

Lands Update

For the Arizona Game and Fish Commission

November 29, 2013

Phoenix, Arizona

U.S. FOREST SERVICE LAND AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING

General Planning Status – Please see attached worksheet.

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest

No changes.

Coconino National Forest

The Coconino NF is expected to release the draft forest plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in mid-late December 2013. The Department recently met with the planning team to discuss Wildlife Habitat Management Areas (WHMA) included in one DEIS Alternative. WHMA's were developed without Department input and in response to comments from environmental groups (Grand Canyon Wildlands Council, Sierra Club). While ostensibly intended to benefit particular wildlife species, they could significantly restrict public access. WHMAs are not expected to be included in the DEIS preferred alternative; however the Department is monitoring this process closely.

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 Fall 2013.

The Draft Land and Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) have been finalized internally. The Forest released the draft EIS on November 15th and is currently being reviewed by AGFD staff.

Kaibab National Forest

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

Prescott National Forest

No changes.

Tonto National Forest

The Tonto National Forest (TNF) will be initiating the stakeholders process for the TNF Plan revision early next year. This process will include coordination workshops. Forest Plans are required to be revised every 15 years; revisions to the Tonto's 1985 Forest Plan (Land and Resource Management Plan) are long overdue. Forest Plans are strategic, broad in scope and provide guidance in the decision-making process involved with site-specific projects. Forest

Plans have desired conditions, objectives, standards and guidelines, identification of suitability of areas for certain uses, and monitoring programs. In the Forest Service's 2012 Planning Rule, Forest Plans are to be science-based and developed with extensive public involvement and collaboration.

Travel Management Environmental Impact Statement

The Interdisciplinary team (ID team) has been meeting and working to provide data and input into the process for development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Department has provided a Specialist Report to the team to provide subject matter expertise analyzing 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. The draft EIS was released to the ID team in October. The ID team continues to provide input on the draft EIS. The Department will continue discussion on the draft EIS through leadership meetings. The anticipated public release is early next year.

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 Forest Service expects to complete the final EIS in mid-2014. An international consortium (Good Earth Power, based in Oman) has taken over from the original Stewardship Contractor (Pioneer Industries). Good Earth Power has appointed the Campbell Group LLC, an international timber investment management company, to handle forest restoration operations on 4FRI.

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (A-S)

South Fork LCR Sheep Translocation

Department personnel have been coordinating with the A-S regarding department efforts to translocate rocky mountain bighorn Sheep from Morenci Mine into the South Fork of the Little Colorado River on the Springerville Ranger District. The A-S has determined that a Bighorn Sheep Viability Analysis was not required to be completed because no domestic sheep are currently grazed on the adjacent allotments. The area proposed for release of bighorn sheep occurs adjacent to the Beehive and Sheep Springs Allotments, both currently permitted for both cattle and domestic sheep grazing under a 2002 NEPA decision. In 2012 the permittees made a request to convert the class of livestock on their permit from cattle and sheep, to just cattle. The A-S is currently in the second year of a trial authorization to graze only cattle on the allotments. Grazing only cattle on the allotments is likely outside of the scope of the 2002 EA, so a new EA will likely need to be prepared to convert these allotments to graze only cattle. The A-S will work to accommodate the request over a period of time as per their internal analysis and processes.

Woodland Lake Park Tract Conveyance

The Decision Notice and Finding of No significant Impact for the Woodland Lake Park Tract Conveyance has been signed with the selection of Alternative 2. The decision authorizes the sale of 543 acres of the Woodland Lake Park Tract (WLPT) by the A-S to the Town of Pinetop-

Lakeside (Town) in Navajo County. The Town has pursued acquiring the WLPT from the A-S since 1986, at which time the WLPT was identified as a Townsite Act Parcel. The National Forest Townsite Act (16 USC §478 (a)) allows the Forest Service to identify tracts of land that would better serve the public in local government ownership than in continued federal ownership. In 1998 Congress passed the Woodland Lake Park Tract Act (112 Stat. 3204), which prohibits the conveyance of the WLPT, which is within the Town boundaries, unless the conveyance is made to the Town or is specifically authorized by law enacted after the date of the enactment of this Act. The acquisition of the WLPT is contingent on available funding, and will likely occur through a series of purchases.

