

Lands Update

For the Arizona Game and Fish Commission

August 30, 2013

Phoenix, Arizona

U.S. FOREST SERVICE LAND AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING

General Planning Status – Please see attached worksheet.

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest

The Department has reviewed and provided comments on the Proposed Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Plan) on May 15, 2013. The Department was generally supported of the proposed alternative but disagreed on a number of issues including but not limited to: some wilderness designations, attributing lack of aspen regeneration to browsing by elk, and the representation of elk as a non-native species. Neither travel management nor dispersed camping is addressed in the Plan.

Coconino National Forest

The Forest is finalizing its Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), release of the Draft plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) with three alternatives is expected October 2013.

The Forest is in the implementation phase of its Travel Management Rule (TMR) and has produced an updated Motor Vehicle Use Maps for distribution to the public.

Coronado National Forest

The Draft Travel Management Plans are being developed for each District and will be released successively for public comment beginning in 2013.

The Draft Land and Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) have been finalized internally and are currently being proofed for errors. The Forest expects the draft EIS to be available and published in September or October with a pre-publication version to be posted on the Coronado website at any time.

Kaibab National Forest

The Forest is in the implementation phase of its Travel Management Rule (TMR) and will soon release Motor Vehicle Use Maps to the public.

Prescott National Forest

Department personnel continue to analyze the effects of implementation of the Travel Management rule, and changes in dispersed camping to constituents that recreate upon the public lands of the Prescott National Forest.

Tonto National Forest

The Interdisciplinary team has been meeting and working to provide data and input into that process for the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Department has

provided a Specialist Report to the team to provide subject matter expertise in the form of an analysis of the effects of motorized travel management on game and non-game species of wildlife and the effects of visitor satisfaction of motorized use management, focusing on hunters and anglers.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE – GENERAL UPDATES

Four Forest Restoration Initiative- 4FRI

The Four Forests Restoration Initiative (4FRI) includes 587,923 acres of mechanical thinning and 593,211 acres to be treated with prescribed fire, primarily on the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests. The 4FRI Planning team is currently reviewing and preparing responses to comments provided on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The Department served on the DEIS Interdisciplinary Team and support the preferred alternative in the DEIS. Comments provided by at least one environmental group suggest that they are planning administrative challenges and possibly litigation of the 4FRI project. The Forest Service expects to complete the final EIS in early 2014. The selected Stewardship Contractor (Pioneer Industries) was unable to secure funding and has made a novation request to the Forest Service, that would facilitate transfer of contract responsibilities to new owners.

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (A-S)

Rim Lakes Forest Restoration Project

The A-S released the Record of Decision for the Rim Lakes Forest Restoration Project on the Black Mesa Ranger District, Coconino County. The project will include selective cutting of trees and broadcast burning on approximately 23,615 acres in ponderosa pine and pine-oak, with additional broadcast burning occurring on approximately 9,339 acres. Maintenance burns will occur after the initial treatments except within dry mixed conifer. . Implementation is now authorized to begin.

Apache Trout Enhancement Project

The A-S signed the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Supplement to the Environmental Assessment for the Apache Trout Enhancement Project. The decision will allow for the continuation of stream renovations for Apache trout with the use of rotenone piscicide CFT Legumine™ and the neutralizing agent sodium permanganate in place of antimycin A piscicide Fintrol® and potassium permanganate as analyzed in the original EA. The switch of piscicide was necessary as a result of Fintrol being no longer available and concentrations in existing stock being highly variable.

Boat Access Improvement Projects

On August 15-16, Department personnel met with Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest engineers and recreation staff to discuss and plan a number of boating access improvement projects on selected lakes on the Forest. Fishing piers were also discussed as part of several projects but will have to be funded out of a different source. The projects will occur at Crescent Lake, Big Lake, and Luna Lake in Apache County, at Black Canyon Lake in Navajo County, and at Willow Springs Lake, Woods Canyon Lake, and Chevelon Canyon Lake in Coconino County over the next several years. Forest personnel were extremely supportive and eager to cooperate with the Department on these projects.

