

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Burns District Office
Andrews Resource Area
Finding of No Significant Impact**

**North American Eagle
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-OR-B060-2012-0013-EA**

INTRODUCTION

Andrews Resource Area, Burns District, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential impacts of issuing a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for the purpose of testing a land speed vehicle by North American Eagle, Inc. (herein after known as the "NAE"). The NAE submitted an operating plan of their proposed action to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Burns District, as part of an application to obtain a SRP to conduct land speed trials and activities.

The proponent proposes to conduct this testing on Alvord Desert (Playa), Harney County, Oregon (See Map 1). This particular landform provides features uniquely suited to the Proposed Action including: an area of sufficient length for vehicle runs that could reach or exceed 600 miles per hour (mph); limited access points to the Playa, which is desirable for security and safety purposes; and soil conditions suited to this type of event.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is for the BLM to issue an SRP to NAE to conduct land speed tests on Alvord Desert Playa. The testing is to verify handling characteristics, aerodynamic characteristics and gather data to validate computer simulations created and tested by the NAE aerodynamics team.

The project area encompasses a 12-mile length of "track" of Playa including several lanes of various widths and lengths and a private land two-track dirt access road that leads from East Steens County Road to the Playa, a ground support area and an area designated for the placement of timing equipment.

The vehicle used to make the land speed trial attempts would be equipped with a jet engine, 56 feet long and weighing 13,000 pounds. The chassis is from an F-104 A-10 Star fighter with NAE design suspension and systems integration. When starting out, the driver applies only partial throttle to avoid material getting caught up in the engine. A tow dolly would be used to turn the vehicle around or towed back to the pit.

A single engine Cessna and an ultra-light would be used to document the racing as well as to help maintain safe operating conditions. Other support for the test trials include support by security and volunteer personnel to ensure the safety of the driver, the support staff, the media, spectators, and to prevent unacceptable impacts to the natural setting, consistent with the permit and conditions ultimately issued and established by the BLM.

Trial attempts would occur ideally between July 15 through November in 2012 and 2013. During this period, two week-long events would take place during which at least four land speed trial runs would occur. Each of the individual attempts would last for less than two minutes.

The NAE team consists of 44 people to support the project. It is estimated most of the team members will be on site during the testing session.

Grading, or compacting the Playa surface would not be necessary, however, removal of pebbles and larger rocks by NAE personnel by hand from the trial and speed run lanes would be necessary. The course would be laid out and marked with highway marker cones and mile marker banners for a total distance of 12 miles from the longest two points on the lakebed. Trial runs will only be conducted during very low to no-wind conditions which is generally in the early morning hours. At the conclusion of testing, the course would be dragged to erase marks from wheels and the shelter base would be swept clean and any holes filled.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to context and intensity of impacts, is described below:

Context

The Proposed Action would occur in Playa and would have local impacts on affected interests, lands, and resources similar to and within the scope of those described and considered in the Andrews Management Unit/Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA) Proposed Resource Management Plan (PRMP)/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). There would be no substantial broad societal or regional impacts not previously considered in the PRMP/FEIS. The actions described represent anticipated program adjustments complying with the Andrews RMP/Record of Decision (ROD), and implementing recreation management programs within the scope and context of this document.

Intensity

The CEQ's ten considerations for evaluating intensity (severity of effect):

1. *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.* The EA considered potential beneficial and adverse effects. Project Design Features were incorporated to reduce impacts. None of the effects are beyond the range of effects analyzed in the Andrews Management Unit/CMPA PRMP/FEIS, to which the EA is tiered.

A. Migratory Birds, Special Status Species and Wildlife

Due to the distance from the proposed NAE course, there would be no effects to sage-grouse or sage-grouse habitat. Since use of the Playa is only occasional by other wildlife, if they were present during any of the speed trial periods, they would move away from the disturbance and avoid areas of people and equipment concentrations for the time of the disturbance and for a week or two afterwards. This would be the case with general recreation use of the Playa if there were no speed trials.

Use by the NAE crew would start as early as June 15 of each year which is within the nesting time frame for snowy plovers and other migratory shorebirds that use wet areas on the west side of the desert near Alvord Hot Springs. Depending on the proximity of the NAE course to the water's edge and snowy plover nesting sites, there would be disturbance that would cause plovers to abandon their nests and would reduce productivity for that year. The closer snowy plover nesting habitat is to the course, the more likely plovers would abandon their nests with several test runs over a two-week period. Noise levels as modeled show sounds of 120 decibels from the jet car, decibel levels at one mile would still be 79 decibels (freight train at 45 ft., garbage disposal); at two miles, 73 decibels; and about 70 decibels (vacuum cleaner, TV) at three miles. This is above ambient noise levels of 35-40 decibels (about double) and with repeated occurrences over a two-week period could cause nest abandonment. Other shorebirds using the area near Alvord Hot Springs would not be affected to the same degree. Decibel levels at this distance would be about the same as a normal conversation. Nesting raptors on rock faces to the east would experience some disturbance but would most likely not abandon their nest sites.

Off highway vehicles have been documented in the past as causing disturbance to snowy plover nesting habitat and increased numbers of people would be wandering around the Playa and disturbing nesting snowy plovers. Since snowy plover nests are well camouflaged in the Playa, they could be crushed by vehicle traffic as well as by people walking. This would reduce productivity of snowy plovers. While this may not be a significant reduction in productivity in one year, repeated years of this type of disturbance would cause a reduction in population numbers below normal variation. This could be from both reduced productivity as well as plovers moving to other sites due to repeated disturbance.

B. Recreation

Because of safety concerns and potential conflicts with recreational users during race events, distribution of recreational use would be altered. This would result in traditional use areas not being utilized during race events. There are no expected impacts to current recreational uses in the area.

Security personnel posted at Playa access points would inform visitors of the Proposed Action and would strongly discourage (but not prohibit) them from accessing the Playa during race events for recreational purposes.

The Proposed Action would not change existing access to the public lands within the project area for recreational use.

C. Soils, Biological Soil Crusts

Soils within the Playa would be compacted along the track route and within the buffer zone established by NAE. It may take one to two seasons for the impacts to return to pre-use condition, depending upon seasonal conditions (precipitation, freeze/thaw, etc.) There would be soil loss in the form of dust as a result of vehicle usage on the Playa. This loss would be greater than most casual usage due to the nature of the forces from the jet engine and the number of vehicles used to maneuver the race vehicle at each end of the race track.

D. Wilderness Study Area (WSA)

The proposed action would have temporary (up to ten days) impacts to Alvord Desert WSA. Team NAE would be accessing Alvord Desert through Davis Ranch on the north end of the Playa. Team NAE would be housed in trailers or motorhomes on Davis Ranch private property located on the north end of the Playa. Portable toilets would be provided by the NAE.

