



## CONSERVATION TRANSFER AREA SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FACT SHEET

### Project History

The Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002 placed an additional 22,000 acres of BLM-managed lands within the disposal boundary established by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA). This additional acreage includes portions of the Upper Las Vegas Wash. The Upper Las Vegas Wash is a deep drainage cut by thousands of years of flooding. Exposed in the soft badlands are the remains of Pleistocene animal fossils, including mammoth, American lion, camel, early horse, and sloth. Additionally, the unique soils that make up the Las Vegas Formation are home to three rare plant species: Las Vegas bearpoppy, Merriam's bearpoppy, and Las Vegas buckwheat. The sensitive resources, both paleontological and botanical, in the Upper Las Vegas Wash had been known to exist; however, they had never been thoroughly quantified.



Las Vegas Bearpoppy

BLM focused a special effort on surveying those sensitive resources known to occur in this area for the Las Vegas Disposal

Boundary Environmental Impact Statement: 438 surface paleontological sites were documented, along with about 500 acres of Las Vegas buckwheat and Las Vegas bearpoppy habitat.



Mammoth Bones

In addition, the Tule Springs National Register Site at 980 acres occurs in this area. Based upon the inventory information, the Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was the Conservation Transfer Area (CTA) Alternative. In this alternative, BLM would develop management prescriptions within the CTA in the form of an agreement signed by the entity that would manage the CTA. The FEIS stated that the CTA boundary will be adaptable to the needs and concerns of interested parties that participate in the development of the conservation agreement and the additional environmental analysis.

BLM developed a process for interested publics to provide preliminary input so that BLM could develop a Conservation Strategy Agreement for the CTA identified in the FEIS. More than 160 members of the public have participated in this process and have

received regular updates from the BLM. From this larger group, Task Groups were formed to provide input on behalf of (1) the City of Las Vegas, (2) the City of North Las Vegas, (3) Conservation, (4) Recreation, (5) Regional Entities (flood, water, transportation), (6) State of Nevada, (7) Fish and Wildlife Service (both Ecological Services and Refuge), (8) Clark County, (9) Education/Research, (10) Utilities, (11) Builders/Developers, (12) Native American, and (13) BLM. During 10 public meetings held over a 10-month period in 2005, BLM received preliminary input on a variety of topics, including vision statements, goals and objectives, boundaries, infrastructure, recreation, education, and management options. Boundary recommendations for the CTA ranged from 3,000 to almost 13,000.

Additionally, Utah State University assisted BLM in a study that models impacts associated with alternative land-use planning scenarios. The results of this study will be useful in achieving a defensible boundary and protection of the resources.

## **Purpose and Need**

Because of the significance of paleontological, botanical, and cultural resources present in the Conservation Transfer Area, the wide range of boundary recommendations and the need for additional public input, BLM is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to meet the additional environmental analysis requirement.

The purpose of the SEIS is to supplement the Las Vegas Disposal Boundary EIS Record of Decision (ROD, 2004) for the Upper Las Vegas Wash CTA. The Disposal Boundary Record of Decision deferred the decision on the final boundary of the Conservation Transfer Area (CTA) and the uses that would be allowed until more public input was obtained.

The SEIS is needed to protect sensitive resources, including fossils, cultural

resources, and endemic plants, on public lands available for disposal within the CTA study area, allowing for compatible uses, in accordance with other applicable laws.

## **Alternatives**

Alternatives that may be considered in the SEIS for the planning area range from approximately 3,000 to almost 13,000 acres in size.

Common to all alternatives will be an analysis of federal management vs. non-federal management responsibility.

The required Conservation Strategy Agreement that would govern management of the CTA will be based on the preferred alternative in the Final SEIS. The Conservation Strategy Agreement must be signed by the managing party(ies) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.