Coconino National Forest

Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP)

FWPP is a voter-approved, \$10 million bond to conduct thinning and prescribed fire treatments on U.S. Forest Service lands on the slopes of Mt. Elden, the Dry Lake Hills above Flagstaff and the Mormon Mountain area. The overall goal is to reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire and potential flooding, which would severely impact the city and local economy. The Department supports this effort, has reviewed and made comments on the FWPP project Proposed Action, and serves as a formal member on the FWPP Interdisciplinary Team.

Hunter Access to Aspen Depredation Area

The Department worked with the Flagstaff Ranger District to seasonally open 10.8 miles of road, previously closed under the Travel Management Rule, within the Peak Subunit of 7E. This cooperative project will put increased pressure on elk in the San Francisco Peaks with the goal of improving aspen regeneration. The appeal period ends August 21, 2013 and if not appealed this decision will be implemented this year with the result of increased access for hunters from Sept 1-Dec 31st.

Coronado National Forest

Galiuro Firescape Project

The Department reviewed the Environmental Assessment for the Galiuro Firescape Project on the Safford Ranger District. The project area encompasses the entire Galiuro Mountain Range (approximately 135,000 acres) including all of the Galiuro Wilderness Area. It will include the treatment of nine burn units over a ten year period, and utilize hand, mechanical, or aerial ignition techniques to complete the prescribed burns. Years of fire suppression in the Galiuros has resulted in dense, decadent stands of oak brush and chaparral with little herbaceous production. Prescribed fire in the project area will open up some of the denser stands and increase herbaceous production, which will benefit many species of wildlife in the Galiuro Mountains that require more open conditions; including Gould's turkey, desert bighorn sheep, and white-tailed deer. The Department, through the Safford Habitat Partnership Committee, has already assisted in the funding of this project, awarding \$38,000 for the completion of the first burn block, the Rock House prescribed fire. The Department supports implementing the prescribed fires outlined in the EA.

Rosemont Copper Project

The Department submitted 39 pages of comments on the Preliminary Final Environmental Impact Statement (PFEIS) for the Rosemont Copper Project. The Department's comments were centered on the lack of analysis of the impacts on State Trust Responsibility Species and on water quality concerns. The Coronado National Forest expects to review all comments and publish the final EIS by September 27th.

Kaibab National Forest

North Kaibab Ranger District (NKRD) Westside Project

This is a long-term partnership effort to improve mule deer winter range and habitat for other wildlife in Unit 12A-W. In Fall 2012 and Spring 2013, the NKRD applied strategic herbicide

applications to kill invasive cheatgrass and create “brownstrip” fuel breaks in areas of the winter range that are highly vulnerable to wildfire. Field assessment of these treatments will be done in Summer 2013. The Department is also supporting a ‘firescape analysis’ of this area, which will begin in August 2013, to help design future fuels management and habitat protection efforts.

North Kaibab Ranger District (NKR D) Moquitch Project

Primary objectives of this project are reducing fire risk and improving wildlife habitat. The NKR D has begun mechanical treatments (grinding) on portions of the project area dominated by thickets of small ponderosa pine trees. Department staff are monitoring the project and working with USFS to accomplish wildlife objectives.

North Kaibab Ranger District (NKR D) Raspberry Project

In cooperation with Department staff, the NKR D has initiated planning for an approximately 3,000 acre thinning and prescribed fire project in mixed-conifer forest on the Southeastern portion of the Kaibab Plateau. The primary objective is wildlife habitat improvement, particularly for blue grouse.

