

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-AZ-P030-2014-0001-EA**

CROSS Y LAND ACQUISITION

YAVAPAI COUNTY, ARIZONA

Agua Fria National Monument

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Cross Y Land Acquisition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introduction 1
 - Background 2
 - Purpose and Need for Action 2
 - Decision to be Made 2
 - Land Use Plan Conformance 2
 - Scoping & Public Participation..... 4
 - Issues Identified..... 5
- II. Alternatives 6
 - Alternative 1 - Proposed Action..... 6
 - Alternative 2 - No Action 7
 - Alternatives Considered but Removed from Detailed Analysis..... 7
- III. Affected Environment & Environmental Consequences 8
 - General Setting..... 8
 - Lands..... 10
 - Affected Environment 10
 - No Action Alternative..... 10
 - Proposed Action 11
 - Water..... 11
 - Affected Environment 11
 - No Action Alternative..... 11
 - Proposed Action 11
 - Recreation 12
 - Affected Environment 12
 - No Action 12
 - Proposed Action 12
 - Cultural..... 12
 - Affected Environment 12

No Action	13
Proposed Action	13
Wildlife	14
Affected Environment	14
No Action	14
Proposed Action	14
Cumulatively Connected Actions	15
IV. Parties Consulted	17
V. List of Preparers	18
VI. Appendix 1 and Map.....	19
VII. MAP	22

I. INTRODUCTION

The Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM), part of the National Landscape Conservation System (National Conservation Lands), is located approximately 40 miles north of the Phoenix Metropolitan area, bordered on the south by Black Canyon City and the north by Cordes Lakes (Map 1). The AFNM is host to a wide variety of uses which include motorized recreation, hiking, biking, equestrian use, camping, hunting, and sightseeing. Historic uses in the area were dominated by homesteading, ranching, and mining. Livestock grazing continues within the AFNM.

The Agua Fria National Monument was established by Presidential proclamation on January 11, 2000, to preserve and protect its significant archaeological and biological resources. These “objects of scientific and historic interests” for which the Monument was created, are defined in the proclamation as the area’s prehistoric and historical archaeological sites; its expansive semi-desert grassland and riparian forests; its vegetative diversity and availability of water; and the productive habitats for diverse and abundant wildlife species.

This environmental assessment (EA), Cross Y Land Acquisition DOI-BLM-AZ-P030-2014-0001-EA, analyzes the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM’s), proposal to purchase 1,984 acres of private land which includes 706 acres within the boundaries of the Agua Fria National Monument and 1,278 acres along the southern boundary line of the Monument (see Map 1). The lands are identified as:

T. 9 1/2 N., R. 2 E., Sec 35, T. 9 N., R. 2 E., Sec 13, 14, 24, and T. 9 N., R. 3 E. Sec 19, 29 and 30.

These parcels include substantial water rights; nearly one mile of the Agua Fria River; more than two miles of Squaw Creek; a spring and associated riparian habitat; wildlife habitat; many cultural resources including several large pueblo ruins, rock art sites, and artifact scatters; and opportunities for public access to Monument lands. The parcels are highly scenic and include one of the densest stands of saguaro cacti in Arizona. The majority of the properties are undeveloped except for a 40 acre parcel which has livestock developments such as corrals, a well, troughs, and fencing. A portion of the properties have been used for livestock grazing however the majority of the land is inaccessible to livestock.

Background

The BLM has been pursuing acquisition of the Cross Y Ranch since 2009. The 1,984-acre Cross Y Ranch consists of a 626-acre inholding (not including 92 acres, the ranch headquarters), two 40-acre inholding parcels on Black Mesa, and a 1,278-acre (two sections) parcel bounded by the Monument on the north, Tonto National Forest on the east, and BLM and State Land on the south (Map 1). Acquisition of these parcels in phases is possible. If BLM successfully acquires the two 40-acre and 626-acre parcels, the BLM will seek to purchase the remainder 1,278-acre parcel and will pursue modifying the AFNM boundary to include these parcels.

Purpose and Need for Action

THE PURPOSE of this acquisition is to acquire private inholdings and edge holdings in order to extend consistent land management over 1,984 acres of private land located within and along the boundaries of the Agua Fria National Monument and provide administrative protection for the resources found within these lands.

THE NEED is to preserve the cultural and biological resources on the project vicinity, as well as to facilitate compatible public access.

Decision to be Made

The Hassayampa Field Manager will decide whether to proceed with the proposed acquisition, either partially or in full, or to terminate the acquisition process.

