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K. Mahoney
SKM

JUL 11 1985

Mr. Stuart Bengson
8900 N. Camino de Anza
Tucson, Arizona 85704

Dear Stu:

The Safford District Bureau of Land Management is beginning the preparation of the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Management Plan. As a preliminary step to drafting the management plan, a Preplan Analysis is now being written. The Preplan Analysis documents the boundaries of the wilderness planning area, identifies preliminary objectives and issues that will guide management of the wilderness, addresses data needs, participants in the planning efforts and public participation, and establishes a planning schedule.

Wilderness management goals, objectives, and issues will determine the subjects that should be addressed in the plan.

Four standard wilderness management goals have been developed as a starting point for the preparation of all wilderness management plans. Though rather general, these goals give direction and purpose to the plan and provide limits to the range of potential objectives. A listing of the standard goals is enclosed for your information.

Objectives are essential components of the wilderness management plan. They are statements of specific conditions to be achieved to assure progress in the direction of established goals. Objectives describe wilderness conditions to be achieved or maintained through management. Preliminary wilderness management objectives are to be documented in the Preplan Analysis.

Associated with objectives are wilderness management-related issues that may need to be resolved to attain the objectives. Issues reflect situations that now or in the future may present problems or opportunities in how the wilderness is managed. Potential issues are also included in the Preplan Analysis.

In response to these Preplan requirements, preliminary objectives and issues specific to the management of Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness have been developed. These preliminary objectives and issues are enclosed for your review and comment. Would you please take some time to consider them prior to our Public Lands Advisory Council meeting on July 19. Time has been allotted on the

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agenda for discussion of the issues. Our particular concerns are that the issues listed address all significant problems related to wilderness management of Aravaipa Canyon and that no issues be omitted. If you have any questions regarding the objectives and issues prior to our meeting, please call me.

Sincerely,

Lester K. Rosenkrance
District Manager

Enclosure

KMahoney/efr 7/9/85
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Same letter sent to:

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STANDARD WILDERNESS
MANAGEMENT GOALS

The following goals set the parameters for determining objectives and specific direction for management of Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness:

- o To provide for the long term protection and preservation of the area's wilderness character under a principle of non-degradation. The area's natural condition, opportunities for solitude, opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and any ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value present will be managed so that they will remain unimpaired.
- o To manage the wilderness area for the use and enjoyment of visitors in a manner that will leave the area unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness. The wilderness resource will be dominant in all management decisions where a choice must be made between preservation of wilderness character and visitor use.
- o To manage the area using the minimum tool, equipment, or structure necessary to successfully, safely, and economically accomplish the objective. The chosen tool, equipment, or structure should be the one that least degrades wilderness values temporarily or permanently. Management will seek to preserve spontaneity of use and as much freedom from regulation as possible.
- o To manage non-conforming but accepted uses permitted by the Wilderness Act and subsequent laws in a manner that will prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the area's wilderness character. Non-conforming uses are the exception rather than the rule; therefore, emphasis is placed on maintaining wilderness character.

ARAVAIPA CANYON WILDERNESS
PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The following objectives establish the specific wilderness conditions to be attained in Aravaipa Canyon. These objectives are established for all resources in the wilderness that require management.

RECREATION. Aravaipa Canyon will be managed to provide a variety of primitive recreation opportunities including use and enjoyment of scenic, scientific, educational, and historical features. The wilderness resource will be dominant in all management decisions where a choice must be made between wilderness preservation and visitor use.

Visitor Management. Visitor use will be controlled to the extent necessary to preserve both the wilderness resource and the visitor's wilderness experience and opportunities. Regulation of visitor use will be the minimum necessary to provide for use and preserve the wilderness character of Aravaipa Canyon.

Improvements and Facilities. Facilities and improvements within the wilderness will be provided only where they are the minimum necessary to protect the wilderness resource and the health and safety of visitors.

Commercial Use. Commercial use will be permitted when consistent with the protection of the wilderness resource, to provide a wilderness opportunity for those who are not prepared to experience Aravaipa Canyon on their own, to promote an understanding of wilderness, and to teach back country skills.

ADMINISTRATION. Necessary administrative activities will be conducted so as to preserve the integrity of the wilderness resource.

CULTURAL RESOURCES. Archaeological and historical resources are a unique and non-renewable part of Aravaipa Canyon. The management objective is to study, preserve, protect and enhance prehistoric and historic sites in compliance with State and Federal laws and BLM policy.

