

Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Target Shooting Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment

Decision Record

DOI-BLM-AZ-P040-2022-0001-RMP-EA

June 2024



INTRODUCTION

This decision record (DR) approves the United States (U.S.) Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) resource management plan amendment (RMPA) for dispersed recreational target shooting on BLM-administered lands within the Sonoran Desert National Monument (Monument). The DR and RMPA provide the management decision on the allocation of areas within the Monument that are available and unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting.

The Monument was established by Presidential Proclamation in 2001 and contains approximately 485,791 acres of BLM-administered public lands in Maricopa and Pinal Counties, Arizona (Presidential Proclamation 7397). The Monument was created to protect an array of biological, archaeological, geological, and cultural objects of historic or scientific interest (referred to as "Monument objects") (*Federal Register* 66:7354–7358).

The BLM Lower Sonoran Field Office (LSFO) completed a resource management plan (RMP) for the Monument in 2012 (*Sonoran Desert National Monument Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan* [2012 Approved RMP]) (BLM 2012a).¹ Under a March 2015 court order, the BLM was required to reanalyze the impacts of dispersed recreational target shooting in the Monument (*National Trust for Historic Preservation, et al., v. Raymond Suazo, et al., CV-13-01973-PHX-DGC*). In 2018, the BLM completed an RMP amendment (RMPA) to allow dispersed recreational target shooting on approximately 435,200 acres (90%) in the Monument (BLM 2018).

The 2018 decision was challenged in federal district court in 2019 (*The National Trust for Historic Preservation, et al., v. David Bernhardt, as Secretary of the Department of the Interior, et al., CV-19-5008-PHX-MHB*). In April 2022, the BLM entered into a settlement agreement and agreed to undertake a new planning effort to analyze impacts related to a specific alternative that encompasses an initial area that would be amended based on the results of an updated suitability analysis.

The BLM Arizona State Director prepared this RMPA and associated environmental assessment (EA) to address the April 2022 settlement agreement and consider whether dispersed recreational target shooting should be allowed in the Monument, and if it is allowed, where within the Monument it may occur, along with any associated management actions. The Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Target Shooting Resource Management Plan Amendment and EA (RMPA/EA) was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States Code [USC] 4321-4347), as amended; the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) (43 USC 1701 et seq.); BLM planning regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1600); the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (16 USC 7202); the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 (Dingell Act) (Public Law [PL] 116-9, Section 4103); and other applicable laws. The RMPA decision amends the existing 2018 RMPA decision regarding dispersed recreational target shooting that amended the 2012 Approved RMP. Other decisions made in the 2012 RMP, as amended, remain unchanged.

Since the 2012 RMP and 2018 RMPA, the Dingell Act was enacted, which established a new process that the BLM must comply with when proposing to close public lands to hunting, fishing, or recreational shooting. Under the Dingell Act, the BLM is required to provide public notice and comment, as well as consult with state fish and wildlife agencies, before a final decision is made to close an area to recreational shooting. In accordance with the Dingell Act, the BLM provided the public with a 60-day opportunity to comment on the proposed dispersed recreational target shooting closures in the Monument.

¹ Full references for documents cited in this decision record are available in the *Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Target Shooting Resource Management Plan Amendment Environmental Assessment* (DOI-BLM-AZ-P040-2022-0001-RMP-EA).

During that time, the BLM received 243 unique comment submissions from 1,027 individuals and three organizations (Desert Tortoise Council, Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation, and one comment submission from the Conservation Lands Foundation, The Wilderness Society, Archaeology Southwest, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Friends of the Ironwood Forest, and Friends of the San Pedro River). From these comment submissions, 197 unique substantive comments were identified. The BLM's responses to the substantive comments are included in a Dingell Act Comment Report, which are part of this DR in Appendix A.

This DR and RMPA provide the decision made, an overview of the alternatives considered, a summary of protests received and how they were resolved, management considerations and rationale for the decision, and an overview of public involvement in the planning process.

Decision

Based on review of the *Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Target Shooting Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment and Final Environmental Assessment* (DOI-BLM-AZ-P040-2022-0001-RMP-EA), the decision is made to approve the Selected Alternative described below.

Selected Alternative

Alternative C (Settlement Agreement Alternative) is the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative was developed following the requirements of the April 2022 settlement agreement, which 1) identified specific areas to be analyzed as unavailable; 2) identified buffer distances for specific resources (such as the Komatke Trail); and 3) required that the results of the suitability analysis presented in Appendix A of the RMPA/EA be incorporated.

Under the Selected Alternative, dispersed recreational target shooting would be available on 5,295 acres (1% of the Monument) and unavailable on 480,496 acres (99% of the Monument). Section 2.5 of the RMPA/EA provides detail regarding the formulation of this alternative. Additionally, the Selected Alternative includes implementation of the existing Monument Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol in Appendix B of the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS and following the standard operating procedures and best management practices outlined in Appendix D of the 2012 Approved RMP. Appendix D of the 2012 Approved RMP is part of this DR in Appendix B.

The Selected Alternative modifies only the areas that are available and unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting use and does not modify any of the other management decisions in the 2012 Approved RMP, as amended. This decision does not change current management for general public access and management of other discretionary uses in the Monument, such as hunting, camping, and off-road vehicle use.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on the analysis of the Selected Alternative, the BLM determined that the RMPA/EA would not have significant effects; therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. The finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the RMPA/EA was approved on June 3, 2024, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

Public Involvement

Public Scoping

Public scoping for this RMPA/EA began on August 24, 2022, with the publication of the notice of intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register*. The NOI requested public comments concerning the scope of the analysis, potential alternatives, planning criteria, identification of relevant information, and studies. The last public scoping meeting was held on October 13, 2022, and the public scoping period closed on October 28, 2022. The total scoping period lasted 66 days. The BLM received 819 unique submissions during the public scoping period comprising 772 substantive comments. Most comments received were from individuals (809 submissions), followed by organizations (10 submissions). Detailed information about the comments received and about the public outreach process can be found in the *Scoping Report for the Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Target Shooting Resource Management Plan Amendment* (BLM 2022).

Public Comment

The draft RMPA/EA was made available to the public for review and comment for 30 days on June 14, 2023. The comment period was extended by the BLM for an additional 15 days. The comment period closed on August 5, 2023. The BLM received 62 comment emails and letters from individuals and five comment letters from organizations to consider. From these submittals, 44 unique substantive comments were identified. Comments received on the draft RMPA/EA were summarized, and responses are included in Appendix B of the Proposed RMPA/EA.

Dingell Act

The Dingell Act requires that the BLM provide an opportunity for public comment on proposed closures of public land to recreational target shooting that do not fall within specific statutory exemptions. The Dingell Act requires that the BLM must make a notice, describing the proposed closure and justification for the closure, available in advance of the public comment period to local offices, chapters, and affiliate organizations in the vicinity of the closure that are signatories to the Shooting Sports Roundtable Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In accordance with the Shooting Sports Roundtable MOU, the BLM included private organizations in the public involvement contact lists for the RMPA/EA; the public comment period was extended by 15 days in response to participating private organizations' request, and the private organizations were provided a 2-week advance notice of the availability of the Proposed RMPA/EA.

A notice commencing the 60-day Dingell Act comment period appeared in the *Federal Register* on January 22, 2024, and the 60-day Dingell Act comment period closed on March 22, 2024. The BLM received 243 unique comment emails and letters during the Dingell Act comment period from 1,028 individuals and two organizations. The unique comment submittals include one form letter, of which the BLM received 809 copies. From these submittals, 197 unique substantive² comments were identified. Comments received during the Dingell Act comment period were summarized, and responses can be

² The BLM differentiates between what qualifies as a substantive comment under NEPA and under the Dingell Act. Under the Dingell Act, the BLM must “respond in a reasoned manner to the comments received,” explain how the agency “resolved any significant issues raised by the comments,” and “show how the resolution led to the closure.” The BLM defined substantive comments as those that

- raise, debate, or question a point of fact or policy as it relates to the provisions of the Dingell Act; or
- question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in an existing report.

found in the *Dingell Act Comment Report for the Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Target Shooting Resource Management Plan Amendment* (BLM 2024) in Appendix A.

Consultation and Coordination

Native American Tribe Consultation

Government-to-government consultation for the 2018 Approved RMPA began in March 2016. The following Tribes were sent initial consultation letters and invitations to be a cooperating agency:

- Ak-Chin Indian Community
- Hopi Tribe
- Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
- Gila River Indian Community
- Tohono O’odham Nation

The Ak-Chin Indian Community signed a MOU and is a cooperating agency in the RMPA. The BLM attended Tribal council meetings, presented information on this action, and had opportunities for discussion, as well as attended several Four Southern Tribes Cultural Working Group meetings in order to present updates and speak face to face with Tribal cultural staff in additional discussions. Letters were sent to Tribal leadership with courtesy copies to cultural staff for the initiation of consultation, workshop invitations, notifications of public meetings, and review and comment descriptions, as well as face-to-face meetings.

For this effort, the BLM continued government-to government consultation with the five Tribes that were sent initial consultation letters in 2016. The BLM LSFO management presented information on this RMPA/EA on November 18, 2022, at the Four Southern Tribes Cultural Working Group meeting and sent a letter to the Tribes on December 2, 2022. Responses were received from the Tohono O’odham Nation and Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

Other Federal, State, and Local Governments

The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was notified of the status of the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS on February 16, 2016, via certified mail and met with the BLM on April 14 and October 28, 2016, to discuss the project in depth. As a result, the BLM developed a compliance document that addressed issues related to Section 106 consultation. The BLM consulted with the Arizona SHPO under the Arizona Protocol and provided the Arizona SHPO with a report containing relevant data on all previous inventory and all known cultural resource sites.

For this effort, the BLM sent an initial notification letter to the Arizona SHPO on January 4, 2022, and received a response on February 3, 2022. The BLM sent a letter requesting formal concurrence on the Area of Potential Effect (defined as the Monument) of the project to the SHPO on September 12, 2023, and received concurrence from the SHPO on October 5, 2023. The BLM has coordinated with the SHPO regarding future pedestrian surveys within the areas that would be made available for recreational target shooting and the potential for future decisions modifying areas that would be available and unavailable for these activities to protect the integrity, context, and setting of cultural and heritage Monument objects.

The BLM initiated consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act on April 13, 2023, via email and shared the biological opinion

completed for the 2012 Approved RMP with the USFWS. The BLM and USFWS had also previously engaged in informal consultation regarding the effects of recreational target shooting management decisions as part of the 2018 Approved RMPA. During the previous formal and informal consultations, the USFWS recommended incorporating surveys of the acuña cactus within potential and critical habitat as part of the overall monitoring program to assess the long-term impacts of recreational target shooting on Monument resources. The public draft of this RMPA/EA was provided to the USFWS on November 16, 2023, and the BLM updated the biological assessment previously completed for the 2012 Approved RMP with relevant information regarding species status changes, such as the listing of the cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl in 2023, and other new information and provided it to the USFWS for review on December 20, 2023. On May 17, 2024, the USFWS provided a conference report and concurred with the BLM's determination that Alternative C *may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect* the acuña cactus and its critical habitat or the cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl. The USFWS also concurred with the BLM's determination that Alternative C is not likely to jeopardize the Sonoran pronghorn and recommended that the BLM incorporate information about Sonoran pronghorn in outreach and educational materials for all users, prohibit dispersed recreational target shooting at night, coordinate with the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) both annually and during periods of severe drought regarding fawning and forage use near areas made available for dispersed recreational target shooting, and requested that future waters developments in the Saucedo Subunit be located outside the area of auditory disturbance around areas made available for dispersed recreational target shooting.

The National Park Service and the AZGFD are cooperating agencies on this effort. This relationship was formalized through MOUs executed on April 21, 2023, and April 17, 2023, respectively.

Authority

This decision is issued under FLPMA, which establishes policies and procedures for management of public lands, and the Dingell Act, which expressly authorizes the BLM to close public lands to recreational shooting. Section 202 of FLPMA and the regulations implementing the act's land use planning provisions (43 CFR 1601 and 1610) provide a process and direction to guide the development, amendment, and revision of land use plans for the use of public lands.

Rationale

Presidential Proclamation 7397 identifies the Monument objects the establishment of the Monument is meant to protect and states, "The Secretary of the Interior shall prepare a management plan that addresses the actions, including road closures or travel restrictions, necessary to protect the objects identified in this proclamation." According to Section 302(a) of FLPMA, the National System of Public Lands is to be managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield "except that where a tract of such public land has been dedicated to specific uses according to any other provisions of law it shall be managed in accordance with such law." This section of FLPMA directs that when an area of public land is set aside by a Presidential Proclamation issued under the Antiquities Act of 1906, as the Monument is, the designating language in the Proclamation is the controlling law (see BLM Instruction Memorandum 2009-215).

The land use plan and management direction for a national monument must comply with the purposes and objectives of the establishing Proclamation. Multiple uses are allowed to the extent they are not inconsistent with the establishing Proclamation. The intent of formulating management direction for dispersed recreational target shooting is to assist in the protection of Monument objects by determining where this type of activity can be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the protection of Monument objects.