Naturalness: Under the Proposed Action, naturalness would not be affected in Alvord Desert WSA. Currently Alvord Desert Playa is open year-round to visitors and motor vehicle use with the most use occurring during the summer months. Any modifications to the Playa would be temporary (i.e., no permanent features or facilities would be constructed). At the conclusion of testing, the course would be dragged to erase marks from wheels and the shelter base would be swept clean and any holes filled.

Solitude: Under the Proposed Action, solitude would be affected when Alvord Desert Playa is being used. The Playa is open to motor vehicle use year-round, therefore, while NAE is conducting their test runs, solitude is affected, but no more than when other visitors and recreationalist are using the Playa.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: No changes to the types (i.e. hiking, horseback riding, hunting, etc.) of recreation opportunities available in the WSA would occur. Due to public interest, the area may receive more visitor use during the testing times. Visitors would be allowed to watch the testing from behind marked areas.

Special Features: Under the Proposed Action, special features (e.g., wildlife, geology, scenic quality and wild horses) would not be affected. Motorized vehicles are allowed on Alvord Desert Playa all year round.

2. *Degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health and safety.* No aspect of the Proposed Action or alternatives would have an effect on public health and safety. The Proposed Action provides safety measures to ensure public health and safety such as a buffer zone of approximately 65 yards around the race course and a minimum buffer of 16 yards around the ground support compound, public notification and security guards.
3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.* The Alvord Desert Playa exists within private lands, Alvord WSA, and the Alvord Desert Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). With Project Design Features, there would be no affects to the ACEC. See number 1 above for a description of effects to the WSA.
4. *The degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.* Controversy in this context means disagreement about the nature of the effects, not expressions of opposition to the Proposed Action or preference among the alternatives. No unique or appreciable scientific controversy has been identified regarding the effects of the Proposed Action or alternatives.
5. *Degree to which possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.* The analysis has not shown there would be any unique or unknown risks to the human environment nor were any identified in the Andrews PRMP/FEIS to which this proposal is tiered.
6. *Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant impacts or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.* This project neither establishes a precedent nor represents a decision in principle about future actions. The Andrews Management Unit RMP/ROD provides for developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities, while protecting resources, to manage the increasing demand for resource-dependent recreation activities. The RMP/ROD also provides for off-highway travel on the Alvord Desert Playa.
7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.* The environmental analysis did not reveal any cumulative effects beyond those already analyzed in the Andrews PRMP/FEIS which encompasses the Alvord Desert Playa. The only known reasonably foreseeable actions within the project area are recreational activities such as off-highway driving within the Playa and continued paving of East Steens Road.

8. *Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.* There are no features within the project area listed or eligible for listing in the *National Register of Historic Places*.
9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat.* There are no known threatened or endangered species or their habitat affected by the Proposed Action or alternatives.
10. *Whether an action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.* The Proposed Action and alternatives do not threaten to violate any law. The Proposed Action is in compliance with the Andrews Management Unit RMP/ROD, which provides direction for the protection of the environment on public lands.

On the basis of the information contained in the EA and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: 1) The implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the Andrews Management Unit/CMPAPRMP/FEIS (2005); 2) The Proposed Action and alternatives are in conformance with the Andrews Management Unit RMP/ROD; 3) There would be no adverse societal or regional impacts and no adverse impacts to affected interests; and 4) The environmental effects, together with the proposed Project Design Features, against the tests of significance found at 40 CFR 1508.27 do not constitute a major Federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an EIS is not necessary and will not be prepared.

Joan M. Suther, Andrews Resource Area Field Manager

Date

**NORTH AMERICAN EAGLE
SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
NORTH AMERICAN EAGLE ALVORD DESERT SPEED
TRIALS
DOI-BLM-OR-B060-2012-0013-EA**

Bureau of Land Management
Burns District Office
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North American Eagle Alvord Lake Speed Trials

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I. INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) describes potential impacts of issuing a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for the purpose of testing a land speed vehicle by North American Eagle, Inc. (herein after known as the "NAE"). The NAE submitted an operating plan of their proposed action to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Burns District, as part of an application to obtain a SRP to conduct land speed trials and activities.

The proponent proposed to conduct this testing on Alvord Desert (Playa), Harney County, Oregon (See Map 1). This particular landform provides features uniquely suited to the Proposed Action including: an area of sufficient length for vehicle runs that could reach or exceed 600 miles per hour (mph); limited access points to the Playa, which is desirable for security and safety purposes; and soil conditions suited to this type of event.

A. BACKGROUND

In 1977, William L. Fredrick was authorized through an SRP to conduct land speed testing on the Alvord Desert Playa. BLM observed the following impacts:

1. The average approximate depth of tire tread was ½ inch, except on the north end where the surface was softer and the vehicle was braking and slowing down, the tracks were approximately two inches deep in these areas.
2. The route across the Playa from the county road to staging area was very evident from repeated vehicular travel where depressed tire marks were apparent.
3. There is no vegetation on the Alvord Desert Playa and BLM found no impacts to the surrounding vegetation.

B. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The purpose of BLM's action is to deny, approve, or approve with conditions an SRP for NAE's proposal to conduct land speed trials and activities on the Playa.

The need for BLM's action is their responsibility to respond to the request as authorized under 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2930 Permits for Recreation on Public Lands and BLM Handbook H-2930-1 Recreation Permit Administration.

C. DECISION FRAMEWORK

The Andrews Resource Area Field Manager (Manager) is the responsible official who will decide which alternative analyzed in this Environmental Assessment (EA) best meets the purpose and need for action based on the interdisciplinary analysis presented here. The decision will specify all terms and conditions intended to mitigate any regulatory or environmental effects of the Proposed Action.

D. DECISION FACTORS

Decision Factors are additional questions or statements used by the decision maker to choose between alternatives that best meet project goals and resource objectives. These factors generally do not include satisfying legal mandates including requirement under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which must occur under all alternatives. Rather, decision factors assess, for example, the comparative cost, applicability, or adaptability of the alternatives considered. The following Decision Factors will be relied upon by the authorized officer in selecting a course of action from the range of alternatives fully analyzed that best achieves the goals and objectives of the project:

1. Would the Proposed Action balance the proposed project's purpose and need with the BLM's other responsibilities to manage lands it administers?
2. Would the proposed action promote cost effectiveness?

E. DECISION TO BE MADE

The BLM will decide whether or not to issue a SRP to NAE's to conduct land speed exercises on the Playa and under what terms and conditions.

F. CONSISTENCY WITH LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

The proposed action and alternatives are in conformance with the Andrews Management Unit Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Record of Decision (ROD), dated August 2005, even though they are not specifically provided for, because they are clearly consistent with the RMP/ROD goals objectives, and management action stated below:

The recreation goal and objective, from page 67, states Goal: "Provide developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities, while protecting resources, to manage the increasing demand for resource-dependent recreation activities." Objective: "Manage commercial, competitive, educational, and organized group recreation activities."

