

Las Cienegas National Conservation Area
Spring 2018 Biological Planning Meeting
March 30, 2018 * 8:30AM - 4PM * Empire Ranch

AGENDA

Themes: Heritage and Riparian

Meeting Objectives

1. Facilitate information sharing, education and learning among stakeholder participants.
2. Update participants on relevant decisions in last 6 months, plans ahead and upcoming decisions in next 6-12 months.
3. Gather and document stakeholder/partner feedback on specific management treatments, proposals, and other issues.

Website: LasCienegasAdaptiveManagement.net

Morning Session – Empire Ranch Headquarters (8:30 -10:00)	
8:30	Coffee, Bagels and Networking Please bring a small cash contribution if you'd like to partake in bagels!
9:00	Welcome, Introductions and Overview of the Day –Tahnee Robertson & BLM ● BLM welcome (<i>Margie or Jayme</i>) ● Reminder of biological planning purpose and overview of day objectives (<i>Tahnee</i>)
9:15 (45 min)	Technical Team Updates – Tahnee Robertson, SDR ● Landscape team - <i>Karen Simms – Pima County, Larry Fisher – UA/CWP</i> ● Uplands team – <i>Gita Bodner - TNC, Phil Heilman - ARS</i> ● Riparian and Heritage teams brief announcements – <i>Jeff Simms/Cat Crawford/Dennis Caldwell, Shela McFarlin</i> Partner Updates ● Cienega Watershed Partnership - <i>Larry Fisher and Shela McFarlin</i> ● Madrean Archipelago Conference – <i>Larry Fisher</i> ● The Nature Conservancy – <i>Gita Bodner and Damian Rawoot</i> ● Pima County – <i>Karen Simms</i> ● Appelton-Whittell Research Ranch – <i>Christine Francois</i> ● Vera Earl – <i>Ian Tomlinson</i> ● UA Cooperative Extension - work on soil moisture and drought indices – <i>Mike Crimmins</i> ● NRCS - <i>Emilio Carrillo</i> BLM Update – Margie Guzman, BLM <i>Note: See newsletter for additional detail on updates</i>
10:00	Field visit overview– Tahnee Robertson

Field Tour (10:00 – 4:00)	
10:15 (45 min)	Stop 1: Empire Ranch Headquarters <i>Alison Bunting – Empire Ranch Foundation, Shela McFarlin, CWP/HHT, Robin Pinto</i> <u>Topics:</u> • National Register Nomination – <i>Alison</i> • Progress of Stabilization Work – <i>Shela</i> • Evolution of the Empire Ranch corral area – <i>Robin</i> <u>Relevant RMP Objectives and Actions:</u> • Preserve and adaptively reuse the Empire Ranch Headquarters for public benefit without diminishing the historically significant buildings and setting by doing the following (CL02): ◦ Evaluating and nominating structures and buildings for listing on the National Register of Historic Places ◦ Stabilizing and maintaining historic structures in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings ... • Manage the historically significant buildings of the Empire Ranch Headquarters for public use (CL03). <u>Discussion Questions:</u> • The National Register submission is a revision to the 1975 nomination for the Empire Ranch historic site which is comprised of the 160 acres purchased by Vail & Hislop in 1876. Which buildings/structures are deemed “contributing” and which are not? • The revision does not change the site boundary, but what are the management implications from improved understanding of the National Register status? Or what are the management implications from the more detailed description provided in the revised National Register nomination? • What are the resource and management implications of stabilizing and maintaining the Headquarters’ historically significant buildings? <i>Organize carpooling – 15 min</i> <i>Travel to Empire Gulch – 5 min</i>
11:00 (60 min)	Stop 2: Empire Gulch <i>Jeff Simms and Dave Murray, BLM</i> <u>Topics:</u> • Sawmill Fire stabilization – <i>Dave Murray</i> • Recreation and restoration at Empire Gulch day use site - Robert, <i>Jeff/Dave (photos-before/after in newsletter)</i> <u>Relevant RMP Objectives and Actions</u>

