

## **Yuma Field Office/Bureau of Land Management**

### **Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

#### **EXISTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS FOR YUMA FIELD OFFICE (YFO):**

Public lands administered by the YFO are presently managed with direction from three Land Use Plans (LUP) and nine LUP amendments:

- Yuma District Resource Management Plan (Yuma RMP) (1987)
- Lower Gila South (LGS) Resource Management Plan (1988)
- Lower Gila North Management Framework Plan (1983)

In addition to the LUPs listed above, there are nine LUP amendments:

- Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan – Goldwater Amendment (1990)
- Yuma District Resource Management Plan Amendment (1992)
- Yuma District (Bill Williams) Resource Management Plan Amendment (1994a)
- Yuma District (Havasu) Resource Management Plan Amendment (1994b) (LHFO)
- Yuma District (Lands) Resource Management Plan Amendment (1996) (LR)
- Statewide Amendment to recommend suitability for Wild and Scenic Rivers (1996)
- Statewide Amendment for Standards and Guides (1997)
- Yuma District (North Baja EIS) Resource Management Plan Amendment (2002)
- Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality (2004)

One monitoring plan was developed:

- 1994 Five Year Monitoring Program Planning Update for the Yuma District Resource Management Plan (1986-1991).

Many of the elements of the existing BLM management decisions will be carried forward where they have worked well and remain valid. Determining which existing management decisions will be carried forward is a part of the planning process for this RMP. The RMP will be developed in accordance with guidance set forth in BLM H-1601-1 – Land Use Planning Handbook.

#### **YFO EXISTING MANAGEMENT BY RESOURCE:**

##### **LANDS AND REALTY**

All land disposal actions are discretionary. Exchange is the preferred method of disposal in order to assure an optimum final land ownership pattern and provide better overall land management. Sales will be considered where more efficient. Disposal of these lands will be made on a case-by-case basis, and will be accomplished by the most appropriate disposal authority. YFO, LHFO

Yuma District policy is to not dispose of lands occupied by listed or proposed threatened or endangered species. If other public uses outweigh the value of a parcel as Federally-owned threatened or endangered species habitat, disposal may be considered on a case-by-case basis. In this instance, consultation or conferencing with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the *Endangered Species Act* will be required. Exchange for other parcels of habitat will be encouraged. Compensation for loss of habitat value will be required where a compensation policy exists. Other mitigation may also be required. 1996 Yuma Lands Amendment YFO, LHFO

All Federal lands in Areas 1-8 and 10-19 (57,759 acres) are available for disposal. Area 10 (approximately 1,100 acres) is available for disposal only in full compensation for the Federal land debt resulting from the Central Arizona Project. This debt settlement may involve transfer of Area 10 lands to: a) the State of Arizona and b) Lake Havasu City under Recreation and Public Purposes authority (refer to Map 9 in the Final RMP and attachments). 1987 RMP, p.19 YFO, LHFO

Land acquisitions will be considered on a case-by-case basis through exchange, purchase, or donation. 1996 Lands Amendment YFO, LHFO

The Yuma District will attempt to acquire 31,220 acres through exchange to benefit Federal programs. These lands will all be open to mineral entry and development in accordance with mining law and regulations. 1987 RMP, p.19 YFO, LHFO

Additional private lands in the Yuma District are identified for acquisition to benefit Federal programs. These lands total 18,950 acres. 1992 Yuma RMP Amendment YFO, LHFO

General Lands Program – Lands cases evaluated on a case-by-case basis for leases, easements and permits, and right-of-ways. Communication sites generally limited to designated mountain peaks with existing facilities.

## **NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **WILD AND FREE ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS**

The Yuma District will mitigate loss of access to water along the Colorado River due to changing land use by either providing fenced access routes or developing new sources of water. 1987 RMP, p. 8 YFO, LHFO

### **WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES HABITAT**

The Yuma District will discourage the introduction of "exotic" species on public lands. 1987 RMP, p. 7 YFO, LHFO

The Yuma District will maintain existing waters used by wildlife on public lands. 1987 RMP, p. 7 YFO, LHFO

Wildlife habitat use of riparian lands is managed in a manner consistent with BLM Manual 6740 (Wetland-Riparian Area Protection and Management), Federal floodplain management regulations, Bureau of Reclamation needs, and floodway clearance obligations of the International Boundary and Water Commission. 1987 RMP, p.8 YFO, LHFO