The Playa is within the Alvord Desert Wilderness Study Area (WSA). The Andrews Management Unit RMP/ROD, August 2005, page 75 states, “The Andrews Management Framework Plan (MFP) recognizes Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) and mechanized vehicle use occurred on the Playa in the Alvord Desert WSA prior to the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLMPA) enactment. The OHV and mechanized vehicle use of the Playa does not impair wilderness values and does not preclude Congress from designating the area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The BLM has allowed this use to continue based on the determination, managed OHV and mechanized vehicle use will not preclude future wilderness designation.

The following documents provide the framework and guidance for management of BLM lands within the Burns District relevant to the Proposed Action:

1. Andrews Management Unit Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan August 2005.
2. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347 (1970)
3. FLMPA, 43 U.S.C. 1701 (1976)
4. State, Local, and Tribal land use plans and regulation
5. Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon (Hagen - 2011).

G. ISSUES IDENTIFIED

On February 3, 2012, representatives from NAE (proponent) and representatives from the BLM met to discuss the Proposed Action. Issues discussed included the race course and schedule, hazardous materials, fences, private land, aircraft, resource concerns, the NEPA process, and the SRP process.

The Proposed Action would involve temporary use of the Playa surface. Use of the Playa and the spectator area would be temporary and would not involve permanent structures or improvements. If access is granted through private lands, access would be through road located in T.35S., R.34E., Sections 8 and 17. Approximately 1/8 mile of road maintenance would be required.

Key issues or resources identified during the scoping process are identified in Table 1 below.

II. ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. Alternative A: No Action

Under this alternative, the BLM would not issue a SRP to the applicant.

B. Project Stipulations/Design Features Common to All Action Alternatives

1. The permittee agrees to assume all responsibility for public safety and health during any phase of this event, including but not limited to:
 - a. Monitors and enforcement officers for spectator control. Permittee would assume all responsibility for insuring spectators are kept at a safe distance from the race course. Permittee would assume all financial costs for providing this measure of public safety. If the Manager considers additional spectator monitors and law enforcement officers are necessary, he/she can request this additional assistance with all costs incurred for this additional security to be paid by the permittee.
 - b. Permittee is responsible for all aspects of safety associated with the land speed record attempt. This includes the safety of the driver and sanctioning officials.
 - c. Adequate sanitary facilities meeting applicable standards and guidelines of the Oregon Department of Health must be provided by the permittee. If the Manager determines the sanitary facilities in the area are not adequate to cover both spectators and participants, he/she may request additional facilities and the cost of these additional facilities must be assumed by the permittee.
 - d. Applicant will leave the area in as near a natural state as possible and cleaned up to the satisfaction of the Manager. The permittee is responsible for cleanup of all lands impacted by this event. Trash receptacles and trash depositories must be provided by the permittee. All trash left on the race course area must be removed after the event by the permittee. This trash must be disposed of in the Fields Sanitary Landfill.

Whole car bodies, large dead animals, sewage sludges, septic tank pumpings, oils, chemicals, liquids, hospital wastes, explosives and other materials which may be hazardous or difficult to manage, shall not be deposited unless a special request and provisions for such disposal are submitted in writing to the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department issues a specific addendum to this permit that allows for such disposal. At the discretion of the Department it may allow by specific written authorization from the Department, for the one-time or otherwise

limited disposal of prohibited solid wastes due to emergency or other unusual circumstances.

- e. First aid facilities must be provided by the permittee. These facilities must be adequate to handle incidents that may arise as a result of the event. This includes the provision for an "air-evacuation" aircraft to provide transportation and interim medical treatment to hospital facilities.
2. No archaeological features will be disturbed by the permittee or his/her employees.
3. No permanent facilities will be constructed on BLM managed lands. Applicant will remove all temporary structures as soon as the speed tests are completed.
4. No access roads or trails will be constructed without the specific authorization of the Manager or his/her representative.
5. NAE assumes all responsibility to confine their vehicle(s) to the permit area.
6. NAE would not be allowed to drive on vegetation within the Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and the land speed vehicle would not be allowed within 25 feet (flame length) of the ACEC.
7. NAE would rehabilitate soils within the boundary of the ACEC to as near pre-testing condition as possible (i.e. By raking to remove tire tracks and compacted areas).
8. Vegetation would not be removed in order to accommodate the 12-mile race track. No disturbance to vegetation would be allowed by NAE.
9. The exact location and length of the runway would be mapped prior to trials.

C. Alternative B - Proposed Action

This alternative is the proponent's proposal for the BLM to issue an SRP to NAE to conduct land speed tests on Alvord Desert Playa. The testing is to verify handling characteristics, aerodynamic characteristics and gather data to validate computer simulations created and tested by the NAE aerodynamics team.

The area proposed to conduct this testing is on Alvord Desert Playa, Harney Country, Oregon.

The project area would encompass a 12-mile length of “track” of Alvord Desert Playa including several lanes of various widths and lengths and a private land two-track dirt access road that leads from East Steens County Road to the Playa, ground support and an area designated for the placement of timing equipment. The length would allow for 4 miles of acceleration, a 1-mile timed section, and 5 miles of deceleration. A land speed record requires runs in both directions with the speed being averaged. The remaining 2 miles on each end would provide a margin of safety for the vehicle and driver if additional deceleration distance would be needed.

The vehicle used to make the land speed trial attempts would be equipped with a jet engine, 56 feet long and weighing 13,000 lbs. The chassis is from an F-104 A-10 Star fighter with NAE design suspension and systems integration. The engine has been recorded at full power at 120 decibels. However, full power is limited to small segments of time lasting less than 20 seconds at a time. When starting out, the driver applies only partial throttle to avoid material getting caught up in the engine. At full throttle the engine throws out a 25-foot flame. After the vehicle comes to a stop a tow dolly would be used to turn the vehicle around or towed back to the pit.

A single engine Cessna and an ultra-light would be used to document the racing as well as to help maintain safe operating conditions. Other support for the test trials include support by security and volunteer personnel to ensure the safety of the driver, the support staff, the media, spectators, and to prevent unacceptable impacts to the natural setting, consistent with the permit and conditions ultimately issued and established by the BLM.

Trial attempts would occur when the Playa is driest, ideally between June 15 through November in 2012 and 2013. During this period, two week-long events would take place during which at least four land speed trial runs would occur. Each of the individual attempts would last for less than 2 minutes, so that the Playa would be used for land speed trial attempts for about 16 minutes per two week-long event dependent upon weather conditions. However, the actual number of runs may be increased depending on need and the suitability of lanes for re-use.

The NAE team consists of 44 people to support the project. It is estimated most of the team members will be on site during the testing session.

A buffer zone of approximately 65 yards would be placed around the race course and a minimum buffer of 16 yards around the ground support compound. The purpose of the buffer zone would be to provide for health and safety and any additional protection to natural and cultural resources that might be near the project area.

