

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Fay-Luther Trail System

August 2006

BLM

Carson City Field Office



It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

NV-030-200617

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1. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE AND NEED

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Carson City Field Office (CCFO) is proposing to develop a non-motorized trail system on public lands located in the Fay-Luther area at the base of Job's Peak in Alpine County, California. The project would entail new trail construction; identify existing trail segments for inclusion into the system; trail realignment with rehabilitation. The proposed project area is located on BLM managed land (public land) adjacent to the Fay-Luther Trail Head (FLTH) managed by the USFS Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Carson Ranger District.

The Humboldt/Toiyabe National Forest, Carson Ranger District acquired 2.35 acres in the Fay-Luther Canyon area along Foothill Road (Nevada State Route 206) in 1997. This acquisition from a willing seller intended solely for the purpose of establishing access to public lands and a potential link to the Tahoe Rim Trail. Presently, the Fay-Luther Trail Head (FLTH) is the only access to public lands in the Carson Range of the Sierra Nevada Mountains from Woodfords, California to Carson City, Nevada.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for the FLTH in collaboration with the CCFO and the Carson Ranger District in 1999. Carson District Ranger signed the Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Notice on July 20, 2000. The decisions brought forward in addition to the designation of the Fay-Luther Trail Head were:

- Outdoor lighting, water, restrooms, and trash receptacles will not be provided;
- Limited to non-motorized activities such as hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding except for administrative, fire suppression and Native American access requirements;
- Overnight camping and campfires are prohibited;
- A short access trail of 300 feet (to Nevada State line) will be constructed to connect to the existing trail paths and user created routes.

Implementation of the FLTH was completed by the Carson Ranger District in 2000.

The BLM Carson City Field Office submitted a temporary closure (43 CFR 8341.2 and 8364.1) for protection of sensitive resources on public land. Specifically, these lands are in Alpine County, California, Sections 26 and 35, T. 12 N., R. 19 E. (Mt. Diablo Meridian). The order applies to all motorized vehicles excluding (1) any emergency, law enforcement or agency vehicles while being used for emergency or administrative purposes, and (2) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized in writing by the Manager, Carson City Field Office.

The closure went into effect upon publication in the *Federal Register* (Vol. 66, No. 9, January 12, 2001) and will remain in effect until the manager, Carson City Field Office, determines it is no longer needed or a land use amendment is prepared.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to identify and establish a system of non-motorized trails on BLM administered lands within the Fay-Luther Canyon area. The need for the Proposed Action is necessary as recreation demands are increasing and monitoring indicates that resources are being affected by user-created trails. Upon the completion of the Fay-Luther Trailhead in 2000, recreation use has increased and user-created trails are occurring. Pedestrian uses currently occur in the project area. Dog walking and short visits of approximately 20-30 minutes are common (personal communication, May 2004, S. Hale-USFS).

This EA provides the public and the BLM with information about the potential environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and alternative, and to identify practical means for avoiding or reducing any of the project's potential adverse environmental impacts. In addition, the EA serves as a disclosure document for the BLM to use in making an informed decision on the project. The document was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and applicable regulations and guidance passed later, including Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) CEQ regulations (Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), the guidelines listed in the BLM *NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1* (BLM, 1988), and the Carson City Field Office's *NEPA Compliance Guidebook for Environmental Assessments, Categorical Exclusions, and Determinations of NEPA Adequacy* (BLM, 2002).

Land Use Plan Conformance Statement

The Proposed Action, and Alternative described below, is in conformance with the *Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan, May 2001 (CRMP)*, page REC-2.

- Management Decision, Desired Outcomes #1, "Provide a wide range of quality recreation opportunities on public lands under management by the Carson City Field Office".
- Post *CRMP* Emergency Closures, Fay/Luther Canyon Area all Public Lands, Notice to *Federal Register*, (Vol. 66, No. 9, January 12, 2001).

2. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

The BLM Carson City Field Office is proposing to identify and establish a trail system that extends approximately one mile south, southwest and approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile northwest of the Fay-Luther Trail Head. The trail system, including signage and a public information kiosk, would be designed and implemented in stages. The length of the proposed trail system, which could include approximately 3.5 miles of existing trail, 2.25 miles of constructed new trail and the rehabilitation of approximately 0.75 mile of trail, total of which is estimated at 6.0 miles.

The proposed action also includes a seasonal leash restriction for dogs on a seasonal basis; from November 15 through March 30 to mitigate dog/deer interaction during the critical wintering period. Public education and awareness of the need for the annual restriction would be pursued to assure compliance.

