



# Range Reader

## Barry M. Goldwater Range East 56th Range Management Office

**Spring 2023**  
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Welcome to spring edition of *Range Reader* - a newsletter to keep you informed of the Barry M. Goldwater Range East happenings. Whether you utilize the range for recreation or are a member of the local community and enjoy staying informed this newsletter is for you!

This newsletter is in electronic format as well and can be found on our website. Thank you for your interest in the Barry M. Goldwater Range!



### Barry M. Goldwater Range East



Established in 1941, the Barry M. Goldwater Range is located in southwest Arizona, and consists of over 1.7 million acres spreading across Maricopa, Pima and Yuma counties. BMGR is divided into the eastern portion managed by the Luke Air Force Base and the western portion managed by the Marine Corps Air Station Yuma.

The Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 renewed the land withdrawal through 2024 and transferred land management responsibilities from the Department of Interior to the Department of Defense. We are in the process of extending the withdrawal beyond 2024.

The location, size, and capacity of the range, coupled with its year round flying weather, enables the U.S. and its allies to conduct realistic combat training, including air-to-ground weapons employment, electronic warfare, tactical maneuvering and air support.

The 56th Range Management Office, a unit assigned to Luke Air Force Base, oversees both the Barry M. Goldwater Range East and Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Field. BMGR East is the Air Force's largest dedicated training range for United States and allied pilots consisting of over 1.05 million acres. 56 RMO is in direct support of the 56th Fighter Wing mission along with the missions of the 355th and 162nd Wings. The services provided are unique as it incorporates the mission of one single unit encompassing a variety of skill-sets including scientists, operations and airspace specialists.

# Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan

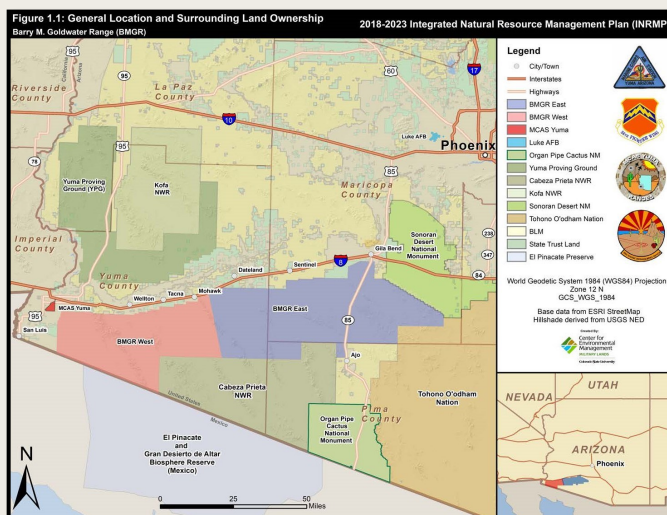
So what exactly is the INRMP everyone is talking about?

The Sikes Act requires most military installations within the United States to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for natural resource conservation and management (e.g., fish and wildlife, forestry, land management, outdoor recreation) on the installation. The Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan or INRMP, focuses on ecosystem-based management with a goal of managing the natural resources to meet stewardship requirements while supporting, and even enhancing, military operations.

Military installations prepare INRMPs in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and state fish and wildlife agencies, ensuring appropriate consideration of fish, wildlife, and their habitat needs. INRMPs are required at almost 380 military installations across the Nation. The Barry M. Goldwater Range is one of them.

Our Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan is a joint effort between the USAF and the USMC, in partnership with the Department of the Interior and the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The plan is in accordance with the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999, the Sikes Act Improvement Act, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and other applicable laws.

The Sikes Act requires an in-depth review of each INRMP with approval by the service and the appropriate state resource agency. We conduct annual reviews and update our INRMP every 5 years (under current review) to ensure it is meeting the Ranges conservation needs. The USAF and USMC hold public meetings and provide review of the draft plan to encourage feedback from the public, partnering agencies and Native American Tribes throughout the review process. You can access a copy of our current INRMP on our [website](#).



## Environmental Efforts



One of the roles of the 56th Range Management Office is to oversee the Barry M. Goldwater Range East landscape. Most people know the range is essential when it comes to the pilots ability to train but there's a lot more that goes on besides the operations and airspace side of the house. The 56th Range Management Office also has a dedicated environmental section that consists of archeologists, geologists, wildlife biologists and natural resources planners. These roles are essential in land conservation and protecting the unique and sensitive natural and cultural resources of the Sonoran Desert.

## Resource Protection



The Barry M. Goldwater Range contains some of the world's most unique and well-preserved desert. Located in the Sonoran Desert, one of the hottest and driest deserts in North America, BMGR is home to many species of plants and animals adapted for life in an arid environment. More than 400 species of plants have been identified at BMGR, including the iconic Saguaro cactus, as well as barrel, cholla, organ pipe, and prickly pear cacti, agave, ocotillo, creosote bush, bursage, palo verde, mesquite, ironwood, acacia and elephant tree. At least 62 species of mammals, over 250 birds, 5 amphibians, and 44 reptiles can be found on the BMGR.





Desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, white-tailed deer, javelina, and mountain lion are some of the animals you could see while on the Range. The vast majority of the remaining U.S. habitat of the Sonoran pronghorn antelope, a federally listed endangered species, is within the BMGR and adjacent Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge.

The 56th Range Management Office along with our other partnering agencies go through extensive measures to ensure the land and species are protected. In addition to the endangered Sonoran pronghorn the endangered acuña cactus is also being actively protected.