Grading, or compacting, the Playa surface would not be necessary. However, removal of pebbles and larger rocks by NAE personnel by hand from the trial and

speed run lanes would be necessary. The course would be laid out and marked with highway marker cones and mile marker banners for a total distance of 12 miles from the longest two points on the lakebed. Trial runs will only be conducted during very low to no-wind conditions which is generally in the early morning hours. At the conclusion of testing, the course would be dragged to erase marks from wheels and the shelter base would be swept clean and any holes filled.

Schedule and Operations

The pit area of the NAE would be marked off by barrier tape. In addition, team members would be designated as security guards. Security guards would be posted along the course to control traffic that may venture onto the course during test runs. Any other users of the Alvord Lakebed would be advised of times when runs are expected to occur.

NAE would initiate preparation for land speed trial activities for up to two years. The time of use would be after June 15 for two years. The number of anticipated trial runs is one to four per day. The actual number of runs may be increased depending on need and the suitability.

A minimum of three hours prior to a run, Playa access points would be secured and security personnel would sweep the Playa to encourage all people and equipment not affiliated with the land speed trials activities to stay clear of secured area. The access points would not be closed.

Officers from the BLM and the Harney County Sheriff's Department would be notified of trial run/race schedules and other important developments. On dates of runs, NAE personnel would be positioned at various locations along the course to monitor wind speed and direction and other safety considerations.

Communications

A coordination meeting would take place shortly after the arrival of the land speed team to coordinate radio communications between the NAE and Harney District Hospital (541-573-8000), local law enforcement, and BLM personnel. NAE would be required to contact BLM Burns Dispatch (541-573-1000) everyday while conducting activities. A center or base station located at the support compound would monitor all radio frequencies. A frequency common to all entities would be established, and a protocol would be developed to ensure clear communication and to clear the channel for priority and emergency messages.

Communications to off-site locations would be through Globalstar Satellite phones. The numbers would be provided to BLM for emergency and business contacts. Communications within the NAE team would be by air to ground radio

using aviation frequency 121.75 and by civilian band (CB) radio using channels 1 and 10.

Safety and Fire Protection

A clearly defined chain of command would be established for proposed NAE operations on the Playa. Importantly, a qualified Chief Steward would ensure the following are satisfactory before any run can take place:

- All media and support personnel (those not directly involved with the vehicle, timing, safety, or security) would be removed to the support compound on the west edge of the Playa.
- Emergency equipment would be staged at both ends of the track in order to be ready for response.
- All access points to the course area would be secured prior to vehicle testing.
- All traffic would be stopped long enough to allow dust to settle or dissipate.
- Wind conditions over the entire course would be within acceptable limits.

The following would be provided for fire protection of the race vehicle. Fire protection would be provided by three fire trucks equipped with an 82-gallon per minute, Class B, AFFF, self-powered, 150-gallon unit capable of extinguishing a spill of all fuel on site including the car at a level range of 50 feet. Fire personnel would be equipped with standard rescue gear and fire suits. Fire truck and personnel would also be equipped with rescue cutting equipment suitable for the composite cockpit of the car.

The following precautionary measures would be taken to prevent wildland fires.

- All vehicles would carry fire extinguishers.
- Adequate firefighting equipment (shovel, Pulaski, extinguisher(s), and/or an ample water supply) would be kept on hand.
- Vehicle catalytic converters would be inspected often and cleaned of all brush and grass debris.
- Welding operations would be conducted in an area free from vegetation. An ample water supply and shovel would be on hand to extinguish any fires created from the sparks. Extra personnel would be at the welding site to watch for fires created by welding sparks.
- NAE would have a fire watch during trial times plus meet the industrial fire precaution level (IFPL) requirements.
- Wildland fires would be reported immediately to the BLM Interagency Dispatch Center at (541) 573-1000.

Hazardous Materials

NAE uses kerosene blended with bio-fuels for the vehicle. The kerosene will be stored in 55 gallon barrels and stored inside the transporter on fuel absorbent mats. Any fuel spill would be contained immediately and not allowed onto the Playa. The pit area (shelter) would be covered by a heavy vinyl fiber mat. This is the same material approved for race teams by the BLM for use on the Bonneville Salt Flats. All waste and garbage would be collected in heavy duty plastic bags and removed from the area for disposal at a state-approved disposal site.

All fuel and other liquids would be contained in leak proof vessels and stored inside trailers out of harm's way and on private property.

Access and Private Land

Team NAE would be using the access road on private land which is on the north end of the project area to travel to and from the lakebed. Team members and guests would be issued ID badges and only those with badges would be allowed into the area used by the NAE team.

Staff Accommodations

The NAE team would unload and setup the NAE camp on private land. NAE campground and parking area would be 393 feet by 393 feet (120 m by 120 m); an area designated for timing equipment would be 1,131 feet by 203 feet (345 m by 62 m). A camp shelter consisting of a 60' x 32' x 18' metal skeleton covered by vinyl sheeting would be erected. This type shelter is used for hay storage by farmers. It is secured to the lakebed surface by 18" x 1/2" diameter stakes driven into the lakebed surface. The base of the shelter is vinyl and is designed to not allow any liquids to pass through to the Playa below. Team members would be housed in trailers or motorhomes. Some sponsors and media personnel are expected to be on site at various times. These people would be kept clear of the trial course and parked in a designated area near the NAE pit location.

Other facilities at the support compound would include portable toilets and trash bins.

Sanitary Facilities

NAE would provide rented portable toilets for the racing support compound. Additional toilets would be supplied if the initial number is not sufficient to service staff and visitors. These would be maintained regularly by the rental company.

A solid waste dumpster unit would be serviced as needed by the contracting waste service company. The NAE team would also place small trash cans as needed at the support compound. NAE personnel would be responsible for servicing these trash cans and black plastic trash bags, including transporting accumulated trash

to the dumpster. Security and volunteer staff would patrol the Playa for fugitive trash.

Media

If media companies make requests to film on the lakebed it is their responsibility to obtain film permits. NAE will, however, be filming portions of the test sessions with their personal cameras.

Access by media personnel would be restricted to the support area during runs. Media personnel would not be permitted to drive on or around the course area. They would be required to park their vehicles at the racing support compound. For safety and security reasons, it would be important that no unnecessary vehicular activity occur during a trial or record attempt run. This restriction of access would be for safety reasons.

D. Alternative C

Alternative C is the same as the Proposed Action except for the following.

Schedule and Operations

The time of use would be after September 15 of each year.

Staff Accommodations

NAE camp would be located on the Alvord Desert Playa with access onto the lakebed through Frog Springs.

Road Maintenance

In Alternative C, road maintenance on the road located in T.35S. R.34E. Sections 8 and 17 would require maintenance to allow vehicles down on the Alvord Desert Playa.