The 2018 Approved RMPA made 50,592 acres of the Monument (10% of the Monument) with high recreational use unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting in consideration of public safety. The RMPA considered the 2018 decision and incorporates some of the analysis supporting that decision-making process but also considered additional issues not adequately addressed in that decision, including Monument objects and the administration of the Monument. The suitability analysis presented in Appendix A of the RMPA/EA documents where dispersed recreational target shooting activities are consistent with the protection of Monument objects identified in Proclamation 7397. The BLM also determined that aligning the area made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting around water sources to protect wildlife identified in the Proclamation with the existing state law (Arizona Revised Statutes 17-308) that prohibits camping within 0.25 mile of a water source would facilitate consistent administration of these areas. Based on that analysis, the BLM determined that dispersed recreational target shooting was inconsistent with the protection of Monument objects on 270,069 acres (56% of the Monument).

As part of its suitability analysis, the BLM also determined that public health and safety concerns made additional areas of the Monument unsuitable for dispersed recreational target shooting. The suitability analysis identified an additional 145,797 acres (30% of the Monument) beyond those areas containing Monument objects as lacking suitable topography (i.e., backstops) for dispersed recreational target shooting activities. These areas were made unavailable in consideration of public safety.

Based on a site evaluation conducted in 2022, the BLM determined that administrative concerns made areas such as designated wilderness areas and lands with wilderness characteristics unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting. The BLM documented damage and trash accumulation in areas used for dispersed recreational target shooting along cherry-stem roads accessing designated wilderness areas in the Monument and within areas with wilderness characteristics. As the Wilderness Act prohibits the use of motorized and mechanized equipment within designated wilderness areas and topography makes accessing these areas on foot challenging, the BLM must conduct cleanup efforts via helicopter, which is cost prohibitive. The BLM determined that aligning the area made unavailable with existing boundaries for designated wilderness areas and lands with wilderness characteristics would facilitate consistent administration of dispersed recreational target shooting activities within the Monument, which accounts for the remaining 11,945 acres (3% of the Monument) made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting.

The areas made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting also includes a 77,958-acre area that was formerly part of the Barry M. Goldwater Range (known as Area A), which requires a permit for public access due to the potential presence of unexploded ordnance. Area A was made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting in consideration of public safety. Approximately 60,681 acres of Area A contains Monument objects that are not compatible with dispersed recreational target shooting activities (included in the 56% of the Monument made unavailable) and 11,519 acres lacking suitable topography (included in the 30% of the Monument made unavailable) that would otherwise not be made available. An additional 3,553 acres of the remaining portion of Area A with suitable topography is located within lands with wilderness characteristics (see discussion below for more information regarding administrative concerns, included in the 3% of the Monument made unavailable). The final remaining 2,093 acres of Area A was made unavailable due to public safety concerns related to unexploded ordnance (< 1% of the Monument).

Finally, because Monument objects identified in the suitability analysis as incompatible with dispersed recreational target shooting activities are present and vulnerable to damage year-round (i.e., saguaro cactus forests, Sonoran desert tortoise, cultural and heritage resources), and public safety concerns (i.e., suitable topography, unexploded ordnance) do not have a seasonal component, the BLM determined that year-round restrictions were necessary to address public safety concerns and meet the BLM's

management responsibilities for Monument objects. As such, the BLM has determined that making the 480,496 acres of the Monument unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting for the life of the current RMP represents the smallest area for the least amount of time that is required for public safety, administration, or compliance with applicable laws, in accordance with the provisions of the Dingell Act.

Governor's Consistency Review

In accordance with the regulations at 43 CFR 1610.3-2(e), the BLM submitted the Proposed RMPA/EA for a 60-day governor's consistency review period on January 22, 2024. The BLM did not receive a reply from the Governor's Office identifying any inconsistencies with approved state or local plans, policies, or programs.

Protest Resolution

Publication of the Proposed RMPA/EA and unsigned FONSI on January 22, 2024, initiated the 30-day protest period. The protest period ended on February 21, 2024. Pursuant to the BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the RMPA/EA planning process and had an interest that may be adversely affected by the BLM's planning decisions was allowed to protest the proposed planning decisions within 30 days of when the Proposed RMPA/EA and unsigned FONSI were published on the ePlanning website.

The BLM received nine unique protest letter submissions during the 30-day protest period. In accordance with 43 CFR 1610.5-2, the BLM evaluated all protest letters to determine which protest letters were complete and timely and which persons have standing to protest. Six letters were complete and timely, but the persons who submitted the letters did not participate in the planning process and therefore did not have standing to protest. These six letters were therefore dismissed from consideration due to lack of standing. The remaining three letters from AZGFD, the Center for Biological Diversity, and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation were complete and timely and were from parties who had standing to protest. The BLM Director's decisions on the protests are summarized in the *Director's Summary Protest Resolution Report for the Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Target Shooting Resource Management Plan Amendment*, which is available on ePlanning.

The BLM's Assistant Director for Resources and Planning³ concluded that the BLM Arizona State Director followed the applicable laws, regulations, and policies and considered all relevant resource information and public input in developing the RMPA/EA. Each protesting party was notified in writing of the findings and the disposition of their protests. The BLM resolved all but two of the protests without making changes to the RMPA/EA. The BLM made minor changes to the proposed RMPA/EA that consisted of explaining in Section 2.9 why an alternative submitted during the public comment period was not carried forward for detailed analysis; adding additional context concerning the analysis of the effects of bioaccumulation of lead in wildlife to Section 3.2.2, Priority Wildlife Habitat and Species; and clarifying in the applicable sections of Chapter 3 that impacts from improper off-highway vehicle use may occur. The protest decision is the final decision of the U.S. DOI.

Mitigation Measures

The Selected Alternative would include implementing the existing Monument Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol (see Appendix B of the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS) and following the best

³ Resolution of protests is delegated to the BLM Assistant Director for Resources and Planning consistent with the BLM Delegation of Authority Manual (MS-1203, Delegation of Authority).

practices outlined in Appendix D of the 2012 Approved RMP. Continued implementation of the Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol would reduce the potential for long-term impacts to natural resources in the areas of the Monument available for dispersed recreational target shooting activities. Monitoring activities would evaluate the disturbance and impacts associated with dispersed recreational target shooting, and mitigation measures could be implemented to reduce the risk that locations do not exceed limits of acceptable change set forth in Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol an area is determined to have become incompatible with dispersed recreational target shooting or has received extensive damage, mitigation measures could include temporary or long-term closure of areas to dispersed recreational target shooting. Monitoring would also evaluate whether dispersed recreational target shooting activity is occurring in areas that are unavailable for that activity, and additional actions (such as signage) could be implemented. Closures could require a plan amendment and would be implemented in accordance with applicable law.

Implementation-Level Actions

The planning decision RMPA will be effective when the DR is signed. The BLM will continue to monitor the resources in the Monument in accordance with the Monument Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol (see Appendix B of the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS).

Future site-specific resource surveys and monitoring may result in new decisions modifying the areas made available and unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting in the Monument. Resource surveys may include, but are not limited to completion of pedestrian surveys for cultural and heritage resources within areas made available for dispersed recreational target shooting under this decision. Based on the results of resource surveys and ongoing consultation with the SHPO and Tribes, decisions modifying areas available and unavailable may be necessary for the proper care and management of Monument objects. Other future implementation-level decisions could include seasonal restrictions and/or other refinements or restrictions on the areas available for dispersed recreational target shooting, the type of dispersed recreational target shooting activities allowed, and the timing of dispersed recreational target shooting activities. Other implementation-level decisions may include public outreach, signage, and development of informational materials.

Decision

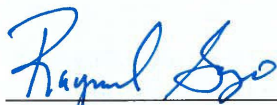
It is my Decision to approve Alternative C as the Selected Alternative and as described in the RMPA/EA. The Selected Alternative replaces the decision regarding areas available and unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting in the 2018 Approved RMPA. I have considered the issues, public comments, and potential impacts to the human environment in making this Decision.

ANGELA MEECE

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MEECE
Date: 2024.05.31 12:46:14 -07'00'

Leon Thomas
District Manager
Phoenix District Office

Date



Raymond Suazo
State Director
Arizona State Office

6-3-2024

Date

APPENDIX A

Dingell Act Comment Report for the Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Target Shooting Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment



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

Dingell Act Comment Report for the Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Target Shooting Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment

DOI BLM AZ P040 2022 0001 RMP EA

June 2024



1 INTRODUCTION

The Sonoran Desert National Monument (Monument) was established by presidential proclamation in 2001 and contains approximately 485,791 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM)–administered public lands in Maricopa and Pinal Counties, Arizona (Presidential Proclamation 7397). The Monument was created to protect an array of biological, archaeological, geological, and cultural objects of historic or scientific interest (referred to as “Monument objects”) (*Federal Register* 66: 7354–7358).

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The 2018 decision was challenged in federal district court in 2019 (*The National Trust for Historic Preservation, et al., v. David Bernhardt, as Secretary of the Department of the Interior, et al., CV-19-5008-PHX-MHB*). In April 2022, the BLM entered into a settlement agreement and agreed to undertake a new planning effort to analyze impacts related to a specific alternative that would make certain areas of the Monument unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting and would be amended based on the results of an updated suitability analysis.

The BLM Arizona State Director prepared the RMPA and associated environmental assessment (RMPA/EA) to address the April 2022 settlement agreement and consider whether dispersed recreational target shooting should be allowed in the Monument, and if it is allowed, where within the Monument it may occur, along with any associated management actions. The RMPA decision amends the existing 2018 RMPA decision regarding dispersed recreational target shooting that amended the 2012 Approved RMP. Other decisions made in the 2012 Approved RMP, as amended, remain unchanged.

The John Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 (Public Law [PL] 116-9, Section 4103) (Dingell Act) requires the BLM to provide public notice and comment before closing public lands to hunting, fishing, or recreational shooting. The Dingell Act also stipulates in Section 4103(a)(2) that any area designated for a shooting closure be the smallest area that is required for public safety, administration, or compliance with applicable laws.

2 COMMENT PERIOD

The 60-day Dingell Act comment period for the Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Target Shooting Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) modification to areas available and unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting within the Monument began on January 22, 2024 (*Federal Register* 89:3949), and ended on March 22, 2024.

3 EXTENT OF THE CLOSURE AND TIME PERIOD OF CLOSURE

The RMPA makes 480,496 acres of the 485,791 acres of the Monument unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting. This closure results in a reduction of 429,905 acres of the 435,200 acres

previously available for dispersed recreational target shooting. In total, 5,295 acres of BLM-administered lands within the Monument remain available for dispersed recreational target shooting.

Presidential Proclamation 7397, which identifies the Monument objects that the Monument was established to protect, states “The Secretary of the Interior shall prepare a management plan that addresses the actions, including road closures or travel restrictions, necessary to protect the objects identified in this proclamation.” According to Section 302(a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), the National System of Public Lands is to be managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield “except that where a tract of such public land has been dedicated to specific uses according to any other provisions of law it shall be managed in accordance with such law.” This section of FLPMA directs that when an area of public land is set aside by a Presidential Proclamation issued under the Antiquities Act of 1906, as is this Monument, the designating language in the Proclamation is the controlling law (see BLM Instruction Memorandum [IM] 2009-215).

The land use plan and management direction for a national monument must comply with the purposes and objectives of the establishing Proclamation. Multiple uses are allowed to the extent they are not inconsistent with the establishing Proclamation. The intent of formulating management direction for dispersed recreational target shooting is to assist in the protection of Monument objects by determining where this type of activity can be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the protection of Monument objects.

The 2018 Approved RMPA made 50,592 acres of the Monument (10% of the Monument) with high recreational use unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting in consideration of public safety. The RMPA considered the 2018 decision and incorporates some of the analysis supporting that decision-making process but also considered additional issues not adequately addressed in that decision, including Monument objects and administration of the Monument. The suitability analysis presented in Appendix A of the RMPA/EA documents where dispersed recreational target shooting activities are consistent with the protection of Monument objects identified in Proclamation 7397. The BLM also determined that aligning areas made unavailable to dispersed recreational target shooting around water sources to protect wildlife identified in the Proclamation with the existing state law (Arizona Revised Statutes [ARS] 17-308) that prohibits camping within 0.25 mile of a water source would facilitate consistent administration of these areas. Based on that analysis, the BLM determined that dispersed recreational target shooting was inconsistent with the protection of Monument objects on 270,069 acres (56% of the Monument).

As part of its suitability analysis, the BLM also determined that public health and safety concerns made additional areas of the Monument unsuitable for dispersed recreational target shooting. The suitability analysis identified an additional 145,797 acres (30% of the Monument) beyond those areas containing Monument objects as lacking suitable topography (i.e., backstops) for dispersed recreational target shooting activities. These areas were made unavailable in consideration of public safety.