Tonto National Forest

Red Creek, Six Bar and Skeleton Ridge Allotments

The forest has scoped the proposal and released the Draft EA (DEA) to improve ecological conditions and to authorize continued livestock grazing on the these allotments in the Cave Creek Ranger District. The Department has reviewed and provided comment on the DEA. The Department provides support for the forests strategies and recommendations for current management under Alternative 2 as well as proposed mitigation measures to improve resource (vegetation/soils/watershed) trends which are fair/poor/unsatisfactory with downward trends in many portions of the 3 allotments included in the analysis.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM)

Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument/Arizona Strip Field Office

Uinkaret Vegetation Management Project

The BLM has initiated planning for a 130,000 acre area in GMU 13A in the Mt. Trumbull/Mt. Logan area. The overall goal is to reduce catastrophic wildfire risk, improve watershed health, and restore ponderosa pine forest and pinyon-juniper woodlands. The Department accepted an invitation for cooperating agency status and will assist BLM in preparing an MOU to facilitate membership on the interdisciplinary planning team.

Kingman Field Office

Route Evaluation

Department personnel attended and participated in BLM’s travel management rule (TMR) implementation process during the week of August 19 – 23. In support of BLM’s implementation of TMR, Regional personnel received their customary invitation to assist BLM staff in 5 days of Route Evaluation for the Cerbat Mountain Planning area.

Black Mountains Burro Surveys

The Department submitted a letter to the BLM Washington Office, forwarded to Congressman Paul Gosar, to apprise the Arizona Bureau of Land Management (BLM) of the need to restore programmed funding for a helicopter burro survey to establish a current population estimate for burros in the Black Mountain Ecosystem (Blacks) in Northwestern Arizona, as well as maintenance gathers to restore the burro population in the Blacks to the appropriate management level (AML) – as required of BLM by provisions embodied in the Black Mountain Ecosystem Plan (BMEP) to which the BLM, the Department, and Wild Horse and Burro non-government organizations are signatories.

Earlier this year (*April 2013*), the Department became aware of a proposed action to dismantle the Kingman Field Office's (KFO) wild horse and burro holding and shipping facility in Golden Valley, AZ; and additionally, that funding previously programmed for planned burro surveys and maintenance gathers in the Blacks (*for 2013*) had been swept.

With the sweep of 2013 funding for programmed burro surveys and gathers in the Blacks, it is likely that the swelling burro population will induce increased pressure on, and competition for important forage resources in the Joint Management Area (JMA) established in the Black Mountains Ecosystem Plan. The JMA is key desert bighorn sheep habitat in the Blacks, wherein livestock and/or burros compete with desert bighorn sheep for forage, water, and other habitat resources.

In January 2012, the Department's Habitat Branch produced an estimate of burro populations for all of the Herd Management Areas Statewide. At that time, the Department estimated the burro population in the Blacks to be approximately 730 animals, roughly 252 animals in excess of AML.

Lake Havasu Field Office

Travel Management

Department staff participated in route evaluations for the Bouse/Cactus Plain Travel Management Plan in August.

Lake Havasu

BLM, Lake Havasu City and other government agencies have been receiving comments from the public on their uncertainty as to which activities on Lake Havasu require permits and from which agencies. All government agencies with jurisdiction on the Lake have been to meeting to resolve the issue. A spreadsheet with the permitting information has been developed and reviewed. The agencies have agreed to meet at least annually to coordinate on this and other issues. The agreement will be memorialized in a Memorandum of Agreement.

Tucson Field Office

Madrean Archipelago Rapid Ecoregional Assessment (MAREA)

Department staff have been reviewing the reports for the conservation elements and providing feedback on the reports and inputs for the conceptual models. The next meeting for the technical team is September 26.

San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) Resource Management Plan (RMP) The Department will be a cooperating agency for development of a Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the SPRNCA. The Department is reviewing the recently received draft memorandum of understanding (MOU). BLM has modified the scoping plan to include public engagement meetings in Sierra Vista, Benson, and Tucson, and Saturday education and scoping forums in Sierra Vista for Water and Riparian, Watershed and Range, Wildlife and T&E, and Cultural and Recreation topics. Meetings are scheduled in June, July, and August.

Ironwood Forest National Monument, RMP Travel Management Implementation

The BLM plans to solicit public comments on implementation of the IFNM RMP Travel Management Plan from September 30th to October 11th. The Department has already provided input.