Fay-Luther Canyon straddles the Nevada/California border. The existing trail head and 300 feet (under Carson Forest Ranger District management) of established trail are located in Douglas County, Nevada. The project area is entirely on public lands administered by CCFO in Alpine County, California.

Rehabilitation and/or construction of an authorized trail system would be performed in phases by BLM staff and volunteers with trail rehabilitation/construction expertise. Trail construction and maintenance would be consistent with US FS trail and brushing standards. Construction of the trails network would follow *USFS Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook*, (October 1996 edition), and if necessary, recommended technical manuals referenced in this notebook.

Organized trail groups such as, the Tahoe Rim Trail (TRT) and/or Carson Valley Trails Association (CVTA) have extensive training and expertise with trail alignment, construction, and volunteer training and follow USFS trail construction standards. Trail construction project days may include National Trail Day, National Public Lands Day, or weekends where crew leader training may be located within the project area. These organized volunteer groups often partner with CCFO to organize or fund recreation projects and are invaluable to CCFO.

Specific Project Requirements

Construction of approximately 2.25 miles of new trail is proposed. Trail construction could entail removal of vegetation and the duff layer and altering soil profiles by cutting and filling to establish the appropriate tread width. Trail construction would be accomplished with hand tools only. The need for rehabilitation of existing trail (approximately 0.75 miles +/-) may occur through monitoring and/or identification of resource issues or resource conflicts. Rehabilitation would entail recontouring the trail by pulling soil fill, where available, back into the cut, reseeding and masking (camouflaging) short segments of reclaimed trail with readily available duff and forest litter. This would be accomplished with hand tools only.

Revegetation efforts would be monitored for success and for possible invasive/non-native plant species introduction. Observations would be documented with photographs, written report(s) and Global Positioning System (GPS) data. All proposed trail segments would be assessed for proper placement for high erosion concerns inventoried prior to trail construction. Trails that do not meet design standards or have high erosion concerns would be identified for rehabilitation.

Trail signs would be placed at key trail points and would provide basic trail information. Future monitoring may indicate a need to provide interpretive messages along the proposed trail. Signs may range from plastic markers to small (2' x 3') panels supported by a 4" x 4" wooden post. Future placement of an information kiosk would also be identified through monitoring. The kiosk would provide trail and resource information including seasonal messages such as wildlife awareness, seasonal closures or restrictions. If applicable, the two or three panel kiosk would be made of plywood and 4" x 6" wooden posts.

Recreation use monitoring would entail conducting visitor use counts and profiles on both peak and non peak periods including the day of the week and season. These observations

would be made by agency personnel and possibly volunteers. Collected data would be entered into the Recreation Management Information System.

During the time period from November 15 through March 30, informal observations would be made to determine if the dog leash restrictions are being complied with. The trail system would be monitored for unauthorized activities such as OHV use, overnight camping and fires. Noncompliance would be documented with photographs and GPS, where applicable, and Patrol Reports.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action alternative the existing trail “system” would continue to be unmanageable as new social trails would most likely continue to appear in undesirable locations and degradation to resources would continue. Reclamation and/or establishment of a trail system in Fay-Luther Canyon would not be considered to protect vegetation and cultural resources.

Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

Carson Ranger District/CCFO Trail System Alternative

This alternative proposed to link a trail system from BLM administered lands to Carson Ranger District administered lands to the west to access Horse Thief Canyon. Differences between Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture regulatory responsibilities regarding the environmental analysis are too encumbering at this time. The Carson Ranger District anticipates addressing the potential of continuation of a trail system in a separate environmental analysis in the future.

Dog Walkers Loop Alternative

Rational included the fact that there would be plenty of opportunities for dog and loop walkers to utilize the identified trail system without having a special designated trail for them.

Southside Canyon Loop Alternative

This alternative was dropped from further consideration since potential trail connectors would most likely occur west of BLM lands on forest lands. The topography of the canyon warrants more investigation by the Carson Ranger District to determine if it is feasible to connect a south canyon trail to the Fay-Luther or Tahoe Rim trail systems.

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Scoping and Issue Identification

Issues identified during internal (including USFS) scoping include critical deer wintering habitat and unfavorable dog/deer interaction during sensitive winter months, accumulation of dog and horse feces on the trail, weed introduction from horse manure, overnight use including camping and campfires, cultural resources and unmanaged and ill-conceived user created trails.