Based on a site evaluation conducted in 2022, the BLM determined that administrative concerns made areas such as designated wilderness areas and lands with wilderness characteristics unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting. The BLM documented damage and trash accumulation in areas used for dispersed recreational target shooting along cherry-stem roads accessing designated wilderness areas in the Monument and within areas with wilderness characteristics. As the Wilderness Act prohibits the use of motorized and mechanized equipment within designated wilderness areas and topography makes accessing these areas on foot challenging, the BLM must conduct cleanup efforts via helicopter, which is cost prohibitive. The BLM determined that aligning the area made unavailable with existing boundaries for designated wilderness areas and lands with wilderness characteristics would facilitate consistent administration of dispersed recreational target shooting activities within the Monument, which

accounts for the remaining 11,945 acres (3% of the Monument) made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting.

The areas made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting also include a 77,958-acre area that was formerly part of the Barry M. Goldwater Range (known as Area A), which requires a permit for public access due to the potential presence of unexploded ordnance. Area A was made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting in consideration of public safety. Approximately 60,681 acres of Area A contains Monument objects that are not compatible with dispersed recreational target shooting activities (included in the 56% of the Monument made unavailable) and 11,519 acres lacking suitable topography (included in the 30% of the Monument made unavailable) that would otherwise not be made available. An additional 3,553 acres of the remaining portion of Area A with suitable topography is located within lands with wilderness characteristics (see discussion below for more information regarding administrative concerns, included in the 3% of the Monument made unavailable). The final remaining 2,093 acres of Area A was made unavailable solely due to public safety concerns related to unexploded ordnance (< 1% of the Monument).

Finally, because Monument objects identified in the suitability analysis as incompatible with dispersed recreational target shooting activities are present and vulnerable to damage year-round (i.e., saguaro cactus forests, Sonoran desert tortoise, cultural and heritage resources), and public safety concerns (i.e., suitable topography, unexploded ordnance) do not have a seasonal component, the BLM determined that year-round restrictions were necessary to address public safety concerns and meet the BLM's management responsibilities for Monument objects. As such, the BLM has determined that making the 480,496 acres of the Monument unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting for the life of the current RMP represents the smallest area for the least amount of time that is required for public safety, administration, or compliance with applicable laws, in accordance with the provisions of the Dingell Act.

4 METHOD OF COMMENT COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

To ensure public comments concerning the recreational shooting closures were properly registered and that none were overlooked, the BLM used a multiphase management and tracking system. Written submissions were given a unique identifier and were logged into the system. The BLM then reviewed each submission and individual comments were extracted.

In this report, a comment submission refers to a unique letter or email public comment received by the BLM during the Dingell Act comment period. A comment refers to a substantive statement identified within the comment submission. The BLM differentiates between what qualifies as a substantive comment under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Dingell Act. Under the Dingell Act, the BLM must "respond in a reasoned manner to the comments received," explain how the agency "resolved any significant issues raised by the comments," and "show how the resolution led to the closure." The BLM defined substantive comments as those that

- raise, debate, or question a point of fact or policy as it relates to provisions in the Dingell Act; or
- question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in an existing report.

The BLM initially reviewed each submission to specifically identify the following:

- Submissions that were considered not relevant because they did not pertain to the provisions in the Dingell Act or those related to the decision (examples of not relevant comments include comments regarding changes to Monument boundaries, general comments regarding analysis in the NEPA document not relevant to the Dingell Act, comments regarding dispersed recreational

target shooting access outside the Monument, comments regarding uses other than dispersed recreational target shooting, or sharing a personal story)

- Form letters (standardized and duplicated letters that contain identical or nearly identical text) and “form plus” submissions, which are form letters that slightly deviate from a standard form letter by containing similar text that is not identical to a master form letter submission. Form plus submissions are tallied in the total submission count but are not counted as individual unique comments unless they contain additional substantive text.

The BLM then reviewed each substantive comment, which were further classified by process and issue category. Comments were next entered into a comment database for analysis. The database stores the full text of all correspondence and allows each comment to be coded by topic and issue. Outputs from the database consist of tallies of the total number of correspondence and comments received, sorting and reporting comments by a topic or issue.

All substantive comments identified were grouped by similar issue/concern and are summarized in Table 1, along with the BLM’s responses.

5 PARTIES RESPONDING TO THE COMMENT PERIOD

The BLM received 243 unique comment submissions during the Dingell Act comment period from 1,027 individuals and three organizations (Desert Tortoise Council, Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation, and one comment submission from the Conservation Lands Foundation, The Wilderness Society, Archaeology Southwest, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Friends of the Ironwood Forest, and Friends of the San Pedro River). The unique comment submissions included one form letter, of which the BLM received 809 copies. The form letter was in support of full closure of the Monument to dispersed recreational target shooting. From these comment submissions, 197 unique substantive comments were identified. Many of the unique substantive comments received from individual commenters were identical or similar in nature to substantive comments raised by other commenters and were summarized into 22 issue/concern statements. Table 1 shows the number of unique substantive comments that were summarized for each issue/concern statement.

Table 1. Comment Analysis and Response

Number	Issue/Concern	Count	Response
1	Concern that the BLM's decision does not comply with the provisions of the Dingell Act and goes beyond "public safety, administration, or compliance with applicable laws"	1	<p>The Dingell Act (PL 116-9, Section 4103) requirements and guidance in BLM IM 2021-010: Implementation of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, regarding access for recreational target shooting, were considered during the planning process (see Section 1.5, Planning Process; Section 1.6.2, Relationship to Other Federal Laws, Regulations, Policies, and Programs; and Section 1.6.3, Recreation Management-Specific Laws, Regulations, and Policies, of the RMPA/EA). The Dingell Act does not define thresholds for the "smallest area for the least amount of time" and instead leaves this determination to the agencies.</p> <p>A detailed rationale for the BLM's determination of the area made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting is provided in Section 3 of this comment report and is summarized in this response. Previously, the BLM made 50,592 acres of the Monument (10% of the Monument) with high recreational use unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting in consideration of public safety. The suitability analysis presented in Appendix A of the RMPA/EA documents where dispersed recreational target shooting activities are consistent with the protection of Monument objects identified in Proclamation 7397, and based on that analysis, the BLM determined that dispersed recreational target shooting was inconsistent with the protection of Monument objects on 270,069 acres (56% of the Monument). The suitability analysis identified an additional 145,797 acres (30% of the Monument) beyond those areas containing Monument objects as lacking suitable topography (i.e., backstops) for dispersed recreational target shooting activities and was made unavailable in consideration of public safety. In order to facilitate administration of dispersed recreational target shooting activities, the BLM aligned boundaries of areas made available and unavailable with existing administrative boundaries, including use restrictions to protect wildlife and livestock access around water sources under state law (which also had the effect of protecting wildlife identified as Monument objects), designated wilderness areas, lands with wilderness characteristics, and Area A. Area A was made unavailable for both public safety and administrative reasons in alignment with the existing permit requirement. As such, the decision complies with the provisions of the Dingell Act in regard to public safety, administration, and compliance with applicable laws.</p>
2	Concern that the analysis does not demonstrate a closure is required and that the areas made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting are "the smallest area for the least amount of time"; the suitability analysis does not provide specific peer-reviewed literature to support the rationale for resource buffers and time-limited seasonal restrictions were not considered in lieu of permanent restrictions	6	<p>The BLM used the best available scientific information, including all previously conducted studies and the information disclosed in the 2012 Monument RMP/FEIS and the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS, to determine the known locations and extent of Monument objects, to disclose the existing baseline conditions of Monument objects, and to disclose the observed and expected impacts from dispersed recreational target shooting activities on Monument objects in the NEPA analysis.</p> <p>The BLM conducted a thorough search for peer-reviewed literature and was able to locate a limited number of applicable references. The public was given an opportunity to provide references and issues that should be included in the EA analysis during scoping and the public comment period of the EA, and relevant literature was incorporated. The BLM relied on the interpretation of available information and the direct observation of conditions by resource specialists, including the results of the site evaluation, to evaluate compatibility of Monument objects with the observed effects of dispersed recreational target shooting activities and disclosed the rationale for these to compatibility determinations in Table 1 of the suitability analysis. The BLM also conducted a site evaluation in 2022 of previously inventoried recreational sites, which recorded damage to Monument objects in areas of high dispersed recreational target shooting use. The results of the evaluation were disclosed in the RMPA/EA in Section 1.4 and referred to in relevant resource sections. This evaluation, the available peer-reviewed studies, and BLM resource specialist experience and observations are representative of the best available scientific information specific to the conditions within the Monument. The purpose of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations at 40 CFR 1501.5(g)(1) and 1502.21 is to advance decision-making in the absence of complete information regarding environmental effects associated with the proposed action, which also informed the determination that the buffers discussed in the suitability analysis are representative of the provisions of the Dingell Act. Specific to the buffer around water resources, the BLM also determined that aligning the area made unavailable around water sources to protect wildlife Monument objects with the existing state law (ARS 17-308) that prohibits camping within 0.25 mile of a water source would facilitate consistent administration of these areas. Additionally, as Monument objects identified in the suitability analysis as not compatible with dispersed recreational target shooting activities are present and vulnerable to damage year-round on BLM-administered lands within the Monument (i.e., saguaro cactus forests, Sonoran desert tortoise, cultural and heritage resources), seasonal restrictions on such activities in lieu of year-round restrictions were not considered because seasonal restrictions would not meet the BLM's management responsibilities for Monument objects within the Monument.</p>

Number	Issue/Concern	Count	Response
3	Statements that the areas made available for dispersed recreational target shooting under the 2018 Approved RMPA should not be changed	83	The decision that made areas available for dispersed recreational target shooting under the 2018 Approved RMPA was determined to not meet the BLM's management responsibilities for Monument objects and therefore must be modified. The BLM also determined that the 2018 Approved RMPA left areas of the Monument available for dispersed recreational target shooting that did not have the requisite topography to ensure public safety. See also response to Issue/Concern 1.
4	Statements that all BLM-administered lands within the Monument should be made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting	23	<p>Not all Monument objects were identified as incompatible with dispersed recreational target shooting, and the Monument objects that were determined to not be compatible with dispersed recreational target shooting are not currently known to be present on all BLM-administered lands within the Monument. Moreover, some of these areas were determined to have topography that made dispersed recreational target shooting safe for the public. As a result, it was not necessary to make all BLM-administered lands within the Monument unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting. See also response to Issue/Concern 1.</p> <p>Future site-specific resource surveys and monitoring may result in new decisions modifying the areas made available and unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting in the Monument. Resource surveys may include but are not limited to completion of pedestrian surveys for cultural and heritage resources within areas made available for dispersed recreational target shooting under this decision. Based on the results of resource surveys and ongoing consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and Tribes, decisions modifying areas available and unavailable may be necessary for the proper care and management of Monument objects. Other future implementation-level decisions could include seasonal restrictions and/or other refinements or restrictions on the areas available for dispersed recreational target shooting, the type of dispersed recreational target shooting activities allowed, and the timing of dispersed recreational target shooting activities.</p>
5	Statements that the areas made available and unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting should be smaller or larger than those proposed	11	See responses to Issues/Concerns 3 and 4.
6	Concerns that bullets can travel more than 0.25 mile and impact public safety and that the BLM should increase the buffer around Monument objects to the distance projectiles can travel to protect Monument objects	1	<p>The BLM acknowledges that bullets may travel more than 0.25 mile. The BLM's decision ultimately improves public safety within the Monument by limiting the areas where dispersed recreational target shooting activities may occur. Section 3.2 of the suitability analysis in Appendix A states, "the onus for evaluating safe conditions for dispersed recreational target shooting would be on the user following best management practices outlined in the 2012 Approved RMP." The best management practices (BMPs) outlined in Appendix D of the 2012 Approved RMP include direction for engaging in dispersed recreational target shooting activities to avoid creating hazardous safety conditions, such as selecting a site with a safe backstop (and provides suggestions for what constitutes a safe backstop) and selecting a site that does not put others at risk (such as not shooting toward roads, trails, parking areas, or across roads), and notes that bullets can travel between 1.5 and 3.5 miles from the shooting location without an appropriate backstop.</p> <p>The BLM also acknowledges that the identified buffers for individual Monument objects, where applicable, may not provide complete protection of Monument objects from projectiles. The majority of observed Monument object disturbance and/or damage documented during the 2022 site evaluation were localized to the areas directly adjacent to the sites and along backstop features. The 0.25 mile buffer will prevent the majority of potential impacts to Monument objects, and the BLM has determined, on balance, that the impacts that could potentially occur as a result of the 0.25-mile buffer are consistent with the protection of the objects identified in Proclamation 7397.</p>

