

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

### Aravaipa Ecosystem Management Plan Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-AZ-G010-2006-0001-EA (Formally AZ-0410-2006-040) Safford Field Office

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA); [Public Law 91-190, as amended], the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has issued the attached final Environmental Assessment (EA) # DOI-BLM-AZ-G010-2006-0001-EA for the Aravaipa Ecosystem Management Plan (EMP).

I, the authorizing official, conclude that the proposed action analyzed in this EA would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and, therefore, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is warranted.

#### **Rational for the Decision:**

Per the Council of Environmental Quality's Regulations for Implementing NEPA in determining "significance" (40 CFR 1508.27), this finding was made by considering both the context and intensity of the potential effects, as described in the final Aravaipa EMP EA, as follows:

#### **Context:**

The proposed action is in conformance with the approved Safford District Resource Management Plan and Partial Record of Decisions, Part I (1992) and Part II (1994).

#### **Intensity:**

- 1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.*

The Aravaipa EMP EA has analyzed and disclosed both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed actions and subsequent connected actions. Implementing the preferred alternative is expected to sustain or restore natural ecological processes, viable native species populations, healthy biological communities, significant cultural resources, and outstanding wilderness values while providing for compatible levels of human use and maintaining lifestyles that emphasize living in harmony with the ecosystem. This will be achieved through cooperative management efforts based on the best available knowledge. Regular monitoring of resource conditions and human use levels will be integrated with all areas of management, and management direction will regularly incorporate new insights gained from the monitoring results. There will be no significant adverse or beneficial impacts on the quality of the human environment including water, air, land use, soil and cultural and biological resources. Impacts to physical and biological resources will be limited to the project area. Impacts of the project would be minimized through a variety of mitigation measures that are identified in the EA.

- 2) *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*

The project area is mostly unpopulated and remote. There will be no disproportionate direct or indirect effects on populations defined in Executive Order (E.O.) 12898, *Environmental Justice* and E.O. 13045, *Protection of Children from Environmental*

*Health and Safety Risks.* Appropriate hazardous material management and waste disposal associated with the preferred alternative will minimize any potential risks to public health, safety, and the environment.

- 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.*

There are no parklands, prime farm lands, or wild and scenic rivers located within the project area. Analyses in the EA demonstrate that resource values of the Area of Critical Environmental Concern, wilderness, historic or cultural resources, and wetlands will not be significantly affected by the preferred alternative. Impacts of the preferred alternative have been analyzed in the EA and appropriate mitigation measures have been identified.

- 4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

The BLM solicited internal and external scoping comments and received additional comments on the draft Aravaipa EMP EA. The comments are summarized in Appendix 8 of the EA. Based on the public responses received, the project is not considered to be highly controversial.

- 5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

The effects anticipated from implementation of the Aravaipa EMP are not uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risk.

- 6) *The 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 selected alternative (Proposed Action Alternative to adopt and implement the Aravaipa EMP) does not set a precedent for future actions. The proposed action is independent of all other actions, and does not represent a commitment of BLM resources beyond that described in the EA.

- 7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.*

The cumulative impacts were considered in the EA and are not significant when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions that have affected, or will affect, the project area.

- 8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.*

Class III intensive inventories of cultural resources will be conducted in priority geographic areas and Class II inventories would be conducted in areas located outside the priority geographic areas. Cultural resources eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) will be protected and preserved per the National Historic

Aravaipa Ecosystem Management Plan and Environmental Assessment Finding of No Significant Impact

Preservation Act. Native American tribes will be provided with opportunities to identify, conserve and protect places of traditional use that are of continuing importance to Native Americans. Impacts of the preferred alternative have been analyzed in the EA and mitigation measures have been identified.

- 9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA).*

The BLM has determined that the planned action would result in a finding of “may affect, but not likely to adversely affect” federally listed species or critical habitat; thus, the effects of implementing the Aravaipa EMP are considered beneficial, insignificant, or discountable. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued the BLM a letter of concurrence with this finding following informal consultation pursuant to the ESA Section 7.

- 10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

The proposed project will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental laws and meets disclosure requirements of the NEPA. The effects from the selected alternative are not significant because the action does not threaten a violation of federal, state, or local laws.

**Mitigation:**

Please refer to the EA (DOI-BLM-AZ-G010-2006-0001-EA) for mitigation measures.



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09/15/2015

Date

Attachment: Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-AZ-G010-2006-0001-EA