

**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
AGUA FRIA NATIONAL MONUMENT**

**Cross Y Land Acquisition  
DOI-BLM-AZ-P030-2014-0001-EA**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

I, the undersigned authorized officer, considering the criteria provided by 40 CFR 1508.27 and the information contained in the Cross Y Land Acquisition Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-AZ-P030-2014-0001-EA), and as explained further below, find that the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and does not exceed those effects as described in the Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM) Record of Decision (ROD) and Resource Management Plan (RMP) (2010) and the Bradshaw-Harquahala ROD and RMP (2010) of the Hassayampa Field Office (HFO). Therefore, an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared.

**Context**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes 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 within the HFO. These parcels include substantial water rights and easements for ingress and egress for legal public access to the southern portion of the Monument.

Recreational opportunities for the public are expected to improve with implementation of the proposed action. Public use is expected to increase in the southern portion of the AFNM as a result of the easement for ingress and egress which is currently unavailable.

Found within the offered lands are pronghorn fawning grounds, Category II and Category III desert tortoise habitat, proposed Critical Habitat for the Mexican gartersnake, and potential breeding habitat for the proposed as threatened yellow-billed cuckoo. It is expected that most effects will be beneficial to the species listed above as a result of increased protection under federal oversight and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Some adverse effects to wildlife species may result from increased recreation in the area. However, this effect will likely result in short term avoidance of some areas by wildlife species during recreation activities. It is expected that recreation use will be greatest during winter months; consequently, the effect to wildlife that are dormant during winter months will not be significant.

## **Intensity**

The following discussion is organized around the ten Significance Criteria described at 40 CFR 1508.27. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

**1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse:**

The effect of the land acquisition on land, water and easements will be in perpetuity. The AFNM will include an additional 706 acres of land, 54 acre feet of water annually from the Agua Fria River and 50% of the water right from an undivided stock pond, and an easement for legal public access across private lands to public lands within the southern portion of the AFNM. An additional 1,278 acres will be added to the land managed by the HFO. Recreation opportunities will increase in the area and be at its greatest during winter months. Critical habitat for the Mexican gartersnake will be protected until the need to list the species is no longer required under Section 4 of the ESA. Yellow-billed cuckoo proposed Critical Habitat is likely to be designated in the area and will also benefit from designation as Monument lands because the Critical Habitat will become protected under Section 7 of the ESA.

**2. Degree of effect on public health and safety:**

No effect to public health and safety is expected.

**3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas:**

Portions of the proposed land acquisition are within riparian areas of the Agua Fria River. This area has been identified as having Wild characteristics and is suitable for designation as Wild under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Proposed Critical Habitat for the Mexican gartersnake exists on offered lands and it is likely that Critical Habitat for the yellow-billed cuckoo will be proposed in the area. Category II and Category III desert tortoise habitat have been designated on lands that are offered. Cultural resources are also present on the offered lands. These resources, and species that reside upon the offered lands, will benefit from the added protection of becoming part of the AFNM and be protected as objects of the Monument or as resources managed by the BLM under existing regulations and Bradshaw-Harquahala ROD/RMP.

**4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial:**

Neither alternative will affect the quality of the human environment or be highly controversial.

**5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk:**

The degree to which the quality of the human environment is affected is negligible and acquired lands will be managed in the same manner as public land already located within the AFNM and HFO, respectively. Consequently, the effects of the proposed action are not highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

**6. Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration:**

The proposed action neither establishes a precedent for future BLM actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. The proposed action would serve to meet the goals of the involved private property owner and resource protection of biological and cultural resources. Additional acquisitions or development of the lands included in this proposal would require separate NEPA analysis in the future.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts:**

No individually or cumulatively significant impacts were identified for the proposed action. Any adverse impacts identified for the proposed action, in conjunction with any adverse impacts of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions will result in negligible impacts to the affected resources.

**8. Degree to which the action may adversely affect district, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources:**

The proposed action will serve to protect cultural resources that are currently unprotected. By acquiring private property and changing the ownership of the lands to BLM lands, cultural resources found upon the offered lands will become protected under federal and state laws. Additionally, cultural resources found within the Perry Mesa Historic District will be added to the District.

**9. Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat:**

The proposed land acquisition will primarily be beneficial to the proposed threatened species and the designated proposed critical habitat in the area. By acquiring private property and changing the ownership of the lands to BLM lands, proposed threatened biological resources found upon the offered lands will become protected under the Endangered Species Act. The area for recreation opportunities in the area increase, however, highest use is expected to occur during winter months when proposed threatened species are either dormant or not present in the area.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law:**

The proposed action violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

/s/ Amanda James (acting for)  
David R. Hawes  
Field Manager  
Hassayampa Field Office

6/27/2014  
Date