Number	Issue/Concern	Count	Response
7	Statements that the BLM should prohibit all shooting activities and/or the use of live ammunition within the Monument	6	See response to Issue/Concern 4. In addition, a prohibition of all shooting activities on BLM-administered lands within the Monument would result in a default prohibition on hunting within the Monument. Hunting is currently allowed in all areas of the Monument, and the BLM does not believe there is a need to limit hunting in accordance with applicable law in the Monument at this time. As the BLM's decision does not prohibit hunting within the Monument and would make 5,295 acres of BLM-administered lands within the Monument available for recreational target shooting, the BLM also cannot prohibit the use of live ammunition. The purpose of the RMPA is to establish a framework for managing dispersed recreational target shooting activities within the Monument, not to manage individual use nor use of specific ammunition by participants.
8	Statements that all recreational target shooting should be limited to designated sites, ranges, and/or be limited to indoor ranges	13	The BLM is not designating specific sites for recreational target shooting within the Monument, and establishment of site-specific area allocations is outside the scope of this RMPA. The scope of this decision is limited to dispersed recreational target shooting management, and no designated sites or indoor or outdoor ranges are present on BLM-administered lands within the Monument. The 2020 <i>Recreational Shooting Sports Project Final Environmental Assessment</i> (2020 Recreational Shooting Sports FEA) (DOI-BLM-AZ-P000-2019-0001-EA) approved the construction and operation of five developed recreational target shooting sites on BLM-administered lands near Phoenix, Arizona. Two of these sites are close to the Monument: Box Canyon (approximately 7 miles east), a 68-acre facility that opened to the public in September 2023, and Narramore Road (approximately 13 miles northwest), a 21-acre facility that has completed engineering as of October 2023 and is planned for construction, which the BLM expects to be open and available to the public after construction is complete.
9	Statements that the BLM should only allow dispersed recreational target shooting activities to be conducted by individuals with a specific permit	1	43 CFR 2930 establishes the requirements for permits on BLM-administered lands, which addresses the BLM's authority to require permits for commercial use, competitive events, organized groups, and recreational use in special areas. The BLM <i>Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook</i> (H-2930-1) identifies the purposes of permitting special uses as "a tool for managing recreation use; reducing user conflicts; protecting natural and cultural resources; informing users; gathering use information; and obtaining a fair return for commercial and certain other uses of public land." The BLM currently requires permits to enter the Area A portion of the Monument and for motorized access into areas currently under a motorized vehicle closure order. As documented in the suitability analysis, several Monument objects are not compatible with dispersed recreational target shooting activities, and implementing a permit system for the public to engage in those activities in the areas identified as unavailable would not meet the BLM's requirements to provide for the proper care and management of Monument objects. Additionally, as Monument objects not compatible with dispersed recreational target shooting are not currently known to be present in the areas that would be available for those activities, additional measures such as requiring a permit for such activities have not been determined to be necessary at this time.
10	Concern that the entire Monument would be made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting under the decision	9	The RMPA makes 5,295 acres of the 485,791 acres of BLM-administered lands within the Monument available for dispersed recreational target shooting. Because not all Monument objects were identified as incompatible with dispersed recreational target shooting, and topography that made dispersed recreational target shooting safe for the public is present in areas without the known presence Monument objects that were identified as incompatible, the BLM has determined that dispersed recreational target shooting activities may occur in the areas identified as appropriate for those activities. See also response to Issue/Concern 1.
11	Concern that public access for other recreational uses (such as hunting and camping) would also be prohibited	5	The areas made available and unavailable under this decision only apply to dispersed recreational target shooting activities. The decision does not include limitations on types of public access to areas of the Monument. The BLM will continue to manage public access and other forms of recreation in accordance with the management direction contained in the 2012 Approved RMP. Management direction for recreation management within the Monument includes allowing camping on all lands open to the public in accordance with 43 CFR 8365 (RM-1.1.20), limiting camping to 14 consecutive days (RM-1.1.3), providing guidance for vehicle-based camping (RM-1.1.4, RM-1.2.2, and RM-1.2.4.4), providing backcountry recreation experiences such as hunting (RM-1.2.4), implementing special management for Area A (RM-2.1.1), and continuing the implementation of standards monitored by the limits of acceptable change (LAC) process (RM-2.1.8).

Number	Issue/Concern	Count	Response
12	Statements that the BLM should implement seasonal restrictions where dispersed recreational target shooting is allowed to reduce the risk of wildfire; seasonal closures for wildfire risk would not require a plan amendment and should be incorporated into the decision	1	The BLM concurs with this statement. The BLM implements seasonal restrictions on several activities, not limited to dispersed recreational target shooting, to reduce the risk of wildfire when environmental conditions are determined to be appropriate. These types of seasonal restrictions are typically implemented under appropriate regulations and do not require an amendment to the relevant RMP. They would be implemented if/when environmental conditions are such that the risk for wildfire is elevated.
13	Statement that the standard operating procedures and the general mitigation measures and administrative actions described in Appendix D of the 2012 Approved RMP are not easily accessible to the public	1	The BLM has included this information as an appendix to the decision record.
14	Requests that the BLM prioritize monitoring, conduct monitoring seasonally, and take action when impacts are observed	1	A Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol is outlined in Appendix B of the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS. That Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol is incorporated into this RMPA and is intended to identify whether or where the LAC is being exceeded in areas available for dispersed recreational target shooting. The BLM began regular monitoring in accordance with the Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol in 2023, and each inventoried recreation site is monitored annually.
15	Statements that enforcement and education would be more effective than making areas unavailable and should include shooter education and Leave No Trace to reduce damage and trash as well as regular patrols and fines.	11	Enforcement, education, and outreach activities are components of the BLM's management of dispersed recreational target shooting in the Monument. The BMPs outlined in Appendix D of the 2012 Approved RMP include supporting and implementing Leave No Trace education and outreach efforts. However, the BLM also has a duty under Section 302(a) of FLPMA to manage dispersed recreational target shooting in accordance with Proclamation 7397 and the protection of Monument objects identified therein. Under this framework, the BLM manages the land and enforces current laws, regulations, and policies. The decisions within the RMPA/EA define where opportunities for dispersed recreational target shooting are available and unavailable within all or part of the Monument. The intent of formulating management guidance for dispersed recreational target shooting is to assist in the protection of Monument objects by determining where this type of activity can be conducted consistent with the proper care and management of Monument objects.

Number	Issue/Concern	Count	Response
16	Statements that dispersed recreational target shooting does/does not degrade the environment or damage Monument objects	N/A*	The BLM conducted a site evaluation in 2022 of previously inventoried recreational sites, which documented damage to Monument objects in high-use dispersed recreational target shooting areas. The results of the evaluation were disclosed in the RMPA/EA in Section 1.4 and document that dispersed recreational target shooting does damage Monument objects.
17	Statements that the BLM should clean up damaged areas or host volunteers that will conduct cleanup efforts instead of limit areas available for dispersed recreational target shooting	3	Clean ups are ongoing within the Monument. The BLM conducts several clean ups annually and has done so for more than a decade. In fiscal year 2012, the BLM removed more than 32,000 pounds of trash. In 2022, the BLM removed nearly 14,000 pounds of trash. And in 2023, the BLM removed nearly 6,000 pounds of trash. These cleanup efforts are becoming cost prohibitive for the BLM and cannot be used as a substitute for proactive land management.
18	Statements that making areas unavailable to dispersed recreational target shooting is a violation of the Second Amendment of the Constitution and civil rights	N/A*	The decision to make areas available and unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting does not violate the Constitution.
19	Statements that the Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol should be based on robust science and data collected on all Monument objects utilize statistically valid methodology, and that the protocol includes actions to correct and restore damaged areas	2	The BLM acknowledges that the Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol outlined in Appendix B of the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS, does not proactively protect Monument objects. The purpose of the RMPA is to establish a framework for managing dispersed recreational target shooting activities within the Monument, as established in the Proclamation and in accordance with Section 302(a) of FLPMA. The purpose of the Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol, in concert with the implementation of the decision for which the purpose is to provide proper care and management of Monument objects, is to identify whether or where the LAC is being exceeded in areas available for dispersed recreational target shooting (or other legal uses). Development of actions to correct or restore disturbed areas are implementation-level actions that are outside the scope of this RMPA.

Number	Issue/Concern	Count	Response
20	Statements that areas available for dispersed target shooting allow for tactical defense training that is not possible at ranges	2	The majority of BLM-administered lands in Arizona is available for dispersed recreational target shooting activities, when conducted in accordance with the applicable land use plan. Of the 12,078,435 acres of BLM-administered lands in Arizona, when combined with current closures (area closures and closures associated with closures required by law, such as in developed recreation sites) and the Selected Alternative, 748,333 acres of BLM-administered lands (6.2%) are closed to dispersed recreational target shooting. The remaining 11,330,102 acres of BLM-administered lands (93.8%) remain available for dispersed recreational target shooting in Arizona. Within the BLM Phoenix District Office boundaries, BLM-administered lands comprise approximately 3,100,000 acres. Of these lands, 576,256 acres (18%) are closed to recreational target shooting (this includes the Selected Alternative, Table Mesa, and Goldfield developed recreation areas).
21	Statements that there is not enough public land available for dispersed recreational target shooting in the region, and that crowding of shooters is a public safety concern	16	See response to Issue/Concern 20. The RMPA/EA and the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS impact analysis both recognize that reducing the area available for dispersed recreational target shooting could have the effect of concentrating this activity in those areas that would remain available or would displace use to areas available for such activity outside the Monument. This is disclosed in the cumulative impact analysis for resources and resource uses and analyzed in detail in Section 3.2.7, Recreation, of the RMPA/EA. Section 3.2 of the suitability analysis in Appendix A states, "the onus for evaluating safe conditions for dispersed recreational target shooting would be on the user following best management practices outlined in the 2012 Approved RMP." The BMPs outlined in Appendix D of the 2012 Approved RMP include direction for engaging in dispersed recreational target shooting activities to avoid creating hazardous safety conditions, such as selecting a site with a safe backstop (and provides suggestions for what constitutes a safe backstop) and selecting a site that does not put others at risk (such as not shooting toward roads, trails, parking areas, or across roads). Additionally, the 2020 Recreational Shooting Sports FEA approved the construction and operation of five developed recreational target shooting sites on BLM-administered lands near Phoenix, Arizona. Two of these sites are close to the Monument: Box Canyon (approximately 7 miles east), a 68-acre facility that opened to the public in September 2023, and Narramore Road (approximately 13 miles northwest), a 21-acre facility that has completed engineering as of October 2023 and is planned for construction, which the BLM expects to be open and available to the public after construction is complete. These facilities are expected to expand target shooting opportunities in the region.
22	Statements that the damage has already been done, so the BLM should allow dispersed recreational target shooting to occur in those areas	1	See response to Issue/Concern 3. Proclamation 7397 requires the BLM to manage the Monument consistent with the proper care and management of Monument objects. Existing levels of use were considered to the extent that such use was consistent with the proper care and management of Monument objects. It was not considered in areas where dispersed recreational shooting was not consistent with the proper care and management of Monument objects.

* Comment counts identified as N/A were included to address concerns expressed generally but allocated to various issues/concerns and were therefore not counted.

6 CONCERNS NOT RELEVANT TO THE DINGELL ACT

The comment submissions included comments on the NEPA analysis in the RMPA/EA, which are not relevant to the Dingell Act public comment process. The BLM provided several means to submit comments during the scoping period and the public comment period for the RMPA/EA (see Section 4.2, Public Involvement, of the RMPA/EA). However, the BLM reviewed these comment submittals to determine if the commenters provided new information or raised new issues concerning the NEPA analysis. A summary of concerns regarding the NEPA analysis in the RMPA/EA included in the comment submittals not relevant to the Dingell Act public comment process are included below.

The analysis does not differentiate between legal and illegal dispersed recreational target shooting activities and conflates the impacts with that of vehicle use.

Section 3.1.1 of the RMPA/EA discloses why legal and illegal dispersed recreational shooting activities were not differentiated in the analysis. Vehicle use impacts were not incorporated into the suitability analysis and the ultimate determination of areas that would be made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting activities within the Monument. The impact analysis, as required under CEQ regulations, disclosed the potential for impacts to these resources within areas that remain available for dispersed recreational activities under each alternative. As users engaged in dispersed recreational typically access areas in which they engage in these activities via motorized means and levels of disturbance between the two could not be clearly differentiated, the impact analysis in the RMPA/EA disclosed all disturbance associated with dispersed recreational target shooting and means of access.

The analysis lacks support for the impact disclosure statements, particularly for impacts to unknown/unrecorded cultural and heritage resources, traditional use areas, and sacred sites that are not disclosed.

The potential for the presence of unknown and unrecorded cultural and heritage resources did not inform the determination of areas that would be made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting activities on BLM-administered lands within the Monument. The suitability analysis limited mapping to buffers of known cultural and heritage resources that met the criteria to be considered Monument objects (i.e., petroglyphs/pictographs, lithic quarries, scattered artifacts, large villages, permanent habitation sites, the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail corridor, the Mormon Battalion Trail, and the Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail). The analysis, as required under CEQ regulations, disclosed the potential for impacts to these resources under each alternative.

The provisions in Executive Order (EO) 13007, Indian Sacred Sites, direct federal agencies to accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners and avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites. The EO also clarifies that where appropriate, agencies shall maintain the confidentiality of sacred sites. This direction is further supported by the National Historic Preservation Act (54 United States Code [USC] 307103), which provides limited authority for withholding disclosure of information about the “location, character and ownership” of historic resources to the public and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 USC 470hh), which provides authority to limit information on the “nature and location” of archaeological resources. As such, the BLM is not required, and in some cases cannot, disclose the locations of traditional use areas and sacred sites, even for areas that were incorporated into the suitability analysis.