WILDLIFE AREAS

Cibola Valley Conservation and Wildlife Area

A temporary closure will be placed on portions of the Cibola Valley Conservation and Wildlife Area from August 20 to September 30, 2013. The temporary closure is for the protection of nesting western yellow-billed cuckoos currently listed as wildlife of special concern in Arizona by the Department and a candidate species for listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. This temporary closure is not anticipated to have any significant adverse impacts on dove hunting opportunities within the wildlife area and Cibola Valley.

Horseshoe Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP)

The Department continues to coordinate and participate on the CRMP for the Horseshoe and Copper Creek Allotments. Information is provided to the public via an updated web-site and the agencies are utilizing the services of a facilitation group. Progress continues as the group is finalizing shared goals and objectives while working into strategies. The CRMP is currently being drafted in sections. The desire to ensure the federal agencies can utilize the CRMP process as their NEPA for formal decision and implementation has affected the timelines somewhat, but will greatly enhance the ability to conduct management actions under one NEPA umbrella at process completion. The anticipated plan document completion will be in 2013

- **Interagency/Planning Team Activities-** A follow-up stakeholders meeting is being held this month to finish up the results chains and situational analysis along with an interagency team meeting for discussion of NEPA and the draft CRMP.

RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

WIND

Boquillas Wind Energy Project

The Department continues to participate in ongoing evaluation of the Boquillas Wind Energy Project proposed by the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority and EDF Renewable Energy for the area atop the Aubrey Cliffs. In May the Coconino County Board of Supervisors upheld the Planning and Zoning Commission's prior decision to require removal one of five meteorological testing towers that NTUA and EDF had installed without the necessary use permits; County use permits

were allowed for the other four. Subsequent to this hearing, the developer failed to apply for separate building permits for the permitted towers by the required deadline, thus a revocation hearing has been scheduled for late August before the Planning and Zoning Commission at which the County will decide whether to revoke all use permits for met towers on the project site.

The Department continues to participate in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in ongoing review of an Eagle Conservation Plan (ECP) for the Boquillas wind energy project being developed by the NTUA and project partner EDF Renewable Energy. The USFWS Eagle Technical Assessment Team recently completed its own independent estimate of eagle fatalities from the proposed wind project which it shared with the developers along with general recommendations for project re-design which could reduce estimated fatalities. USFWS will evaluate the final ECP and associated biological data to help determine whether a federal eagle incidental take permit for the project is warranted.

Marcou Mesa Wind Facility

Disgen Holdings, LLC, continues to move forward with their Marcou Mesa Wind Facility project, 390 MW (130-190 turbines) north of Holbrook and Joseph Cities, Navajo County. Department personnel recently responded to Disgen with a requested comment letter on the status of the wildlife studies for the project. The letter details the coordination that has occurred between the Department and Disgen and provides information on the Departments concerns associated with the Marcou Mesa project. While Disgen has completed some pre-siting studies they do not meet the level of requested studies in the Department's Wind Guidelines nor the level that the Department has requested in past comment letters and meetings with Disgen. The Department is requesting further studies be completed for turbine micrositing as well as an Eagle Conservation Plan and a Bat and Bird Conservation Strategy. There is golden eagle issues associated with this project location. Also, according to Navajo County, Disgen has included a second Special Use Permit Application for a proposed 200 MW (2,500 acres) photovoltaic solar facility that will be close to the potential wind facility. To date Disgen has not coordinated with the Department concerning this potential solar facility. This was also mentioned in the Department's comment letter and that the Department would like to work with Disgen on studies and siting for this potential solar facility.

Mohave County Wind Farm

The ROD for the BP Mohave County Wind Project was signed on June 27, 2013 by the BLM Washington office. The next step in the process will be construction and operation of the project.

