Federal Lands Update

For the Arizona Game and Fish Commission February 2018

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (A-S)

Travel Management Planning (TMP)

• The Department continues to participate as a Cooperating Agency, providing information and expertise through meetings, field visits, and formal comments. In October 2017, the A-S published a notice of intent (NOI) to revise the Environmental Impact Statement and intends to use comments received in 2010 for this initial NEPA phase. The Department has requested the A-S provide an opportunity for the public to comment on significant changes incorporated within the revised EIS. The EIS is expected late 2019.

Coconino National Forest

Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP)

• The Final LRMP is anticipated for release March 2018, followed by a 90-day appeal process. Based on meetings and the Forests' most recent response (February 7, 2018) to formal comments/recommendations, the Department anticipates outstanding issues will be carried forward in the final plan.

Travel Management Planning (TMP)

• The Forest is continuing to review public comments on TMP at the District level. The Department continues to assist in the review of campsite data collected.

Coronado National Forest

Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP)

• The LRMP has been signed by the Regional Forester and is awaiting approval by the Washington D.C. Office. The Forest is uncertain as to when the plan will be approved.

Travel Management Planning (TMP)

• The Department continues to track, provide input, and coordinate with the Forest on changes to Motorized Travel systems EA's by district.

Kaibab National Forest

Travel Management Planning (TMP)

• The Kaibab National Forest (KNF) is continuing to review public comments on Travel Management at the District level. The Department continues to work with the KNF to update Motor Vehicle Use Maps.

Prescott National Forest

Chino Landscape Restoration Project (EA)

• The Chino Valley Ranger District has initiated a second round of scoping, seeking comments on the Environmental Assessment for the Chino Landscape Restoration Project. The project proposes a series of actions to restore and maintain soil and watershed function,

vegetation conditions, riparian and groundwater dependent systems, and natural fire regime. The project area spans both sides of the Chino Valley District. On the east side it includes most of the district north of the Woodchute Wilderness Area; on the west it runs from the southern boundary of the Chino Valley District north to the watershed boundary above Juniper Mesa Wilderness. The Department provided comments for the initial scoping comment period in September 2017, and will provide comments for the second round of scoping due in March 2018.

Tonto National Forest

Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP)

- The Department is a Cooperating Agency on the plan revision and continues to meet with the Tonto National Forest (TNF) Planning and ID Team. The Department is providing preliminary information, participating in field visits, and engaging constituents.
- The Preliminary Proposed Plan was released November 6, 2017; formal comments were submitted in January, 2018. The LRMP/DEIS is anticipated summer of 2018.
- In efforts to recommend areas on the TNF for wilderness designation, a draft wilderness evaluation map was released for public input in late January. The Department submitted formal comments on February 12, 2018.

Travel Management Planning (TMP)

• A project team has been assembled to identify a timeline for the Supplemental EIS (SEIS) and draft record of decision for travel management on the TNF. Until the SEIS and a Final Record of Decision is made, the existing system of roads and travel areas on the Payson and Pleasant Valley Ranger Districts will remain in effect.

Pinto Valley Mine

• The Department continues to participate as a Cooperating Agency for the Pinto Valley Mine EIS and any necessary amendments to the Tonto Forest Plan. The Forest has posted the Final Draft Scoping and Issues Report on the public website. In January 2018, the Forest held an alternatives development workshop with Cooperating Agencies to identify potential alternatives, design features, and best management practices. The Forest Service requested Cooperating Agency review/analysis of state trust species impacts and input on Pinto Creek resource concerns.

Resolution Copper Project and Land Exchange EIS

• The Department continues to participate as a Cooperating Agency for the Resolution Copper Project and Land Exchange EIS. The Department provided Cooperating Agency feedback on proposed draft alternatives, resulting in a revised set of alternatives. The TNF has posted the draft Alternatives Evaluation Report on its website. The Department is working with the FS ID Team on the Biological Workgroup and the Ground Water Modeling Workgroup. The Department continues to work internally to research the mine project; collect wildlife and recreation information on the project area; and prepare mitigation recommendations for the EIS.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Havasu Field Office

Travel Management Planning (TMP)

• Havasu Field Office has scheduled route evaluations for the Alamo and Salome Travel Management Areas. The plan is for all route evaluations to be completed this federal fiscal year and the plans to be completed by the end of FY 19.