The impact analysis for visual resources includes effects that may occur from other activities that commonly occur in the Monument and are not restricted.

Visual resources were not identified as Monument objects in the establishing Proclamation. As such, visual resources and dispersed recreational target shooting activities' potential effects on the BLM's management objectives for each Visual Resource Management (VRM) class were not included in the suitability analysis and the ultimate determination of areas that would be made unavailable for dispersed recreational target shooting activities on BLM-administered lands within the Monument. The BLM acknowledges that other uses that occur on BLM-administered lands within the Monument may also affect the BLM's ability to meet VRM objectives. The analysis, as required under CEQ regulations, disclosed the potential for impacts to these resources under each alternative. The effects of other uses were disclosed in Section 3.2.11.3, Cumulative Effects of the RMPA/EA.

Request to remove "The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations" from the front cover of the RMPA/EA.

The BLM has removed this statement from the RMPA/EA. The BLM manages national monuments for multiple uses only to the extent those uses do not conflict with the direction in the designating proclamation. Where conflicts exist, the designating proclamation controls.

The BLM did not identify the preferred alternative or the environmentally preferred alternative in the RMPA/EA.

The BLM identified Alternative C as the Preferred Alternative in the unsigned finding of no significant impact (FONSI) published for public comment with the draft RMPA/EA. CEQ regulations require the identification of a preferred alternative and environmentally preferred alternatives in a NEPA document in an environmental impact statement, not an EA.

The RMPA/EA did not disclose the baseline condition for Sonoran desert tortoise (Gopherus morafkai) populations within the Monument and did not analyze all effects of legal and illegal dispersed recreational target shooting activities (trash, lead and other hazardous material contamination, surface disturbance, spread of invasive species, and wildfire) on Sonoran desert tortoise and other special status species.

The BLM conducts annual surveys for Sonoran desert tortoise in all BLM Sonoran desert tortoise category habitat areas within the Monument. As these surveys are presence/absence surveys, the results are not representative of the true baseline population conditions within the Monument. Similarly, Monument-specific information for trash, lead and other hazardous material contamination, surface disturbance, and the extent of invasive species was not available. Previous analysis conducted in the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS, available peer-reviewed studies, and BLM resource specialist experience and observations are representative of the best available scientific information specific to the conditions within the Monument. NEPA recognizes the need to make decisions in the absence of complete information regarding environmental effects associated with the proposed action.

Impacts from dispersed recreational target shooting on wildfire management were analyzed in detail in the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS, and because all alternatives analyzed in the RMPA/EA would result in either similar (the No Action Alternative, analyzed in the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS under Alternative C) or reduced effects within the Monument, the previous analysis was incorporated by reference in Table 3-1, Resources and Resource Uses Not Analyzed in Detail, of the RMPA/EA. Impacts from trash, other hazardous material contamination, surface disturbance, spread of invasive species, and wildfire on all relevant resources were tiered to the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS analysis for each resource and discussed in the cumulative

effects sections to the extent of which information was available. The BLM did incorporate additional context concerning the analysis of the effects of bioaccumulation of lead in wildlife to Section 3.2.2, Priority Wildlife Habitat and Species of the RMPA/EA. In the absence of complete information, the BLM relied upon general trends with which risk was disclosed in the cumulative effects sections.

The BLM must manage the Monument to minimize the likelihood of wildfire and should implement a fire prevention and fire suppression plan for protection of Monument objects.

Development and implementation of a fire prevention and fire suppression plan is outside the scope of this RMPA. Management direction for wildland fire management is provided in the 2012 Approved RMP and includes the following: unplanned ignitions on all lands within the Monument will be fully suppressed (WF-1.1.1); a hazardous fuels reduction program will be implemented (WF-1.1.2); fuels treatments to protect cultural resources will be developed (WF-2.1.2); and all fire management activities will focus on maintaining or improving habitat for federally listed and candidate species (WF-3.2).

Request that the BLM create a database and geospatial tracking system for special status species to track management decisions resulting in cumulative impacts (such as surface disturbance, roads and trails, linear projects, invasive species occurrence, pesticide/herbicide use, wildfires) to mitigate cumulative impacts and effectiveness of mitigation.

This request is outside the scope of this RMPA.

The Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol should be completed as part of the RMPA and NEPA process and provided for public review and comment and should use the best available science for monitoring each Monument object to determine whether dispersed recreational target shooting activities are affecting each Monument object and include the mitigation that would be implemented to restore each Monument object. The limits of acceptable change for each Monument object were not identified in the Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol and do not assess the effects of dispersed recreational target shooting activities.

Within the BLM's land use planning process, Monitoring and Mitigation Protocols typically occur at the implementation level and would not be included at the current broader, landscape-scale RMPA level (BLM Handbook H-1610-1). The BLM conducted a site evaluation in 2022 of previously inventoried recreational sites, following this framework protocol, which recorded damage to Monument objects in high use dispersed recreational target shooting areas. The results of the evaluation were disclosed in the RMPA/EA in Section 1.4 and referred to in relevant resource sections. The BLM initiated annual monitoring following the current framework protocol in 2023. During these efforts, BLM resource specialists evaluated the effectiveness of the framework protocol and identified where the process could be expanded, and refinements to the Monitoring and Mitigation Protocol are ongoing.

Table 3-14 in the 2017 Monument Target Shooting RMPA/FEIS presents a summary of each Monument object's characteristics (i.e., indicators) and protection criteria (i.e., threshold for level of acceptable change). The results of monitoring efforts are evaluated against the protection criteria identified in this table to evaluate for departure from baseline conditions.

The FONSI does not list wildfire as an impact from dispersed recreational target shooting.

Wildfire has been added to the list of potential impacts from dispersed recreational target shooting in the FONSI.

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APPENDIX B

Best Management Practices and Standard Operating Procedures



APPENDIX D

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

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D. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES & STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

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Appendix D

Best Management Practices & Standard Operating Procedures

D.1 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are land and resource management techniques determined to be the most effective and practical means of maximizing beneficial results and minimizing conflicts and negative environmental impacts from management actions. BMPs can include structural and nonstructural controls, specific operations, and maintenance procedures. BMPs can be applied before, during, and after activities to reduce or eliminate negative environmental impacts. BMPs are not one-size-fits-all solutions. BMPs should be selected and adapted through interdisciplinary analysis to determine which management practices are necessary to meet the goals and objective of the resource-management plan (RMP). The best practices and mitigation measures for a particular site are evaluated by considering site-specific conditions, local resource conditions, and a suite of techniques that guide or may be applied to management actions to aid in achieving desired outcomes. BMPs are often developed in conjunction with land-use plans, but they are not considered a land-use plan decision unless the land-use plan specifies that they are mandatory. They may be updated or modified without a plan amendment if they are not mandatory.

D.2 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are procedures carried out daily during proposal implementation which are based on laws, regulations, executive orders, BLM planning manuals, policies, instruction memoranda, and applicable planning documents. SOPs describe the flow of actions as well as identifying roles and responsibilities. Policy and planning procedures either already exist or have been identified through collaborative planning processes which are used as a guide during the implementation of management decisions. It is the goal of SOP to maintain operational efficiency and consistency during the planning and implementation processes.

D.3 RESOURCES

D.3.1 CAVE RESOURCES

D.3.1.1 Standard Operating Procedures

- Survey priorities will be assigned to those areas that are most likely to include significant cave resources, are relatively accessible to the public, and/or vulnerable to damage or loss from land use activities.

D.3.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

D.3.2.1 Standard Operating Procedures

- Where impacts are occurring, implement protection measures to stop, limit, or repair damage to sites. A variety of protection measures, described in BLM Manual 8140, may be used to protect the integrity of sites at risk such as signing, fencing or barriers, trash removal, target shooting closures, erosion control, backfilling, repairing, shoring up, or stabilizing structures, restricting uses and access, and closures. Structural and material stabilization techniques may use chemical, mechanical, or structural elements to retard deterioration of cultural resources.
- Ensure that all proposed undertakings and authorizations are reviewed and conducted in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, the NAGPRA and other applicable laws.
- Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act:
 1. All undertakings will be subject to thorough cultural resource inventory in order to identify all cultural resources that lie within the Area of Potential Effect (APE).
 2. All identified cultural resources within the APE will be evaluated for National Register eligibility.
 3. All undertakings shall be scrutinized for ways to design or re-design proposed projects to avoid cultural resources. Every effort shall be made to minimize impacts on cultural resources.
- Those cultural resources within the APE that have the characteristics that would make them eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) would be mitigated using appropriate treatment strategies, in order to reduce the intensity of the impact to the lowest level possible.
- Evaluate project designs and proposed activities and mitigate or adjust activities to avoid disturbing or removing Native American human remains and associated items to the maximum extent possible and practicable. Where disturbance cannot be avoided, the BLM will consult with associated tribes under NAGPRA. Avoid directing site visitors toward areas where these items would be observed or disturbed.
- Complete Class II (sample) and Class III (intensive) field inventories to identify cultural resources and evaluate the condition of sites, in accord with Section 110 of the NHPA. Use the information obtained through these surveys to allocate sites to proper use categories, develop protection measures, and integrate survey results into research designs and interpretation efforts. Priorities for inventory will be determined based on resource use and an area's or site's protection priority.

D.3.3 PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

D.3.3.1 Standard Operating Procedures

- The collection of “reasonable” amounts of common invertebrate and plant fossils would be allowed without a permit when not aided by mechanical or motorized devices (43 CFR 3620).
- Paleontological inventory of project areas would be done prior to authorizing surface-disturbing activities to protect vertebrate or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils.
- Survey priorities will be assigned to those areas that are most likely to include significant paleontological resources, are relatively accessible to the public, and/or vulnerable to damage or loss from land use activities.
- For all authorized surface-disturbing activities, inventories will be conducted on a case-by-case basis, as deemed necessary by the authorized officer, for each proposed surface-disturbing activity to ensure maintenance or integrity of paleontological values.
- The authorized officer may issue a permit for the collection of paleontological resources if it is determined that the applicant is qualified to carry out the research; the research is undertaken for the purpose of furthering paleontological knowledge or for public education; and the proposed methods of collection will not threaten significant natural or cultural resources.
- The following stipulations may be applied to surface-disturbing activities:
 1. User/operators shall be responsible for informing all persons associated with a project that they shall be subject to prosecution for damaging, altering, excavating, or removing any vertebrate or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils on site.
 2. If vertebrate or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils are discovered, the user/operator shall suspend all operations that further disturb such materials and immediately contact the authorized officer.
 3. User/operators shall not resume until written authorization to proceed is issued by the authorized officer.
 4. Within five working days, the authorized officer will evaluate the discovery and inform the operator of actions that will be necessary to prevent loss of significant scientific values.
 5. The user/operator shall be responsible for the cost of any mitigation required by the authorized officer.
 6. Upon verification from the authorized officer that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator shall be allowed to resume operations.

D.3.4 SOIL RESOURCES

D.3.4.1 Best Management Practices

- Best management practices would be applied when authorizing vegetative or surface disturbances to limit soil loss and erosion and protect water quality.
- Disturbance to surface resources would be minimized when constructing new developments or reconstructing existing facilities. Mitigation plans would be developed, disturbed surfaces would be restored, and soils would be stabilized in accordance with restoration objectives.

D.3.5 VEGETATION RESOURCES

D.3.5.1 Standard Operating Procedures

- Several treatment methods and standard operating procedures would be used in a vegetation treatment program. Bureau of Land Management's policies and guidance for public land treatments would be followed in implementing all treatment methods. SOPs and guidelines are provided in the following documents:
 1. Manual Section 1740, BLM Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health (Land Health Standards)
 2. "Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic EIS" (BLM 2007) and "Vegetation Treatments on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report (ER)" (BLM 2007)
 3. Other general and specific program policy, procedures, and standards for implementing renewable resource improvements
- The programmatic EIS and ER described above provide information regarding the application of herbicides and pesticides and identify procedures and guidelines that would be followed by the BLM to ensure that risks to human health and the environment from treatment actions would be kept to a minimum. Included are SOPs those for the prevention of weeds and weed control, and a compilation of treatment-specific procedures and guidelines based on various guidance in BLM manuals, handbooks, regulations, and standard agency and industry practices. For resource specific SOPs and guidelines including those for fire use, and mechanical, manual, biological and chemical methods, see Table 2-5 in the ER. These methods would be used under all alternatives.

D.3.6 VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

D.3.6.1 Standard Operating Procedures

Facility Construction. Facility construction will achieve resource management and use benefits and focus on resource protection, resource management, and public safety. Facilities will be constructed to be visually unobtrusive while emphasizing protection of resources. Facilities will be located in areas where they are visually unobtrusive and will cause minimal damage to resources. Recreational facilities,

including visitor centers, will be preferentially located off site in nearby communities and built through the use of partnerships.

Scenic quality. Measures to mitigate potential visual impacts include the use of natural materials, screening, painting, project design, location sighting, or restoration.