E. Alternative Considered but Eliminated from Further Analysis

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were considered. These include use of the Black Rock Desert (BRD) in Nevada and the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. These two alternatives were found to be unacceptable. See Sections 2.4.1 for a description of each area.

Both of these areas have been used for similar activities in the past. These sites were considered because each area meets some of the site selection criteria (e.g., a surface that is dry and firm, suitable weather conditions, and available margins of safety around the actual race track).

However, inspection by NAE personnel showed both Playas are used by recreational permits already reserved and unpermitted recreational activities throughout the year. Extensive modifications to the Playa surface would be needed to create a suitable distance available for a high speed race car to safely attain the expected speeds. Additionally, the continued casual recreational use by various kinds of vehicles on either Playa is expected to be unmanageable with respect to the control and removal of such users on the BRD Playa for safety purposes at the time of racing activities. Adequate safety for racing participants and the other public users could not be assured. Therefore, these areas were eliminated from further consideration.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Resources/Issues

An Interdisciplinary Team has reviewed and identified issues and resources affected by the alternatives. The following table summarizes the results of that review.

Resources/Issues		If Not Affected, why? If Affected, Reference Applicable EA Chapter
Air Quality (Clean Air Act)	Not Affected	There could be possible fugitive dust from the vehicle conducting trial tests but it is anticipated the fugitive dust would not be measurable.
American Indian Traditional Practices	Not Present	There are no cultural or American Indian Traditional Practices on the Playa
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)	Not Affected	Project design features do not allow vegetation within the ACEC to be trampled/burned and tracks would be rehabilitated.
Cultural Resources	Not Present	There are no cultural or American Indian Traditional Practices on the Playa
Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898)	Not Affected	Implementation of the proposal would not result in a disproportionately adverse effect on minority or economically disadvantaged populations as such populations do not occur in or near the Project Area.
Flood Plains (Executive Order 13112)	Not Present	
Grazing Management	Not Affected	The effects to Grazing management from the Proposed NAE speed trial testing would not be measurable or no impacts would occur. The timing and season of use for grazing on the

Resources/Issues		If Not Affected, why? If Affected, Reference Applicable EA Chapter
		Alvord and Serrano Point Allotments are outside the proposed time frame of June 15 th thru October. Both of these allotments are either utilized in the spring or winter of each year from November 1 st thru June 15 th . The area for the proposed speed trials is on a desert Playa that is predominately a dry lake bed during the summer and is not managed for grazing as part of the two previously named allotments.
Hazardous or Solid Waste	Not Present	
Lands and Realty	Not Affected	NAE representatives would be required to acquire independent access through private lands; access through private is not guaranteed by BLM. Access along BLM public roads would be casual use and require no formal permits or ROW's.
Migratory Birds (Executive Order 13186)	Affected	See Chapter III Section A-1
Noxious Weeds (Executive Order 13112)	Not Present	NAE would be responsible for ensuring all equipment brought onto the Playa is weed free.
Paleontological Resources	Not present	
Prime or Unique Farmlands	Not Present	
Recreation	Affected	See Chapter III, Section A-2
Social and Economic Values	Not Affected	Social effects are discussed under the Wilderness Study Area Section. There would be benefits to some businesses within Harney County such as toilet rental companies and law enforcement officers, however, the economic benefits would not be measurable.
Soils/Biological Crusts	Affected	See Chapter III, section A-3
Upland Vegetation	Not Affected	Vegetation within the ACEC would be avoided and no vegetation would be removed.
Visual Resources	Not Affected	The temporary nature of this project (Maximum 21 days) would not affect the existing character of the landscape; therefore the visual resource would not be affected.

Resources/Issues			If Not Affected, why? If Affected, Reference Applicable EA Chapter
Threatened or Endangered (T/E) Species or Habitat	Fish	Not present	
	Wildlife	Not present	There are no known federally listed Endangered or Threatened species or species proposed for listing under the ESA or designated critical habitat within the project area.
	Plants	Not Present	
BLM SSS and Habitat	Fish	Not Present	
	Wildlife	Affected	See Chapter III, Section A-1
	Plants	Not Present	
Water Quality (Surface and Ground)		Not Present	
Wetlands/Riparian Zones (Executive Order 11990)		Not Present	
Wild and Scenic Rivers		Not Present	
Wilderness/Wilderness Study Areas/ Wilderness Characteristics		Present	WSA; See Chapter III, Section A-4.
Wildlife		Affected	See Chapter III Section A-1
Wild Horses and Burros		Not Present	There would be no measureable impacts to wild horses within the Coyote Lake-Alvord-Tule Springs Herd Management Area as horses do not use the project area due to a lack of forage and water on the Alvord Desert. There would be no measureable impacts to horses from the use of surveillance aircraft so long as aircraft remain in the project area and operate under existing FAA regulations.

1. Migratory Birds, Special Status Species and Wildlife

Affected Environment

The Alvord Playa receives only occasional use by migratory birds, special status species or wildlife in general. Migratory birds (waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, and songbirds) use this area during migrations north (April and May) and south (late September and October) as the east side of Steens Mountain is a migration corridor. Most migratory birds concentrate near Alvord Hot Springs due to the permanence of water and wetland vegetation. A list of migratory bird species observed around Alvord Desert and Alvord Hot Springs during 2004-2006 snowy plover surveys is included in Appendix B. Several raptor species such as kestrel and prairie falcons probably nest in rock faces around Alvord Playa with the nearest rock faces being about 3 miles to the east of the course. There have been no recorded nest sites for golden eagles on the rock faces east and north of the Playa. Although peregrine falcon is included on the bird list, there was only one sighting during 2004 near Alvord Hot Springs.

Special status species include western snowy plover (inland populations) and kit fox which are BLM Sensitive species. Snowy plovers start arriving on breeding grounds in southeastern Oregon in early to mid-April. Nesting may begin in May but most nesting occurs from mid-June to early July. The latest recorded nest found in the Burns District was the last week of July around Harney Lake. Migration to wintering grounds occurs by late September. Snowy plovers nest on the Playa usually near the water's edge which has fluctuated during the last decade. Surveys for snowy plover in 1990 (Stern et al) showed the extent of plover habitat near Alvord Hot Springs and the wetlands associated with the outflow from the hot springs. Plover surveys from 2004-07 documented the expansion of nesting habitat as water inundated much of the Playa during 2005-06 (Dust Devil Nature Co. unpublished reports). Kit fox, a BLM Sensitive species and an ODFW State Threatened species, reaches its northern extent in the Great Basin near Alvord Desert. Studies in the 1990s (DeStefano 1990, Keister 1994) documented kit fox east and south of the Alvord Desert. There were no detections of kit fox on Alvord Desert with the nearest sighting occurring near Little Sand Gap which is about 5 miles from the southern end of the proposed NAE course. Scent stations deployed in these studies on the east side of Alvord Desert showed no use by kit fox.