Redhorse Wind Project

The Department received, and has reviewed, Interim Data Report #1 for the proposed Red Horse Wind Energy Facility in Cochise County AZ. Redhorse is providing avian and bat use data as they are collected during the preliminary data collection period and are currently developing and preparing a Bat and Bird Conservation Strategy (BBCS), Eagle Conservation Plan (ECP) and Wildlife Conservation Strategy (WCS)_for the project. The proponent is on a very aggressive schedule, and informs us that they will be soon submitting formal outlines of the three documents, with face-to-face/teleconference meetings to follow to receive feedback from the Department as they develop the documents. [Based on the data](#), the Department still has concerns

about the impacts this project may pose to golden eagles and raptors in the area. We are not confident that they can be mitigated through development of BBCS, ECP, and WCS. The Department has requested a meeting to discuss our concerns and possibly ways to modify data collection to address some of the concerns.

Background

The Redhorse Wind Project is proposed for an area that includes the Allen Flat pronghorn population in Game Management Unit 32. Torch Renewable Energy, LLC (TRE), is proposing to build a wind-energy facility approximately 15 miles west of the city of Wilcox, in Cochise County. The project area encompasses approximately 5,798 acres of land, a small percentage of which would be occupied by permanent and temporary project infrastructure, including meteorological (MET) towers, approximately 21 2.4-megawatt (MW) or 28 1.6- to 1.8-MW wind turbines and foundations, buried electrical collection lines, access roads, laydown areas, a small operations and maintenance building, a switchyard at the point of interconnection, and an overhead generation tie transmission line. The route of the generation tie transmission line will be southeast of and run parallel to an existing 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line to the point of interconnection at the existing Winchester Substation. The entire project area is located on private and State lands, whereas the generation tie line would likely cross State lands to reach the point of interconnection.

The Department is concerned about the impacts this project will have on bats, golden eagles, and other raptors in this area. Additionally the project is being proposed in an area where the pronghorn population is already declining. The project site is on the best remaining grassland within the Allen Flat and Steele Hills area and also has the potential to impact mule deer habitat. The Department is also concerned with hunter opportunity and access. The pronghorn habitat on State Land in this area has degraded in the last several decades. Mesquite has overtaken the grasslands in the Allen Flat and Steele Hills which are rapidly becoming a disclimax mesquite scrubland; the site chosen for the Special Use Permit is considered by the Wildlife Manager to be the best open grassland left for pronghorn in the area.

The Department is also concerned with our ability to conduct aerial big game surveys in the area if wind turbines pose a significant flight hazard.

On April 10, 2013, the Cochise County Planning and Zoning Committee approved the project 8-0 with one member abstaining. However, on April 24, 2013, Audubon Arizona appealed this decision. The Cochise County Board of Supervisors met on June 11, 2013 to discuss the appeal. The Department sent another letter asking the county to put some conditions on the permit. The conditions reflect recommendations from the Department's wind guidelines. The Board of Supervisors approved the project with conditions that Audubon Arizona asked for which were similar to the Department's conditions.

TRANSMISSION LINES

SunZia Transmission Line Project

The SunZia Transmission Line protest period ended June 24th. The Department continues to work on the project with the State Land Department and Bureau of Land Management to ensure that state wildlife resources are adequately addressed in the Plan of Development and stipulated

in the Right of Way Grant. The project has yet to go to the Arizona Corporation Commission's Line Siting Committee which must issue a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and The Arizona State Land Department must concur on route alignment with the line siting committee for the project to proceed. Both entities may make stipulations and requirements on the project. The Department is interested in providing input to these processes. The timeline before final approval appears to be another year and a half of detailed planning in which wildlife resources may also be considered.

TRANSPORTATION

Greenway Parkway

Department personnel have recently provided comments on the proposed Greenway Parkway. The study area is approximately nine miles in length and two miles wide, is generally centered on the Greenway Road section line, and stretches from one mile west of the planned future Hassayampa Freeway alignment (approximately 339th Avenue alignment) to one mile east of the planned future Turner Parkway (approximately 279th Avenue alignment). Most recently the Department commented on Tech Memos 1-3. The Greenway parkway alignment sits immediately north of the White Tanks linkage and traverses linkage strands in a couple locations associated with major washes (tributaries to the Hassayampa). The Department will be working with MCDOT to develop a corridor alternative and language that recommends crossing structure designs to minimize impacts to the proposed linkage.