Land Use Plan Conformance

The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plans, proclamation and guidance (43 CFR 1610.5). The proposed purchase of the property is consistent with the following goals and objectives outlined in the Agua Fria National Monument Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (April 2010) and the Bradshaw Harquahala Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (2010):

Agua Fria National Monument Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (April 2010)

- TE-14. Acquisition criteria for non-Federal lands will include lands with the potential to: enhance the conserving and managing of threatened or endangered species habitat, riparian habitat, desert tortoise habitat, key big game habitat, and improve the overall manageability of wildlife habitat.
- LR-7. Acquiring non-Federal lands within the monument boundaries will be considered if they become available from a willing seller. Upon acquisition, these lands would automatically become a part of the monument. Acquiring adjacent non-Federal lands (from a willing seller) will be considered if they could be managed to enhance monument values.
- LR-8. High priority is assigned to acquiring lands that contain habitat recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as needed for the recovery of federally listed threatened or endangered species.
- LR-9. Acquire land that contains resources determined to be important in contributing toward resource management goals and objectives, when management may be enhanced by public ownership. Resources so identified may include historical or heritage resources, outstanding scenic values, or critical ecosystems.
- LR-10. Evaluate the long-term effects of land acquisitions near rural communities on community economic and social stability and environmental sustainability. Work with a diverse network of residents, user groups, and governments to determine if land tenure adjustments could enhance both local communities and environmental health.
- LR-11. Maintain, obtain, and secure access rights to BLM-administered lands to meet monument management goals and objectives. This action is accomplished by requiring reciprocal grants (where needed) when granting rights-of-way across BLM-administered lands adjacent to the monument.

Bradshaw Harquahala Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (2010)

- TE-16. Acquisition criteria for non-Federal lands will include lands with the potential to: enhance the conserving and managing of threatened or endangered species habitat, riparian habitat, desert tortoise habitat, key big game habitat, and improve the overall manageability of wildlife habitat.

- LR-8. Acquire lands that contain resources determined to be important in contributing toward BLM resource management goals and objectives, when these resources are threatened by land use change or when management may be enhanced by public ownership. Resources so identified may include historical or heritage resources, outstanding scenic values, critical ecosystems, or potential recreation opportunities.
- LR-9. Acquire land that reduces conflicts between public and private landowner objectives.
- WS-4. Identify, quantify, and secure legal entitlement to all existing water sources on the public lands and seek to acquire water rights, when possible, to ensure water availability to meet multiple-resource needs.
- TM-19. Easements or rights-of-way across key private and State-administered lands will be acquired to ensure long-term network viability and public access. Easements or rights-of-way actions will be undertaken when:
 - route system effectiveness is or would be adversely effected by outside actions;
 - opportunity becomes available and the action is consistent with recreation settings and goals;
 - recreation and resource disciplines need public and/or administrative access to sites;
 - portal access is desired to support resource objectives of safety and sustainability.
- RR-48. Acquire legal public access to public lands for recreation uses through suitable easements, rights-of-way, or other methods.
- RR-75. Emphasize preserving open space and retaining scenic and visual qualities. Sustain recreation, cultural, and biological assets while recognizing and protecting private property rights. Retain and acquire legal access to public lands.

Scoping & Public Participation

The public was provided the opportunity to participate in this EA in compliance with 43 CFR 1610.2. Both internal and external scoping was conducted for the proposed action. An Interdisciplinary Team identified preliminary issues to be analyzed in this EA. Scoping letters were mailed to approximately 400 individuals, special interest groups, and interagency partners.

Generally, most comments were in favor of the proposed land acquisition. Many comments were in favor of the proposed action because the proposal would benefit the scenic values as well as the biological, water, riparian, and cultural resources found within the private property encompassed by and next to the AFNM. See Appendix 1 for a full list of scoping comments.

Issues Identified

For the purpose of BLM National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, an “issue” is a point of disagreement, debate, or dispute with a proposed action based on some anticipated environmental effect. An issue is more than just a position statement, such as disagreement with grazing on public lands. An issue:

- has a cause and effect relationship with the proposed action or alternatives;
- is within the scope of the analysis;
- has not been decided by law, regulation, or previous decision; and
- is amenable to scientific analysis rather than conjecture.

For the purposes of this EA, the BLM analyzed issues if the analysis of the issue is necessary to make a reasoned choice between alternatives, or the issue is significant or may have potentially significant effects (BLM H-1790-1 2008). The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) carefully considered comments by BLM specialists, interested publics, and affected agencies in order to identify issues relevant to the proposed land acquisition. The issues derived from internal and external scoping are as follows:

Issue 1- *Lands*: Determine whether or not to acquire lands

Issue 2 - *Water*: Protect water resources

Issue 3 - *Recreation*: Improve access to the Agua Fria National Monument

Issue 4 - *Cultural*: Protect cultural resources

Issue 5 - *Wildlife*: Protect biological resources

Some additional issues and concerns were raised by the public but outside the scope of this EA. The issues that were removed from further analysis include:

1. *Recreation*: Increase recreation access throughout the AFNM
2. *Cultural*: Acquisition of lands outside of the management of the BLM's Hassayampa Field Office to protect cultural resources
3. *Lands*: Rights-of-way for roads outside of the proposed land acquisition

II. ALTERNATIVES

Pursuant to Section 102(2)(E) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, federal agencies shall “Study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal which involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.” Two alternatives will be analyzed in this Environmental Assessment (EA). The two alternatives have been identified as the Proposed Action; acquire inholdings and edge holdings, or the No Action alternative; leave private inholdings and edge holdings identified for acquisition as private property.

Alternative I - Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to acquire offered inholdings and edge holdings within and bounded by the AFNM in a phased approach. In total, the BLM has proposed to acquire 1,984 undeveloped acres of the Cross Y Ranch. Phase one is to acquire two 40-acre inholding parcels on Black Mesa within the AFNM along with easement for ingress and egress into the southern portion of the AFNM.

