

BLM Cautions Public of Illegal Activities Occurring in Southern Arizona
April 10, 2009

Phoenix, Ariz. - Bureau of Land Management (BLM) public lands in southern Arizona continue to experience illegal activities, including drug and human smuggling. Visitors to public lands are encouraged to be aware of their surroundings while in southern Arizona. In the past, encounters with drug smugglers have typically been non-violent in nature; however, recent BLM law enforcement reports indicate smugglers may be armed and have displayed aggressive behavior toward people working or recreating on public lands in southern Arizona.

Visitors to BLM public lands in southern Arizona, including the Sonoran Desert and Ironwood Forest national monuments, need to be aware of these activities. Remember the following safety tips:

- * * * * *Cell phone service is out of range in many remote areas.
- * * * * *Know where you are at all times, follow good safety procedures and use common sense when making decisions.
- * * * * *Do not pick-up hitch hikers.
- * * * * *Keep valuables, including spare change, out of sight and lock your vehicle.
- * * * * *Avoid traveling outside of well-marked roads and routes.
- * * * * *People in distress may ask for food, water or other assistance. Do not make contact. Report the location of the distressed people to the nearest BLM or other law enforcement authority.
- * * * * *Report ANY suspicious behavior to the nearest BLM office or contact Law Enforcement Dispatch.

The BLM is alerting the public to be aware of their surroundings when visiting public lands in southern Arizona, and to follow the safety tips above. Your safety is important. If you see anything that looks illegal, suspicious or out of place, do not intervene. Note your location and call 911, or report it to the BLM Law Enforcement Dispatch at (623) 580-5515, as quickly as possible.

The BLM manages more land - 256 million acres - than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.