D.3.7 WILDLIFE RESOURCES

D.3.7.1 Standard Operating Procedures

- Coordinate with AGFD on migratory bird inventories when migratory bird inventories are proposed by BLM or required of third parties.
- Coordinate with AGFD when Sonoran desert tortoise inventories are proposed by BLM or required of third parties. The inventories should be completed using standardized protocols such as those developed by AGFD.
- Wildlife water developments proposed in Wilderness Areas would have to meet the non-impairment criteria.

D.3.7.2 Best Management Practices

- Reasonable administrative vehicular access to wildlife water facilities would be granted to AGFD, BLM and authorized permittee personnel for the purposes of constructing, maintaining, and/or repairing facilities or conducting research or surveys.
- The use of new technologies, products, and construction designs that provide for the lowest degree of maintenance and a visually obscure wildlife water development that is compatible with the surrounding terrain would be emphasized.
- See manuals 6500 (Wildlife and Fisheries Management) and 6780 (Habitat Management Plans)
- Fences constructed will comply with applicable wildlife fence standards (Fences – BLM Manual Handbook H-1741-1). Existing fences that impede big game movement or that otherwise conflict with wildlife may be modified to comply with applicable wildlife fence standards on a case-by-case basis.
- The PDO will consult agency species management plans and other conservation plans as appropriate to guide management and devise mitigation measures when needed. Examples of these plans include but are not limited to the North American Landbird Conservation Plan, National and Arizona Partners in flight Bird Conservation Plans, Arizona Bat Conservation Plan, and the Arizona State Wildlife Action Plan (Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy).
- The PDO would comply with the *BLM Migratory Bird Treaty Act- Interim Management Guidance* (Instructional Memorandum 2008-050)

D.4 RESOURCE USES

D.4.1 LANDS & REALTY

D.4.1.1 Standard Operating Procedures Access

Access:

- Reasonable public and administrative access to BLM-administered land will be obtained in the following ways:
 1. Require reciprocal access easements to meet specific program needs;
 2. Consider and manage the use of public land for right of way[s] (ROW)s, ROW reservations, easements, permits, leases, licenses, agreements, etc., except for those areas identified as exclusion areas;
 3. Secure access easements as needed to prevent closing of access to public land.

Corridors & Communication Sites:

A corridor is used for one or more of the following major facilities:

1. Natural gas and other pipelines that are at least 10 inches in diameter;
 2. Electric transmission facilities that have a capacity of 115 kilovolt lines or greater voltage;
 3. Major telephone transmission, cable, or fiber optic lines;
 4. Significant canals that provide delivery of water to urban areas;
 5. Transportation facilities that are those formally defined as Current or Proposed Roads of Regional Significance or Current or Proposed Major Arterials (functional class) identified by a local government jurisdiction as regionally significant and projected to carry 20,000 or more vehicles per day by the year 2015;
 6. Utilities, whether interstate, intrastate, or local, should be collocated in designated corridors to the maximum degree possible to minimize impacts to public lands;
 7. Transportation routes, whether interstate, intrastate, or local, should be collocated with utilities in designated corridors to the maximum degree possible to minimize impacts to public lands.
- The BLM will strive to coordinate applicable transportation-related planning efforts for the Lower Sonoran Planning Area with ADOT, Maricopa County Department of Transportation, Maricopa Association of Governments, and Pinal, Pima, Yuma, and Gila counties.
 - Smaller utility lines needed for local service in the vicinity of the corridors should be co-located within a corridor unless doing so would limit the opportunity to collocate additional major utility lines in the corridor.

- Avoidance of sensitive or special resources is a primary consideration in future planning and designation of utility corridors.
- BLM planning should promote, whenever possible, optimal energy transfer efficiency and support alternative energy sources such as use of photovoltaic cells (solar energy) and wind power.
- In February 2003, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued the National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets (DHS 2003), which summarized the initial assessment of and planning to protect against vulnerabilities to the terrorist threat. As DHS continues to carry out its mandate, the designation of utility and transportation corridor location and the planning and maintenance of utilities; railroads; and Federal, State, and interstate highways that cross BLM-administered lands will be consistent with all directives, policies, and procedures that DHS may institute to minimize vulnerabilities to the energy grid.
- Whenever possible, utility transmission lines will be designed and/or routed to minimize adverse visual impacts to the surrounding land and vistas.
- The BLM's utility corridor designations must be consistent with authority granted under FLPMA Title V, Sections 501–511 (43 United States Code [USC] 1761–1771), the Mineral Leasing Act of 1928 (CFR 2880) and the BLM ROW Manual, Sections 2801.11 and 2801.12.
- In accordance with Executive Order No. 13212, the Energy Project Streamlining process (signed May 18, 2001), Federal energy-related planning must serve to expedite the production, transmission, or conservation of energy.
- The BLM will continue to cooperate as a full partner with the U.S. Forest Service, Arizona Public Service Company, and Salt River Project in Arizona in the Western Utility Group, whose mission is to facilitate an exchange of information and coordinate planning efforts between Federal agencies and utility providers throughout the western United States.
- The BLM will, as appropriate, coordinate communication-related planning efforts with the Federal Communications Commission.
- Bureau of Land Management planning related to telecommunication infrastructure must, in accordance with the Telecommunications Act of 1996, help facilitate implementation of wireless telephone systems, in compliance with existing law, by making Federal land and facilities available for communication sites.
- New ROWs will make maximum use of existing routes and will share facilities whenever possible, including joint use by different types of utilities, such as transmission line towers and communication sites.
- Communications related planning efforts will be coordinated with the Federal Communications Commission, as needed.
- If areas are discovered that require the protection of a withdrawal, the withdrawal will be processed. If other Agency withdrawals are revoked - the BLM will manage the lands the same as the adjacent lands.
- New utilities within the El Paso Natural Gas multiuse corridor must comply with the adopted Individual Operating Plans for the administration of energy transport development.

These Individual Operating Plans meet the requirements of Section 368 to expedite the permitting process (see Appendix B of the Approved RMP/ROD for Designation of Energy Corridors on BLM Administered Lands in 11 Western States, 2009). The Individual Operating Plans provide coordinated, consistent interagency management procedures for permitting ROWs within the corridors. The Individual Operating Plans also identify mandatory requirements that will help ensure that future projects developed within Section 368 corridors are planned, constructed, operated, and eventually decommissioned in a manner that protects and enhances environmental resources and long-term sustainability.

General Rights of Way:

- BLM may require that a licensed surveyor provide cadastral survey (to be reviewed by a BLM cadastral surveyor) of a right-of-way route prior to issuance of the authorization to an outside entity.

D.4.2 LIVESTOCK GRAZING

D.4.2.1 Standard Operating Procedures

- Rest rotation, deferred rotation, seasonal or short duration use, or other grazing management systems may be implemented where the need has been identified through monitoring. Monitoring will be used to assess the effectiveness of changes brought about by new management practices.
- Intensity, season and frequency, and distribution of grazing use should provide for growth and reproduction of the plant species needed to reach Desired Plant Community objectives.
- Deferment of livestock will be considered, where possible in cooperation with lease and permit holders, to allow for the use of prescribed fire or other vegetative treatments, or the use of the area as a grass bank to allow for rest in other grazing allotments.
- Administrative vehicular access to repair range improvements by the grazing lessee is assured through issuance of the grazing permit.
- Any compensation for a loss of range improvements will be made in accordance with 43 CFR 4120.3-6.
- Livestock management changes may be made when sufficient assessment, inventory, or monitoring data are available.
- Fence construction and maintenance will follow guidance provided in BLM handbook on Fencing No. 1741-1.
- Grazing on designated ephemeral (annual and perennial) rangeland may be authorized if the following conditions are met:
 - Ephemeral vegetation is present in draws, washes, and under shrubs and has grown to useable levels at the time grazing begins.
 - Sufficient surface and subsurface soil moisture exists for continued plant growth.
 - Serviceable waters are capable of providing for proper grazing distribution.

- Sufficient annual vegetation will remain on site to satisfy other resource concerns, (i.e., watershed, wildlife, wild horses and burros).
- Ephemeral use will be authorized up to March 31 when conditions warrant. After April 1, authorizations will be limited to 30 days, subject to further evaluation. This will ensure maintenance for habitat for special status species (e.g. Sonoran desert tortoise).
- Monitoring is conducted during grazing to determine if objectives are being met.

D.4.3 RECREATION

D.4.3.1 Standard Operating Procedures

- The following provisions are set forth by regulation or bureau policy and thus do not require planning decisions to be implemented as part of management actions.
- General standard operating procedures:
- Encourage “Tread Lightly” and “Leave No Trace” travel and camping techniques.
- Adopt measures to increase visitor responsibility for campfire etiquette and to reduce proliferation of campfire rings.
- Implement procedures for systematic monitoring of sites developed or authorized for public visitation. Restrict visitor access or group tours if necessary to prevent damage from visitor use.
- Determine areas where comprehensive site assessments are needed to determine existing physical and social impacts of recreation activities, to define desired conditions and standards, or to establish monitoring plans to manage camping and other uses.
- Develop and maintain partnerships and identify cooperative, sustainable recreation and tourism-based economic opportunities with nearby communities.
- Develop and maintain partnerships with local clubs and organizations to help maintain and monitor motorized and non-motorized trails.
- Post applicable toll-free phone numbers on kiosks, maps, brochures, permits, and other public outreach conveyances to keep the public involved in reporting emergencies and criminal activities, including damage to resources.
- Allow cultural and natural resource interpretation signs and facilities where needed for visitor enjoyment or resource protection. Interpretive developments must be compatible with recreation management objectives, desired recreation settings, and VRM standards.
- Pursue interpretation and environmental educational opportunities, outreach development, and implementation of on-site and off-site programs for adults and children.
- Develop school curricula focusing on the BLM's mission with staffs from schools, school districts, and other learning institutions.
- Pursue multicultural interpretation and environmental education opportunities, outreach, development, and implementation of programs for adults and children. Apply learning

modalities and incorporate various learning styles in program design and delivery. Encourage the use of multiple intelligence or other theories for program presentations.

- Support existing educational and interpretive programs and initiatives such as Project Archaeology; Leave No Trace; Tread Lightly; Project Learning Tree; and other proven national, State, regional, and local programs.
- Develop websites and distribute brochures, maps, access guides, and information sheets to provide information on recreational opportunities, interpreted sites, resource protection, designated trails and travel routes, safe travel, and safe shooting practices.

Special recreation permits

The BLM issues special recreation permits (SRPs) to manage visitor use; to protect natural and cultural resources; to meet the goals and objectives of the field office recreation program as outlined in a land-use plan; and to authorize specific types of recreational activities. Special recreation permits (including academic, educational, scientific, or research use) are issued to qualified applicants on a first-come, first-served and a case-by-case basis based on resource values and how the SRPs meet resource and public health and safety concerns. Permit authorization numbers will be set and could be adjusted based on monitoring of areas to be used to accurately accommodate level of use, and to sustain resources while maintaining desired social and managerial settings.

Special recreation permit stipulations

In addition to the conditions and stipulations listed on the Special Recreation Application and Permit form, supplemental office and resource-specific stipulations are included with approved permits that are designed to protect the land and resources involved, reduce user conflicts, and/or minimize health and safety hazards. These stipulations must be followed to keep the permit in good standing. Failure to comply with the stipulations may result in the loss of permit privileges.

Standard SRP stipulations are listed below. Not all stipulations may apply in every SRP, and stipulations may be added, modified, or deleted on a case-by-case basis based on the specific event being permitted.

General SRP stipulations

- Estimated fee payments or the minimum non-refundable annual fee, whichever is applicable, will be submitted in advance to the BLM authorized officer prior to issuance or validation of the SRP. Any additional use fees will be due at the end of the 6-month reporting period in which the fees were accrued, or at the end of the event, whichever is applicable. Overpayment of fees will be applied to the following year's estimated use fees.
- Post-use reports and estimated fee payments for annual and multi-year permits will be submitted to the BLM on a fiscal year semi-annual basis. They are due within 15 days after the 6 month use period (April 15 and October 15).
- The permittee is required to contact private landowners and other governmental agencies whose property is affected by the use associated with the permit (this includes the Arizona State Land Department for State Trust land). Evidence that authorization has been obtained must be available to the BLM authorized officer upon request.