Greater sage-grouse, a candidate for federal listing as Endangered or Threatened under the ESA, is not found on Alvord Desert Playa but may use sagebrush areas adjacent to the Playa. Low density habitat as characterized by ODFW (2011) extends onto the Playa on the east side of Alvord Desert. Sage-grouse would not use this area which consists of Playa, sand dunes, greasewood flats and rocky cliff faces, due to lack of suitable habitat. The nearest lek is about 5 miles east of the Playa. Sage-grouse nesting is usually completed by June 15 each year.

Other wildlife occasionally using the area include mule deer, pronghorn antelope, black-tailed jackrabbits, coyotes, small mammals, tree frogs, Great Basin spadefoot toad, rattlesnakes, gopher snakes, and desert whiptail lizard. Many of these species would mainly use the surrounding vegetated areas around Alvord Desert but would cross parts of the Playa occasionally. Predators may use the area around the outflow of Alvord Hot Springs when searching for prey which would concentrate there.

Alvord Desert WSA is closed to off-road motorized vehicle use except for the portion of WSA within Alvord Desert Playa which is entirely open to motor vehicles. Within the Alvord Desert most recreational use is associated with motorized cross country travel, land yachts, and glider enthusiasts. Some OHV use around the outflow of Alvord Hot Springs has been documented in the past but use may be limited by the amount of water saturating the soils.

Environmental Consequences

Effects Common to All Alternatives

Since studies by DeStefano (1990) and Keister (1994) showed no use of Alvord Desert Playa by kit fox, there would be no effects to kit fox from any of the alternatives. Due to the distance from the proposed NAE course, there would be no effects to sage-grouse or sage-grouse habitat. These two species will not be discussed further in the analysis. Since use of the Playa is only occasional by other wildlife, if they were present during any of the speed trial periods, they would move away from the disturbance and avoid the areas of people and equipment concentrations for the time of the disturbance and for a week or two afterwards. This would be the case with general recreation use of the Playa if there were no speed trials.

No Action Alternative

In this alternative, there would be no new effects to migratory birds, western snowy plovers or other wildlife than what already occurs on Alvord Desert Playa. Use by recreationists varies from year to year depending on water levels on the Playa. Even with use by motorized parasailers, OHVs and campers, populations of snowy plovers have fluctuated but remain within the range of past counts from around the Alvord Hot Springs outflow.

Alternative B

In this alternative, use by the NAE crew would start as early as June 15 which is within the nesting time frame for snowy plovers and other

migratory shorebirds that use wet areas on the west side of the desert near Alvord Hot Springs. Depending on the proximity of the NAE course to the water's edge and snowy plover nesting sites, there would be disturbance that would cause plovers to abandon their nests and would reduce productivity for that year. The closer snowy plover nesting habitat is to the course, the more likely plovers would abandon their nests with several test runs over a two-week period. Noise levels as modeled on the M^c Squared System Design Group website (<http://www.mcsquared.com/dbframe.htm>), which is a simplified sound model, shows with a sound of 120 decibels from the jet car, decibel levels at one mile would still be 79 decibels (freight train at 45 ft., garbage disposal); at two miles, 73 decibels; and about 70 decibels (vacuum cleaner, TV) at three miles. This is above ambient noise levels of 35-40 decibels (about double) and with repeated occurrences over a two-week period could cause nest abandonment. Other shorebirds using the area near Alvord Hot Springs would not be affected to the same degree since it is about 4 miles from the course to the hot springs outflow area that shorebirds use. Decibel levels at this distance would be about the same as a normal conversation. Nesting raptors on rock faces to the east would experience some disturbance but would probably not abandon their nest sites.

While there would not be any planned news release about this event, people not associated with this event will show up to watch which could bring more disturbance to the Playa from increased OHV traffic. Off highway vehicles have been documented in the past as causing disturbance to snowy plover nesting habitat and increased numbers of people would be wandering around the Playa and disturbing nesting snowy plovers. Since snowy plover nests are well camouflaged in the Playa, they could be crushed by vehicle traffic as well as by people walking. This would reduce productivity of snowy plovers. While this may not be a quantifiable reduction in productivity in one year, repeated years of this type of disturbance would cause a reduction in population numbers below normal variation. This could be from both reduced productivity as well as plovers moving to other sites due to repeated disturbance.

Alternative C:

Since the timing of the speed trials would be after snowy plover nesting season, there would be no abandonment of nests and loss of productivity within about two miles of the proposed course. By September 15, most migratory birds would be staging for southerly migration and some would be gone by that time. Staging for migration would be concentrated near Alvord Hot Springs outflow. If snowy plovers were present near the course due to high water levels on the Playa, both parents and chick plovers would move away from the disturbance to areas where noise and

concentrations of people and equipment were not an influence on their activity.

2. Recreation

Affected Environment

Recreation activities within the project area primarily consist of off highway vehicle use, day hiking, camping, backpacking, horseback riding, hunting, observing wildlife, sightseeing, and photography which typically occur during the Playa dry season. Bighorn sheep hunts would occur on Mickey Butte (Sheepshead Mountain Hunt) to the north and the Steens Mountain Hunt to the west from August 18 through September 17, 2012. Three tags are issued for the Sheepshead Mountain Hunt and 4 for the Steens Mountain hunt. These are once-in-a-lifetime hunts for Oregon and are highly prized for these seven tags. Pronghorn antelope hunts would occur in the Whitehorse Unit and the Steens Mountain Unit from August 11-30, 2012. Although not a once-in-a-lifetime hunt, it may take ten years or more for applicants to draw one of these tags. In 2011, there were about 5500 applicants for the 295 available tags for pronghorn in these two units.

Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative no impacts to recreation would occur.

Alternative B

The only impacts to recreational users from the Proposed Action would occur during two week-long periods beginning June 15th of each year, up to 2 years. Time of encampment would be no longer than 14 days each summer. Because of safety concerns and potential conflicts with recreational users during race events, distribution of recreational use would be altered. This would result in traditional use areas not being utilized during race events. Due to the short-term nature of the Proposed Action, there are no expected impacts to current recreational uses in the area. The Willamette Valley Soaring Club has an annual Special Recreation Permit that allows them to use Alvord Desert for one week during July. This week is usually the third week of July. The NAE team would not use Alvord Desert during this time.

Security personnel posted at Playa access points would inform visitors of the Proposed Action and would strongly discourage (but not prohibit)

them from accessing the Playa during race events for recreational purposes.

The Proposed Action would not change existing access to the public lands within the project area for recreational use.

Alternative C

There would possibly be fewer effects to recreation if the event would occur during two week-long periods beginning September 15th of each year, up to two years. NAE camp would be located on the Alvord Desert Playa with access onto the lakebed through Frog Springs.

In Alternative C, road maintenance would be required on the road located in T.35S. R.34E. Sections 8 and 17 to allow the truck to transport the land speed vehicle down on the Alvord Desert Playa.