Kingman Field Office

Annual Coordination

- The Annual Coordination Meeting took place at the AGFD Region 3 office in February. At the meeting, BLM personnel indicated the Minimum Requirements Decisions Process (MRDP) for three new wildlife waters on the Goodwin Mesa, Upper Burro Creek Wilderness, was nearing completion. BLM indicated a possible date of late summer 2018 for the final signature and project approval. Coordination for region-wide projects included road maintenance for wildlife waters and new wildlife water development.
- The Mohave County Wind project was sold to the Orion Company in 2016/2017. The Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office has completed the new ROW permits, as Orion has indicated their interest in proceeding with the 500-megawatt wind facility project. No dates have been given for construction plans or operational designs.

Lower Sonoran Field Office

Travel Management Planning (TMP)

• The Department continues to participate as a Cooperating Agency on the Buckeye Hills TMP and Environmental Assessment (EA). The Department participated on the BLM interdisciplinary team to conduct route evaluations and develop TMP alternatives to be analyzed through the NEPA process. Route evaluations were completed October 2017. BLM released the Draft TMP and EA and Alternatives maps for Cooperating Agency 30-day administrative review. Public release of the Draft TMP and EA is estimated for March/April 2018. The Department is currently developing input on individual route designations and comments on the Draft EA and will be participating in review and comment. The Field Office plans to complete all Travel Management Plans by the end of federal FY 19 and the target date for a decision is September 2018.

Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Shooting

On October 20, 2017, BLM issued the Final EIS and proposed RMP amendment. BLM's
Washington office is completing the protest resolution. The final step will be signing the
ROD and submitting the documents to the court. The Department has been actively engaged
on this issue for over a decade and anticipates an informed and reasonable Record of
Decision.

Hassayampa Field Office

Travel Management Planning

• The Department is a Cooperating Agency on the Black Canyon Corridor Travel Management Plan. The Department participated on the interdisciplinary team to conduct

route evaluations (completed in September) and develop a range of alternatives. Route evaluations were completed August 2017. BLM released the Draft TMP and EA and Alternatives maps for Cooperating Agency 30-day administrative review due March 1st. There are 4 alternatives to the No Action alternative that include a range of scenarios from maximum conservation to maximum access, with several "blended" options for ~524 miles of existing routes. Unique to this TMP are technical vehicle sites (TVSs) which are presently user created routes for rock crawling within drainages that offer large rocks and other off-camber obstacles for specialized vehicles. The Department is currently developing input on individual route designations and comments on the Draft EA. Public release of the Draft TMP and EA is estimated for March/April 2018. The Department will be participating in review and comment. The Field Office plans to complete all Travel Management Plans by the end of federal FY 19 and the target date for a decision is September 2018.

• BLM is currently conducting internal review of the results of the evaluation process and developing the final proposed alternatives. BLM will meet with Cooperating Agencies to review the final proposed action, alternatives and components of the draft EA prior to public release. Public release of the draft EA is anticipated Spring 2018. The target date for a final plan decision is September 2018. The Field Office plans to complete all Travel Management Plans by the end of federal FY 19.

Tucson Field Office

San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area

• The Department is a Cooperating Agency on the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) RMP/EIS process. The Department provided comments on the Administrative Draft, which the BLM will address prior to publication of the public Draft document. The Draft RMP/EIS is expected to be available for public review in summer 2018.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Bison Herd Reduction

• The Final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were finalized and signed in September 2017. Implementation efforts are scheduled to begin in fall 2018. The Department had served on the interdisciplinary (ID) Team and as a Cooperating Agency in this effort until January 2018. At that time, the Department formally pulled out as a cooperator in this effort due to fundamental conflicts between AZGFD and NPS on how herd reduction activities will occur.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Barry M. Goldwater Range