	● Maintain or achieve properly functioning condition (PFC) and the potential natural community (PNC) for 80% of the riparian areas in the Sonoita Valley. ○ Repair eroding streambanks or terraces at abandoned stream crossings or other disturbed sites along cienega Creek and its tributaries where erosion from these banks or terraces is harming riparian or aquatic habitats or function. <u>Discussion question/topics</u> ● Empire Gulch “trail” – challenges and opportunities moving forward ● Brainstorm ideas for volunteer projects and ways for partners to contribute to restoration ● Discuss effects of Sawmill Fire observed during fish monitoring in Cienega Creek and Empire Spring
12:00 (45 min)	Lunch – across the road from Empire Gulch Day Use site <i>Travel to wetland – 15 min</i>
1:00 (60 min)	Stop 3: Cienega Creek Road crossing at Cienega Ranch Wetland <i>Jeff Simms – BLM</i> <u>Topics:</u> ● Beaver reintroduction – <i>Jeff Simms</i> ● Sawmill Fire effects and channel drying leading to arroyo formation –<i>Jeff Simms</i> ○ Walk down drainage to see effects <u>Relevant RMP Objectives and Actions:</u> ● Maintain or achieve properly functioning condition (PFC) and the potential natural community (PNC) for 80% of the riparian areas in the Sonoita Valley. ● Provide a diversity and high quality of aquatic habitats to maintain and enhance the viability of existing native fish community and other species within the Cienega Creek portion of the Sonoita Valley. ● Manage public lands land to achieve and maintain the following desired resource objectives for fish and wildlife through the SVPP: ○ Restore and maintain the native diversity, natural distribution, and abundance of fish and wildlife species in the Sonoita Valley, with sufficient resources and in a manner that perpetuates naturally functioning ecosystem processed by the following (partial list below): ▪ Minimizing habitat fragmentation; ▪ Reestablishing, extending the range, or supplementing populations; ▪ Implementing recovery plans: ○ Use and ecosystem approach to manage four rare habitats (grassland, riparian/wetland, mesquite bosque, and oak woodland) that support the following priority species: ▪ Gila topminnow, ▪ Gila chub, ▪ Longfin dace, ▪ Lowland leopard frog, Chiricahua leopard frog,

	▪ Mexican gartersnake, ▪ Huachuca water umbel. - o Implement the Gila topminnow recovery plan to increase for the Cienega Creek Gila topminnow population by the following: ▪ Protecting surface water quality and quantity, ▪ Achieving and maintaining habitat integrity and function - o Reestablish, extend the distribution within the historic ranges of , or supplement populations of the following wildlife species in the Sonora Valley, where determined to have suitable habitat and be compatible with other management activities (partial list below): ▪ Gould's Turkey, ▪ Gila topminnow, ▪ Desert pupfish, ▪ Beaver, ▪ Gila chub, ▪ lowland leopard frog, ▪ Chiricahua leopard frog. <u>Discussion Questions:</u> ● Discuss rationale for beaver reintroduction and current proposed action. Focus on <i>ecosystem resiliency</i> in a drier climate and tradeoffs for plant communities and riparian fauna with the addition of beaver. Travel to Los Pozos – 25 min
2:30 (45 min)	Stop 4: Los Pozos <i>Dave Murray, Margie or Dan Q - BLM, Trevor Hare – Watershed Management Group/Borderlands Restoration</i> <u>Topics:</u> ● Grassland Restoration EA – prescribed burning, continued grubbing, erosion control structures, continuing maintenance post-treatment, re-seeding/re-planting - <i>Margie</i> ● CWP Erosion control training sessions - <i>Trevor</i> <u>Relevant RMP Decision</u> ● Desired future conditions – land health standards (standard 1): - o Signs of accelerated erosion are minimal or diminishing for the ecological site as determined by monitoring over an established period of time as indicated by such factors as signs of erosion. ▪ Flow pattern ▪ Gullies ▪ Rills ▪ Plant pedestalling - o Work with other entities within the watershed to maintain or improve watershed processes and characteristics that affect infiltration, runoff, and sediment transport. - o Implement methods of erosion control in lower Wood Canyon and other areas where this type of erosion is advancing. <u>Discussion:</u>

	● Overview of EA process and proposed action ● Discuss opportunities and suggestions for partner feedback
3:15	Wrap Up and Next Steps At Los Pozos
4:00	Head home

2018 MEETINGS AND EVENTS:

- **Madrean Archipelago – May 14-18, 2018**
- **Science on the Sonoita Plain** - June 2nd, 2018
- **Wet-Dry Mapping** - June 12 or 13
- **Cross watershed Meeting** – April 4-5 (Socorro, NM)
- **Tamarisk Beetle Workshop in Benson and Fieldtrip on San Pedro** - April 9-10
- **AVCA Brush Management Workshop at Buenos Aires NWF** - April 19
- **Biological Planning Standing Dates**
 - o Fall: First Friday in December (December 7, 2018)
 - o Spring: Last Friday in March (March 29, 2019)