3. Soils, Biological Soil Crusts

Affected Environment:

Soils on the Playa consist of the Alvodest-Droval-Playa soil associations. These soils occur on dry lake basins on valley floors. They are poorly drained, very deep soils which formed in lacustrine sediments. Elevation ranges from 4000-4600 feet in areas where precipitation ranges from 7 – 10” annually and slopes are generally 0 – 3 percent. These soils are poorly drained with ponding during the winter and spring or longer on a wet year. Erosion caused by water is slight, with wind erosion a moderate hazard. Soil crusts are not present on the Playa or in the immediately adjacent areas and therefore will not be addressed. (Ecological Site Inventory 1990)

Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under this alternative the NAE Project would not conduct land speed tests on the Alvord Desert Playa; therefore, there would be no affects to soils from this project.

Proposed Action

Under this alternative, soils within the Playa would be compacted along the track route and within the buffer zone established by NAE. It may take 1-2 seasons for the impacts to return to pre-use condition, depending upon seasonal conditions (precipitation, freeze/thaw, etc.) There would be soil loss in the form of dust as a result of vehicle usage on the Playa. This loss

would be greater than most casual usage due to the nature of the forces from the jet engine and the number of vehicles used to maneuver the race vehicle at each end of the race track.

Alternative C:

Impacts would be the same as the Proposed Action. There will be disturbance to soils and biological soil crusts; however, the short term disturbance would outweigh the loss of soil and biological soil crusts from water erosion due to a poorly maintained and drained road.

Alternative C

Impacts would be the same as the Proposed Action. There will be disturbance to soils and biological soil crusts; however, the short term disturbance would outweigh the loss of soil and biological soil crusts from water erosion due to a poorly maintained and drained road.

4. Wilderness Study Area

Affected Environment

The Alvord Desert WSA contains 251,060 acres of public land. It is 37 miles long from east to west, and 20 miles wide, north to south. Within the study area, and included in the above acreage, are 70 parcels of split-estate lands totaling 29,213 acres. In addition, the WSA contains 34 parcels of private land that total 5,370 acres. Roads and private land make up the boundaries of the study area.

The WSA consists of a prominent basin and a desert plateau lying east of the 9,700-foot ridge of Steens Mountain. The dominant feature of the study area is Alvord Desert Playa. The desert is a large (more than 35 square miles within the WSA), clay-bottomed Playa which catches seasonal runoff from the east side of Steens Mountain, but is generally dry for nearly two-thirds of the year. The study area contains a variety of plant species. The most common species is big sagebrush. Other species included in the study area are greasewood, spiny hopsage, green rabbitbrush, shadscale, budsage, and cheatgrass. The Alvord Desert Playa is completely devoid of vegetation.

Alvord Desert WSA is closed to off-road motorized vehicle use except for the portion of WSA within the Alvord Desert Playa which is entirely open to motor vehicles. All use would occur on the Playa. Within the Alvord Desert, most recreational use is associated with motorized cross country travel, land yachts, and glider enthusiasts.

Wilderness characteristics within WSAs include naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, and the presence of special features. The following definitions are from BLM Manual Handbook H-8550-1 – Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review.

Naturalness - refers to an area which "generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable."

Solitude - is defined as "the state of being alone or remote from habitations; isolation. A lonely, unfrequented, or secluded place."

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation - is defined as non-motorized and undeveloped types of outdoor recreation activities.

Supplemental Values - are listed in the Wilderness Act as "ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value."

Naturalness: Alvord Desert study area contains five reservoirs, five wells, a horse trap, the remnants of what might have been an old homestead or stagecoach stop, two borrow (rock) pits, several small mineral prospecting scars, two fences totaling 20 miles and 16 vehicle ways totaling 65 miles. These developments have a negligible visual influence due to the terrain within the study area. The area is relatively flat to gently rolling so most developments are not visible from the surrounding terrain. About two percent of the study area is influenced by man-made features. However, there are no developments on Alvord Desert Playa.

Solitude: Opportunities for solitude are outstanding in Alvord Desert WSA. These opportunities are enhanced by the area's size and diverse topography, particularly flat to gently-rolling terrain surrounded by lava cliffs and plateaus. Ridgelines and cliffs provide some topographic screening. Vegetation in the WSA does not screen wilderness users from each other.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Alvord Desert WSA provides outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation, including day hiking, camping, backpacking, horseback riding, hunting, observing wildlife, sightseeing, and photography. The primary attractions for day hiking would be Alvord Desert Playa and basin area, the plateau area east of the Alvord, and Coyote Lake area. The day hiker would experience the expansive views and open space available throughout the entire WSA. There are ample opportunities for level campsites and relatively easy hiking, but there is a lack of water throughout the entire area.

Special Features: Geology, vegetation, wildlife, wild horses and scenic quality add to the value of Alvord Desert WSA. The geologic features of interest are in the western portion of the WSA. The main geological feature is Alvord Desert Playa which is roughly defined as a large basin between Steens Mountain on the west and a prominent ridgeline on the east. This basin is a structural graben (elongated depression) bounded by fault zones and their associated escarpments. The dominant feature of this basin is the intermittently dry Playa. The vegetative feature of the area is Alvord ACEC, designated to protect both vegetation and wildlife values. Other features include two plant species of special interest. These species are the solitary milkvetch (*Astragalus solitaries*) and the Davis peppergrass (*Lepidium davisii*). Alvord Desert WSA supports an unusual variety of reptiles, small animals and insects. The kit fox, whose habitat is in the southernmost part of the WSA, is on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) List of Threatened and Endangered Species. The snowy plover is also on the ODFW's List of threatened or Endangered Species and nests mainly along the western edge of Alvord Playa but may nest along the water's edge during years of high water in the center of the Playa. Archeological sites in the WSA give evidence of adaptations of prehistoric Indians to environments that have long since disappeared. Also portions of four wagon roads cross parts of the WSA. The scenic qualities in portions of the WSA are outstanding, which include Steens Mountain on the western side of Alvord Desert WSA. Alvord Desert Playa, the sand dunes, and the ridgeline combine to create outstanding contrasts in color, landform and vegetation.

Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, the North American Eagle Project would not conduct land speed tests on Alvord Desert Playa. There would be no additional effects to the WSA.

Alternative B

The proposed action would have temporary impacts to Alvord Desert WSA during trial runs. The NAE Project would conduct test sessions on Alvord Desert Playa in Alvord Desert WSA. Use of Alvord Desert Playa would occur after June 15 of each year for up to two years. Team NAE would be accessing Alvord Desert through Davis Ranch on the north end of the Playa. Team NAE would be housed in trailers or motorhomes on Davis Ranch private property located on the north end of the Playa. Rented portable toilets would be provided by the NAE.

