities needed to achieve resource management objectives.

H. Travel Speed: 15 – 25 MPH on Primitive Roads; 35 MPH on Roads.

5. Existing Sign Inventory

Existing Monument signs are minimal, and limited to essential identification, regulatory and informational signs, including:

- A. Portal Monument Identification signs at key entrances.
- B. Informational signs at bulletin boards at some entrances, with regulations and ethics information.
- C. Regulatory signs with ‘No Motor Vehicles’ messages along roads at desert wash crossings and other areas prone to attracting cross country vehicle use.
- D. Regulatory signs on prohibited target shooting, and informational signs on target shooting opportunities outside the Monument.
- E. Stewardship signs in desert bighorn sheep lambing area to educate visitors about sensitive wildlife habitat.
- F. Stewardship signs near Monument entrances to educate visitors about livestock grazing area operations to alleviate potential conflicts with recreational use.
- G. Temporary warning signs alerting travelers of intensive law enforcement operations related to international border activities by US Border Patrol and Homeland Security, and partner agencies.
- H. Temporary fire restriction signs, when in effect, near Monument entrances.
- I. Miscellaneous standard signs: ‘Entering Public Lands’, ‘Leaving Public Lands’, ‘Please Close Gate’, ‘Pack Your Trash Out’, etc.

6. Proposed Signs

The proposed signs are the minimal needed to communicate management messages now that the land use allocations have been established, including the travel route network where public use and administrative travel will occur, and where the proposed signing is needed. Existing signs will be replaced as needed, and new signs will be installed including:

- A. Monument Access Route Signs
 - a. ‘Monument Access Route’ signs; directional signs along designated county maintained roads to guide travelers to the Monument from the local public highways. These signs will be installed in cooperation with, and with permits from the county public works departments.
- B. Monument Identification Signs
 - a. Monument Portal Signs; Monument identification signs at or near road entrance points, and along county maintained roads crossing the Monument. These are existing signs produced according to current National Landscape Conservation System Unit standards. These signs will be maintained and replaced as needed.
 - b. Monument Secondary Portal Signs; Monument identification signs at or near primitive road entrances that provide secondary access to Monument lands.
 - c. ‘Monument Boundary’ signs; at all travel route crossings of the Monument boundary, and at corners in the Monument boundary fence.
- C. Monument Route Identification and Guide Signs
 - a. Route Number signs; Monument routes will be assigned BLM route numbers (6500-6699), which will be used on route signs and markers. Route numbers will be posted at route intersections.

- b. Route Name signs; some of the existing travel routes are known by official names, and some with names given by users over time for reference. Route names will be adopted and used in signs and maps for identification and reference.
- c. Route guide markers; installed where needed to aid travelers in navigation.

D. Visitor Informational Signs

- a. Crossing Private Land, Stay on Road', on BLM held road rights of way or easements (pending acquisition).
- b. Crossing State Trust Land, Stay on Road', on BLM held road rights of way (pending acquisition).

E. Traffic Control Devices

- a. Speed Limit Signs (15 MPH, 25 MPH) along primitive roads.
- b. Stop Signs; on designated BLM Roads at county maintained road intersections.
- c. 'No Motor Vehicles', 'Not A Road' signs: at closed route entrances, and at desert wash crossings that attract motor vehicle use.
- d. Temporary signs and portable barricades: at hazardous road washouts.

F. Regulatory/Warning/Safety Signs

- a. 'Slow, Wildlife Crossing'; at designated locations along travel routes in sensitive habitat.
- b. 'Primitive Road Not Regularly Maintained' signs; at primitive road entrances from county-maintained roads.
- c. 'Danger Low Water Crossing'; installed at hazardous low water crossings along Roads.
- d. 'Dead End', 'No Through Access' signs; installed at the entrance of dead end road spurs.
- e. 'No Motorized or Mechanized Vehicles'; signs installed at road closure points, and at entrance of designated non-motorized trails.
- f. 'Administrative Vehicles Only, Non-Motorized Mechanized Public Use Allowed'; signs installed at administrative road ingress points.
- g. 'Directional Arrow', 'Turn' signs; at right angle turns prone to errant vehicle impacts.
- h. Object Marker, Striped; on all cattle guard approaches.

G. Stewardship Signs

- a. 'Please Keep Gate Closed' signs; at all gates across designated travel routes.
- b. 'Livestock Grazing Area' signs; near Monument entrances to remind visitors of grazing livestock and range facilities that may be encountered in the Monument, and promote respect for rancher's rights and help protect livestock and range improvements.
- c. 'Restoration Site/Area, Please Keep Out to Allow Vegetation to Grow' signs; at restoration sites that are prone to attract attention that may interfere with revegetation efforts.
- d. 'Natural and Cultural Resources are Protected by Federal Law' signs; existing signs along Monument roads near entrance to Monument lands.

H. Miscellaneous Signs

- a. 'Entering Public Lands', 'Leaving Public Lands', 'Please Close Gate', 'Pack Your Trash Out'; installed and maintained where needed.

7. Other Agency Signs

- a. Signs installed by authorized land users in accordance with the terms and conditions of the authorization. (Arizona Game and Fish, utility companies holding rights-of-way).
- b. Signs along county maintained roads across the Monument will be installed by the county, or with the concurrence of the county, and will comply with county standards.

8. Sign Installation Methods

- a. Sign installation will in accordance with route markers and special message signs may be installed using fiberglass posts that are pounded into the ground with minimal ground disturbance. These signs will be low profile, with a height approx. 48" above ground.
- b. Some signs will be installed on wooden posts that require excavation of one or more holes approx. 10" diameter and 24" deep.
- c. Portal informational kiosks will require excavation of two or more holes approx. 10" diameter and 30 inches deep, set in concrete.