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. The Coconino National Forest is continuing to draft the EIS which is expected to come out in early 2014.

Hunter Access to Aspen Depredation Area

The Department worked with the Flagstaff Ranger District to seasonally open 10.8 miles of road within the Peak Subunit of 7E, which was previously closed under the Travel Management Rule. The Forest Service prepared a categorical exclusion (CE) to allow seasonal access from September 1- December 31st. The CE was not appealed and roads were opened as planned.

Coronado National Forest

Rosemont Copper Project

The Department entered into an “Agreement in Principle” with Rosemont Copper Company (RCC) under which RCC would fund, and the Department would implement, certain wildlife conservation actions should the Rosemont Mine become a permitted activity through the federal process.

The conservation actions would support implementation of certain federally required measures, but are also designed to offset the mine’s impacts to and provide benefits to state responsibility species and recreational opportunities.

The responsibilities of both parties in the Agreement in Principle would be set forth in further detail in a later agreement to be negotiated between the department and RCC upon the issuance of a Forest Service-issued Mine Plan of Operations permit. This later agreement would be subject to review and approval by the Commission.

The Agreement in Principle has been sent to Coronado National Forest (Forest) with the request that it be included in the Forest’s Record of Decision (ROD) for the project. The Department continues to work with the Forest and expects the Forest to reference the agreement in the ROD

and place a Rosemont voluntary measure that briefly summarizes the points in the Agreement in an appendix to the ROD.

Hermosa Mine

The Department Submitted comments on the Hermosa Drilling Project proposed for the Patagonia Mountains in unit 35B. Coronado National Forest (Forest) is considering a request by Arizona Minerals, Inc. (AMI) for approval of a Plan of Operations permit to implement a mineral exploration project (Hermosa Drilling Project) on National Forest System (NFS) land. The project is proposed on the Sierra Vista Ranger District in Santa Cruz County, Arizona, about six miles southeast of the town of Patagonia.

The Department anticipates that the drilling project could have major disruption on hunter access, camping, and use of the area due to the numerous exploration sites slated for mostly areas currently used as dispersed campsites. If exploration is fruitful, the open pit could rival or dwarf the proposed Rosemont Copper Project.

Kaibab National Forest

North Kaibab Ranger District (NKR D) Westside Project

This is a long-term partnership effort to improve mule deer winter range and habitat for other wildlife in Unit 12A West. Department staff completed annual measurements and surveys of winter range condition. Thanks to abundant summer rains, native grasses and other desirable forage plants were extremely productive on the winter range and helped reduce growth of cheatgrass and other invasive weeds. The Department continues working with US Forest Service staff to implement control measures on established weed infestations. Cooperators at Northern Arizona University have also begun work on a ‘firescape’ analysis that will 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 applied mechanical treatments (grinding) to open up thickets of small ponderosa pine trees and increase wildlife forage. Department staff are monitoring the project and working with USFS to accomplish wildlife objectives.

North Kaibab Ranger District (NKR D) Raspberry Project

This is a 3,000 acre thinning and prescribed fire project in mixed-conifer forest on the Southeastern portion of the Kaibab Plateau. Its primary objective is wildlife habitat improvement and Department staff will be fully involved. NEPA analysis will begin in 2014 with expected completion by Fall 2015.

Tonto National Forest

Resolution Copper Mine

The mine submitted the plan of operation to the Tonto National Forest (TNF) this year. The plan of operations will include all project features (mine, concentrator, tailings, infrastructure, filter plane, water sources) on private, state and public lands as well as employment numbers. The plan will also address closure and reclamation to include baseline data (water, air, biology, cultural

resources) collected in and around the proposed mine. The plan of operation will have to be approved by the TNF for initiation of the NEPA process. An EIS must be completed before a final mine plan of operations is approved and a record of decision is granted.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM)

Arizona Strip Field Office

Travel Management

On September 11, the Department provided comments to the Arizona Strip BLM Office on proposed route designations on the AZ Strip Field Office District. Through the BLM's route evaluation process, they are proposing to designate routes as either open to motor vehicles, closed, or administrative use. In addition, the BLM is proposing to designate open approximately 96 miles of off highway vehicle trails, open specifically to ATV's, UTV's and motorcycles only. It is important to note that this route designation effort does not affect camping, big game retrieval or other recreational uses such as target shooting; these uses were previously determined to be compatible in the 2008 Arizona Strip Resource Management Plan.