FISH AND WILDLIFE. Management emphasis will be placed on a natural distribution, number, and interaction of existing and native species of fish and wildlife. Natural processes will be allowed to continue as far as possible without human influence. Management will protect the conditions that allow natural processes to occur. To the extent possible, wildlife species will be allowed to maintain a natural balance with their habitat and each other.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat. Habitat manipulation will be permitted to perpetuate threatened and endangered species or to correct unnatural conditions resulting from human influence. These activities will be permitted only where they will enhance the wilderness resource and where natural processes are unsuccessful.

Fish and Wildlife Manipulation. Native fish and wildlife species may be reintroduced and managed as part of Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness if their presence enhances the wilderness values of the area.

Hunting/Fishing/Trapping. These activities will be allowed where consistent with State laws and regulations, public safety and wilderness management objectives.

Predators. Predator control actions will be approved contingent upon a clear showing that removal of an offending predator will not diminish the wilderness values of the area. Predators are an integral part of the wilderness as well as the wilderness experience.

FIRE. Fire will be used to reestablish and maintain natural diversity of vegetation types and wildlife habitat without endangering public safety or property. Natural fires will normally be allowed to burn. Human-caused fires will be prevented and controlled unless the fire contributes to the reestablishment and maintenance of natural ecosystems. Prescribed fire may be permitted to achieve wilderness management objectives.

WATERSHED. Water quality will be managed to maintain and enhance a safe human contact standard. A potable water standard will not be required. Water quantity will be maintained at a level necessary to preserve the

riparian ecosystem and wilderness experience. Management will prevent human-caused contamination of waters. Soil and vegetation will be managed to maintain a natural ecological condition.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING. Livestock grazing, where established prior to wilderness designation, will be allowed to continue on the rims above Aravaipa Canyon. Livestock grazing will not be permitted in the canyon bottom but cattle will be allowed to "trail" through the canyon bottom during roundups.

Maintenance of Facilities. Maintenance of necessary rangeland improvements will be allowed in keeping with the minimum tool concept.

Construction of New Facilities. Construction of new rangeland improvements may be permitted if determined necessary for the purpose of rangeland and wilderness resource protection and the effective management of these resources.

Recreational Livestock. To maintain the riparian ecosystem, commercial and non-commercial recreational livestock will not be permitted to graze or remain overnight in the canyon bottom.

ARAVAIPA CANYON WILDERNESS
MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The following issues identify problems and opportunities that may need to be resolved to attain the preliminary management objectives. The first three issues are general in nature and are required to be considered in each plan.

- o How will long-term protection of wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, and supplemental features) be best provided?
- o How will visitor use be managed?
- o What non-conforming but accepted uses require attention and how will they be managed?

Recreation

- o Is a reservation and permit system necessary to manage visitor use and preserve wilderness values in Aravaipa Canyon?
- o Should the number of visitors allowed in the wilderness be reduced or increased from the current 50 people allowed per day or should visitor numbers be limited at all?
- o Should the distribution of visitors allowed to enter from the east and west be changed, and if so, to what proportions from the current 20 on the east and 30 on the west?
- o Is there a need to keep the portable "airlift" toilet facility in the wilderness?
- o How much commercial use should be allowed in the wilderness and is there a need to allocate a portion of the allowable use to commercial outfitters and guides?

- o Is there a need to allocate a portion of the allowable use to groups?
- o Should campsites be designated in certain heavily used areas in the canyon?
- o Should campfires be allowed?
- o Should dogs be allowed in Aravaipa Canyon?

Administration

- o How should personnel be used to administer the permit system and insure compliance?
- o Are the administrative sites located to most efficiently provide visitor service and manage the wilderness?

Cultural Resources

- o How should cultural resources in the wilderness be managed?

Fish and Wildlife

- o How many bighorn sheep should be managed for in the wilderness?
- o How will wilderness management affect removal of bighorn sheep for transplant to other areas?
- o Should facilities construction occur within the wilderness to support wildlife spending time both in and outside the wilderness?
- o Should visitor use be restricted near raptor nesting sites during critical nesting periods?

- o Does visitor use conflict with a proposed critical habitat designation for Threatened and Endangered fish species in Aravaipa Creek?
- o Is public safety adequately provided for during the hunting season under the current firearms closure?

Fire

- o How will wildfire be suppressed in the wilderness?

Watershed

- o How will water quality and quantity be maintained to prevent contamination and loss of riparian values?

Livestock Grazing

- o Should grazing continue to be excluded from the canyon bottom?
- o Should cattle be allowed to trail through the canyon bottom for roundup purposes?
- o Is the use of llamas as recreational livestock appropriate within Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness?
- o Should use of recreational livestock continue to be allowed only for day trips into the canyon bottom?