- Any changes to the approved Plan of Operations must first be approved by the BLM authorized officer. This includes the use of subcontractors.
- The permit does not authorize exclusive use and shall not be construed in any way so as to prevent public use or access on any public land except as expressly allowed under the permit.
- The permittee is required to provide the BLM authorized officer with a copy of a valid Certificate of Insurance covering the periods of use. The U.S. Government must be named as a co-insured party on the policy.
- It is the responsibility of the permittee to ensure valid insurance coverage including general public liability, with the limits listed above, is provided for all equipment and services supplied by subcontractors. A copy of the valid insurance coverage must be made available to the BLM authorized officer upon request.
- A copy of this permit and the stipulations must be carried by guides during all tours conducted on BLM-administered land, and must be made available to any BLM employee or client upon request.
- Any violation of the permit terms, conditions, and stipulations may be subject to penalties prescribed in 43 CFR 8372.0-7, which may include fines as set (currently up to \$1,000 and/or imprisonment up to 12 months). Additionally, any such violation may result in permit probation, suspension, or revocation. Examples that can lead to permit violations include, but are not limited to delinquent post use reports and/or payments, deviations to operating plan not approved by authorized official, violation of laws and regulations, significant resource damage, and public endangerment.
- All signs on public land must be authorized by the BLM in writing.
- The permittee is responsible for ensuring the safety of all clients and support personnel, assuring that all permit actions are in conformance with local, State, and Federal health and safety standards and providing for appropriate emergency attention.
- All injuries requiring emergency hospital care will be reported to the BLM authorized officer within 2 days of the occurrence and a Death and Injury Report submitted to the BLM authorized officer within 10 days of the occurrence.
- The BLM reserves the right to alter the terms, condition, or stipulations of a permit at any time for reasons such as significant policy, administrative procedure, or stipulation change.
- Annual permits remain valid if the permittee is in good standing by complying with all terms, conditions, and stipulations including timely submission of post use reports, and applicable use fee payments. For multi-year permits, an annual review is done at the beginning of each fiscal year (October 1) and permits are validated for the upcoming fiscal year. For a permit to be validated, the permittee must be in good standing by complying with all terms, conditions, and stipulations including timely submission of post use reports and applicable use fee payments. In addition, certificates of insurance shall be current and operating plans must be reviewed and updated with any changes before a permit will be validated for the upcoming fiscal year.

1. Require holders of special recreation permits (SRPs) to give site visitors suitable educational information on archaeological site etiquette and resource conservation.
2. SRP applicants will be strongly encouraged to have a working knowledge of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly principles. Additionally, applicants will be asked to incorporate Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly principles into their tour, program, or event activities.

Resource protection stipulations

- All activities are to remain on the approved roads, trails, washes, and/or staging areas. No deviation to these routes is permitted without prior approval from the BLM authorized officer. Motorized vehicles are not permitted in riparian areas or in running washes except at road crossings.
- Employees and clients will be instructed that it is unlawful to disturb, deface, excavate, or remove any archaeological or paleontological objects or structures (i.e., "look but do not touch!"). Rock art may be photographed but not touched. Collection of prehistoric or historic artifacts is not allowed. Any prehistoric or historic cultural site or human remains discovered by the permittee, employees, or clients will be left undisturbed and reported as soon as possible to the BLM authorized officer.
- Permittee must notify the BLM authorized officer of any specific archaeological sites proposed for inclusion on tours. Tours to sites are subject to BLM approval and protective stipulations.
- Historical mine sites should not be disturbed. Collecting artifacts from these sites is strictly prohibited.
- All persons operating under the SRP, including subcontractors, are prohibited from entering abandoned mines.
- Proposed activities will be conducted in a manner that will not interfere with mining or exploration operations. No mineral specimens are to be collected from areas encumbered by active mining claims unless authorized by the claimant(s).
- Harassment of livestock, wildlife, and wild horses or burros or destruction of private and public improvements such as fences and gates is prohibited. All gates and fences shall be left as found. The taking of any threatened and endangered plant or animal is prohibited.
- Collection, harassment, and disturbance of desert tortoises and Gila monsters are prohibited by Arizona State Law. If encountered on roads or trails, the animals should be avoided. If a desert tortoise is encountered and cannot be avoided, it should be carefully moved to safety by carrying it horizontal to the ground, not tilted, and placed in the shade the minimum distance needed to remove it from harm's way. Gila monsters should be avoided and not handled. They are venomous and can inflict a serious and painful bite.
- Vegetation clearing, trimming, or removal is not permitted without prior approval from the BLM authorized official.
- If the volume of use is determined to be adversely impacting soils or riparian condition through erosion, bank alteration, or other means, the BLM may restrict use of affected areas or routes to allow restoration and recovery of degraded areas. During wet periods, certain

road and trail segments may be closed to all traffic. The BLM will consider the applicant's needs when designing and implementing restrictions or watershed restoration efforts that could influence the operation.

- In order to minimize the importation or spread of noxious weeds, all vehicles are to be washed thoroughly (including the undercarriage and engine compartment) before entering public land to remove all soil and vegetation debris (including seeds and seed heads) acquired from previous use. This washing should occur at the home base of operations of the permittee before traveling to public land. All vehicles used for activities approved by this permit are subject to inspection by the BLM.
- The permittee will be committed to preserving and protecting public lands by learning, practicing, and promoting the "Leave No Trace" principles as presented by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics (see www.lnt.org).

Motorized vehicle-use stipulations:

- Motorized routes and non-motorized trails will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for use in permitted events and suitability for future use, closure, re-routing, rehabilitation, upgrading or authorization as an approved and permitted course will be determined.
- No motorized vehicles are permitted in riparian areas or in running washes except at road crossings. Substantiated reports of unauthorized use in these areas will result in immediate probation and possible suspension or revocation of permit privileges.
- Per 43 CFR 9268, all motor vehicle use will comply with existing BLM and State motorized vehicle laws and regulations on public lands relating to use, standards, registration, operation and inspection. These regulations include, but are not limited to, the following:
 1. No person shall operate an OHV on public land in a reckless, careless or negligent manner; in excess of established speed limits; while under the influence of alcohol, narcotics or drugs; or in a manner causing, or likely to cause, significant undue damage to or disturbance of the soil, wildlife, wildlife habitat, improvements, cultural resources or vegetation.
 2. Drivers shall yield the ROW to pedestrians, saddle horses, pack trains, and animal drawn vehicles.
 3. Drivers are prohibited from operating a motor vehicle unless the driver and each front seat passenger are restrained by a properly fastened safety belt.
- The permittee will be committed to preserving and protecting the public land by learning, practicing, and promoting the "Tread Lightly!" principles as presented by the Tread Lightly non-profit organization (see www.treadlightly.org).

Hunting outfitter/guide supplemental stipulations

The following stipulations for hunting outfitters and guides are in addition to the terms and conditions listed on the back of the special recreation application and permit form and the standard stipulations for BLM's Phoenix District and LSFO. The stipulations listed below are part of the permit: Failure to comply with them may result in the loss of permit privileges.

- Hunters shall not hunt within $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile of any developed recreation or archaeological site.
- Hunters may not use motorized vehicles of any type to retrieve injured or killed animals, including hunters with Challenged Hunter Access/Mobility Permits. Outside of wilderness areas, the use of wheeled game carts is allowed and recommended.
- No base camps may be established in undisturbed areas without the prior approval of the BLM.
- The BLM shall be notified of any base camp stays anticipated to occur over the standard 14-day camping limit. This notification shall be received at least three business days prior to the fourteenth day of occupancy. Under no circumstances is the base camp occupancy to exceed the length of the hunting season for which the hunt permit/tag is drawn.
- Portable self-contained chemical toilets are the preferred method for human waste disposal and are required for groups larger than eight people. "Catholes" may be used for groups less than eight people and must be located at least 200 feet from water sources or dry wash beds. Toilet paper and feminine hygiene products are to be packed out and properly disposed. Waste from self-contained toilets shall be disposed of at State approved sewage disposal facilities.
- The permittee must notify the BLM three business days in advance if horses or pack stock animals are to be used for hunting activities.
- The permittee shall provide the BLM contact with the following information at least three business days prior to the start of the hunt:
 1. Hunt number and Game Management Units for which the permit-tag was drawn
 2. Anticipated area of concentration for hunt and location of overnight base camps
 3. If applicable, the following additional information needs to be provided: 1) Name of the lead guide, 2) Vehicle information including make, model, color and license number

Parking, Staging Areas, Roads, and other Facilities and Sites

Facilities to manage concentrated recreation use typically are planned and authorized by site-specific planning that is conducted at the project level on a case-by-case basis:

- Facilities (such as camping locations, motorized and non-motorized activity staging areas, toilets, scenic turnouts, cultural interpretive sites, directional and interpretive signs, non-motorized trails, and roads) will be authorized where needed for resource protection, visitor safety, resolution of visitor use conflicts, or to implement an RMP or implementation-plan decision.
- To the greatest extent possible, all new construction and modifications for recreational facilities, outdoor developed areas, and any related programs and activities will be accessible to people with disabilities in accord with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, with later amendments. Guidance, requirements, and standards applicable to conform with the above legislation may be found in the following:
 1. Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards,

2. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines,
 3. ADA-ABA Accessibility Guidelines (use whichever guidance is most stringent), and
 4. Proposed Outdoor Developed Areas Guidelines (U.S. Access Board found at <http://www.access-board.gov> and 43 CFR Part 17, Subpart E found at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>.)
- Roads and trails will be maintained as needed.
 - Per 43 CFR 9268, all motor vehicle use will comply with existing BLM and State motorized-vehicle laws and regulations on public lands relating to use, standards, registration, operation and inspection.
 - Vehicle and recreational uses and access to areas with known listed, sensitive, threatened, or endangered species (plant and wildlife) will be avoided.
 - Recreational use and vehicular traffic will be minimized when the soils are so wet or abnormally dry that the route or surrounding resources may be damaged by use and during high fire-threat conditions.
 - The BLM will work with private property owners to reduce conflicts between private owners and recreational activities.
 - Coordinate with partners and nearby land owners and managers to develop joint campgrounds on and off public lands.
 - Develop partnerships and volunteer opportunities with local clubs, organizations, and communities to maintain and monitor routes, recreation sites, and other areas.
 - Develop brochures, maps, and information sheets to disseminate recreation use information to the public.

Recreational target shooting

Public lands administered by the BLM are generally available for recreational target shooting unless otherwise specifically closed to that use. BLM will work with the public, organizations, and law enforcement to promote safe shooting practices that limit user conflicts and damage to natural and cultural resources. The following discussion describes criteria for the selection of safe and considerate shooting sites.

It is the ultimate responsibility of the recreational target shooter to ensure the projectiles they fire are contained within the shooting site they select. While shooting is allowed in most public land areas, the shooter should make no concession concerning safety. Consideration of other people using public lands is not only considerate, Arizona Revised Statutes Title 13-1201 says:

- A. A person commits endangerment by recklessly endangering another person with a substantial risk of imminent death or physical injury.
- B. Endangerment involving a substantial risk of imminent death is a class six felony. In all other cases, it is a class one misdemeanor.

General considerations for selecting a suitable shooting site include the following:

- Select a site with a safe backstop. That means that it is visibly apparent where the bullets are hitting behind the target. A hill or pushed-up berm of dirt is perfect. Remember that bullets can ricochet off flat surfaces—that includes rocks, dirt and water. Place targets right in front of the backstop to ensure that bullets stop in the dirt.
- Select a site that doesn't put others at risk. Do not shoot towards or across areas where other people congregate such as hiking trails, vehicle parking and staging areas, and trail heads. It is a violation of Arizona State law (A.R.S. 17-301B) to shoot across a maintained road. Though this law only pertains to maintained roads, there are many routes in the desert that are used by motorcycles, quads, and four-wheel drive vehicles that are not as apparent as a maintained road. Shooting in the direction, or across them, though not a violation of the referenced law, could be just as dangerous to people using them. Choose a site that avoids shooting across or towards motorcycle, quad, or four-wheel-drive routes as well.
- In addition to motorized routes, there are many popular hiking, bicycling, and equestrian trails. Select a site that doesn't cross or shoot in the direction of a trail that could put people at risk.
- Selection of a safe shooting site would include staying more than ¼ mile from any residence or occupied structure. When selecting a site, assume any structure is occupied. It is a violation of Arizona State Law to knowingly discharge a firearm at a structure. The statute (A.R.S 13-1211A and B) says:
 - A. A person who knowingly discharges a firearm at a residential structure is guilty of a class two felony.
 - B. A person who knowingly discharges a firearm at a nonresidential structure is guilty of a class three felony.
- Selection of a site should include avoiding such improvements as wildlife or livestock water facilities, livestock control facilities such as corrals and fences, signs or kiosks installed to provide information, barns or other rural developments, or any other improvement that was not specifically designed to be shot at.
- It is a violation of Arizona State law (A.R.S. 13-1603A 1) if a person "Throws, places, drops or permits to be dropped on public property or property of another which is not a lawful dump any litter, destructive or injurious material which he does not immediately remove." This includes not only trash, but also brass or shells (including shotgun shells) from spent ammunition, and items used as targets. Shooters are required to remove any targets, items on which targets are mounted, and brass from spent ammunition. BLM Phoenix District policy is to only use targets that do not produce litter, and to remove them when shooting is finished.
- Under the Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR 8365.2-5(a)) no person shall "Discharge or use firearms..." on a developed recreation site. (43 CFR 8360.0-5(c) defines "Developed Recreation Sites and Areas" as "...sites and areas that contain structures or capital improvements primarily used by the public for recreation purposes. Such sites or areas may include such features as: delineated spaces for parking, camping or boat launching; sanitary facilities; potable water; grills or fire rings; or controlled access."