• Luke Air Force Base and Marine Corps Air Station jointly manage and use the Barry M. Goldwater Range (BMGR). The BMGR Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) five-year review process has begun. The Department has reviewed and provided initial feedback on the administrative draft. Public Meetings will be held in Ajo and Yuma in March.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lower Colorado River Multi-species Conservation Plan (LCR MSCP)

• The LCR MSCP is a fifty year joint federal and state conservation plan for Endangered Species Act compliance for activities on the lower Colorado River. Part of the program is to construct and operate refugia ponds for razorback suckers and bonytail chub on the Planet Ranch Wildlife Area. LCR MSCP has submitted an administrative draft EA for construction of the ponds to the Department for review. Department staff participated in a public meeting to discuss the development plans.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE- NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

Lower Colorado River Refuge Complex (Kofa, Imperial and Cibola)

• Every 10 years Refuges must review/renew Recreational Compatibility Determinations (CD) to determine if a recreational activity is compatible with a Refuge's purpose. The Complex is reviewing the CD for all currently allowed recreational activities, and proposes to renew all CD's. Refuges will consider new activities in the near future.

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS (CORPS)

Alamo Dam

• The Corps is proposing safety inspection/maintenance on Alamo Dam beginning in March, 2018. This will entail lowering the lake level to below 1100 feet and flushing sediments. Flushing flows will be less than 5,000 cfs for no more than 20 days. The project proposal and timing has prompted feedback from various stakeholders, including the Department. Department comments include impacts to sensitive wildlife, recreation, and fisheries management. The Department will continue to track and provide input to the Corps.

US Forest Service (USFS)

Status of USFS Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMP) and Travel Management Planning (TMP) in Arizona – February 2018

	USFS					
Forest	Plan	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and Implementation		
Apache- Sitgreaves	LRMP	June 30, 2016: Department sends decline to withdraw appeal letter to Appeal Reviewing Officer.	Majority of appeal points resolved. Recommended Wilderness unresolved.	LRMP completed.		
Apache- Sitgreaves	TMP	Oct. 2, 2017: NOI published for preparation of revised draft EIS. Nov. 29, 2017: Department commented and requested an opportunity for public/partners to comment on updated information/draft (last opportunity was 2010).	Department waiting for response to request for public comment opportunity. FS is preparing revised draft EIS.	Revised draft EIS expected summer 2018. Final EIS expected winter 2019.		
Coconino	LRMP	Final Draft released May 2016. Nov. 6, 2017: Dept. met with Forest Service leadership Feb. 7, 2018: Forest responded to the Department's February 2017 formal comment letter.	Department preparing for release of Final LRMP. Majority of issues/concerns expected to be resolved in final draft. Exceptions may include: Recommended Wilderness and/or wild and scenic river areas, and semi-primitive, non-motorized area designations. Potential for long term impacts to wildlife management and public recreation/access.	Final LRMP expected March 2018, followed by a 90 day appeal process.		
Coconino	TMP	Final 2011 (forest wide), MVUMs available; Department appealed plan on MBGR and	Dispersed camping 300ft from specifically identified roads only, 30ft from all other roads. MBGR	TMP revision process ongoing. Department continues to work with the forest to identify and recommend needed changes. Ex.		

