

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
ARIZONA STATE OFFICE

1610 (93)

October 5, 1989

Memorandum

To: District Manager, Phoenix District  
From: Deputy State Director, Lands and Renewable Resources  
Subject: Record of Decision for the Phoenix Resource Area RMP

It is a pleasure to transmit the signed Record of Decision (ROD) for the Phoenix Resource Area RMP. The ROD was signed by the State Director on Friday, September 29, 1989.

Since preparation of the Empire-Cienega Amendment has started, and since this work will require a major effort from the Resource Area, we suggest that preparation of the Approved Plan document be postponed until the ROD for the Amendment has been issued.

This postponement also will permit inclusion of desert tortoise management actions referred to on page 4 of the ROD into the Approved Plan document.

*Phillip D. Moreland*  
Phillip D. Moreland  
Acting

Attachment  
Record of Decision (6pp)

BLM PHOENIX DISTRICT

FILED

DM	PA	ADMIN	OPS	MRS	RES	PLEA	PRA	LGRA	KRA	CF	Action By	Due Date

Lynn Salvo  
rec'd a copy  
Today  
please ensure  
you have info  
as needed for  
Apache/Navajo  
Counties

*Wing 9/11*

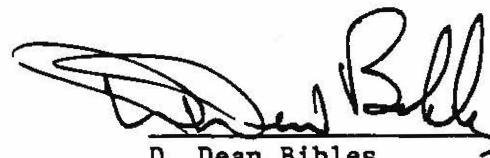
PHOENIX RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN/  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

RECORD OF DECISION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
PHOENIX DISTRICT, ARIZONA

I select the proposed action alternative described herein and approve it as  
the Phoenix Resource Management Plan.

September 29, 1989  
Date selected/approved

  
D. Dean Bibles  
State Director  
Arizona State Office

## PHOENIX RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

The proposed action alternative published in the Proposed Phoenix RMP/Final EIS document (Phoenix District, December 1988) is, with one change described below, the Phoenix Resource Management Plan (RMP).

The RMP will alleviate the significant management problems associated with managing the RMP area's scattered land while maintaining or enhancing valuable resources.

The RMP was produced through the BLM planning process in compliance with the procedures of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Differences between the Phoenix RMP and the preferred alternative of the draft Phoenix RMP/EIS represent changes resulting from comments of the public and governmental agencies, new resource information and the draft EIS analysis.

After discussions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on their comments on the Proposed Phoenix RMP/Final EIS, I have removed 120 acres of habitat occupied by sword milkvetch (Astragalus xiphoides) from land considered for disposal. The area is five miles east of Holbrook, Arizona. The sword milkvetch is a category 1 candidate for federal listing. The decision to retain the habitat is made because a proposal by the USFWS to list the plant as threatened is expected in the near future and the 120 acres are now considered vital to species recovery efforts.

With the above-noted exception, the proposed action alternative published in the Final Proposed Phoenix RMP/Final EIS is approved as the Resource Management Plan for the Phoenix Resource Area.

### SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

#### Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM will attempt to consolidate public ownership and intensively manage land in seven resource conservation areas (RCAs) as described in the Proposed Phoenix RMP/EIS. Altogether the seven RCAs contain 49 percent (437,476 acres) public land (surface estate), 38 percent (330,814 acres) state land and 13 percent (121,194 acres) private land. The BLM will retain all public land (surface and subsurface estate) within the seven RCAs and pursue the acquisition of all state land through the BLM-state of Arizona exchange program. Acquisition of private land within the RCAs is authorized and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Outside the RCAs, 6,880 acres adjacent to Petrified Forest National Park and 615 acres adjacent to the Tucson Mountain District of Saguaro National Monument are retained pending congressional action to include any of these parcels in the U.S. Park System. In addition, 23,600 acres outside the RCAs are retained and included in the cooperative recreation management areas (CRMAs) proposed under Issue 5 - Recreation Management and 120 acres east of Holbrook will be retained to protect sword milkvetch.

Also outside the RCAs, 391,680 acres of public land (surface estate) are identified as suitable for disposal through the state indemnity selection program or state or private exchange. An additional 45,000 acres are identified as suitable for disposal through state indemnity selection, state or private exchange or sale.

All land identified as meeting the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) criteria for disposal by sale is identified by tract in Appendix 1 of the Proposed Phoenix RMP/Final EIS.

The BLM will attempt to consolidate surface and subsurface ownership through the acquisition by exchange of nonfederal mineral estate underlying federal surface holdings. Within the RCAs, CRMAs and Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) leases, the BLM will retain all federal subsurface mineral estate and attempt to acquire through exchange all nonfederal subsurface estate underlying the land.

All subsurface mineral estate is identified for disposal if it underlies federal surface estate identified for disposal.

#### Utility Corridors and Communication Sites

Seven utility corridors are designated. These corridors identify priority routes for major utility systems. All the corridors except for Black Canyon are one mile in width. The Black Canyon corridor is two miles wide to prevent overcrowding.

The utility corridors identify the BLM's preferred utility systems routings. However, with the exception of those areas identified in this RMP as closed to right-of-way development, the RMP area generally is open to right-of-way development on a case-by-case basis.

Five communication sites are designated. Two of these, Confidence Peak and the Kelvin site, were identified in the 1974 Silver Bell and 1976 Middle Gila management framework plans (MFPs). These already-designated sites will continue to be managed for communication facilities under the RMP and Newman Peak (site development dependent upon congressional determination of wilderness suitability), Pan Quemado Peak and the White Tank Mountains are formally designated as communication sites.