Future phases are to acquire 626 acres of land within the AFNM boundary which includes substantial surface water rights. The acquisition would conclude with the acquisition of 1,278 acres of edge holdings south of the AFNM (See Map 1). This EA will analyze the effects of the proposed action regardless of the number of phases. As each phase of the acquisition is completed, applicable water rights and easements(s) will be acquired and appropriately designated.

The BLM would obtain the right to manage existing and grant future land use authorizations in accordance with the designated land use plan. Inholdings within the AFNM boundary would be designated as National Conservation Lands and become part of the National Landscape Conservation System and managed under the AFNM Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (2010). The 1,278 acre edge holding would become public lands and be managed under the Bradshaw-Harquahala Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (2010). The acquisition will provide continuity in administration and management of at least one known existing easement/right-of-way as well as possible future uses.

Alternative 2 - No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, no available private lands offered for sale would be acquired by the BLM. Private lands totaling 1,984 acres of would remain privately owned and available for sale. No water rights, rights-of-way, or easements would be acquired.

Alternatives Considered but Removed from Detailed Analysis

Proposed development of recreation sites on lands potentially acquired in phase two of the proposed action have been considered but removed from further analysis. This alternative was removed from further analysis because it is beyond of the scope of analysis.

Construction or development on acquired parcels would be subject to additional NEPA analysis at a later time.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

General Setting

The potential land acquisition is located within and near the Agua Fria National Monument, which was established in 2000. The AFNM was established to preserve and protect the unique cultural and biological resources found in the area. Offered parcels encompass a multitude of habitat types and an assortment of biological and cultural resources all of which are objects and values for which the Monument was designated.

Because of the biological resources within the area, both prehistoric and historic cultural uses have been documented. Prehistoric archaeological sites have been documented to exist along the Agua Fria River and on the mesa tops along the Agua Fria River and its tributaries. The Perry Mesa Tradition people lived on the mesas between A.D. 1250 and 1450. It is estimated that at least 3000 people inhabited settlements in the area during that period. A historic sheep grazing driveway occurred on lands offered for acquisition in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Cattle grazing continues on these lands.

Objects and values of the AFNM are broadly identified in the Monument Proclamation (2000). These include object and values such as cultural, both pre-historic and historic, biological, and water resources. Additionally, both objects of historic or scientific interest are also specifically articulated as objects of the AFNM. Impacts to each of the respective monument objects and values are captured in the cultural, wildlife, and water portions of the affected environment. See table 1 for a list of resources and rationale for detailed analysis.

Table 1 Resources and Rationale for Detailed Analysis

Resource	Not Present	Present, Not Affected	Present, May Be Affected	Rationale
Air Quality		X		There would be no measurable change to air quality as a result of the change of ownership of the subject parcels.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	X			Not present.
Cultural Resources			X	See Cultural section below.
Environmental Justice	X			Neither of the alternatives would disproportionately impact any low income or minority populations as described in Executive Order 12898.
Farmlands (Prime and Unique)	X			Not present.
Floodplains		X		Some parcels are located within a flood hazard zone but the proposed action and all alternatives will not impact the floodplain.
Lands			X	See Lands section below.
Native American Religious Concerns		X		Scoping letters were sent to tribal officials. The one reply was supportive of the acquisition.
Non-native Invasive and Noxious Species		X		There would be no measurable change to the presence or spread of non-native invasive or noxious species as a result of the change of ownership of the subject parcels.
Recreation			X	See Recreation section below.
Wastes (Hazardous and Solid)	X			Not present.
Water Quality (Surface and Ground)			X	See Water section below.
Wetlands and Riparian Zones			X	See Water section below.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X			Portions of the Agua Fria River in the area are identified as suitable for listing as wild river but not formally designated. No appreciable change to the characteristics of the area will occur; consequently, no further analysis is discussed.
Wilderness	X			Not present.
Wildlife, including Threatened and Endangered Species, Special Status Species, and Migratory Birds			X	See Wildlife section below.
Monument Objects and Values			X	See Wildlife, Cultural, and Water sections below.

Lands

Affected Environment

The offered lands analyzed fall within or are adjacent to the AFNM. Lands within the AFNM were withdrawn from public land laws under Proclamation 7263 of January 11, 2000. Section 2 of the Antiquities Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C 431) authorizes the President, in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be National Monuments, and to reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected. The establishment of the Monument was subject to valid existing rights. All Federal lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of the Monument were appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, leasing, or other disposition under the public land laws. Lands and interests in lands within the Monument not owned by the United States were reserved as a part of the Monument upon acquisition of title thereto by the United States. As no new authorizations are permitted within the Monument, the affected environment consists of any potential existing rights not disclosed prior to acquisition.

There is one known right-of-way located on the approximately 1,984 total acres of private land proposed for the Cross Y Ranch acquisition. Namely, APS power line right-of-way AZA-006121-01 (formally AZA-027240).