Potential impacts on fish and wildlife habitat will continue to be evaluated and mitigated whenever a project or action is proposed. Such evaluations will consider the significance of the

proposed project and the sensitivity of fish and wildlife habitat in the affected area. 1987 RMP p. 8 YFO, LHFO

Wildlife habitat improvement projects will be implemented where necessary to stabilize or improve unsatisfactory or declining wildlife habitat condition. These projects will be identified through cooperative management plans (under the *Sikes Act*) or coordinated resource management activity plans. 1987 RMP, p. 8 YFO, LHFO

No activities or projects that would jeopardize the continued existence of federally-listed threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species, or species proposed for listing will be permitted on BLM-administered lands. 1987 RMP p. 8 YFO, LHFO

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use in priority wildlife habitat areas is limited to existing roads and trails. 1987 RMP, p. 15 YFO, LHFO

New livestock waters will be located at least two miles from crucial tortoise habitat and/or crucial desert bighorn sheep habitat. (LGS, 1988)

Before installing facilities, BLM will conduct a site evaluation for state-protected animals and will develop mitigation to protect these species and their habitats. Such mitigation might include project relocation, redesign, or abandonment. (LGS, 1988)

Fences proposed in big game habitat will be designed to reduce adverse impacts to big game movement. Specifications in BLM Manual 1737 and in local BLM directives will be used. BLM will consult with the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) on the design and location of new fences. (LGS, 1988)

Where existing fences in big game habitat do not meet BLM specifications, they will be modified according to BLM Manual 1737 when they are scheduled for replacement or major maintenance (LGS, 1988)

All livestock waters will provide safe, usable water for wildlife. As funding and opportunities permit, existing facilities will be modified for safe wildlife use. The following standards apply to design and modification of livestock waters. (LGS, 1988)

The aboveground height of livestock troughs and tanks will not exceed 20 inches. BLM will install wildlife escape ladders in each facility and provide ramps for small bird and mammal access. Storage tanks will have either a metal or floating vinyl cover to reduce evaporation and prevent wildlife from drowning.

Ground-level wildlife water developments will be established on livestock waters where feasible. An enclosure of three to seven acres containing the water source, storage, and related riparian habitat will be built to exclude livestock. Where terrain permits, livestock water will be provided at least 0.25 miles outside of the fenced enclosures.

Developed spring storage and adjacent riparian habitat will be fenced to exclude livestock.

Where practical, water troughs and tanks will be kept full year-round to provide a continuous water supply for wildlife. (LGS, 1988)

Wildlife and special status plants monitoring decisions were deferred to the Habitat Management Plans. (LGS, 1988)

BLM will continue to place wildlife escape ramps in water troughs and construct or maintain new wildlife waters in coordination with state and other federal agencies and according to the following specifications. (LGS, 1988)

Design studies to ensure that wildlife requirements in riparian areas were being met. Special emphasis would be placed on monitoring riparian habitat along the Gila River (Fred J. Weiler Green Belt). (LGS, 1998)

## **TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS**

Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) designations allow for 640 acres Open, 13,985 acres (minus LHFO adjustment) Limited to designated routes, 22,420 acres (minus LHFO adjustment) Closed, and 1,154,955 acres (minus LHFO adjustment) as Existing roads and trails. Yuma Field Office is currently inventorying routes.

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use on the 33 cultural resource sites and areas is restricted to existing roads and trails. 1987 RMP, p. 16 YFO, LHFO

New competitive-use OHV areas will be designated in the appropriate activity plans to meet the increasing public need for such areas. Competitive-use, off-highway vehicle events not scheduled for the SCORE Parker 400 course must comply with District off-highway vehicle designations and special recreation use permit provisions. Special recreation use permits would be issued on a case-by-case basis. Completion of NEPA compliance documentation is necessary before these events would be approved. 1992 Yuma RMP Amendment YFO, LHFO

## **RECREATION**

### **RECREATION MANAGEMENT**

Where warranted by increased recreation needs and demands, the recreation program will be expanded to additional Federal lands. Development of new and expansion of present recreation sites will be contingent upon demonstrating feasibility and need through economic, market and environmental analyses. These analyses will consider recreation use and demand, user profiles and preferences, natural values and benefits-costs at a minimum. 1987 RMP, p. 22 YFO, LHFO

The Yuma District will periodically conduct recreation supply and demand studies to ensure that public needs for recreation on the Colorado River are being met. 1987 RMP, p. 22 YFO,

