

# Update

## Ironwood Forest National Monument Resource Management Plan



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT • TUCSON FIELD OFFICE

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On June 9, 2000, President William J. Clinton signed a proclamation creating the Ironwood Forest National Monument (Monument) for the purpose of protecting the land and its valued resources. The President's action was based on recommendations by then Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, which was based predominantly on broad, local community support.

The Monument lies in the heart of the Sonoran Desert ecosystem in Southeast Arizona, and is a unique, scenic area of rolling desert and Ironwood woodlands around the Silverbell, Waterman, Sawtooth, and Roskrige mountains. Located along the Tohono O'odham Reservation boundary, within an hour of the rapidly growing Tucson metropolitan area, the Monument offers outstanding dispersed recreation opportunities but is also highly vulnerable to the impacts of growth.



Following the proclamation, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Tucson Field Office conducted several information meetings for the general public and residents within and adjacent to the Monument boundaries. Meetings held in October 2000, May, June, and December 2001, and March 2002, provided information about issues of importance to the general public. These included:

- Biological diversity of wildlife
- Threatened and endangered species, special status species, and critical habitat
- Vegetation management
- Cultural and paleontological resources
- Intermixed State Trust, private, and Federal land
- Visitor use and enjoyment
- Urban interface
- Undocumented immigrants

On April 24, 2002, Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton, directed BLM to begin developing the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Ironwood Forest National Monu-

ment, which encompasses approximately 129,068 acres of Federal land, 54,697 acres of State Trust Land, and 6,012 acres of private land. The same day, BLM published notices in the *Federal Register* to initiate the planning process. In July 2002, the BLM Tucson Field Office hosted nine open-house format public scoping meetings throughout southern Arizona to gather comments for the RMP and its associated

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). About 10,000 responses were received, mostly through electronic mail.

Since the end of the scoping period (September 30, 2002), BLM has conducted a preliminary review of the comments received and secured a contractor, URS Corporation (URS), to assist with the development of

the RMP/EIS. URS has exhibited extensive understanding of and experience with the BLM planning process, as well as expertise with human, natural, and cultural resources in Arizona, all of which pose challenges to management of the Monument. As one of their first tasks, URS will analyze the comments received during scoping and prepare a scoping report that summarizes the issues that will be addressed as part of the planning process. Upon completion of the analysis of scoping comments, a Planning Bulletin will be developed to summarize the status of the planning process, results of scoping, and criteria that will guide the planning efforts. The Planning Bulletin also will describe ongoing opportunities for public participation. The Planning Bulletin will be available through the internet and/or mailed to interested parties.