			USFS	
Forest	Plan	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and Implementation
		dispersed camping decisions, appeal denied.	for elk only, 1 mile from roads except GMUs 5A & 5B.	Region collected ~95% of CNF dispersed camping locations. This data was instrumental in latest TMP revisions.
<u>Coronado</u>	LRMP	Draft released in 2013, Department submitted comments; Plan submitted to Washington, DC office. Feb. 2018: FS discussed Dept. comments	Outstanding issues include state vs. federal authority over wildlife issues and Recommended Wilderness.	FEIS NOA in Fed Register estimated Spring of 2018.
Coronado	MVUM EAS	Changes to Motorized Travel System EA's are progressing district by district. Region addressing district-specific road closures and access issues. 300' corridor closure in some areas.	Review and comment on Sierra Vista EA.	Nogales: Completed, 3/17 Safford: Completed, 11/17 Douglas: Completed, 12/17 Sierra Vista: Final draft EA expected 6/2018 Catalina: Final Draft EA expected 8- 2018
Kaibab	LRMP	Finalized 2014		
<u>Kaibab</u>	TMP S. Zone	Revision released Jan 2016, MVUMs available. Department accepted final revision.	Region is completing dispersed camping inventory to inform TMP. KNF released new MVUM's for the Williams, Tusayan, and North Kaibab ranger districts 2/17. Department engagement resulted in: motorized dispersed camping along 276 miles of roads (currently 100 ft. from roads, with Forest looking to expand to 300 ft); 14 camping spur roads added; and 24 miles of roads re-opened. MBGR	MVUMs anticipated to be updated annually. Department continues to work with KNF on adaptive management for MVUM's and TMP revisions.

			USFS	
Forest	Plan	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and Implementation
			limited to elk/bison 1 mile from open roads. 9 miles of open roads closed due to resource degradation.	
<u>Kaibab</u>	TMP N. Zone	Region has completed data collection of all dispersed camping locations.	No TMP revision process has been initiated (timing uncertain). See above for N. Kaibab. Department looking to remedy insufficient designated dispersed camping opportunities in lower elevations.	MVUMs anticipated to be updated annually.
<u>Prescott</u>	LRMP	Final signed 2015. Department Appeal Declined, Plan approved 2016.	Recommended wilderness areas. Potential for long term impacts to wildlife management and public recreation/access based on land use/management changes.	
Prescott	TMP	No new TMP, amending 2005 plan for travel management.		
Tonto	LRMP	The Department participates as a Cooperating Agency in plan revision process. November 2017: The Forest released Preliminary Proposed Draft Plan. January 12, 2018: Department submitted formal comments. February 12, 2018: Department commented on draft wilderness evaluation map.		Comments on the Preliminary Proposed Draft Plan are currently being reviewed through March 2018. The draft plan/EIS anticipated late summer 2018.
<u>Tonto</u>	TMP	Draft Decision and Final EIS was not complete. A supplemental to the EIS is being developed.	Currently undergoing development of a supplement to the EIS, due to the need for further analysis.	Timeline unknown.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Status of BLM Resource Management Plans (RMP) and Travel Management Plans (TMP) in Arizona – February 2018

			BLM	
Field Office/District	Plan	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and Implementation
AZ Strip (including Grand Canyon- Parashant and Vermillion Cliffs NMs)	RMP	Record of Decision Feb 2008	N/A	
Colorado City	TMP	We have faced very few issues with respect to maintaining appropriate motorized access. Where they have occurred, BLM has afforded opportunities to negotiate and successfully resolve.		Record of Decision expected 2018.
Littlefield	TMP	u u		Record of Decision expected 2018.
St. George Basin	TMP	и и		Record of Decision expected 2018.
Remainder of AZ Strip Field Office	TMP	EA initiated 2014, Department staff are fully engaged in the process.		Record of Decision expected 2018.
Hassayampa	RMP	ROD for Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP and Agua Fria National Monument signed February 2009.		
Black Canyon Corridor	TMP	Planning reinitiated EA planning May 2017, Department engaged as Cooperating Agency.	There are 4 alternatives to the No Action; a range of scenarios from maximum conservation to maximum access; a hybrid of	Public release of the draft EA is estimated for March/April 2018. The Target date for a decision is September 2018.