Additional Federal lands will be available for the expansion of existing or development of new recreation concessions and leases in order to ensure that public recreation needs are being met. However, such expansion and development must be compatible with the resource base. Where adverse impacts to natural values would result from recreation development, such development will either not be allowed or will be mitigated in a manner which protects the full integrity of the natural values. 1987 RMP, p. 22 YFO, LHFO p. 17 Record of Decision

Additional long-term visitor areas (LTVAs) will be established on the basis of a demonstrated need and compatibility with ongoing land and resource uses established in the resource management plan. 1987 RMP, p. 23 YFO

Changes in OHV designations will be addressed in the appropriate activity plans to avoid potential conflicts with other recreation uses, off-highway vehicle-related impacts on resources, or other management concerns. 1992 Yuma RMP Amendment YFO, LHFO

An inventory will be completed following approval of the resource management plan in order to clearly ascertain "existing roads and trails" in the District. Priority wildlife habitat, special management, high use recreational and other areas with potential for significant conflict between off-highway vehicle use and other resources and uses will receive priority consideration in the inventory. 1987 RMP, p. 23 YFO, LHFO

Site-specific environmental review will be completed for the area prior to each event to determine exact course location, assess the impacts to resources, and develop appropriate mitigation and stipulations. If more than one race event per year is proposed for the route, additional environmental review will be completed to determine the impacts and develop mitigation. 1995 Havasu Amendment YFO, LHFO

A management plan for this event may be developed to guide supervision and management, additional course and facility development and monitoring, and rehabilitation of impacts. 1987 RMP, p. 24 YFO, LHFO

Specific strategies and actions for managing recreation use areas will be established through the development and revision of a) recreation activity plans, and b) management and development plans for sites operated by concessionaires and other public agencies. 1987 RMP, p. 12 YFO, LHFO

The Yuma District will continue to lease recreation areas for concession State park and county park operation to ensure that recreation opportunities are provided for all publics. Private enterprise will provide services and facilities that are responsive to public needs and are appropriate in intensively developed recreation areas. 1987 RMP, p. 22 YFO, LHFO

As a general practice, new roads will not be bladed for use in fence construction. Vehicles will travel overland, or fences will be built by hand. (LGS, 1988)

Visual resources will continue to be evaluated as a part of activity and project planning. These evaluations would consider the significance of a proposed project and the visual sensitivity of the affected area. Stipulations are to be attached as appropriate to assure compatibility of projects with management objectives for visual resources. (LGS, 1988)

The plan limits ORV use to existing and/or designated roads, trails, and vehicle routes. ORV closures may be made on areas where ORV use is determined to be causing irreparable harm to the existing resources. This applies to all public lands in the LGS planning area except for those specific areas identified for closure. Cross-country vehicle travel will be permitted only when a specific authorized task requires such use and only in areas where such use would not cause unnecessary or undue resource damage. Random off-road travel that results in the creation of new trails or the widening or extension of existing trails is not permitted. (LGS, 1988)

Wilderness study area lands not designated as wilderness by Congress will be managed as limited ORV use areas as described above. (LGS, 1988)

Other designations (closed or open) will be made as circumstances warrant. This will be done through the planning process. (LGS, 1988)

During construction of rangeland developments, vehicles will use existing roads and trails wherever possible for access to sites. Where feasible or where no roads exist, vehicles will travel cross-country to avoid the need for road building. Where new roads must be built, roadbeds will be no wider than needed for reliable access; BLM specifications will also be used to reduce erosion and gullyng. (LGS, 1988)

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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ACEC	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
AGFD	Arizona Game and Fish Department
ALRIS	Arizona Land Resources Information System
AML	abandoned mine land
AWC	Arizona Wilderness Coalition
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CRU	Community Resource Unit
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FGDC	Federal Geographic Data Committee
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
GIS	Geographic Information System
HI	historical indices
HMA	Herd Management Area
LCRMSCP	Lower Colorado River Multiple Species Conservation Plan
LGS	Lower Gila South
LHFO	Lake Havasu Field Office
LTVAs	Long Term Visitor Area
LUP	land use plan
MSCP	Multi-Species Conservation Plan
MTP	master title plat
NECO	Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NSDI	National Spatial Data Infrastructure
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
OHV	off-highway vehicle
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purpose
RIMS	Recreation Information Management System
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RV	recreational vehicle
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
T&E	Threatened and Endangered
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geographical Survey
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WSA	wilderness study area
WA	Wilderness Area
YFO	Yuma Field Office
YPG	Yuma Proving Grounds