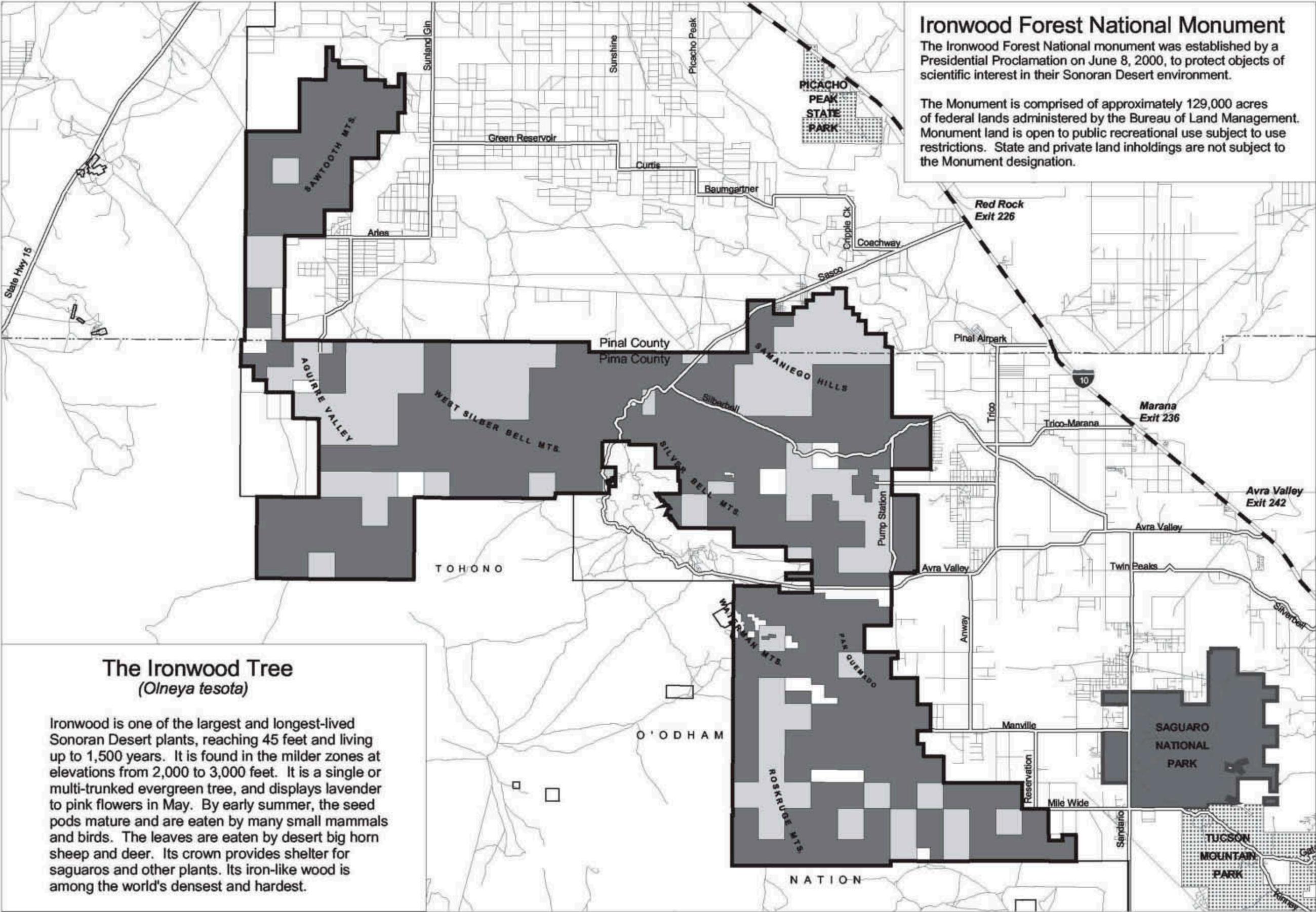
The draft Resource Management Plan is scheduled for publication by May 2005, with various opportunities for participation throughout the process, including public meetings. For further information please contact Larry Shults, Community Planner at 520.258.7242, the Tucson Field Office at 520.258.7200, or visit our website at [www.az.blm.gov](http://www.az.blm.gov). If you would like to be added to the mailing list for the project, please contact Annie DeChance of URS at 602.861.7487.



# Ironwood Forest National Monument

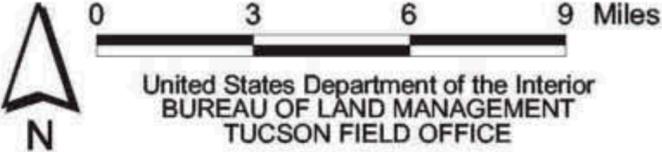
The Ironwood Forest National monument was established by a Presidential Proclamation on June 8, 2000, to protect objects of scientific interest in their Sonoran Desert environment.

The Monument is comprised of approximately 129,000 acres of federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Monument land is open to public recreational use subject to use restrictions. State and private land inholdings are not subject to the Monument designation.



## The Ironwood Tree (*Olneya tesota*)

Ironwood is one of the largest and longest-lived Sonoran Desert plants, reaching 45 feet and living up to 1,500 years. It is found in the milder zones at elevations from 2,000 to 3,000 feet. It is a single or multi-trunked evergreen tree, and displays lavender to pink flowers in May. By early summer, the seed pods mature and are eaten by many small mammals and birds. The leaves are eaten by desert big horn sheep and deer. Its crown provides shelter for saguaros and other plants. Its iron-like wood is among the world's densest and hardest.



General Land Ownership in the Monument:

- Bureau of Land Management
- State Land Inholdings
- Private Land Inholdings

Monument Boundary

Monument Access Route

# IRONWOOD FOREST NATIONAL MONUMENT