In October, Regional staff met with the Field Office Manager to discuss Department recommendations for route designations, nearly all of which were adopted. In addition, BLM and Regional staff developed a strategy to secure the Department's standing as a cooperating agency on future travel management planning efforts on the AZ Strip District. This will afford the opportunity to partner in developing specific recommendations on route status prior to development of an EA.

Uinkaret Project

Regional staff continue to partner with the AZ Strip District BLM and the Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument staff in developing the proposed action for the Uinkaret Vegetation Management Project in game management unit 13A. This collaborative will develop a programmatic EIS for vegetative management on approximately 128,000 acres on the AZ Strip. It is the intent that this document will guide the BLM in a myriad of vegetative management tools including prescribed fire and mechanical/chemical vegetation treatments. As part of this effort, regional staff have attended several meetings/field trips and directly assisted with drafting the proposed action. Cooperating agency status is being secured for this effort to ensure that Department mission and objectives are incorporated into the planning effort.

Kingman Field Office

Rangeland Monitoring

Regional Wildlife Managers and members of the Habitat Program are involved in fall rangeland monitoring efforts for several of the allotments that fall within the purview of the Kingman BLM Field Office. Fall monitoring began in early October, and will continue through late December. The grazing allotments being monitored this fall include: the Black Mountain A, Borianna Unit B, Burro Creek, Gediondia, Happy Jack Wash, Mud Springs, Canyon Ranch, Greenwood Community, artillery, Cerbatt, Fort McEwan, Hackberry, Hibernia Peak, Little Cane, Palmerita, Quail Springs, La Cienega, and Yellow Pine Allotments.

RAC Grazing Sub-Committee

During the week of November 10th, Region 3 was notified that one of its personnel had been invited to sit (for the next 12 months) on a Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) Grazing Sub-Committee tasked with developing a suite of proposed grazing options for management of the Cerbatt, Quail Springs, and Fort McEwan grazing allotments. The RAC and its Grazing Sub-Committee are chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). With the Department participating in the development of these resource management options, it may also be recognized as a compliance measure under the Sikes Act as well.

Lake Havasu Field Office

Travel Management

The Finding of No Significant Impact for Final Environmental Assessment for Havasu Travel Management Area has been signed.

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 continues involvement in development of the SPRNCA RMP, specifically providing comment on access, mesquite management, beaver management, and native fish management issues. The Department and other cooperating agencies will meet with BLM November 5 to assist with development of the final scoping report. Public meetings are scheduled for December 14 (Sierra Vista) and 17 (Benson).

Ironwood Forest National Monument

The Department teamed with Friends of the Ironwood Forest volunteers in honor of National Public Lands Day. About 40 volunteers participated in three different projects on the Ironwood National Forest in GMU 37A. Two of the project locations were Department wildlife water catchments. Vegetation was removed from around the aprons and the drinkers. The third location was a cleanup wildcat shooting area directly adjacent to BLM land. After the projects were completed, the volunteers and AGFD representatives met for brunch and a quick presentation by AGFD about the desert bighorn sheep in the Silver Bell mountains and the importance of wildlife waters.

Yuma Field Office

The Yuma Field Office has released the Draft Environmental Assessment for the La Posa Travel Management Plan. The Department staff has been a full partner in the planning process and will continue to be until the planning process is completed.

Customs and Border Patrol

Department staff met with Customs and Border Patrol, BLM Yuma Field Office, Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to review the latest proposed mitigation plan for

clearing Border Patrol did in the Limitrophe Region of the Colorado River. The Department supports this proposal.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD)

Luke Air Force Base Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP)

The Department received and accepted the invitation for participating in the INRMP process. The INRMP provides guidance for the management of natural resources and is intended to provide a planning tool to allow for managers to take into account natural resources in all potential undertakings on facilities. The objective is to ensure protection and conservation of natural resources at these facilities compliant with all applicable laws, regulations and policies related to natural resource management.