Selecting sites with side berms and backstops is optional where the shooter can be assured of safe shooting 1.5 miles downrange for pistol or 3.5 miles downrange for high powered rifles, with appropriate left and right ricochet safety zones. With the popularity of public lands for recreation and other uses, this scenario is the exception rather than the rule. Therefore, the primary purpose for selection of backstops and side berms is to protect against the injury of people, the damage of property or both.

The type of firearms being fired and the shooting activity being conducted will dictate the extent of the backstops, side berms and safety fans required to achieve that goal.

A downrange safety fan is an area beyond the backstop and side berms that is free of people or property that can be injured or damaged by errant bullets. It is important to remember that, depending on the suitability of the backstop and side berms, a safety fan downrange will be required to assure a safe shooting area. Below are ideal specifications for both backstops and side berms. Sites with less than ideal backstops and side berms must have increasingly longer downrange safety fans, approaching the distances described above of 1.5 miles for pistols and 3.5 miles for high power rifles. Even with an ideal backstop and side berms, site selection should still consider downrange safety and a downrange safety fan.

- The characteristics of safe backstops and berms recognized as needed for safe shooting practices are as follows:
 - Height. Preferred backstops include naturally occurring hills or mountainsides, or steep-sided wash banks. Backstops of soft dirt are preferred over hard surfaces, and rocky slopes should be avoided as they create a high ricochet hazard. A minimum height of 15 feet is acceptable but 20 to 25 feet is recommended. Remember that bullet ricochet can happen even on the best backstop. Site selection should consider ricochet possibilities and backstops that exceed 20 to 25 feet should be chosen where possible to reduce ricochet away from the shooting area.
 - Width/Length. The width of the backstop should be at least as wide as it is high. Targets should be placed directly in front of or on the backstop with sufficient backstop on either side to catch bullets. Ideally, side berms should be the same height and the full length of the shooting area from the backstop to even with the firing line.
 - Slope. The range side slope (side facing the shooter) must be as steep as possible, but not less than a 45-degree slope (a ratio of one-to-one). Side berm slopes should have the same dimensions.
- The bottom line is to select a shooting site in harmony with adjacent properties and other public land users. The site should prevent adjacent properties and other public land users from experiencing any risk from the shooting activities. The overall responsibility of the shooter is to stop fired bullets before they exit the selected shooting area. It is the intention of the BLM to provide a safe and pleasant experience for any public land user. If shooting areas emerge that are contrary to the above criteria they will be clearly construed as putting other public land users at risk and they may be closed to shooting by the authorized officer, either temporarily or permanently.

D.4.4 TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

D.4.4.1 Best Management Practices

Travel System Planning

- Ensure that road specifications and plans are consistent with good safety practices.
- Design, construction and maintenance of roads, primitive roads and trails will comply with guidelines identified in the BLM 9113 Roads Manual, the BLM 9115 Primitive Roads Manual or the BLM 9114 Trails Manual (2012).
- Plan each road to the minimum standards for the intended use. Adapt plans to the soils and terrain to minimize disturbance and damage to soil productivity, vegetation, water quality, and wildlife habitat.
- Plan natural road cross-drainage by insloping and using relief culverts or outsloping and by grade changes. Plan for effective well-placed dips or water bars.
- Design relief culverts or roadside ditches to prevent fill erosion or direct discharge of sediment into streams.
- Emphasize the use of existing roads (through continued use or reconstruction) to minimize new road construction.
- Implement mitigation techniques when designing and implementing the route system.

Road/Primitive Road Construction

- Construct culverts, cross drains, or other water control devices to prevent erosion.
- Design roads to balance cuts and fills or use full bench construction where stable fill construction is not possible.

Road/Primitive Road Drainage

- Provide adequate drainage from the surface of all roads by using outsloped or crowned roads, drain dips, or insloped roads with ditches and cross-drains or relief culverts.
- Vary road grades to reduce concentrated flow in road surface, ditches, and culverts and on fill slopes and road surfaces.
- Size drainage structures appropriately to handle anticipated flow during normal runoff or storms.
- Outsloped Roads: Outsloped roads provide means of dispersing water in a low-energy flow from the road surface. Outsloped roads are appropriate when fill slopes are stable, drainage will not flow directly into stream channels, and transportation safety considerations can be met. Outsloping is the preferred method of drainage for primitive roads.
- Insloped Roads: For insloped roads, generally design ditch gradients to be between two and eight percent to prevent sediment deposition and ditch erosion. The higher gradients may be suitable for more stable soils; use the lower gradients for less stable soils.

- Drain Dips: Construct drain dips deep enough into the subgrade so that traffic will not obliterate them. Dips should be angled 20 to 45 degrees perpendicular to the road and have a drainage grade of two to eight percent. Alternative drain dip designs are acceptable when properly constructed to ensure performance and longevity.
- Prevent downslope movement of sediment by using sediment catch basins, drop inlets, changes in road grade, headwalls, recessed cut slopes, slash filter windrows, or other design features.
- Prevent cross drains, culverts, water bars, dips, and other drainage structures from discharging onto erodible soils or fill slopes without outfall protection.
- Design roads for minimal disruption of drainage patterns.

Road/Primitive Road Maintenance

- Maintain erosion control features through periodic inspection and maintenance, including cleaning dips and cross-drains, repairing ditches, marking culvert inlets to aid in location, and clearing debris from catch basins and culverts.
- Avoid using roads during wet periods if such use would damage the road drainage features.
- Grade road surfaces only as often as necessary to maintain a stable running surface and to retain the original surface drainage.
- Conduct spot maintenance on primitive roads to correct safety, conserve resources or to maintain the desired recreation experience. Grading the full length of primitive roads is not required, nor desired, in most cases.

Non-motorized Trail Construction

- Construction will follow BLM 9114 Trails Manual (2012) or other applicable standard.
- All trails are designed to minimize surface disturbance.
- Linear areas of interest would be marked with fiberglass posts or rock cairns to establish the footpath.
- Alternative types of transportation to link areas of interest should be considered.

D.4.4.2 Standard Operating Procedures

New Routes

- Changes to the route system and the TMP will be considered in unison with the SDNM RMP five-year evaluation process. The guidance for the five-year RMP evaluation cycle and how such an evaluation is conducted is provided in the Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-I, section V.B, on pages 33-36. Consequently, a five-year evaluation cycle is also suitable for the TMP. The evaluation will determine if the RMP, and successively the TMP, are being properly implemented, analyze the plan's effectiveness, and determine if changes to the subject plans are needed. Linking the evaluation cycle of the TMP to the RMP evaluation cycle will be very informative in determining success for key aspects of plan implementation and desired monument management outcomes. Moreover, the evaluation process will afford

citizens, organizations and agencies opportunities to propose changes to the TMP and travel management system. BLM-driven route changes or projects required for public health and safety, to maintain or acquire public access as prescribed by the TMP, or to address new issues, rules, regulations or laws will be conducted on an “as needed” basis.

- After the initial five-year review period, new route development would be considered only for resource protection, address changed conditions or public safety purposes when no other options meet the management need. If such development is required, routes and management strategies will be planned, designated, and developed with community and user input. Limits of acceptable change indicators and standards would be adopted and use conflicts reduced.
- The process of adding new routes to the designated route network, motorized or non-motorized, will include a structured analysis approach. All proposed additions will be processed as follows:
 1. Route locations will, as a minimum, be mapped or located under instructions from the BLM using accepted Global Positioning System devices and presented to BLM for consideration. Locations of route proposals off of designated motorized routes must be located and mapped using non-motorized methods.
 2. Route proposals submitted to BLM will include a description of the route (including its proposed width), its proposed use(s) (including expected traffic and design vehicle) and rationale for its need.
 3. The proposed location will be staked and flagged for on-the-ground review by resource specialists.
 4. The route location will be analyzed for potential conflicts such as (but not limited to): wildlife habitat and movement, cultural resources, visual resources, other recreation uses, mining claims or leases, grazing facilities, ROWs, and proximity to other jurisdictions (such as private land). A structured process will be used to evaluate and document the potential route conditions.
 5. The conflict assessment may lead to development of mitigation actions or alternative locations or design.
 6. An environmental analysis would be conducted to determine the environmental effects of the proposed route and any alternatives and recommended mitigation.
 7. A decision will be issued by the authorized officer based on LUP conformance, resource objectives, and environmental impacts.
 8. If the decision is to approve the addition of the route, the Travel Management Plan will be updated, accordingly.

General Management

- The development of standards for monitoring the route system will be directed by compliance with laws, regulations, and travel management plan goals and objectives.

- Route or area closures or mitigation will be enacted where OHV or special vehicle use is determined to be inconsistent with established recreational management objectives, and/or such use is causing harm to natural or cultural resources.
- Partnerships will be developed with local clubs and organizations to help maintain and monitor motorized routes and non-motorized trails.
- Manage OHV use and travel activities, and implement best management practices according to the Arizona BLM Guidelines for OHV Recreation Management.
- A route inventory database will be maintained using standard collection and information storage methods.
- The field office area will be monitored to detect unauthorized route creation.
- Create design and maintenance guidelines and procedures for managing access points, roads and trails, consistent with the route's access purpose.

D.4.5 WILDLAND FIRE & FUELS MANAGEMENT

D.4.5.1 Standard Operating Procedures

- Fire suppression will be carried out in a manner consistent with Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations, which is updated on an annual basis by the National Interagency Fire Center. Logistical support, operation and coordination, and policies and procedures for mobilization of firefighting resources are outlined in the Southwest Area Mobilization Guide.
- Fire management activities will continue to avoid disturbing known archaeological sites or sites found during such activities. Fires will not be intentionally started at known sites. Archaeologists will serve as resource advisors for fire management and help develop and implement fire and fuels management plans, which would address effects on cultural resources. Fire crews will be educated about the need to protect cultural resources.
- In areas suitable for fire, the BLM will monitor existing air quality levels and weather conditions to determine which prescribed fires can be ignited and which, if any, must be delayed to ensure that air quality meets federal and state standards. If air quality approaches unhealthy levels, the BLM will delay igniting prescribed fires.
- The BLM will update and maintain Fire Management Plans to include site-specific actions for managing wildfire and fuels in accordance with Federal fire policies and this plan. These plans will be coordinated with the USFWS and AGFD to address site-specific concerns for Federally protected species. Consultation with the USFWS will occur with these project-level plans, as necessary.
- Avoid impacts to protected plants or their habitats by developing, modifying, redesigning, mitigating, or abandoning projects.
- Use suppression tactics that limit damage or disturbance to the habitat and landscape. Use no heavy equipment (such as dozers) unless approved.

- Use fire retardants or chemicals next to waterways in accordance with the Environmental Guidelines for Delivery of Retardant or Foam near Waterways (Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations Task Group 2004).
- Protect all known cultural resources from disturbance.
- Use MIST, comply with the management plan to the maximum extent possible, and coordinate with resource advisors.
- Implement general and species-specific conservation measures to the extent possible to minimize harm to federally listed, proposed, or candidate species within the action area.

D.5 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

D.5.1 AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

There are no ACECs within the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

D.6 SOCIAL & ECONOMIC

D.6.1 PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

D.6.1.1 Standard Operating Procedures

- Releases of hazardous materials will be minimized through compliance with current regulations. When hazardous materials are released into the environment, their impacts on each resource will be assessed and the appropriate response, removal, and remedial actions to take will be determined.
- All actions (including land-use authorizations and disposals, mining and milling activities, and unauthorized land uses) will be evaluated for hazardous materials, waste minimization, and pollution prevention. Appropriate mitigation will be identified for surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of hazardous materials and waste management and all types of fire management.
- Investigate all reported hazardous-materials and solid-wastes sites. Identify the probable scope of needed containment and clean-up efforts. Plan necessary containment and/or cleanup responses on a case-by-case basis as soon as possible upon report.
- Conduct active investigations to identify potentially responsible parties and recover planning, containment, cleanup, monitoring, investigation, and enforcement costs associated with spill/release responses.
- Site-specific inventories will be completed when land is being disposed or acquired. It is DOI policy to minimize potential liability of the department and its bureaus (including the BLM) by acquiring property that is not contaminated unless directed by Congress, court mandate, or as determined by the Secretary.
- Mining and milling sites will be inspected to determine appropriate management for hazardous materials.

- Parties responsible for contamination will be identified and be liable for cleanup and resource damage costs, as prescribed by law.
- Maintain current and develop new, as needed, law enforcement/public safety patrol, fire suppression, and search and rescue programs.
- Complete site-specific inventories when lands are being disposed or acquired. It is departmental policy to minimize potential liability of the Department of Interior (DOI) and its bureaus by acquiring property that is not contaminated unless directed by Congress, court mandate, or as determined by the Secretary.
- Inspect mining and milling sites to determine appropriate management for hazardous materials.
- Evaluate all actions (including land use authorizations and disposals, mining and milling activities, and unauthorized land uses) for hazardous materials, waste minimization, and pollution prevention. Minimize releases of hazardous materials through compliance with current regulations. Identify appropriate mitigation for activities associated with all types of hazardous materials and waste management and all types of fire management.

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