

Donation of land

In Reply Refer To:
8500 (240)

MEMORANDUM

To: Secretary

Through: Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management

From: Director, Bureau of Land Management

Subject: Donation of Private Land to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for Addition to the Rawhide Mountain Wilderness Area

We are pleased to transmit to you a package from our Arizona State Office regarding a gift from Ms. Mary M. Ankeny of 182.5 acres of land to become part of the Rawhide Mountains wilderness area. This is the first gift of lands made to the BLM with the specific intention of having them become part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The enclosed package contains background information related to the gift (environmental assessment, comment letters and decision record), and letters to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives informing them of your acceptance of this gift to become part of the wilderness area.

These letters of notification to the Congress fulfill the requirements regarding gifts mandated in Section 6 of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

We have provided a courtesy copy of this package to all of the members of the Arizona Congressional delegation.

For additional information, please contact Gary Pavek of my staff at (202) 452-7797.

Attachments

CORRESPONDENCE SUMMARY FOR SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR

ACTION REQUESTED: Signature of transmittal memorandum to the Secretary asking the Secretary to sign letters of notification to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives regarding private land donated to BLM to become part of Arizona's Rawhide Mountains Wilderness Area

BACKGROUND: In November 1994, Ms. Mary M. Ankeny offered to voluntarily convey and transfer title of patented land inherited from her father, Mr. William H. Geddes, Jr., to the United States. BLM proposed accepting the gift under Section 103 (a) of the Public Land Administration Act of 1960 and Section 6 of the Wilderness Act of 1964. Through the Wilderness Act, the Secretary of the Interior may accept gifts of land adjacent to wilderness areas for preservation as wilderness provided that sixty days advance notice is given to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. BLM prepared an environmental assessment proposing acceptance of the donated land and its addition to the Rawhide Mountains Wilderness. EA preparation included a determination that the lands meet the Wilderness Act criteria.

CONSTITUENT POSITIONS: Six of eight comments received on the Environmental assessment addressing the donation and addition to the wilderness area supported the proposal. Supporters included The Wilderness Society, Wilderness Land Trust, Cocopah Indian Tribe, Center for Plant Conservation, and individuals. The Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, The Arizona Department of Mines and Mineral Resources recommended that the donation not be accepted and that the land remain in private ownership.

BLM FUTURE ACTIONS: Upon completion of the mandated 60 day notification period, BLM will include the lands within the boundary of the rawhide mountains wilderness area, and will manage it in accordance with the management plan for the area. Inclusion as wilderness satisfies the wishes of Ms. Ankeny to protect the donated lands from future mining or development. Acquisition of the donated lands also ensures Federal protection of sensitive bat species and important bat habitat (maternity roosts), Category II desert tortoise habitat, and significant historical cultural properties.

WHO SURNAMED:

CONTACT: Denise Meridith, Arizona State Director, (602) 417-9500

The Vice President Al Gore
President of the Senate
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Vice President:

The Department of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), has recently accepted a gift of land in La Paz County, Arizona, from Ms. Mary M. Ankeny of Santa Barbara, California. The property, about 183 acres in size, is surrounded by public land managed by BLM. The property is also surrounded on all sides but one by the Rawhide Mountains Wilderness, designated by the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990. BLM is accepting the gift under Section 103(a) of the Public Land Administration Act of 1960 and Section 6 of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Through Section 6 of the Wilderness Act, the Secretary of the Interior may accept gifts of land adjacent to wilderness areas for preservation as wilderness provided that 60 days advance notice is given to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Pursuant to this authority, I am providing notification, concurrent with notice to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, that the donated land will be added to the Rawhide Mountains Wilderness in 60 days and thereafter managed as wilderness under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

The action to accept the donated property and to include the land within the Rawhide Mountains Wilderness has undergone environmental analysis and public review under National Environmental Policy Act procedures. The environmental assessment, comment letters, and decision record are enclosed.

A briefing paper is also enclosed to summarize this information.

Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Bruce Babbitt
Secretary of the Interior

Enclosures

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OFFICIAL COPIES: CF SD GROUP AUTHOR

Honorable Newt Gingrich
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

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