



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Farmington District Office
6251 College Blvd., Suite A
Farmington, New Mexico 87402
www.blm.gov/nm



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February 24, 2014

EMS Transmission – 2/24/2014

Instruction Memorandum No. NMF000-2014-010

Expires: 9/30/2015

To: All Employees Farmington Field Office

From: Farmington Field Office Manager

Subject: Brack's Cactus Interim Guidance

Purpose: Manage conservation of the Brack's Cactus

In accordance to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Manual 6840 (Special Status Species Management), it is the policy to manage for the conservation of BLM Sensitive Species and their associated habitats and to ensure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out do not contribute to the need to list any sensitive species as Threatened or Endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Brack's cactus (*Schlerocactus cloveriae* var *brackii*) is on the BLM Sensitive Species list approved by the State Director in 2011. In 2012, the BLM/FFO first became aware that new habitat areas for this species may exist in the southern region of the management area. Subsequent biological surveys have located several large populations of Brack's cactus, confirming previous reports. Given this new information, interim guidance for this new habitat area is necessary until the BLM/FFO can collect new information and ensure proper interim protection while recognizing valid existing lease rights. New management will be developed as the appropriate habitat information is collected and a more refined habitat map is developed.

I. WHAT IS MAPPED SUITABLE HABITAT?

Brack's Cactus is found primarily in the Nacimiento formation. The Nacimiento formation generally exists as outcrops of badland areas with sage/grasslands areas intermixed. The current habitat map for this species is limited to the northern portions of the FFO, ~163,000 acres north of Angel Peak. In 2012, Brack's cactus was discovered on Nacimiento formations further south within the FFO management area in the Escrito/Lybrook area. A map of suitable habitat has been developed to include the potential Nacimiento formations south and east of Farmington. This is shown on the attached map.

II. WHAT IF PROPOSAL IS OUTSIDE HABITAT AREA?

Any project proposed outside of the mapped suitable habitat would not require any management under this guidance due to lack of suitable habitat. Any habitat outside the mapped suitable habitat will be considered habitat for the subspecies; Clover's cactus (*Schlerocactus cloveriae* var. *cloveriae*) and not Brack's cactus (*S.c. var brackii*). However, there may be small "pockets" of suitable habitat outside of the mapped habitat. In the unlikely event that a Brack's cactus is found outside of the mapped habitat, site specific mitigation would be developed that would incorporate best management practices, standard operating procedures, and appropriate design measures to try and mitigate impacts subject to valid existing rights.

III. WHAT IF PROPOSAL IS IN THE MAPPED SUITABLE HABITAT AREA (Pre-2012)?

Management for this area (north of Angel Peak- see map) is unchanged and requires protection as previously described in IM-NM-200-2008-001, Farmington Field Office Special Management Species Policy 2008 Update.

IV. WHAT IF THE PROPOSAL IS IN THE NEWLY DISCOVERED SUITABLE HABITAT?

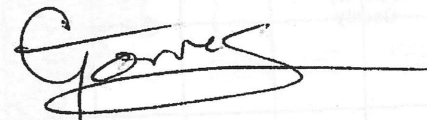
The following interim guidance will apply to proposed actions that result in disturbed ground in potential New Suitable Habitat Area (2012). This guidance is specific to Brack's cactus. Concerns and resource issues will best be addressed by revealing them as early as possible in the process. Specific guidance is as follows:

- A. To minimize impacts to Brack's cactus and habitat, appropriate planning and Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be implemented. Examples include:
 1. Use of GIS or other available tools to evaluate the location of the project area to minimize potential issues.
 2. For oil and gas related projects, placement of well pads, access roads, pipelines and other infrastructure within existing corridors or on existing disturbance. Co-location of two or more wells from one well pad and/or using pre-existing disturbance will generally meet the intent of these best management practices and would not require an additional alternative.
 3. When possible avoidance and temporary fencing will be used to avoid impacts to occupied habitat.
- B. For oil and gas related projects, concerns/issues should be addressed at the on-site with information that can be discussed/documented at the on-site with the BLM staff and incorporated into the NEPA process by reference in the environmental assessment (EA).
- C. Development of alternatives to be discussed in the environmental assessment is driven by unresolved resource issues and is at the discretion of the FFO NEPA Coordinator. If these guidelines are followed, it is not necessary to develop and discuss in detail other alternatives in the environmental assessment (EA).

- D. A biological survey and report will be required by a BLM/FFO approved biologist after the on-site. The biological report will be submitted to the BLM T&E Specialist. Any relevant results of the biological report should be included in EA.
- E. If the appropriate steps were taken to minimize impacts to Brack's cactus habitat as discussed above, any relevant impacts to Brack's cactus habitat will be disclosed in the EA and mitigated to the extent practicable. Mitigation may include:
1. Scraping, proper storing and re-spreading the top 6 inches of top soil to preserve the seed bank.
 2. Projects that have cacti population clusters greater than 30 will require relocation and transplanting. If there are a high number of cacti in the proposed disturbed area (i.e. >100), only a portion (~ 50% or less) the cacti will be relocated. The amount to be relocated and transplanted will be determined on a case by case basis based on population richness and quality of occupied habitat. Relocation and transplanting will occur during site construction and may include mechanical in-situ methods.
 3. Relocation and transplanting protocol will be provided by the FFO biologist prior to any transplanting activities. The protocol will include report requirements, data sheets, relocation and transplant methodology, timing, and other essential information.
 4. All biological contractors must be approved by the FFO prior to any transplant mitigation work.