			BLM	
Field Office/District	Plan	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and Implementation
		August 2017: Route evaluations for ~524 miles of existing routes completed. Draft TMP/EA and Alternatives maps to cooperating agencies for a 30-day administrative review due March 1st.	access for motorized and non-motorized with designations that separate users; unique to this TMP are technical vehicle sites (TVSs) which are existing user created routes for rock crawling within drainages that offer large rocks and other off-camber obstacles for specialized vehicles. The Department is currently developing input on individual route designations and comments on the Draft EA. The Department's goal is to ensure the Proposed Action is well balanced and meets our administrative and constituent needs.	
Box Canyon	ТМР	Decision on Wickenburg Travel Management Plan issued. Town of Wickenburg appealed decision Box Canyon area. BLM agreed to re-evaluate the Box Canyon area (judge remanded only that portion of the decision) and is working with Wickenburg to re-evaluate with a more focused approach.	Looking to develop an MOU with Wickenburg to formalize partnership, and give Wickenburg status for future planning.	Unknown
Kingman	RMP	ROD Signed 1993; route evaluations currently being	BLM KFO looking at updating RMP. Asked Region 3 for review and update of issues for	

			BLM	
Field Office/District	Plan	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and Implementation
		conducted. Plan Life: 20 years, with amendments as needed.	the new plan. Provided December 2016.	
<u>Kingman</u>	TMP	August 2017: BLM initiated planning efforts for TMP for the entirety of the Kingman Field Office: Bagdad, Black, Cerbat, Hualapai and the Music Mts., as well as the Crozier, Poachie, Goodwin Mesa and White Hills travel mgmt. areas.	Initial Route Evaluations were completed in 2014/2015/2016 and sent to the BLM District Office for final review. Department was involved throughout process.	Department invited to become a Cooperating Agency on KFO TMP August 21, 2017. We accepted and will participate in the EA review when the process begins 2018.
<u>Bullhead</u>	TMP	FONSI/ROD signed March, 2009	In effect until rescinded or amended by management action.	
<u>Lake Havasu</u>	RMP	RMP ROD signed July 2007.		
<u>Lake Havasu</u>	TMP	FONSI signed for Bullhead Unit March 2009, Havasu Unit September 2013. Route Evaluations begun for Bouse Unit.	Completed new route inventories for Bouse and Cactus Plain TMA. Begin route evaluations for Alamo and Salome TMA	FY 19
Lower Sonoran	RMP	RMP for Lower Sonoran Field Office and Sonoran Desert National Monument ROD signed September 2012.		
<u>Lower Sonoran</u>	RMP	SDNM TMP completed in RMP.	Uncertain	
Buckeye Hills	ТМР	Scoping for the TMP and associated EA May 2017. The Department submitted scoping input June 22, 2017; accepted Cooperating Agency status May 2017.	There are 4 alternatives to the No Action; a range of scenarios from maximum conservation to maximum access; a hybrid of access for motorized and nonmotorized with designations	Public release of the draft EA is estimated for March/April 2018. The Target date for a decision is September 2018.

			BLM	
Field Office/District	Plan	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and Implementation
		Oct 2017: Route evaluations for ~524 miles of existing routes completed. Draft TMP and EA and Alternatives maps to cooperating agencies for a 30-day administrative review due March 1st.	that separate users; The Department is currently developing input on individual route designations and comments on the Draft EA. The Department's goal is to ensure the Proposed Action is well balanced and meets our administrative and constituent needs.	
<u>SDNM</u>	Recreational Shooting	Final EIS and Proposed Amendment October 20, 2017	Washington DC Review and Governor's Consistency Review	Record of Decision expected early 2018.
SDNM Juan Bautista De Anza Area	Recreation Plan	Reviewing Draft Plan. Provided Comments	Plan Implemented.	FONSI signed, implementation not begun awaiting funding
Safford – Gila- San Simon	TMP	Department provided scoping comments November 3, 2017	Department to participate in route-by-route analysis meetings in Dec 2017, and Feb and Mar 2018	TBD following route-by-route analysis
Tucson – Ironwood Forest NM	RMP	Ironwood Forest NM RMP completed;		
Tucson – Ironwood Forest NM	TMP	Ironwood Forest NM TMP finalized 7/2014		
Tucson – San Pedro Riparian NCA	RMP	Administrative Draft RMP/EIS received by Department 1/20/18. Comments submitted 2/7/18.	Draft RMP/EIS available to public July 2018	Approved RMP and ROD predicted for public release June 2020.