South Mountain Freeway

The proposed South Mountain Freeway has been a critical part of the Maricopa Association of Governments' Regional Freeway Program since it was first included in funding through Proposition 300 approved by Maricopa County voters in 1985. The freeway was also part of the Regional Transportation Plan funding passed by Maricopa County voters in 2004 through Proposition 400. The South Mountain Freeway is the last piece to complete the Loop 202 and Loop 101 freeway system necessary for high-quality regional mobility. The study team, led by the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, has released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway Study. The Department has reviewed the DEIS and coordinated with the Gila River Indian Community. The Department participated on this project as necessary or requested by the project team over the last 8-10 years. Recommendations include consideration on overpasses, underpasses not for multi-functional use, surveys for several species including big game and mitigation for loss of habitat and water sources. The Department has responded to the DEIS.

I-11 Phoenix to Las Vegas Project

U.S. Congress in the 2012 Surface Transportation Act designated Interstate 11. The first phase of the project is from Phoenix to Las Vegas. ADOT and Nevada Department of Transportation are partnering to conduct a two year study of potential corridors for the proposed Interstate. The Department participated in a stakeholder's meeting and expressed that the study should include impacts to wildlife, hunting opportunities and stressed the economic importance of hunting and wildlife-dependent recreation for the region. It should be noted that one of the ideas "being kicked around" is using Carefree Highway as part of the corridor. This proposal would impact Department headquarters and Ben Avery Shooting Range. The Department continues to participate on stakeholders team for the project. The next phase of the project is underway for the

development of the corridor concept report, future connectivity corridor study for Phoenix to Mexico, development of evaluation criteria for alternative corridors, level 1 screening (high level to limit alternatives application to the entire corridor) and level 2 screening (more detailed and weighted evaluation).

FOR4--Department staff met with ADOT and their consultant to discuss Department's input on the Interstate 11 Study. The Department and ADOT agreed to partner on evaluating impacts, mitigation potential and opportunities for enhancement for the Study. The Department will provide its evaluation for the Level 1 analysis by September 15.

FOR5-- The Department has attended stakeholder partner meetings introducing the potential alternative alignments for I-11 connecting Casa Grande to Mexico. Five alternatives are currently proposed linking Casa Grande to Ports of Entry at San Luis (Yuma), Sasabe, Nogales, Naco, and Douglas. The Pima County Administrator has submitted a memo to the Pima Association of Governments supporting an alignment through the Avra Valley, through the BOR Wildlife Mitigation Corridor. Four years earlier the Commission and The Pima County Board of Supervisors both issued resolutions in opposition to a proposed I-10 bypass route that would have gone through this same area. The Department plans to address these same concerns again in comments submitted to ADOT.

FOR6--ADOT has just released the I-11 Corridor Justification Report. The report details the key justifications for expansion of the I-11 corridor as: enable economic development, add needed north-south capacity, integrate the economies of the Southwest Triangle megaregion and improve connections to other regions, capitalize on Mexico's growing role in North American manufacturing and trade, support economic development initiatives of Arizona and Nevada, prevent congestion from crippling economic competitiveness, and comply with enabling federal legislation. Existing and Natural and Built Environment Tech Memo due to be posted on web in 2-3 weeks. Phase 2 begins this month and a series of workshops will be held every 2 months over next 6-8 months. The development of Corridor Alternatives for multimodal (interstate, bus transit, train (passenger/freight), utility/communication) needs will be accomplished in this phase.

US 191 Realignment

Department personnel provided Arizona State Land Department comments concerning the Right-of-Way application by Golder Associates to test ground stability for one of the US 191 realignment alternative routes. This project will re-route US 191 around the expanding Morenci Mine. As BLM lands are involved in the potential realignment, BLM is expected to be the lead agency in the NEPA analysis for this project.

