



BARRY M. GOLDWATER RANGE
 Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan
 P.O. Box 67132
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Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Newsletter 7 ■ Spring 2006

Final Statement to be Released

The final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Barry M. Goldwater Range (BMGR) Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) will be released soon.

The final EIS will be available to the public at libraries in 15 Arizona and two California communities, or online at the Community Interests link of the Luke Air Force Base web site (<http://www.luke.af.mil/>) (select the Community Interests link and then select the INRMP page). A copy of the EIS on compact disk (CD) may be requested by contacting the Air Force (see the text box on this page for details).

The draft EIS on the proposed INRMP and a Community Report, which provided a condensed version of the draft EIS, were released for public review and comment at the end of February 2003. During the 60-day comment period, 129 written or oral statements were received from federal, state and local agencies; Native American tribes; non-governmental organizations and individuals. Public hearings on the draft EIS were held in six Arizona communities during the comment period. Individuals attending these hearings provided 104 of the 129 statements.



Both the draft and final EISs were jointly prepared through an inter-agency partnership consisting of the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Arizona Game and Fish Department. The EIS analyzes five alternative strategies, including the proposed action and no-action alternative, for managing natural and cultural resources and public access within the BMGR. Each alternative outlines guidance for 17 separate resource management elements and would constitute an INRMP for the BMGR, if implemented.

To receive a copy of the final EIS

If you wish to receive a CD copy of the EIS, please contact Ms. Teresa Walker, 56 RMO Public Affairs Officer, at one of the following addresses.

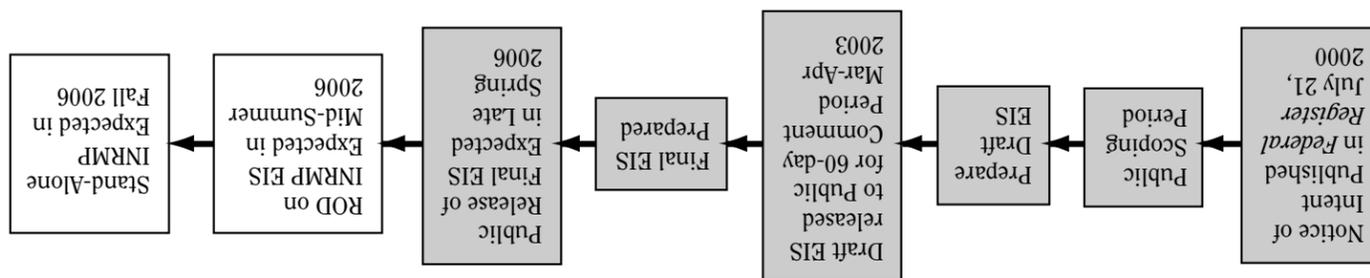
E-mail: teresa.walker@luke.af.mil
 (Please put "INRMP EIS" in the subject line.)

Standard mail: 56RMO/ESM, 7224
 North 139th Drive, Luke AFB, AZ 85309

The final EIS may be viewed at the following libraries:

- Ajo Public Library, 33 Plaza
- Casa Grande Public Library, 405 E. 6th Street
- El Centro, CA Public Library, 539 State Street
- Flagstaff Public Library, 300 W. Aspen
- Gila Bend Public Library, 200 N. Euclid
- Glendale Public Library, 5959 W. Brown
- Mesa Public Library, 64 E. 1st Street
- Palo Verde Valley Library, 125 W. Chanslor Way, Blythe, CA
- Phoenix Public Library, 1221 N. Central Avenue
- Prescott Public Library, 215 E. Goodwin Street
- San Luis Branch Library, 23222 S. 1st Street
- Scottsdale Public Library, 3839 Civic Center Boulevard
- Tempe Public Library, 3500 S. Rural Road
- Tohono O'odham Education Department Library, Sells, AZ
- Tucson/Pima Library, 101 N. Stone Street
- Wellton Branch Library, 30101 E. Highway 80
- Yuma County Library, 350 S. 3rd Avenue

Items in gray indicate steps that have been completed.