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action alternative, 1,984 acres of private property will remain as private property. No additional lands will be acquired for inclusion into the AFNM. The private land owner would continue to reserve the right to grant various land uses at will. The land ownership of at least one existing right-of-way, crossing both public and private lands, would continue to be located on more than one land management agency/party. No easements for ingress or egress to the southern portion of the AFNM for public access will be granted.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action alternative, 80 acres of land would be acquired in the first phase and an additional 1,904 acres would be acquired in later phases. Upon acquisition, one known right-of-way would convert to be under the sole land ownership of the Bureau of Land Management. As the acquisition falls within the boundaries of the AFNM, the acquired lands would be protected against all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, leasing, or other disposition under the public land laws. The acquisition would occur subject to all valid existing rights.

Water

Affected Environment

A large portion of the offered private property of the Cross Y Ranch is located in and near the Agua Fria River and Squaw Creek tributary. Perennial water flows through a small portion of the Agua Fria River within the lands offered for sale. Squaw Creek flows intermittently but is usually dry. A small spring with an estimated output of less than 1 gallon per minute is located on one of the two 40-acre parcels. Riparian forests thrive where water is expressed perennially above ground.

A small diversion dam approximately 2 feet tall diverts water away from the Agua Fria River into a small pond of approximately 1/2 acre. Associated with the pond are subsurface irrigation facilities except for where the diversion pipe crosses the Agua Fria River above ground. A significant amount of surface water rights are associated with the diversion and storage system. Water delivered by the irrigation system is used to water pastures.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no surface water rights would be acquired. 225 acre feet of water annually, diverted from the Agua Fria, would continue to be put to beneficial use for crop use. Ten acre feet of water annually would continue to be put to beneficial use for livestock which is contained within a stock pond.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action alternative, 54 acre feet of water annually of the total 225 acre feet, and 50% of the water in an undivided stock pond (five acre feet of water annually of the total of 10) would be acquired in phase two of the proposed action.

Recreation

Affected Environment

The AFNM is host to a wide variety of recreation activists. Many visitors explore the vast number of cultural resources within the AFNM. Some hike in the riparian forest of the Agua Fria River and its tributaries or view the open grasslands of the mesa tops. Equestrian use is common in many portions of the AFNM. The AFNM is home to a diverse assortment of wildlife, some of which are game species. Due to the abundance of wildlife, hunting opportunities abound within the AFNM. Encompassed by Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) Management Unit 21, tags are issued by AZGFD for mule deer, javelina, antelope, and white-tailed deer. “Over the counter tags” can be purchased for mountain lion. Quail hunters are frequently encountered during quail season as too are predator hunters.

No Action

Due to private property, current restrictions on public access and recreational opportunities would continue throughout the southern part of the AFNM.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action alternative adds 1,984 acres of public land open for recreational opportunities to hunt, experience nature, camp, hike, and view archaeological remnants/sites.

Cultural

Affected Environment

Cultural and heritage resources within the AFNM represent evidence of more than 10,000 years of human occupation of the region. The majority of the cultural resources on the monument are archaeological sites reflecting mainly pre-Columbian occupation and agricultural sites. Post-contact occupation sites are present but to a lesser degree. The monument consists of 71,000 acres; of that 50,000 acres of the monument is part of the Perry Mesa Archaeological District that was designated in 1996 with the National Register of Historic Places. The Perry Mesa Archaeological District is located on both the AFNM and the Tonto National Forest and is the largest prehistoric register district in the United States. The potential land acquisition is located at the southern end of the monument, and largely within the Perry Mesa Archaeological District. A large portion of the offered private

property of the Cross Y Ranch is located in and near the Agua Fria River and Squaw Creek tributary, which has the potential to contain a large number of cultural resources sites. A class I (literature) search discovered that 10 previously recorded archaeological sites are located within the proposed lands and 8 sites were located in the adjoining federal lands. The search also revealed that no formal archaeological surveys have been conducted within the proposed land acquisition or the adjoining federal lands.

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, 1,984 acres will remain as private property and would continue to be only protected by state laws pertaining to burials and burial related artifacts on private lands. Currently no known cultural resource sites within these lands are being monitored against vandalism, destruction or looting of artifacts and there is little chance that additional sites will be identified, documented, protected and added to the archaeological record, under current conditions. If the lands were to be developed, it is highly likely that a great deal of the known and unknown cultural resource sites would be destroyed by construction activities. Arizona does not require cultural clearance for construction on private lands, unless federal funding or specific state and municipal funding is used or if within cities that have enacted laws pertaining to the protection of cultural resources. Currently any cultural resources within the potential land acquisition are located on private land and subject to limited state laws regarding the protection of cultural resources, which only protect burials and burial associated artifacts on private lands.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action alternative, the 1,984 acres would be first and foremost protected under federal laws; including the Archaeological Resources and Protection Act of 1979 among others, which allow for federal prosecution for destruction and/or theft of cultural resources, not just burials or burial related artifacts. Known cultural resource sites and sites yet to be discovered would be added to the Perry Mesa Archaeological District knowledge base and sites would be evaluated for monitoring, documenting, stabilization and protection requirements. If acquired, cultural resource sites currently located on private property would gain protection under Sec. 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Cultural resources found within these areas would not be destroyed by development and would remain as they have for the past 1,000 years.