### ***Invasive Species***

While the goal of the 56th Range Management Office environment section is to support the military mission through sound land stewardship efforts which includes protecting the land surrounding areas from invasive species.



An invasive species is an organism that is not indigenous, or native, to a particular area. Invasive species can cause great economic and environmental harm to the new area. To be invasive, a species must adapt to the new area easily. It must reproduce quickly. It must harm property, the economy, or the native plants and animals of the region.

Examples of this are buffelgrass, Sahara mustard, bitter cucumber, fountain grass and globe chamomile, better known as stinknet. If you happen to run across any of these on the range let us know by reaching out to [56RMO.ENV@us.af.mil](mailto:56RMO.ENV@us.af.mil).

### ***Cultural History***

Archaeologists have confirmed that people inhabited the present-day BMGR over 13,000 years ago when the climate was colder and wetter and early hunters stalked mammoth and other now extinct mammals. About 10,000 years ago the region began an 8,000 year transition to the Sonoran Desert we see today.



Traces of prehistoric human settlements, sites and trails are scattered across the landscape. Historically, the Tohono O'odham (Papago/Desert People) and Hia C-ed O'odham (Sand People) lived, and continue to live, in the area. By the early 1700s, the region was an important route for Spanish explorers and missionaries and, later, for American pioneers bound for California. Beginning in the 1880s, ranching and mining became more prevalent. The first military use of the area is documented by the 1941 auxiliary air fields where pilots trained for WWII.



We have roughly 1,700 active archeological sites that cover the Barry M. Goldwater Range East. Our archeologists work diligently to preserve and protect the sites.

### ***Monitoring and Projects***

In addition to the research and monitoring done on the more obvious endangered species and cultural sites the 56th Range Management Office also has tons of other projects and items of interest going on behind the scenes.

Wildlife waters, weather stations and remote cameras/data loggers, and erosion studies are a few projects we have on the range that help us know what's happening on the range as well as address climate change effects.

We currently maintain 11 real-time weather stations placed throughout the range to gather data on rainfall and temperature. We also have 12 live cameras in various locations on the range which monitors wildlife and individual species, access population sizes and collects aspects of various species ecology and behavior. These are just to name a few.



## Public Tour Program

Did you know the 56th Range Management Office hosts tours on the range?



Tours are conducted on a first come, first served basis and are in high demand during the winter/spring months. Public tours are done on the first and third Thursday of the month October through May.

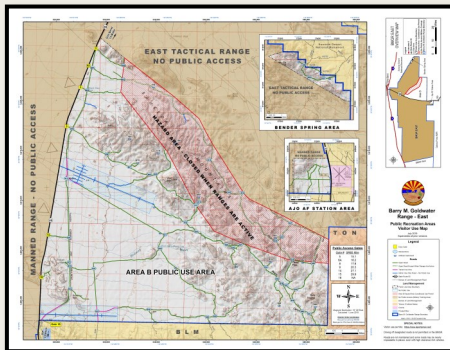
For more information visit our [website](#) or email us at: [56RMO.Public.Affairs@us.af.mil](mailto:56RMO.Public.Affairs@us.af.mil).

## Public Recreation Areas

Did you know that there are parts of our range designated for recreational use? At the moment we have three designated locations on Barry M. Goldwater Range East that we allow recreational activities; Area B, Bender Springs, and the Ajo Air Station.



If you have interest in visiting the range you must first get your permit. Each individual 18 years or older must have a permit prior to entry. Individuals under 18 years must be accompanied at all times by a permitted adult. Place a copy of your permit on the vehicle dashboard and carry a copy on your person at all times when recreating on the BMGR-East, BMGR-West, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, and Area A of the Sonoran Desert National Monument.



Individuals must get a new permit each year on or after 1 July. Your permit number will remain the same each year as your original permit number.

All permitted areas may present hazards associated with historic military use and the harsh environment of the Sonoran desert. Visitors are responsible for their own safety when recreating in these areas.

Know and follow the rules of the areas you visit.

Interested in visiting one of our sites? Visit us on our [website](#) for more information! If you have any additional questions or are having issues with your existing account please contact: 623-856-7216.

## Useful Phone Numbers

### 56 RMO Public Affairs

623-856-7216

(media requests, tours, public recreation area use, iSportsman, hunting/special use permitting)

### BMGR East Range Security

623-856-5421 or 623-683-5200

### U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

#### Dispatch

800-637-9152 x2

### U.S. Customs & Border

#### Protection

877-227-5511

## Communications

We have been working hard to improve our methods of communication with our partners and the community.

One of those ways is through this very newsletter. We hope you find it useful as we plan to do one quarterly and include updates and items of interest along with things we have been up to throughout the quarter. This newsletter will be distributed at our public meetings and can be downloaded from our website.

Another way is through our website. It's still in the works but it has more information and should be easier to navigate for those looking for documents or information.

And also through our official Facebook page. We've posting about recent happenings and items we feel could benefit our followers.

If you have any comments or suggestions on how we can help get information out, let us know by reaching out to [56RMO.Public.Affairs@us.af.mil](mailto:56RMO.Public.Affairs@us.af.mil).

### **Visit our website**

<https://www.luke.af.mil/Units/56th-Range-Management-Office/>

### **Follow us on Facebook**

[@BarryMGGoldwaterRangeEast](#)