GENERAL UPDATES

Becker Lake

On July 29-30, Department personnel attempted a catfish removal effort on Becker Lake, Apache County. Becker Lake is currently managed as a blue ribbon trout fishery and has been extremely successful in growing rainbow trout up to 25 inches. These large trout have attracted anglers from all over the state, who have been very happy with the fishery. Recently, a number of anglers have reported seeing several very large catfish cruising the shallows in this clear lake.

Catfish are not stocked or managed at Becker Lake and therefore must be from an illegal stocking. Catfish have not shown up in the regular fish population surveys conducted each spring and fall, so their numbers must still be very low. This removal effort attempted to selectively catch these individual catfish by snorkel spearing, so that other fish in the lake are not harmed or stressed. Several very large catfish were observed, but the spearing attempt was unsuccessful. A number of smaller catfish, and juvenile largemouth bass, another recent illegal introduction, were also observed, indicating a larger problem than initially thought. The lake will be monitored to track the population trends of these illegally stocked species while a solution to the problem is being developed.

Hidden Cove Park

On July 17, Department personnel met with City of Holbrook officials and National Park Service representatives to discuss Hidden Cove Park in Holbrook, Navajo County. The primary discussion topics included selecting 150 of the most common wildlife and plant species that may be seen by visitors at Holbrook's Hidden Cove Park for inclusion into a wildlife viewing guide and determining a list of useful field guides, type of binoculars, and other miscellaneous items to be included in daypacks for visitor checkout and use. Funding to print the viewing guide and acquire the contents for the daypacks has been made possible by an Urban Heritage Grant which the city successfully applied for during the last grant cycle. Final refinements and photo selections are underway for the brochure, and it should be delivered to the printer within the next month or two.

On August 20, Department personnel conducted a fish population and limnological survey on Hidden Cove Lake. This small lake is associated with the wastewater treatment facility that is run by the City of Holbrook, but is being evaluated for its potential for natural resource based recreation for the local community, and as a possible tourist draw to the area. Recreational sportfishing is one of the potential activities being considered. The fish population surveys were conducted to determine what fish species already exist in the lake and the limnological surveys will determine what may be able to survive. A previous fish survey was conducted in December 7, 2012 but found no fish. This follow-up fish population survey was conducted in an effort to detect warm-water fishes that may not have been active in the cold water in December. However, the only fish collected were plains killifish, a small minnow-like fish that is also found in the nearby Little Colorado River in the Holbrook area. A previous limnological survey conducted in March 2013 revealed some water quality issues that may cause problems for a sportfishery, so this follow-up limnological survey was conducted to gather more data with which to make a decision. The limnological data has not yet been analyzed.

HPC Projects

Kingman HPC

The Kingman HPC met at the Kingman Regional Office on August 21, 2013. In attendance were representatives from the Mohave Livestock Association, the Kingman Chapter of the Mule deer Foundation, Regional personnel and interested public. At the meeting, participants presented proposed projects for submission by the September 1st HPC deadline. At this meeting, HPC members participated in a project prioritization exercise, and identified the projects that will be carried forward for consideration.

Diamond Bar Allotment

In cooperation with the Kingman BLM, the Mule Deer Foundation and Ranch Management, Region 3 personnel conducted a site visit to the Diamond Bar Ranch in Northern GMU 15BE to inventory waters the Ranch has proposed for development or redevelopment. The Department and MDF have identified two water projects that will provide benefit to wildlife, and in partnership have initiated the development of HPC proposals that will be submitted this current cycle.