WILDLIFE AREAS

Cibola Valley Conservation and Wildlife Area

Department personnel are working with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to resolve an issue concerning the payment of Cibola Valley Irrigation and Drainage District taxes to La Paz County. In 2008 the BOR entered into a contractual agreement with the Department assuming responsibility for all costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the Cibola Valley Conservation and Wildlife Area. We are assessing whether an amendment to the 2008 agreement is needed to clarify the financial responsibilities of the BOR

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 2014

- **Interagency/Planning Team Activities-** the November team meeting included a presentation from the operator on needed improvements, task assignments for sections of the draft document, NEPA update, data update, and next steps.

ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

PIPELINES

Kinder Morgan CO2 Pipeline Project

The NEPA for the Kinder Morgan CO2 Pipeline Project from GMU2B east through New Mexico is anticipated to begin during the first week of December. Department personnel will be attending this meeting as well as the Department participating as a Cooperating Agency with BLM throughout the NEPA process.

Sierrita Natural Gas Pipeline Project

The FERC issued Draft EIS October 25. The Department is currently reviewing the document. The comment deadline is December 16. On September 25, 2013 the Department submitted comments to the Land Department for Sierrita's ROW application. Major concerns raised by the Department are control of illegal ROW access, appropriate diversity of re-seeding mix, development of a comprehensive conservation agreement (CCA), and erosion control. The Department has received no response from the Land Department to date.

TRANSMISSION LINES

Southline Transmission Line Project

The Department received the Administrative Draft EIS from the BLM October 17, 2013. Cooperators were given only 2 weeks to provide comment, therefore Department comments were cursory. In general, the Department expects no significant concerns for wildlife posed by this project.

SunZia Transmission Line Project

The Department has received no updates from BLM on the SunZia project for several months. It appears the DOD has major concerns with portions of the proposed route through New Mexico and is working with BLM to determine if their concerns can be ameliorated.

WIND

Boquillas Wind Energy Project

This project has been inactive since May.

Redhorse Wind Project

The Department received, and has reviewed, Interim Data Report #1 & 2 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 has reported that they would be submitting drafts of the documents for AGFD and USFWS review; to date, the documents have not been received. Based on the data, the Department still has concerns about the impacts this project may pose to golden eagles and raptors in the area. Therefore, we have asked Arizona State Land Department to consider incorporating language to the permit that would require Red Horse to develop the plans in coordination with AGFD and US Fish and Wildlife prior to operation of the facility. These plans outline how the wind facility will respond if wildlife mortality is higher than anticipated or agreed upon within the plans. We also asked that the project developer/operator form a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), as outlined in the AGFD Wind Guidelines. The role of the TAC is to review the project's impacts and whether the plans need to be implemented or amended. The Department has made the same request of other wind companies (i.e. Perrin Ranch) and it has been implemented.

TRANSPORTATION

Greenway Parkway and Wintersburg Parkway

MCDOT has initiated two new parkway feasibility studies for east/west corridor between the White Tank Mountains and the Belmont Mountains, transecting the Hassayampa River corridor. The Wintersburg Parkway is a north-south and east-west roadway reaching approximately 22 miles from Salome Highway to the proposed Turner Parkway as recommended in the I-10 Hassayampa Valley Roadway Framework Study conducted by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). Greenway parkway is an east-west parkway as well. Both will intersect the proposed White Tanks linkage. Department concerns are habitat loss and fragmentation, impacts conservation of the linkage, impacts to special status species including Desert tortoise (Sonoran population), impacts to wildlife recreation and public access to the White Tank Mountains.

- The Department recommended bridged structures (suitable for big game) to preserve big game movement under future roads/parkways/freeways for all major drainages identified by AGFD as important to regional wildlife connectivity goals between the White Tank Mountains, Hassayampa River corridor and Belmont/Bighorn Mountains. Daggs, Star, and Wagner Washes and the Hassayampa River are critical to this plan. The Department will be working with MCDOT to explore future opportunities to identify bridged locations for big game movement within the Technical Memorandums in order to include wildlife mitigation costs into the *Opinion of Probable Costs* during the Phase II – Development of Candidate and Preferred Alignments. Estimating these costs early into project planning may afford a greater degree of opportunity and success in actually implementing wildlife related roadway designs and mitigation, in that costs would be included in early project budget projections.
- The Department also recommended to MCDOT planners to consider developing independent results for each component of the environmental category (biological, water quality, visual, cultural, air quality, noise tec.) within the *Evaluation of Candidate Alignment Alternatives* process; as opposed to a combined result. We recommended assigning ratings for each component, and then a total score for environmental in order to further clarify the tradeoffs that occur between the different components of the environmental category.
- The Department has identified Candidate Alignment 1 as the alternative with the least potential to impact wildlife; it intersects proposed wildlife corridors the least. Special status species concerns exist for Desert tortoise within the planning area.