Wildlife

Affected Environment

Varying from the Sonoran desert and associated upland desert scrublands typified by saguaro cacti to vast expanses of semi-desert grasslands intersected by riparian gallery forests of the Agua Fria River and its tributaries, a diverse assortment of wildlife species can be found within the AFNM. Large game species such as pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) occur within the area. Small game species like the Gambel's quail (*Callipepla gambelii*) and rabbits are frequently encountered. Both the uplands and riparian forests support a diverse assortment of bird species. Due to its significance to migratory birds, areas within the offered lands are designated as important bird area by the Audubon Society. Yellow-billed cuckoos (*Coccyzus americanus*), a proposed threatened bird, likely breed in riparian forests within portions of the parcels available for acquisition. Critical habitat for the Yellow-billed cuckoo has not been proposed or designated. Mexican gartersnake (*Thamnophis eques*), a proposed threatened species and proposed critical habitat occur on lands offered. Desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) can be found along the canyon sides of the Agua Fria River. Many native fish and non-native fish game species can be found in the Agua Fria River.

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, 1,984 acres of habitat will remain as private property and not be protected. Consequently, wildlife that depend upon the private property, including many migratory birds, may be impacted by future development of those lands. Two miles of Squaw Creek and 0.4 miles of the Agua Fria River and associated riparian habitat would not be protected. 1,748 acres of Category II desert tortoise habitat, 12 acres of Category III desert tortoise habitat, 463 acres of Important Bird Area, and 40 acres of pronghorn fawning ground will remain available for development. Although the Mexican gartersnake is federally protected under the Endangered Species Act, 93 acres of its proposed critical habitat will remain as private property. Consequently, privately owned proposed critical habitat for the Mexican gartersnake will remain unprotected by the Endangered Species Act. Yellow-billed cuckoo likely breeds in the in the riparian forests of the Agua Fria River during the summer months within portions of the privately owned lands. Critical habitat for the yellow-billed cuckoo has not been proposed or designated. However, it is likely that it will be designated on privately owned lands of the Cross Y Ranch.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, 706 acres of habitat would become designated as Agua Fria National Monument lands, thus receiving protection under the Antiquities Act of 1906. An additional 1,278 acres of edge holdings may be considered to be acquired as public

lands. Consequently, wildlife that depend upon the private property, including migratory birds, will not be impacted by future development of those lands. Two miles of Squaw Creek and 0.4 miles of Agua Fria River and associated riparian habitat will be managed by the BLM and protected. A total of 93 acres of proposed Mexican gartersnake critical habitat will become part of the AFNM. If acquired, proposed critical habitat for the Mexican gartersnake will receive protection under the Endangered Species Act. The yellow-billed cuckoo, a proposed threatened riparian obligate breeding migratory bird, will benefit through the protection of 0.4 acres of riparian habitat in the Agua Fria River. 1,748 acres of Category II desert tortoise habitat, 12 acres of Category III desert tortoise habitat, 463 acres of Important Bird Area, and 40 acres of pronghorn fawning ground would also be managed and protected by implementation of the proposed action.

It is expected that visitor use would continue to occur in the Southern portion of the AFNM. However, recreation is expected to occur most frequently in the cool season when Mexican gartersnakes are inactive and yellow-billed cuckoos are not present. The environmental consequence to desert tortoise and their habitat is also expected to be at a minimum due to the biological phenology of desert tortoise. Impacts from recreation to desert tortoise and their habitat will be greatest when desert tortoises are dormant. At most, the impact of recreation to wildlife species will be short term avoidance of some areas by wildlife species during recreation activities.

Cumulatively Connected Actions

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) defines cumulative effects (also known as cumulative impacts) as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what (federal or non-federal) agency or person undertakes such actions” (40 CFR 1508.7). In other words, it is the sum total of the direct and indirect effects of the action and the direct and indirect effects of other actions on the same affected resource or resources (i.e. the overlap of the actions’ impacts). It is factored into the overall assessment of the significance of the proposed action’s/alternative’s impacts. The past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions contributing to cumulative effects in this analysis are discussed below.

Special Recreation Permit (SRP) # (AZA - 31558) is active less than one mile south of the proposed action. The primary use is equestrian trail rides. It is expected that there will be a cumulative increase in the amount of recreational use in both duration and intensity as a result of the proposed action, especially in the winter months. Authorized trail use associated with SRP # (AZA – 31558) occur in upland desert scrub within Category II desert tortoise habitat and is typically greatest during winter months when desert tortoises are not active. However, a cumulative effect of human encounters to desert tortoise from both the SRP and increased recreation use to the area is expected.