Where Are We Now? The EIS and INRMP Preparation Process



Artifacts from prehistoric and historic human use of the BMGR are protected by law and must not be collected or disturbed.

of roads, the partner agencies found that the revised proposed action would better provide for sustainable multipurpose public access. This use of the BMGR would be consistent with the requirements of its military purposes while also providing for proper management and protection of its natural and cultural resources.

The revised proposed action described in the final EIS is similar to the proposed action in the draft and remains within the overall range of alternatives considered in the draft EIS. The changes made to the proposed action for the final EIS do not meet a threshold of significance that would warrant publication of a supplemental draft EIS.

Consultation under Endangered Species Act and National Historic Preservation Act

The Air Force and Marine Corps have consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the effects of INRMP implementation on threatened and endangered species, including the Sonoran pronghorn and lesser long-nosed bat. The INRMP is intended to aid in recovering species that occur or potentially occur on the BMGR, but also includes actions that do not directly contribute to species recovery. After careful review of the proposed INRMP, USFWS found the overall implementation of the plan would not be likely to jeopardize the continued survival of these species.



Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires the Air Force and Marine Corps to consult with the Arizona State Historic Preservation



Officer and tribes that claim cultural affiliation with places on BMGR regarding the potential effects of INRMP implementation on cultural resources. This consultation process, which was described in some detail in the December 2004 newsletter, was concluded by the Air Force, Marine Corps, and State Historic Preservation Officer in October 2005 with the signing of a programmatic agreement that demonstrates compliance with the NHPA. The programmatic agreement, which now is being circulated to the concurring parties for signature, demonstrates that the Air Force and Marine Corps have appropriately considered the potential impacts of the proposed INRMP on significant historic properties that occur on the BMGR and will guide cultural resource actions in support of INRMP implementation.



The proposed action and preferred INRMP alternative identified in the final EIS is expected to be implemented, but another alternative from the EIS could be selected by the decision makers. The decision that is announced in the ROD will not be made until 30 days after a notice is published in the Federal Register announcing the immediate availability of the final EIS to the public. Consequently, the ROD should not be anticipated before midsummer 2006.

Selected INRMP to be Extracted into a Separate Document

The purpose of the EIS was to provide the government decision makers and the public with a range of reasonable alternatives for the BMGR INRMP and a fair and full discussion of the probable environmental impacts of implementing each of the five INRMP alternatives. As a result, the EIS includes important descriptive and analytical information documenting factors that are important in selecting a management alternative. After the ROD is published, the selected INRMP alternative and certain other information already provided to the public in the EIS will be extracted from the final EIS in a stand-alone document. The purpose of this stand-alone document is to provide a concise, single-volume reference that will facilitate implementation of the BMGR INRMP and simplify government and public oversight of progress towards management goals. The availability of the stand-alone INRMP document should not be anticipated before Fall 2006.

Proposed INRMP Action Slightly Revised

The Air Force, Marine Corps and the other partner agencies carefully considered all comments on the draft EIS. As a result, revision was made to one of the 17 elements that make up the proposed action and preferred INRMP alternative for the final EIS. The revised proposed action would retain 42, or 2.7 percent, more total miles of existing roads in the designated BMGR road system than would have been retained with the proposed action presented in the draft EIS. As a result, the revised proposed action retains 1,606 miles, or about 72 percent, of the existing road network compared to 1,564 miles, or about 70 percent, of the existing road network that would have been retained under the draft EIS proposed action.

After considering all of the comments on the draft EIS and assessing the effects of retaining 42 additional miles



Record of Decision Expected Midsummer 2006

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Departments of the Navy, Air Force and Interior, the lead agencies for the INRMP EIS, will publish a ROD in the Federal Register which announces their joint decision to implement the alternative selected from the final EIS as the INRMP for the BMGR.