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).

At the request of ADOT, the Department and TNC met with ADOT to discuss the Level 2 Screening and evaluation criteria to be used for the *Environmental Sustainability* category. Criteria will be qualitative and quantitative. The analysis will use Level 2 evaluation criteria to further evaluate alternatives that have been shown in Level 1 to be feasible and potentially beneficial to the two states; and to identify two or more alternatives for further planning and environmental work as part of the I-11 project development process. The Department is collaborating with TNC on how to approach a Level 2 evaluation of alternatives, segment by segment, to provide as project review feedback to ADOT. Additionally, the Department and TNC are also working with ADOT to help them with their Level 2 analysis on the *Environmental Sustainability* category and potentially others relevant to wildlife.

FOR5--The Department submitted comments to ADOT identifying proposed segments representing fatal flaws or significant Department concerns. Within the Region, the Department identified Alternative B (segment 7) from Sasabe, through the Buenos Aires NWR, the Altar Valley, the Tucson Mitigation Corridor, and the Ironwood Forest NM as a fatal flaw. ADOT has not recommended this Alternative for further analysis. Only Alternative C, a corridor situated along I-19 and I-10 through Tucson has been recommended for further analysis.

GENERAL UPDATES

Central Arizona Grasslands Conservation Strategy

GMU 21 Agua Fria Grassland Habitat Enhancement Project

The Department is currently finalizing a 4 year contract to hire contractors to thin up to approximately 600 acres pending bids. Two different contractors will be awarded allowing for hire of both. Work will occur on BLM & PNF project areas. Currently, the Cooperator In-Kind Contributions financial plan for submittal (as required) are being updated to the PNF; as well as required paperwork to pass through limited funding to BLM fire crews for burning post-cut on treatment areas on BLM lands. BLM fire crews have no budget to do the work and will be funded with an HPC grant. PNF fire crews will provide fire applications using Forest budgets/workplans. The Department is also currently conducting site visits to finalize flagging, photo points and stand density counts for upcoming contracts.

City of Goodyear

The City is currently updating their General Plan and Planning Department staff invited the Department to present information on “Wildlife Friendly Community Design”, best management practices for the Sierra Estrella-SDNM linkage, and Department wildlife/habitat conservation goals for the Goodyear planning area. Project consultants hired by the City to facilitate the plan revision process have requested a meeting to follow-up on presentation recommendations and to solicit Department review of plan elements related to open space, wildlife and habitat conservation. The Department met with Goodyear consultants and they presented their conceptual ideas to present to the Town Council for future open space in Goodyear. The conceptual ideas include conservation of wildlife linkage in Rainbow Valley on BLM land as a desired open space component, in addition to several wash corridors and the Gila River.

Concentrate Wetlands Management

The City of Goodyear and the Bureau of Reclamation are conducting a siting study for a demonstration concentrate management wetland. The intent is to find a location to construct a quarter size demonstration vertical flow wetland to treat reverse osmosis brine in order to reduce constituent levels to below regulated concentrations. The brine would be used to support riparian habitat, the blend of treated brine and groundwater would be used to support riparian habitat and the 157th water reclamation facility would no longer be blended with treated brine making it suitable for groundwater recharge. The blended water would support riparian habitat along the conveyance channel and also in the Gila River channel, discharge of the blended water into the Gila River is expected to improve the water quality and increase the quantity of water in the Gila River.

Bighorn Sheep Transplant

On November 4-6th, Regional personnel, in cooperation with volunteers from of the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, Game Branch, and Research Branch, participated in the successful capture and translocation of 40 desert bighorn sheep. The sheep were captured in a helicopter net-gunning effort in the south end of the Black Mountains in Game Management Unit (GMU) 15D, and were ultimately translocated to the People's Canyon area near the Arrastra Mountain Wilderness Area. This group of sheep will augment a translocated population of sheep introduced into this area roughly 2 years ago with sheep from the Navajo Reservation in Mexican Hat, Utah.

