



THE STATE OF ARIZONA
GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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June 28, 2012

Mr. Mike Pool
Acting Director
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20240

RE: Recreational Shooting - Lower Sonoran and Sonoran Desert National Monument Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Director Pool:

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) fully supports the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) proposed alternative (Alternative E) regarding 'Recreational Target Shooting Areas' in the Lower Sonoran and Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM) Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) establishes a multiple-use mission for public lands under the jurisdiction of Bureau of Land Management. Recreational target shooting is a traditional recreational use of BLM lands, and we are encouraged that the Bureau has endorsed its multiple-use mission by embracing dispersed recreational shooting in its RMP.

Recreational shooting is recognized as a legitimate and important recreational resource valued by the public. Dispersed recreational shooting on BLM public lands provides an important opportunity (especially for urban youth) to get outdoors and develop a personal connection with nature. Dispersed recreational shooting continues to provide a safe and informal gateway to formal shooting sports and hunting. The Department recognizes hunters as not only supporters of the multiple-use mission, but supporters and principal funders of wildlife conservation. Further, the importance of hunting and recreational shooting as a gateway to hunting is recognized in the 2006 Executive Order 13443 (EO), "Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation." This EO called for the development of a "Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Resource Conservation Plan" and a 10-year implementation plan. One of the resulting implementation plan recommendations is to: "Increase structured hunting programs and recreational shooting opportunities as a means of achieving a net increase in federal land hunting."

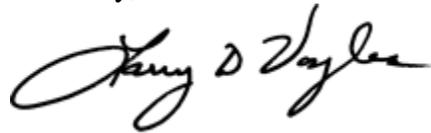
The Department understands and respects BLM's mandate to avoid and minimize impacts to Monument objects and protect the public's safety. We recognize the need to proactively manage recreational activities, including dispersed recreational shooting, on SDNM. For these reasons,

Director Abbey
Recreational Shooting Support – SDNM/LS RMP

the Department wishes to continue our collaborative partnership with BLM in the development of the supplemental rule, activity level planning and implementation efforts for recreational shooting described in the Resource Management Plan.

Once again, the Department fully supports the BLM's decision to continue to allow responsible, dispersed recreational shooting on the Lower Sonoran and SDNM. We look forward to working with the BLM to encourage shooters to practice the best management practices outlined in Appendix H in the RMP for safe dispersed recreational shooting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry D. Voyles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Larry" being the most prominent.

Larry D. Voyles
Director

Cc: Ray Suazo, Arizona State Director BLM