

Ironwood Forest National Monument
Draft Goals and Objectives on Soils, Water, Air Quality and Geology
June 16, 2004
Comment Summary

The following are summarized comments from the public meeting conducted Wednesday, June 16, 2004 at the Pima County Parks and Recreation Center in Tucson, Arizona regarding the draft goals and objectives for soils, water, watersheds, air quality, geology and minerals within the monument. The meeting included a presentation on soil resources, water resources, and watersheds by Mark Murphy of URS; a presentation on air quality by Dan Moore of BLM; and a presentation on geology and minerals by Charlie Gaskill of BLM.

The meeting attendance included nine individuals from the general public and agencies (outside of BLM). Attendees worked in one discussion group and discussed the draft goals and objectives. The discussion focused on the goals and objectives for soil and water resources; therefore, discussion of goals and objectives for watersheds, air quality, and geology was not completed at this workshop (follow-up on these topics to be determined by BLM).

General Comments:

- Add an objective to read, “Understand impacts on vegetation from groundwater mining.”
- BLM needs to research the effects of groundwater pumping and on washes within the monument.
- BLM needs to conduct water modeling to determine any impacts from groundwater mining (on vegetation) within and adjacent the monument.
 - It was suggested that BLM begin its hydrogeologic studies near developed areas first.
- Discussion took place regarding artificial wildlife waters as a surface water issue.
 - A new objective was suggested: “Consider placement of and for wildlife waters/catchments and maintenance activities for the wildlife waters.”
 - BLM indicated that the wildlife water issue could be addressed under biological resources (wildlife) rather than under water resources.

Specific Comments on the Draft Goals and Objectives for Soil Resources:¹

GOAL NUMBER 1: *Manage the monument such that erosion and sedimentation rates are appropriate to natural processes, landscapes determined to be returning to natural processes, or landscapes under active restoration.*

- Add an objective about soil erosion caused by allowable uses (e.g., roads) in addition to erosion caused by natural processes.
- Change the term “restoration” in the goal to “manage impacts” or “mitigate/minimize impacts.”

¹ The goals and objectives were numbered for capturing public comments only and do not indicate a hierarchy or priority of importance.

- Add an objective regarding best management practices and managing uses to minimize impacts.
- Add in the terms “allowable uses” or “authorized uses” before natural processes so the goal is not restricted to only natural processes, but can incorporate uses.

Objective Number 1: *Base land management decisions that address erosion on monument soil types and metrics that compare conditions to Rangeland Health Standards.*

- Define “metrics.”

GOAL NUMBER 2: *Conserve sensitive soils such as desert pavement and cryptogamic soils.*

- Add the term “as appropriate” to the goal.
- Remove “desert pavement” and “cryptogamic soils” from the goal.
 - Suggested new goal would read, “Conserve sensitive soils.”
- There should be three objectives under this goal: Conduct surveys; identify sensitive soils (including highly erosive soils, etc.); and determine management prescriptions for sensitive soil areas.
- Add a new objective regarding biological soil crusts (cryptogamic soils) and desert pavement.
- Add a new objective regarding identification and inventory areas of sensitive soils (perform a soil survey).

Objective Number 1: *Determine the current existence, location, and status of significant occurrences of desert pavement and cryptogamic soils.*

- Revise objective by removing “desert pavement and biological soil crusts (cryptogamic soils)” and change the term “status” to “condition.”
 - Suggested new objective would read, “Determine the current existence, location, and condition of sensitive soils.”
- Add an objective regarding management prescriptions for various soil types.

Specific Comments on the Draft Goals and Objectives for Water Resources:

GOAL NUMBER 1: *Manage surface water and groundwater resources to protect, maintain, and improve water quality in accordance with water quality standards.*

- Remove this goal entirely.
- Add a new goal “Manage land uses to protect groundwater and surface water.”
- What water quality standards are referred to here?
- Keep groundwater and surface water separate.
- No consensus was achieved on whether this goal should be included or modified – the group set this aside for BLM’s further consideration.

Objective Number 1: *Work with the US Geological Survey and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) to identify the groundwater and surface water quality parameters most likely to be impacted by the current and forecast public land uses in the monument.*

- OK

Objective Number 2: *Identify locations where groundwater and surface water can be sampled for analysis under the ADEQ ambient monitoring program.*

- OK

Objective Number 3: *Develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU), or an amendment of the existing State non-point-source monitoring program MOU, to support ADEQ monitoring of groundwater and surface water at selected locations in the monument.*

- OK

GOAL NUMBER 2: *Protect water supply to provide for the needs of the biota and other natural resources.*

- Define what “protect water supply” means to BLM.
- Revise goal to say, “Protect the needs of the monument and natural communities from allowable uses.”
- Remove the term “biota” from the goal.

Objective No. 1: Identify locations on the monument where groundwater levels can be monitored. Begin to develop cooperative agreements with the US Geological Survey to compare and analyze groundwater data on the public land.

- OK

Objective No. 2: *Identify locations where surface water on the monument can be monitored under the Pima County Flood Control District program.*

- OK

Objective No. 3: *Develop a water quantity database in order that the current and forecast water needs of the monument can be assessed and to evaluate impairments to public land water resources from other water users can be evaluated.*

- Add “to include other applicable agencies.”

Objective No. 4: *Identify, quantify and secure legal entitlement for existing and future water sources on public lands within the monument by acquiring surface water rights/well permits, when possible, to ensure water availability to meet the purposes of the monument.*

- OK

The group discussion concluded at objective number four. The group did not discuss objectives five through seven under this goal number two. The date(s) to review this with the public will be determined by BLM.