IV. PARTIES CONSULTED

United States Fish and Wildlife Service – Proposed Threatened Species Informal
Consultation

V. LIST OF PREPARERS

Paul Sitzmann	Wildlife Biologist
Bryan Lausten	Archeologist
Hillary Conner	Lands and Realty Specialist
Gloria Tibbetts	Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Brent Allen	Acting Planning and Environmental Coordinator
James Ingram	Planning and Environmental Coordinator (Pathways)
Mary Skordinsky	Recreation Planner
Amanda James	Agua Fria National Monument Manager/Assistant Field Manager
Rem Hawes	Hassayampa Field Office Manager

VI. APPENDIX I AND MAP

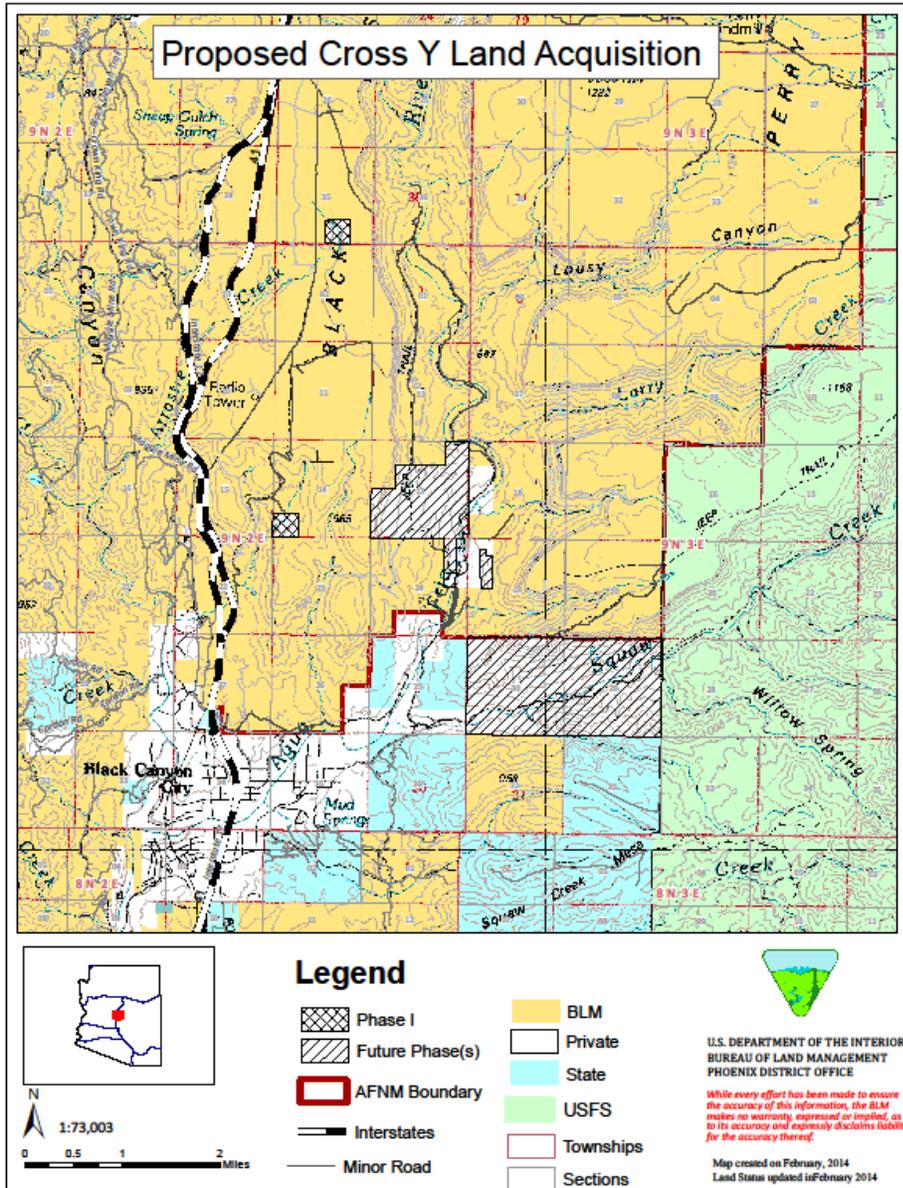
Appendix 1. Scoping Comments for the Agua Fria National Monument's 2014 Cross Y Land Acquisition Environmental Assessment (EA).