Consultation with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada & California was initiated August 6, 2004, with a field visit to the project area. Concerns raised were focused on trail reroutes and

known sensitive cultural resources. Consensus by agency staff and tribal members present was reached that signage to keep visitors on existing trails would be encouraged and proposed reroutes through areas of concern would not be brought forward as part of the project proposal. To meet mandates for purposes of confidentiality those areas are not disclosed in this document.

Public scoping began Saturday, May 29, 2004, with an ‘open house’ meeting at the Fay-Luther Trail Head from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. One of the sixteen people in attendance at the meeting provided written comments. A total of three written comments were received. All three received comments were supportive of the proposed trail system. The scoping period ended June 29, 2004.

Proposed Action

General Setting

The project area lies at the eastern side of the Carson Range of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Jobs Peak and Jobs Sister tower above Fay-Luther Canyon providing a stunning backdrop for the Carson Valley. There is a rapid transition from an upland shrub steppe community to the Western Yellow Pine forest due the valley floor at approximately 4,000 foot elevation to Jobs Peak at 10,633. The trail system area is dominated by a shrub community consisting of Wyoming Sage, Western (*Artemesia tridentata wyomiensis*) and bitterbrush, (*Purshia tridentata*). The existing trailhead and adjacent project area is nestled in between a low density/high value residential area in Douglas County, Nevada, within minutes of the communities of Minden and Gardnerville.

Critical Elements of the Human Environment

Critical Elements	Present	Not Present
Air Quality		X
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern		X
Cultural Resources	X	
Environmental Justice		X
Farm Lands (prime or unique)		X
Flood Plains		X
Hazardous Materials		X
Invasive, Non-native Species	X	
Native American Religious Concerns	X	
Threatened or Endangered Animal & Plant Species	X	
Water Quality (surface/ground)		X
Wetlands/Riparian	X	
Wild & Scenic Rivers		X
Wilderness		X

The following critical elements of the human environment are not present or would not be affected by the proposed action or alternative in this EA: Air Quality, ACEC, Environmental

Justice, Farm Lands, Flood Plains, Hazardous Materials, Water Quality (surface/ground), Wetlands/Riparian, Wild & Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness.

Resources Present But Not Affected

Bureau specialists have further determined that the following resources, although present in the project area, are not affected by the proposed action:

Visual Resources
Wetlands/Riparian

Resources Present and Brought Forward for Analysis

The following resources are present within the proposed project and are analyzed in this Environmental Assessment.

Cultural Resources

In order to understand the nature and function of cultural resources present in the proposed project location, an archival resource review and intensive (to BLM Class III standards) cultural resources inventory were conducted by Far Western Anthropological Research Group in May 2004. The research results were documented in a draft report, and submitted to the BLM CCFO in January 2006. After BLM review, a final report on the project was accepted by BLM in July 2006. This report, *Cultural Resources Inventory for the Fay Luther Trail Project, near Minden, Douglas County, Nevada, and Alpine County, California* (CRR 3-2280), included:

- 1) Documentation of the 145-acre inventory;
- 2) Recordation of cultural resources;
- 3) Evaluation of each cultural resource's eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP);
- 4) Assessment of current and proposed project impacts to each cultural resource; and
- 5) Management recommendations concerning avoidance, monitoring, and if necessary, mitigation, relative to current and proposed project impacts. This report contains the entire area of proposed action.

Native American Religious Concerns

The USFS Carson Ranger District conducted government-to-government consultation with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. This included field visits to the area of proposed action in summer 2004. In December 2004, follow-up communications between Federal government representatives and representatives of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California indicated that the Tribe supports 1) immediate placement of signage to keep visitors on existing trails in areas of resource sensitivity, 2) existing social trail development is detrimental to sensitive resources, and 3) the trail project as proposed in this EA is consistent with their requests. As part of a BLM/Washoe Tribe data sharing agreement, the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California has received one copy of the cultural resources report, *Cultural Resources Inventory for the Fay Luther Train Project, near Minden, Douglas County, Nevada, and Alpine County, California*. Consultation with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California is completed.

Invasive, Non-native Species

The last inventory of the area was conducted in 2001. No noxious weed species were found. Equestrians parked at the Fay-Luther Trailhead are allowed only certified weed-free hay be utilized at all times, thus reducing the potential for weeds to be introduced to the area.

Threatened or Endangered Animal & Plant Species

Potential habitat was evaluated within the proposed project area for endangered, threatened and sensitive/rare species of wildlife. No listed threatened and endangered or BLM sensitive animal species are known to occur in the project area.