Maricopa County Flood Control District (MCFCD)

River Corridors

The MCFCD has initiated discussion for a project that will assign various grades to river corridors in Maricopa County. The data may be used for planning environmental protection efforts or restoration efforts in river corridors as well as identifying river corridor areas that have potential for economic development. The Department is currently working with MCFCD for data sharing.

Biological Predictive Analysis

The Department is currently working with MCFCD to develop a "Landscape Compatibility Assessment for Biological Resources" that can be used to predict compatibility of various flood mitigation strategies to maintaining biological diversity and habitat functions in Maricopa County. When MCFCD plans flood hazard mitigation methods/structures they evaluate compatibility to resources (like cultural or visual aesthetics) and community development plans. The biological resources compatibility assessment will be used together with other resource assessments contained in the Flood Control District's Landscape Inventory and Analysis (LIA) for Maricopa County. Information from the LIA is used in District planning and design studies to assist in the development flood hazard mitigation alternatives that are intended to be context sensitive with landscape resources in Maricopa County.

Ray Mine Tailings Facility in GMU 37B

The Department met with the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) and submitted scoping comments on the Ray tailings facility in

37B. The facility is proposed to be located on twelve square miles of Arizona State Trust Land under application for sale to ASARCO for the purpose of creating additional tailings storage to support up to approximately 750 million tons of material. The proposed site is a major tributary to the Gila River comprised of rich Sonoran desert vegetation type including saguaro and ironwood communities. The area is popular with mule deer, javelina, Gambel's quail, and other small game hunters and other outdoor recreationists. The 2,129 acre facility will require a permit from the Corps under Section 404 (404 permit) of the Clean Water Act. The Corps is the lead federal agency for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS.)

The Department requested Cooperating Agency status for the project based on special expertise related to wildlife resources potentially affected by the project. The Corps denied the Department Cooperating Agency status but has committed to coordinating with the State as required under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA.) Under the FWCA, the Corps must first consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Department "with a view to preventing loss of and damage to wildlife resources."

The Department informed the Corps that Preservation of 2,129 acres will be the Department's starting point when considering compensation at 100% level under Commission policy. The Department suggested that compensation lands be protected at a higher than 1:1 acreage and be funded to enhance habitat that will achieve 100% replacement value for the habitat lost.

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. The Department will be meeting with the County Planning and Zoning in the near future to present the wildlife linkages product and wildlife friendly development. The County has a new Parks and Trails Department. The Committee assists the new Department through providing recommendations. The Department continues to work on the drainage protection subcommittee for development of identification of important drainage features within the county. The county has posted the link to the wildlife linkage county product on their planning and development website.

San Rafael State Natural Area

The Department provided comments on the San Rafael Draft Management Framework (Framework.) The Department's comments centered on public and Department access for game management to the Natural Area. The Department requested that Arizona State Parks meet with Department staff to discuss the Framework in detail before completing a final draft.

| 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) 6/2014 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 imminent | 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 | Proposed Plan DEIS released 11/15/13 | Under review by AGFD | Final EIS 7/2014 |
| | TMP in Process in all Districts. | Final TMP | Final TMP end of 2013: Decisions by district: Douglas 7/2014; Nogales 3/2013; Safford 3/2014; Santa Catalina 3/2014; Sierra Vista 9/2014 |
| Issues: | Motor Vehicle Use maps show access through roads that have locked gates. Maps not enforceable. | | |

| Forest | Status | Next Step | Projected Next Step Completion |
|-----------------|---|--|---|
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| Kaibab | AGFD appeal on North Kaibab TMP declined. TMP completed by district. MVUM's available. | Final LRMP | LRMP Decision imminent |
| 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 | Expected FEIS in Federal Register 3/2014 | 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 Assessment beginning; public scoping in 2014. TMP final EIS anticipated 11/13 | Final LRMP & EIS Fall 2017 |
| Issues: | Consistency across forests, enforceability, MBGR, road closures, and Dispersed Camping all addressed in response to NOI. | | |