Communication facility placement within the RCAs will be allowed only on the four designated sites (the White Tanks site is outside an RCA). Land identified for disposal generally will be left open for communication site development on a case-by-case basis. Thus, the BLM will consider site applications on this disposal land until such time as disposal takes place.

#### Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and Special Management Areas (SMAs)

Six ACECs encompassing 10,121 acres of public land are designated: Baboquivari Peak, Waterman Mountains, White Canyon, Larry Canyon, Tanner Wash and Appleton-Whittell. An additional 2,600 acres of state and 3,680 acres of private land within these six ACEC boundaries will be designated upon acquisition. Also, 9,440 acres of federal and state land on Perry Mesa will be automatically designated an ACEC upon the acquisition of the state land.

Nineteen SMAs are designated. Two SMAs, the Middle Gila Cultural Resource Management Area and the Gila River Riparian Management Area, are currently under withdrawal. Actions in these SMAs will be implemented only in cooperation with the agency that manages the withdrawn land.

Seven of the 19 SMAs are designated as multiple resource management areas. These contain nine grazing allotments for which the BLM will develop coordinated resource management plans (CRMPs) to provide direction for managing all the significant resources within the allotments.

#### Off-Road Designations

Vehicular travel is limited to existing roads and trails on all the RMP area's public land with the exception of those areas specifically identified as closed or limited to designated roads and trails. A total of 11,761 acres and 6.5 miles of existing roads or trails in the planning area is closed to vehicular traffic.

#### Recreation Management

The Coyote Mountains and Hells Canyon both are designated BLM special recreation management areas and are now wilderness study areas (WSAs). Management of these two WSAs as recreation areas will occur only if they are not designated wilderness by Congress.

Five CRMAs -- Lake Pleasant, San Tan Mountains, Black Canyon Trails, Tortolita Mountains and Sawtooth Mountains -- are established.

These CRMAs have been identified by county and state governments as important areas for intensive recreation uses. For each of these CRMAs, the BLM and the cooperating government agency will develop a management agreement detailing the role of each in managing recreation activities in the CRMA.

Additionally, five parcels are slated for transfer to local governments or agencies under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PPA). This land will be retained in federal ownership until such time as the grantee files an R&PP lease application and has an approved plan for development for the parcels. The land includes: Goldfield (1,140 acres) to the city of Apache Junction for park development, Saginaw Hill (460 acres) and Tucson Mountain Park Extension (600 acres) to Pima County for park development and Picacho Reservoir (350 acres) and Zion Reservoir (280 acres) to the Arizona Game and Fish Department for the protection of wildlife values.

#### Land Classifications

The RMP area currently is encumbered by five multiple use classifications affecting 12,177 acres. Under the RMP, the five classifications are terminated. Land covered by these classifications will return to multiple use management under the guidance of this RMP.

## OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative A - The no action alternative would have maintained the status quo of managing current public land under existing guidelines. Most of the identified issues would have remained unresolved.

Alternative B - The BLM's preferred alternative in the draft RMP/EIS, this alternative's proposals centered around identifying seven RCAs where public land containing important resources would be consolidated through land exchanges. Other issues would have been resolved by the establishment of ACECs and SMAs, designating utility corridors, providing for motorized vehicle use designations and by making land available to local governments for recreation and other public purposes.

Alternative C - Similar to Alternative B, this alternative presented management options to proposals in the preferred alternative. Differences centered around the number and size of proposed RCAs and the amount of public land made available to local governments for recreation and other public purposes.

Alternative D - The total disposal alternative, Alternative D proposed making all public land in the resource area available for private exchange or sale and analyzed the environmental impacts of doing so. The primary purpose for developing this alternative was to provide impact assessments in the event any particular parcel in the resource area were to be slated for private exchange or sale.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The Proposed Action Alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative of those chosen for study.

## MITIGATION

A site-specific environmental analysis will be prepared before actions in this RMP are implemented. The analysis will assess the significant impacts on affected environmental elements including cultural resources and special status wildlife and plants. The presence of any hazardous materials also will be identified. The analysis will identify mitigation, if necessary, to reduce the impacts of implementing an approved action.

Until the Bureau's recent rangewide desert tortoise management plan is addressed through the land use planning process, the guidelines in that document will be used to mitigate actions which may impact the desert tortoise or its habitat. It is the BLM's intention to complete an amendment to this RMP for desert tortoise management as soon as feasible.

Desert tortoise habitat acquired under this plan will be considered as mitigation for habitat transferred out of federal ownership and habitat impacted by Bureau initiated and approved actions as guided by the tortoise management plan.

Actions that are not specifically identified in this RMP will be analyzed through an environmental assessment or an EIS in accordance with NEPA and the RMP amendment portion of the planning regulations (43 CFR 1600).

All practical means have been adopted to minimize environmental harm from implementing the approved Phoenix RMP.

#### MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE PROPOSED RMP

The effect on the identified environmental issues of implementing the Phoenix RMP will be monitored and evaluated according to the schedule and methods shown in Table 2-8 of the Proposed Phoenix RMP/Final EIS. Other environmental values, not now considered issues, will be incorporated into the plan through the amendment process and formally monitored if these values deteriorate significantly during the life of the RMP.