The project area may provide habitat for Washoe tall rockcress, (*Arabis rectissima* var. *simulans*), designated as sensitive within the Nevada Heritage Program listing process and threatened by the Northern Nevada Native Plant Society. This plant is found on dry, deep, sandy, granitic soils on mostly gentle slopes of all aspects, in full or filtered light within mid to late seral Jeffrey pine stands (Morefield 2002). Washoe tall rockcress was first named and described in the scientific literature in 1993; it is endemic to the north half of the Carson Range, in northwestern Douglas and southwestern Washoe counties. The nearest documented population to the Fay-Luther project area is within the Clear Creek Drainage, approximately seventeen (17) miles to the north. Prior to trail construction the trail corridor would be evaluated and any habitat occupied by this species would be avoided.

Wildlife

The proposed Fay-Luther trail system lies within a transition from an upland shrub steppe community to Jeffrey Pine forest. The shrub community is dominated by Wyoming sage, (*Artemisia tridentata wyomiensis*) and bitterbrush, (*Purshia tridentata*). The forest understory also contains bitterbrush and, with a slight increase in elevation, mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*) and green leaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula*). White fir (*Abies concolor*) is a minor understory component of the shaded draws within the project area.

Riparian development is not extensive within the project area. Located in the northern most area of the proposed project, there is a small improved spring resulting in a stream with a well-established, narrow, linear featured willow community.

The major wildlife assemblages of the project area are as follows. Migratory birds (under provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act all native bird species in North America are considered “migratory”, whether or not there is any migratory behavior in their life cycles) could include:

Turkey Vulture	Northern Flicker	Black-billed Magpie
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Lewis' Woodpecker	Common Raven
Cooper's Hawk	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Mountain Bluebird
Red-tailed Hawk	Hairy Woodpecker	Townsend's Solitaire
American Kestrel	Downy Woodpecker	Mountain Chickadee
Prairie Falcon	Western Kingbird	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Golden Eagle	W. Wood-peewee	Brown Creeper
California Quail	Western Flycatcher	House Wren
Mourning Dove	Tree Swallow	American Robin

Great Horned Owl	Stellar's Jay	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Long-eared Owl	Western Tanager	Calliope Hummingbird
Poorwill	Black-headed Grosbeak	Western Meadowlark
Spotted Towhee	Chipping Sparrow	Brewer's Blackbird
Fox Sparrow	Cassin's Finch	Song Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco		

While the project area could be included within the periphery of a home range for the Northern Goshawk, habitat features significant to nesting areas and post-fledging areas are not present. The project area does not include large tree diameters and shrub-understory development which is characteristic of Flammulated Owl habitat. Mountain Quail are associated with upper elevations and more developed riparian habitats than those present within the project area.

Mammals associated with the project area could include:

Broad-footed mole	Badger	Dusky shrew	Little Brown myotis
Black-tailed jackrabbit	Gray fox	Deer mouse	Long-eared myotis
Least chipmunk	Coyote	Pocket mouse	Fringed myotis
Golden-mantled	Bobcat	Long-tailed weasel	California myotis
ground squirrel	Striped skunk	Long-legged myotis	
Beechy ground squirrel	Raccoon	Mule deer	

The Wyoming big sagebrush / bitterbrush community within the project area does not have a well-developed understory of forbs and grasses. Therefore, this area would not provide suitable habitat for the Pygmy rabbit.

The habitats within the project area are identified as critical deer winter range. Winter range for deer extends across the foothill area of the Carson Valley within the upland sagebrush/bitterbrush shrub community. A large portion of the winter range area has been impacted by increasing development of private lands. Increased human use of public lands, including the presence of free-roaming domestic dogs, has further compromised winter range integrity within the wildland/ urban interface. The northern extension of the proposed trail is adjacent to a 40 acre tract of National Forest lands and additional private acreage currently managed as a cattle ranch. This provides a large, intact portion of this critical winter habitat for deer.

Reptiles and amphibians associated with the project area could include:

Long-nosed leopard lizard	Sagebrush lizard	Rubber boa
Great Basin spadefoot	Western skink	Gopher snake
California toad	Great Basin whiptail	Kingsnake
Sierra alligator lizard	Gartersnake	Northern Pacific rattlesnake

Recreation

Public access to the BLM and Forest Service lands in the vicinity of Fay-Luther Canyon area is provided by the Fay-Luther Trailhead off Foothill Road (Nevada State Route 206). The trailhead is located near a low density/high value residential area. Other trail opportunities in the area include the Job's Peak Ranch trailhead north of Fay-Luther (located on private land), the Horsethief Canyon trailhead in Woodfords Canyon on California Highway 88 and the

Tahoe Rim trailhead at Spooner Summit on Nevada Highway 50 (both under USFS management).