Ray Mine Tailings Facility in GMU 37B

The Department received notice from the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the potential to be a Cooperating Agency on the Ray Mine Tailings Facility proposed for 12 sections of land currently owned by the Arizona State Land Department. The Department has had no coordination with the Land Department on this issue, however, in discussions with the county, has learned that the State Land will be auctioned and is expected to be sold to ASARCO for the purpose of the tailings facility. This facility will occupy a major tributary to the Gila River in a scenic and wildlife rich area of upper Sonoran Desert Scrub habitat formerly evaluated as having high potential for cactus ferruginous pygmy owl due to its' diverse habitat elements containing dense ironwood and saguaro. The facility would impact a significant area of the A-Diamond Ranch, which has been a strong cooperator with the Department in the Habitat Partnership Committee. The Department is concerned that impacts to wildlife resources may not have been adequately evaluated in selecting the location of the facility since there has been no previous coordination with the Department.

Pinal Partnership Open Space and Trails Committee

The Department remains in the discussions for implementation of the master plan and participates on the subcommittee for drainage protection. We met with the County for further discussion on incorporation of the Pinal County Wildlife Linkages Assessment Stakeholders Report into the Pinal County Comprehensive Plan. The County would not commit to incorporation at this time; however, would like to continue to work with the Department for refinement and potential for a future amendment. The Department will be meeting with the County Planning and Zoning in the near future for continued discussion. The County recently budgeted for a County Parks and Trails Department and named a Director. The Department continues to work on the drainage protection subcommittee and plans to meet with the County Flood Control District, along with the other 8 districts for discussion on important drainage identification and efforts to produce a mutually beneficial map product. The committee has brought forward a recommendation to include wildlife linkages as part of the development checklist.

Forest	Status	Next Step	Projected Next Step Completion
Apache Sitgreaves	The Proposed LRMP and Draft EIS public review period ended 5/16/2013.	Final LRMP EIS, TMP on hold.	Final EIS (LRMP) 5/2014 TMP start after LRMP complete, draft out late 2014. (separate decisions)
Issues:	MBGR in preferred Alt B of previous TMP draft allows 1mile from road for elk, mule deer & bear. 658 miles of corridors for dispersed camping 300 ft off established roads.		
Coconino	TMP signed Sept 2011, MBGR appeal denied; Draft EIS(LRMP) ready. Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM's) available	Draft LRMP EIS anticipated 10/2013	Decision anticipated 6//2015
Issues:	Dispersed camping 300 ft from designated roads, else 30 ft. MBGR for elk only, 1 mile from roads except GMUs 5A & 5B.		
Coronado	Draft EIS imminent	Public comments	Final EIS 7/2014
	TMP in Process in all Districts.	Final TMP	Final TMP end of 2013 Decisions by district
Issues:	Motor Vehicle Use maps show access through roads that have locked gates. Maps not enforceable.		

Forest	Status	Next Step	Projected Next Step Completion
Kaibab	AGFD appeal on North Kaibab TMP declined. TMP completed by district. MVUM's available.	Final LRMP	LRMP Decision Sept 2013
Issues:	Tusayan & Williams TMP: MBGR 1 mile from road for elk in designated areas. Dispersed camping in camping corridors, or 30 feet from road. North Kaibab MBGR 1 mile off designated roads for elk and bison, dispersed camping 300 feet off 99 miles of designated roads and 100 feet off 104 miles of		
Prescott	Final EIS in Federal Register imminent. AGFD personnel were invited to participate in Strategic planning	Review aof final EIS (LRMP).	Will not do new TMP. Rely on 2009 updated/amended TMP
Issues:	Current draft advocates MBGR: Elk within 1 mile of designated open road. May be changed by amendment. Dispersed camping 300' from centerline of designated roads. Wilderness under consideration		
Tonto	LRMP began 2006. Negotiating to reinstate due to rule change. TMP elevated to EIS from EA. Notice of intent to prepare TMP EIS has been released for review and comment. Department comments submitted 3/4/2013. Request to be Cooperating Agency has been accepted. IDT teams have met and individual Ranger District meetings have been held.	LRMP public scoping in 2014. TMP final EIS anticipated 11/13	Final LRMP Fall 2017
Issues:	Consistency across forests, enforceability, MBGR, road closures, and Dispersed Camping all addressed in response to NOI.		