This procedure is effective the date this guidance is signed and will remain in effect through until rescinded. Please contact John Kendall (564-7685) or Dale Wirth (564-7675) with any questions or comments regarding this guidance.

Authenticated by:
Gloria Peshlakai
Management Analyst



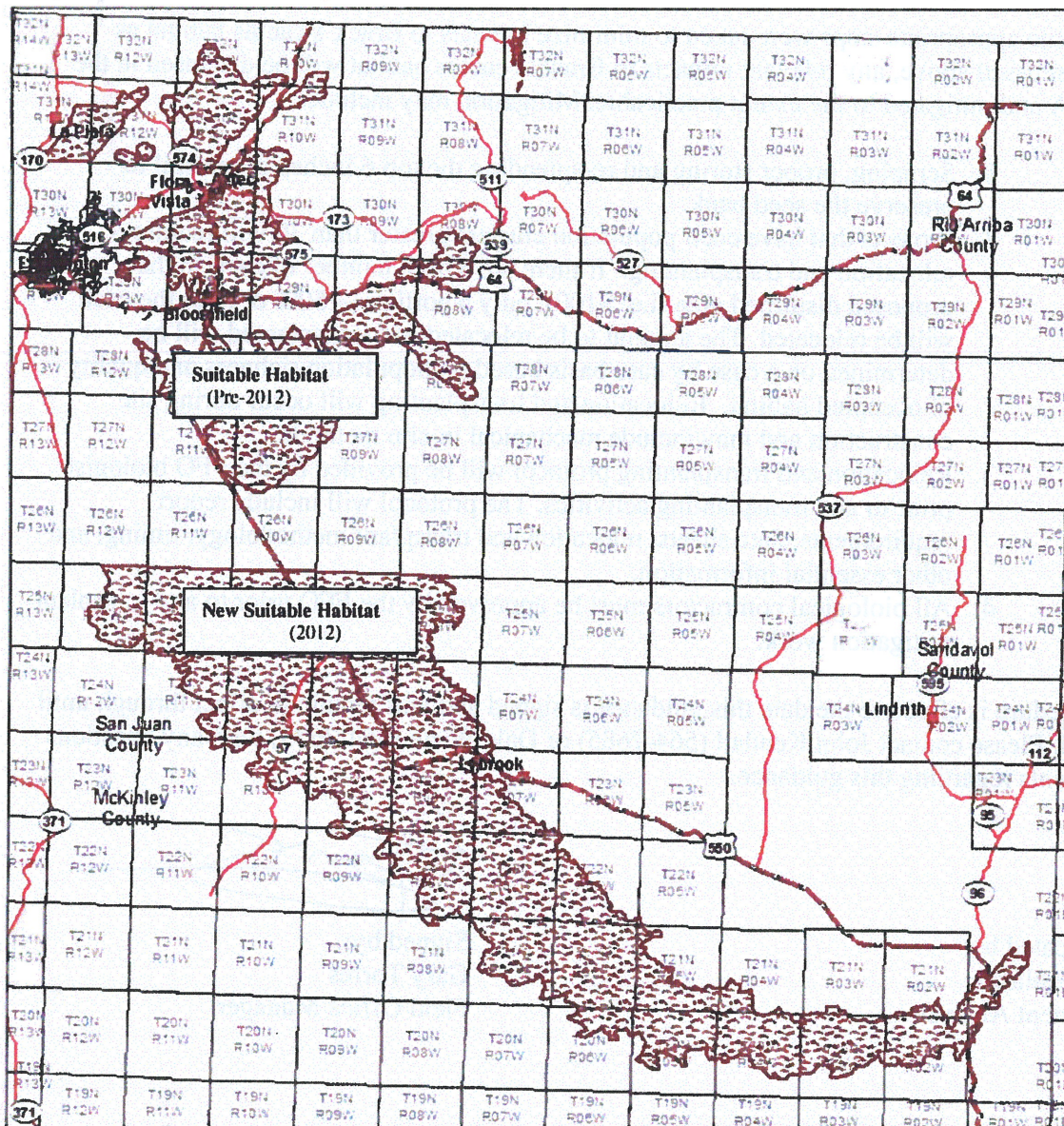
Signed by:
Gary Torres
Field Office Manager

1 Attachment:
1- Brack's Cactus/Aztec Gilia Habitat

Distribution
NM9300

Brack's Cactus/Aztec Gilia Habitat

Nacimiento Formation



Brack's cactus/Aztec gilia habitat



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR



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FARMINGTON, NM



Scale bar: 0 1 2 3 4 5 miles

This report is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the actual, reached, or proposed status of the habitat for Brack's cactus/Aztec gilia. It is not intended to be used for any other purpose. It is provided by BLM for informational purposes only. No warranty is made by BLM for the accuracy of the information. The information may be located without further notice to BLM. The BLM Farmington Field Office is the primary contact for this information.