There are approximately 3.5 miles of pre-existing trail in the project area. These trails are comprised of historic logging roads being currently utilized as trails, single track trail and user defined “social” trails. Subsequently, none of the existing trail alignments have been designed to sustain the current user types and current and projected levels of use for the area. Segments of existing trail routinely exceed design standards which result in accelerated soil erosion. Moreover, existing trail alignments offer limited loop opportunities. Consequently, existing non loop trails may receive twice the amount of foot traffic as a loop trail would. A segment of existing trail parallels Luther Creek where, on occasion, users water their horses and dogs.

No formal monitoring plan currently exists for the area. Photographs have been taken at various points along the existing trail system over the years; however, photo points have not been established. Informal observations by Forest Service and BLM personnel indicate the following: a) social trails have increased since 2000; b) segments of trail exceeding 15% slope show evidence of accelerated erosion; c) amount of trail use has increased by at least 50% since 2000; d) domestic dogs can be a nuisance to the resident deer population.

Public information related to the area is provided at the USFS trailhead via a kiosk. Specific trail information is limited as there are no authorized trails on public land. Signage includes several assurance markers located on the main trail and several signs located along the creek trail segment to discourage use from trespassing onto private lands.

The Fay-Luther Canyon area is currently used by hikers, casual walkers, equestrians, dog walkers and, to a limited degree, mountain bikers. Neither the BLM nor USFS has extensive quantitative information regarding past and current use of the existing trail system in the Fay-Luther Canyon area. Observations and periodic monitoring by USFS and BLM personnel indicate the following: a) use of the area occurs throughout the week; b) more use occurs on weekends; c) use tapers off in the winter months; d) with the exception of OHV's, current user profiles remain consistent with pre trailhead use profiles; e) prior to the development of the Fay-Luther trailhead in 2000, the absence of legal public access, limited parking space and low public profile of the area resulted in relatively low visitor use (estimated at 2,500 visits annually) for the area; f) construction of the trail head in 2000 has resulted in more than double the annual visitation (estimated at 5,500 visits annually); g) unauthorized OHV use occurs at a very low level; h) OHV use prior to the trailhead has decreased with publication of an emergency closure in the Federal Register (2000), signing and other access control measures.

During good weather on a weekend it is not uncommon to see 12 or more vehicles at one time parked at the trailhead. The majority of the use comes from day use visitors who stay in the area for part of a day. It is estimated that less than 15% of the users move uphill into the canyon proper preferring to confine their visit to the gentler routes below the mouth of the canyon. This is especially true during the winter months where typical trail access at higher elevations is precluded by snow accumulation.

Alternative

No Action

The description of the affected environment for the No Action alternative would be the same as that brought forward for the proposed action.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter describes the potential direct/indirect/residual/cumulative impacts that may result from the Proposed Action and Alternative, as well as identify any potential mitigation and/or monitoring needs associated with the specific resources. Reasonable foreseeable future actions within the project area could include recreation related projects, such as trail building, trail rehabilitation, or information kiosks. Currently, a land use plan amendment is in progress for public lands in Alpine County. An alternative to be brought forward in the LUPA will address the temporary closure as mentioned in the beginning of this document. No decision has been made regarding this issue at this time.

Proposed Action-Environmental Impacts

Cultural Resources

A Class III cultural resource inventory has been completed. The total number of cultural resources identified is 13. There is one site managed by BLM as NRHP-eligible. This site will be avoided by the activities involved in the Proposed Action alternative, and therefore the Proposed Action will have No Effect on historic properties, as defined through the Section 106 Process of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

As the cultural resources inventory located and documented cultural resources that extend across the state line and onto USFS-administered lands, concurrence from the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is currently being sought on site eligibility determinations per the BLM-California SHPO Protocol Agreement of October 2004. A response relative to concurrence from SHPO regarding the Section 106 Process of the NHPA is ongoing. The Section 106 process must be completed prior to implementation of the Fay-Luther Trails System Proposed Action.

Native American Religious Concerns

Consultation with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California is completed. All information related to Native American Religious Concerns is considered confidential and is on file at the Carson City Field Office.

