

Middle Gila Canyons Organizational Meeting
2/22 Meeting Notes

(Attendees are included on the participants list on the project website www.gila.ecr.gov)

Opening/Welcome from Larry Fisher

Welcome to participants, especially those who had a long commute. Meeting objectives:

- Provide an intro to the travel management process.
- Clarify protocols for the collaborative process.
- Reach agreement on logistics.

Introductions from all participants.

Opening Statement from Patrick Madigan, BLM Field Manager

I'd like to welcome everyone to this process, and thank everyone for coming out. Currently there are a lot of recreation and multiple use issues in the Middle Gila Canyons area. The challenge before us is coming up with a plan. We ask that for the purposes of this process you put personal and historical issues aside, and try to work together to come up with this plan. As of now, no decision has been made whatsoever by the BLM on route designations. What's important to keep in mind here though is that in the end, BLM has the final say on the travel management plan. This process is a great opportunity for you to provide input, and I believe it truly can be an efficient process to inform the BLM's decision.

Larry Fisher introduction about the Institute (see PowerPoint at: http://gila.ecr.gov/pdf/Middle_Gila_Intro.pdf)

Francisco Mendoza, BLM, -Overview of Travel Management Planning Process

In fiscal year 2007 the BLM TFO is ready to put the travel management plan in place for the Middle Gila Canyons area. A letter and a map were sent out to all of you in January, outlining the timeline for this process. The map still has some mileage that needs further analysis, which is what we will be doing now. When it is completed, it will become the proposed action for the travel management plan. A number of designations need to be decided on, including allowable uses and motorized/non-motorized designations. BLM will take the info we receive from this process to help design the travel system. The area needs a comprehensive plan that includes the designations of:

- Routes
- Restrictions
- Needed facilities
- Maintenance intensities/levels
- Financial needs
- Types of access
- What should routes accommodate
- Easements required
- Signage needed

Question 1: Do you think we can accomplish all of this in three meetings?

Answer 1: The BLM will be doing a lot of work in between the meetings. Participants will also have homework and background readings to help the process go smoother and more efficiently. Readings and all related information will be posted on the website for participants to have access to.

As for adjacent State lands – this is not, of course BLM jurisdiction, but it is pertinent to the planning area. The Arizona Game and Fish Department (John Windes) will be represented throughout the process, and they have jurisdiction over access issues related to State lands.

Q2: What about the U.S. Forest Service being involved? This is going to be very important since their land borders the area.

A2: Currently, the Forest Service is on a different timeline than the BLM, and securing their participation is rather difficult at the moment. As we go forward on the BLM plan, think some coordination will hopefully take place between agencies, at least as best we can. We don't want to hold up the process right now – the best thing we can do is provide them with recommendations that they can use when they are in their planning process. The Forest Service has scheduled their Forest Plan Revision meetings for the Tonto National Forest for March 5th in Globe.

Q3: What type of input - from a user's standpoint - is going to influence the BLM's decision? What is the basis of your decision on designating a route open or closed?

A3: We do have a list of criteria on how we designate routes. (See website for this document). [After the group reviewed criteria sheet, it was agreed that “and/or” should be put in between numbers 1, 2, and 3 to make it a correct statement. It was also agreed that the group would review this list of criteria during the initial meeting in Casa Grande on March 15th. Previous work done on the project, including the MGCP report will also be put up on the website for participants to catch up on.]

Q4: I thought the starting point was the map that showed the routes that we all agreed on, otherwise known as “Map 4”?

A4: Yes, “Map 4” is the map that we sent out to everyone. It does say “Map 2” on it, but this is the correct map. It shows about ½ mile of routes that have not yet been decided. These areas were not shown on the original Map 4, but we can make a decision on these areas in the upcoming workshops.

Kim Caringer, Institute, -Middle Gila Website

The project website is now up and running at <http://gila.ecr.gov/>. This site will serve as the main portal for all participants to receive information. Please let us know if you think anything needs to be added. Also, feel free to point others there who might be interested in the project or may want to participate. We plan to keep the site updated regularly with all the latest information.

Linda Marianito, BLM, -Overview of NEPA (See PowerPoint presentation on website at: http://gila.ecr.gov/pdf/NEPA_PP.pdf) The website will also include a link to the site that contains the Phoenix Resource Management Plan.

Larry Fisher, Institute, -Protocols for Collaborative Process

(See this document on the website at: http://gila.ecr.gov/pdf/Middle_Gila_Protocols.pdf)

Additional points:

- ❑ Everyone committed to the process should try to make all meetings. If you absolutely cannot make it, maybe it is possible to send a representative in your place.
- ❑ There will be homework. Everyone should try to be fully prepared for the meetings
- ❑ Punctuality is an important rule to keep the process on track.
- ❑ Participants should try to avoid using jargon, or explain and clarify certain terms

Comment 1: It should be noted that the BLM will make available any reference documents used in their decision making process to the participants and the public.

C2: “Map 4” should be available at each workshop for us all to reference

Everyone present at the meeting agreed to the protocols as presented, including the basic principles and ground rules outlined in the document.

The Institute is committed to seeking a balanced representation of all stakeholder interests – so we encourage participants to help us identify people or interests who may still be missing.

After considerable discussion and debate, the following dates were agreed upon for the upcoming Workshops:

- March 15th 1:00P.M. to 7:00P.M.
- April 7th 9:00A.M. to 5:00P.M.
- April 17th 5:00P.M to 9:00P.M.
- April 19th 4:00P.M. to 8:00P.M

Participants agreed that the meetings would take place in Casa Grande. Kim will work with Kent Taylor in identifying a location, and she will send out updates and information as soon as possible.

Please keep checking in on the website for more information. The Institute will send out an announcement with the agenda and background readings for the first workshop shortly.