	BLM					
Field Office/District	Plan	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and Implementation		
Tucson – San Pedro Riparian NCA	TMP	scoping comments sent for SPRNCA 9/2013	TMP on hold until RMP completed and ROD issued	SPRNCA Draft TMP/unknown		
Tucson – Las Cienegas NCA	RMP	Las Cienegas TMP/RMP completed				
<u>Yuma</u>	RMP	RMP ROD signed January 2010.				
Yuma - La Posa	TMP	La Posa Plan Final EA and FONSI signed.	Begin implementation			
Yuma - Imperial Hills	TMP	Reviewed public comments on route evaluation alternatives for Imperial Hills. Began route evaluation for Laguna Mountains				
Yuma Ten West Transmission Line		Administrative Draft reviewed by cooperating agencies	Incorporate agency comments, release public draft	Uncertain behind schedule		

US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Status of USFWS planning in Arizona – February 2018

USFWS				
Office/Refuge	Plan	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and
				Implementation
<u>Havasu</u>	Compatibility	USFWS announced on April 12,	May 2016: AZGFD commented	June 2016: USFWS determines
<u>National</u>	determination	2016 that a draft recreational	on Draft Compatibility	additional deliberation is required.
Wildlife Refuge	for	boating Compatibility	Determination for Havasu	USFWS concluded formal public
		Determination for Havasu	National Wildlife Refuge.	comment period for draft Havasu

USFWS				
Office/Refuge	Plan	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and Implementation
Lower Colorado River Refuge Complex	Recreational Boating Renewal of Compatibility Determinations for current	National Wildlife Refuge was available for public review and comment. The Service was reassessing all boating recreation activities taking place at the Refuge. The Refuge began reevaluating boating usage on a 17-mile restricted boating area by ½ mile of No-Waterskiing. Implemented May 2015. Compatibility Determinations (CD) must be reviewed and renewed every ten years. Refuge complex released	Proposal is to renew existing recreational activities. Proposing to discuss any additional activities in the near	National Wildlife Refuge Recreational Boating Compatibility Determination (CD) on June 13, 2016. After receiving and reviewing a substantial number of comments seeking reconsideration of the draft CD, the Service decided more deliberation is required before a final CD is developed. New CD released, Department supported new CD. Process completed. Uncertain
	recreational activities	proposed actions	future.	
Cabeza Prieta NWR	Renewal of CDs for current recreational activities	Compatibility Determinations must be reviewed/renewed every ten years. Refuge complex released proposed actions	Proposal is to renew existing recreational activities. Proposing to discuss any additional activities in the near future.	Uncertain

National Park Service (NPS)

Status of NPS planning in Arizona – February 2018

	NPS				
Office/Park	Plan	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and Implementation	
Grand Canyon- Parashant National Park	Initial Bison Herd Reduction EA	2013: The Department began as a Cooperating agency and has partsince 2013. March 2017: Department submitted comments as a cooperator on Draft EA. May 2017: Department participated in public workshops. Department commented June 2017 which focused on unresolved issues.	In January 2018, the Dept. formally withdrew as a cooperator in this effort due to fundamental conflicts between AZGFD and NPS on how herd reduction activities will occur.	FONSI was finalized and signed in September 2 Current schedule has a bulk of the implementa activities starting in fall 2017/spring 2018.	

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)

Status of major transportation planning in Arizona – February 2018

FHWA-ADOT				
Project Plan	n	Status	Issues and Next Steps	Projected Completion and
				Implementation
I-11 Tier 1		ADOT preparing Tier I DEIS for I- 11 (Wickenburg to Nogales). Department is Cooperating Agency and provides feedback on alternatives, and in depth analyses of resource concerns and mitigation opportunities as the Tier I DEIS process progresses.	An Administrative Draft EIS is expected to be available for Cooperating Agency review in May 2018.	Draft Tier 1 EIS expected fall 2018. Final Tier 1 EIS expected late 2019. FHWA will be choosing a single 2000-ft corridor from Wickenburg to Nogales. As funding becomes available, individual municipalities will evaluate sections under Tier 2 NEPA analyses to identify the final 400-foot wide corridor to be constructed.