Invasive, Non-native Species

Occurrence of invasive, non-native species could increase due to the overall increase of use of the area by hikers and equestrian riders. Based on previous monitoring, the increased use of equestrians, hikers and casual walkers, invasive, non-native plant species has not been seen. The proposed action, which includes rehabilitation of existing trails and construction of new trail, however, does not play a significant role in increasing the potential for invasive species to establish themselves. Considering the above information, the potential to spread

invasion, non-native species would be minimal. If any noxious weed species are found in future inventories, appropriate measures would be taken.

Threatened or Endangered Animal & Plant Species

No federally listed Threatened or Endangered Species, or any Bureau listed sensitive species has been documented within the project area, however, surveys for Washoe tall rockcress have not been completed. As brought forward in the proposed action, prior to trail construction the trail corridor would be evaluated and any habitat occupied by this species would be avoided.

Wildlife

The proposed action would minimize the system of user created trail within the project area. Much of the proposed trail alignment utilizes an existing trail with sections of new trail construction. Timing of disturbance is outside of the breeding and nesting activities of migratory birds and those of the mammals, amphibians and reptiles listed. Clumps of brush would be removed in areas of new trail construction; tree removal is minimal or non-existent for this project. Overall there would be a minimal disturbance of the existing habitat structure.

This project has the potential to further reduce the integrity of a critical winter deer range. Increased human and associated free ranging dogs would push deer out of their desired forage and cover during a stressful time of the year. This can develop into energy expenditures for deer that can affect winter survival. Based on the proposed action, prohibiting off-leash dogs from November 15 to March 30 annually, the potential for any impacts to wintering deer are minimal.

Recreation

Trail realignments would reduce accelerated soil erosion and increase public accessibility and safety. Providing loop and stacked loop trails would reduce potential user conflicts, provide additional recreation opportunities and increase overall visitor satisfaction. A defined trail system would improve the quality of trail information made available to the public. Increased trail signage and public information at the site would improve public awareness regarding the proposed mitigating measures described in 4.3 of this document.

Loss of existing trail segments due to proposed rehabilitation efforts could create initial confusion for the historical user in regards to the new trail system (i.e. available trail routes); however, this is expected to be temporary.

No Action Alternative-Environmental Impacts

Cultural Resources

A Class III cultural resource inventory has been completed. The total number of cultural resources identified is 13. There is one site managed by BLM as NRHP-eligible. This site is not avoided by the current continued social trail development and lack of signage marking designated trails. Therefore current usage under the No Action Alternative could potentially have an Adverse Effect on historic properties, as defined through the Section 106 Process of the NHPA.

Native American Religious Concerns

Consultation with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California is completed. The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California has requested that social trails through sensitive resource locations be closed and signed. The continued use and development of social trails—as would occur under the No Action Alternative—would have an adverse effect on Native American Religious Concerns.

Invasive, Non-native Species

Invasive, non-native species could continue to spread through creation of non-authorized trails. Since recent surveys have not identified any invasive, non-native species, any spread would remain minimal.

Threatened or Endangered Animal & Plant Species

There are no threatened or endangered plants or animal species identified through surveys or literature searches. Therefore, under the No Action alternative, no environmental impacts would be associated with this alternative.

Wildlife

Under the No Action alternative, user created trails would continue to multiply, thus leading to wildlife disturbances. Wildlife would continue to be harassed by free-roaming dogs during critical winter months.

Recreation

Under the No Action alternative the existing trail “system new social trails would most likely continue to appear in undesirable locations and degradation to resources would continue. Reclamation and/or establishment of a trail system in Fay-Luther Canyon would not be considered.

Cumulative Impacts

The time frame for this analysis occurred July 2004 to present (August, 2006). The past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions may include other recreation trail projects. There are no other authorized uses such as, mining (hard rock, geothermal, or mineral material sales), forest product harvesting, grazing, recreation events, that occur within this area of Alpine County. When added to the proposed project would not result in any incremental when added to direct or indirect impacts to resources.

All resource values have been evaluated for cumulative impacts. It has been determined that cumulative impacts would be negligible as a result of the proposed action.

Monitoring

The monitoring described in the Chapter 2, Proposed Action, is sufficient for this action.

5.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

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6.0 REFERENCES / MAPS

Morefield, James 2002. Conservation Status Report for *Arabis rectissima* E. Greene var. *simulans* Rollins (Brassicaceae), the Washoe Tall Rockcress. Status report prepared for U.S.F.W.S., Nevada State Office, 1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234, Reno, NV, 89502, 15 pp.

FIGURE 1.
LOCATION Map here