Comment ID No.	Commenter	Type	Comment/Comment Summary <i>Entries in italics are original text of comments received; no alterations or corrections have been made.</i>	Response
001	Michael Moore	Individual	<p><i>"The proposal for BLM to acquire Cross Y ranch - currently in private ownership - in a phased manner certainly seems an appropriate objective. Since BLM land surrounds the property, it seems reasonable that it, rather than an alternative government alternative, should be the organization to acquire it.</i></p> <p><i>Without information on costs involved and estimates on property value if it remained in private ownership, I can not say with certainty that I would recommend this proposal. However, I have no grounds to specifically object upon and, in abstract, I favor conservation of land."</i></p>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
002	Greg T. Watts	Individual	Questions/suggestions about potential future recreational amenities near the Cross Y acquisition and elsewhere on the Monument. Handwritten comment; original on file.	This comment raises issues that are outside the scope of the analysis for this action.
003	Dwayne Fink	Individual	<p>Excerpt:</p> <p><i>"Hopefully, the new acquisitions on the south end of the Monument will improve accessibility and eventually, there will be access off Dugas Road."</i></p>	The issue of accessibility related to acquisition of Cross Y parcels in the south end of the Monument is addressed in the EA. Access from Dugas Road is outside of the analysis area and scope of the EA.
004	Deb Westcott	Individual	<i>"I am against your proposal to acquire both the inholdings and edge holdings through a phased approach, where BLM will acquire 2 40 acre inholding parcels on Black Mesa and the 621 acres of inholdings near the southern portion of the monument. What is the land owner of Cross Y RANCH GETTING OUT OF THIS? Just how much money? I say no."</i>	The value of Federal land acquisitions are based upon appraisals of fair market value conducted by independent appraisers. This comment raises issues that are outside the scope of the analysis for this action.
005	Steven Brown, Friends of Agua Fria National Monument	Group	<i>"The Board of Directors of the Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument (Friends) wish to express their direct support for the continuing efforts to obtain funding for the acquisition by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) of the Cross Y Ranch and the continuation of this acquisition as a top priority for the Bureau. Located within the boundaries of the Agua Fria National Monument on the northern fringe of Phoenix, the total potential 701.2 acre acquisition is essential to the goals outlined in the Monument's designation. This acquisition would include substantial water rights, nearly one mile of the Agua Fria River, more than two miles of Squaw Creek, and wildlife migratory corridors. It would also protect irreplaceable cultural resources including several large pueblo ruins, rock art sites, smaller habitation sites that are critical to the ongoing world class archaeological research in the region. This property would also increase public access to the remaining 71,000 acres of Monument land and the Tonto National Forest, which are both currently inaccessible from the southern end of the Monument. The property is highly scenic and includes one of the densest stands of saguaro cacti in Arizona. Incorporated in 2006, the Friends is committed to the active partnering with BLM and other agencies and organizations in sustaining and improving watershed and ecosystem health, fish and wildlife habitat and protecting cultural resources on the Monument. These are all objectives for which the monument was designated. The Friends wish to lend their support to that of others in impressing on you the value of this acquisition to the furtherance of the qualities for which the Monument was created. We would welcome any questions you may have with regard to the Friend's support for this acquisition."</i>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
006	Ellen Martin	Individual	<p><i>"Received and read the December 26, 2013 [2130 (P030)] letter on the interim acquisition of two 40-acre parcels of land on Black Mesa and the 621-acre holding around the Cross Y Ranch...plus a potential purchase of another 1,278-acre parcel.</i></p> <p><i>I am definitely in favor of this expansion of the Monument, as it's one of the few open areas near the Phoenix area that hasn't been destroyed by development. (I live in Tempe and hate what's been done to the downtown area; most of its prehistoric and historic sites and buildings are gone now. Then there are all the Phoenix Basin mountains with houses crawling up the sides...)</i></p> <p><i>I've been to the monument several times, the last time for the 2013 Arizona Archaeology EXPO. I'd love to be able to explore more of the area, including additional pueblos, perhaps part of the same cultural group as in the current</i></p>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.

Comment ID No.	Commenter	Type	Comment/Comment Summary <i>Entries in italics are original text of comments received; no alterations or corrections have been made.</i>	Response
			<p><i>AFNM, and rock art sites. Perhaps there are Cross Y Ranch buildings than can also tell a story.</i></p> <p><i>Hopefully, this is the kind of feedback the BLM is requesting. I think this would be a good use of Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act funding, even if the land can only be purchased in several phases. This area should be protected and available for public use long into the future."</i></p>	
007	Tawny Kite	Individual	<p><i>"Hi Amanda I am Tawny Kite. I've lived in this area since 1958, lived in Black Canyon City since 1990. I totally agree with acquiring the Cross Y ranch. I've know Bob Ashcraft for several years and protecting that area is a goal for him. It's pristine land and I live at the south end of it. Needless to say, I would prefer it's preservation to looking out my back door and seeing subdivisions on the nice hills with the saguaros on them. We love our surrounding hills and mountains and would love for the BLM to care for them for a long time to come. Our little town wouldn't be the same with big development coming in and upsetting the ambiance!!</i></p> <p><i>I would like to comment on the road out Perry to some of the homes on Perry, Shadow Mtn. and Shangrila. I'm understanding there is no legal access or right of way to all these homes. Is there something in the works to grant easement or legal access to our homes?? What happens if that can't or won't happen?? We are basically between BLM and the National Monument, but my home has been here since 1980 and I know a few others have been here longer than that. Do we get a "grandfather clause" easement, or something on that order?? Our property values are effected by this. Now FEMA has decided some of us are in a flood zone as we border the meanderland of the Agua Fria, perhaps trying to close off access by the road to our homes. What and where can we do or go for help with this matter?? We've not been able to get in and out all these years, why change status now?"</i></p>	This comment raises issues that are outside the scope of the analysis for this action.
008	Katherine Spielmann	Individual	<p>Excerpt:</p> <p><i>"What do you need from me? It's a great idea."</i></p>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
009	Virginia Wenzel	Individual	<p><i>"I urge in the strongest possible way that the BLM purchase the Cross Y land. We are in a drought which is only to get worse. Please protect our water source from development."</i></p>	Impacts to water and hydrology are addressed in the analysis.
010	Bob Leighty	Individual	<p><i>"I currently teach Geology at Mesa Community College, but have spent significant time mapping the geology in and around the Agua Fria National Monument. The proposed BLM land acquisition in and around the AFNM looks reasonable and prudent; I am fully supportive of this action. Please let me know if I can lend any further assistance."</i></p>	This comment does not raise any issues germane to the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
011	Archie Dickey	Individual	<p><i>"I read the article about the land purchase in last nights Prescott Courier, --I strongly support this."</i></p>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
012	Tom Hildebrandt	Individual	<p><i>"As you well know, I am familiar with the landscape and legal holdings of many areas of the Agua Fria National Monument. Based on this knowledge I strongly support the BLM's announced intent to purchase the 2 40-acre parcels available currently from the Cross Y Ranch. These and similar acquisitions will help consolidate the monument geographically and lead to enhanced success in achieving your varied objectives in managing the land, water, wildlife and cultural heritage that is the focus of the AFNM.</i></p> <p><i>Please accept my best wishes for the success of this acquisition and thank you for continuing to work towards ever more effective resource management on the AFNM."</i></p>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
013	Lance Buckhammer	Individual	<p><i>"Even though I realize that no part of the Cerbat Mountains in Mohave County is not a National Monument, I would hope this action by the BLM could be used a very good precedent for at some point in the future for the BLM <u>to also purchase</u> a few patented mining claim parcels in the Cerbat Mountains to protect historical and archeological sites that are sensitive areas in order to stay that way from unnecessary exploitation from mining which has unfortunately been the ruse of mining as a ulterior motive for the purpose lucrative tax write of a corporation, and other personal man-made development such as for homes, etc."</i></p>	This comment raises issues that are outside the scope of the analysis for this action
014	Jack Teague	Individual	<p><i>"I would like to know if there is ground, To run sheep on .I need sheep feed!"</i></p>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
015	Mike Ford	Individual	<p><i>"[T]hanks for your effort to get this story out. It will be very helpful as we work to obtain additional LWCF funding. Great job!"</i></p>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.

Comment ID No.	Commenter	Type	Comment/Comment Summary <i>Entries in italics are original text of comments received; no alterations or corrections have been made.</i>	Response
016	Beau McClure	Individual	<i>"The Arizona Chapter of the Public Lands Foundation (PLF) supports the BLM's efforts to acquire the Cross Y Ranch, which includes two 40-acre inholding parcels located on Black Mesa, a phased acquisition of 621-acres of inholdings near the southern portion of the Agua Fria National Monument, and two sections of edge holdings of land adjacent to the southern boundary of the Monument."</i>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
017	Carl & Joan Tomoff	Individual	<i>"We enthusiastically support the purchase of land parcels described in the January 9 issue of The Daily Courier. The biological, anthropological, and scenic values of these lands are significant and would further enhance the values of Agua Fria National Monument for generations to come."</i>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
018	Paul Goseta	Individual	<i>"Who is doing the appraisals?"</i>	This comment raises issues that are outside the scope of the analysis for this action. (See response to comment #4)
019	J.D. Greenburg	Individual	<i>I am totally in favor of the BLM purchasing the Cross Y Ranch land. It is hoped that additional funds will become available to purchase the remaining 621 acres and 1,278 acre parcels.</i>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
020	Michael Sandford	Individual	<i>"I am oppose of the BLM acquiring more land. Although it should be preserved. The community of Black Canyon City, in the near future may incorporate. We residents have been working with the idea for about, twenty years. The down side to our community is, we are dominated by retirees of other States, that out weight the votes of long time residents"</i>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
021	Beau McClure, Public Lands Foundation	Group	Excerpt: <i>"These acquisition will help protect the important resources. They will include substantial water rights, nearly one mile of the Agua Fria River, and more than two miles of Squaw Creek, and wildlife migratory corridors. These acquisitions also will provide improved public access to portions of the Monument that currently are difficult to reach.</i> <i>We encourage you to continue to pursue acquisition of these parcels and to manage them in accordance with the mandates of the Agua Fria National Monument Proclamation, land use plan and record of decision."</i>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
022	Hopi Tribe	Gov't	Excerpt: <i>"The Hopi Tribe claims cultural affiliation to prehistoric cultural groups in Agua Fria National Monument. Hopi Cultural Preservation Office supports the identification and avoidance of prehistoric archaeological sites, and we consider the prehistoric archaeological sites of our ancestors to be "footprints" and Traditional Cultural Properties. Therefore, we appreciate the BLM Agua Fria National Monument's solicitation of our input and your efforts to address our concerns.</i> <i>...We also understand the Cross Y Ranch property includes many natural and cultural resources including pueblo ruins, rock markings sites, and artifact scatters. Therefore, we support this proposal and the Conservation Fund's intended purchase of the remaining 1,278-acre parcel."</i>	Impacts to cultural resources are addressed in the analysis.
023	City of Phoenix	Gov't	Excerpt: <i>"Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Application No. 2130 (P030); the acquisition of Cross Y Ranch; 1,979 acres of land encompassed by, and next to, the Agua Fria National Monument. The City of Phoenix does not have any comments at this time."</i>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.
024	State Historic Preservation Office	Gov't	<i>"What a wonderful opportunity for BLM to acquire these culturally rich lands."</i>	This comment does not raise issues for the environmental analysis of the proposed action. However, we appreciate your input.

VII. MAP



Map 1. A map of the proposed land acquisition in and next to the Agua Fria National Monument with multiple phases identified for the 2014 Cross Y Land Acquisition Environmental Assessment (EA).