Naturalness: Under the proposed action naturalness would not be affected in Alvord Desert WSA. Currently Alvord Desert Playa is open year-round to visitors and motor vehicle use with the most use occurring during the summer months. Any modifications to the Playa would be temporary (i.e., no permanent features or facilities would be constructed). At the conclusion of testing, the course would be dragged to erase marks from wheels and the shelter base would be swept clean and any holes filled.

Solitude: Under the proposed action, solitude would be affected when Alvord Desert Playa is being used. The Playa is open to motor vehicle use year-round; therefore, while NAE is conducting their test runs, solitude is affected, but no more than when other visitors and recreationalist are using the Playa. The noise disturbance associated with the operation of the NAE Project would be minimal as the Playa absorbs much of the sound created and dissipates a great deal of that sound.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: No changes to the types (i.e. hiking, horseback riding, hunting, etc.) of recreation opportunities available in the WSA would occur. Time of encampment on the Playa would be up to 14 days each summer. The course would be laid out and marked with highway marker cones and mile marker banners for a total distance of 12 miles from the longest two points on the lakebed. Trial runs would only be conducted during very low to no-wind conditions which is generally in the early morning hours. Due to public interest the area may receive more visitor use during the testing times. Visitors would be allowed to watch the testing from behind marked areas.

Special Features: Under the proposed action, special features such as , wildlife, geology, scenic quality and wild horses would not be affected. There would be no affect to special features during the time the testing is occurring. Motorized vehicles are allowed on Alvord Desert Playa all year round.

Security personnel would be posted at Playa access points to inform visitors of when the speed trial event is happening.

Alternative C:

The proposed action would not have any impacts to Alvord Desert WSA. The NAE would conduct test sessions on Alvord Desert Playa in Alvord Desert WSA. Use of Alvord Desert Playa would occur after September 15 of each year for up to two years. Team NAE would be accessing Alvord Desert through Frog Springs. Team NAE would be housed in trailers or motorhomes on the Alvord Desert north end of the lakebed. Rented portable toilets would be provided by the NAE.

Naturalness: Under the proposed action naturalness would not be affected in Alvord Desert WSA. Currently Alvord Desert Playa is open year round to visitors and motor vehicle use with the most use during the summer months. Any modifications to the Playa would be temporary (i.e., no permanent features or facilities would be constructed). At the conclusion of testing, the course would be dragged to erase marks from wheels and the shelter base would be swept clean and any holes filled.

Solitude: Under the proposed action, solitude would be affected when the Alvord Desert Playa is being used. The Playa is open to motor vehicle use year-round; therefore, while North American Eagle is conducting their test runs, solitude is affected, but no more than when other visitors and recreationalist are using the Playa. The noise disturbance associated with the operation of the NAE Project would be minimal as the Playa absorbs and dissipates much of the sound created.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: No changes to the types (e.g., hiking, horseback riding, hunting, etc.) of recreation opportunities that are available in the WSA would occur. Time of encampment on the Playa would be up to 14 days each summer. The course would be laid out and marked with highway marker cones and mile marker banners for a total distance of 12 miles from the longest two points on the lakebed. Trial runs would only be conducted during very low to no-wind conditions which is generally in the early morning hours. Due to public interest the area may receive more visitor use during the testing times. Visitors would be allowed to watch the testing from behind marked areas.

Special Features: Under the proposed action, special features (e.g., wildlife, geology, scenic quality and wild horses) would not be affected. There would be no affect to special features during the time the testing is occurring. Motorized vehicles are allowed on Alvord Desert Playa all year round.

Security personnel would be posted at Playa access points to inform visitors of when the speed trial event is happening.

B. Discussion on Cumulative Effects

As the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), in guidance issued on June 24, 2005, points out, the "environmental analysis required under NEPA is forward-looking," and review of past actions is required only "to the extent this review informs agency decision- making regarding the proposed action." Use of information on the effects on past action may be useful in two ways according to

the CEQ guidance. One is for consideration of the Proposed Action's cumulative effects, and secondly as a basis for identifying the Proposed Action's effects.

The CEQ stated in this guidance that "[g]enerally, agencies can conduct an adequate cumulative effects analysis by focusing on the current aggregate effects of past actions without delving into the historical details of individual past actions." This is because a description of the current state of the environment inherently includes the effects of past actions. The CEQ guidance specifies that the "CEQ regulations do not require the consideration of the individual effects of all past actions to determine the present effects of past actions." Our information on the current environmental condition is more comprehensive and more accurate for establishing a useful starting point for a cumulative effects analysis, than attempting to establish such a starting point by adding up the described effects of individual past actions to some environmental baseline condition in the past that, unlike current conditions, can no longer be verified by direct examination.

The second area in which the CEQ guidance states that information on past actions may be useful is in "illuminating or predicting the direct and indirect effects of a Proposed Action." The usefulness of such information is limited by the fact that it is anecdotal only, and extrapolation of data from such singular experiences is not generally accepted as a reliable predictor of effects.

However, "experience with and information about past direct and indirect effects of individual past actions" have been found useful in "illuminating or predicting the direct and indirect effects" of the Proposed Action in the following instances: the basis for predicting the effects of the Proposed Action and its alternatives is based on the general accumulated experience of the resource professionals in the agency with similar actions.

The environmental consequences discussion described all expected effects, including direct, indirect, and cumulative, on resources from enacting the proposed alternatives. Direct and indirect effects plus past actions become part of the cumulative effects analysis; therefore, use of these words may not appear. In addition, the Introduction Section of this EA, specifically the Purpose of and Need for Action, identifies past actions creating the current situation.

Reasonably foreseeable future actions (RFFAs), also relevant to cumulative effects, include those Federal and non-Federal activities not yet undertaken, but sufficiently likely to occur, that a Responsible Official of ordinary prudence would take such activities into account in reaching a decision. These Federal and non-Federal activities that must be taken into account in the analysis of cumulative impact include, but are not limited to, activities for which there are existing decisions, funding, or proposals identified by the bureau. These RFFAs must fall within the geographic scope and timeframe of the analysis being prepared. Recreation activities and continued paving of East Steens

Road are known RFFAs. The cumulative effects of these actions were thoroughly addressed throughout Chapter III by resource.

IV. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

A. List of Preparers

List by name and specialty

Daryl Bingham, NRS (Riparian, Wetlands, Water Quality, and Floodplains)
Louis Clayburn SNRS (Grazing Management)
Eric Haakenson, Outdoor Recreation Planner (Lead Preparer)
Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator (NEPA Review)
Caryn Meinicke, NRS (Biological soil crusts, Vegetation and Soils)
Matt Obradovich, Wildlife Biologist (Wildlife and SSS Fauna)
Dory Osgood, (Recreation/WSA)
Lesley Richman, NRS (Noxious Weeds Coordinator)
Rob Sharp, Wild Horse and Burro
Scott Thomas, Archaeologist

B. Persons, Groups, or Agencies Consulted

Harney County Commissioner
Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA)

V. LITERATURE CITED

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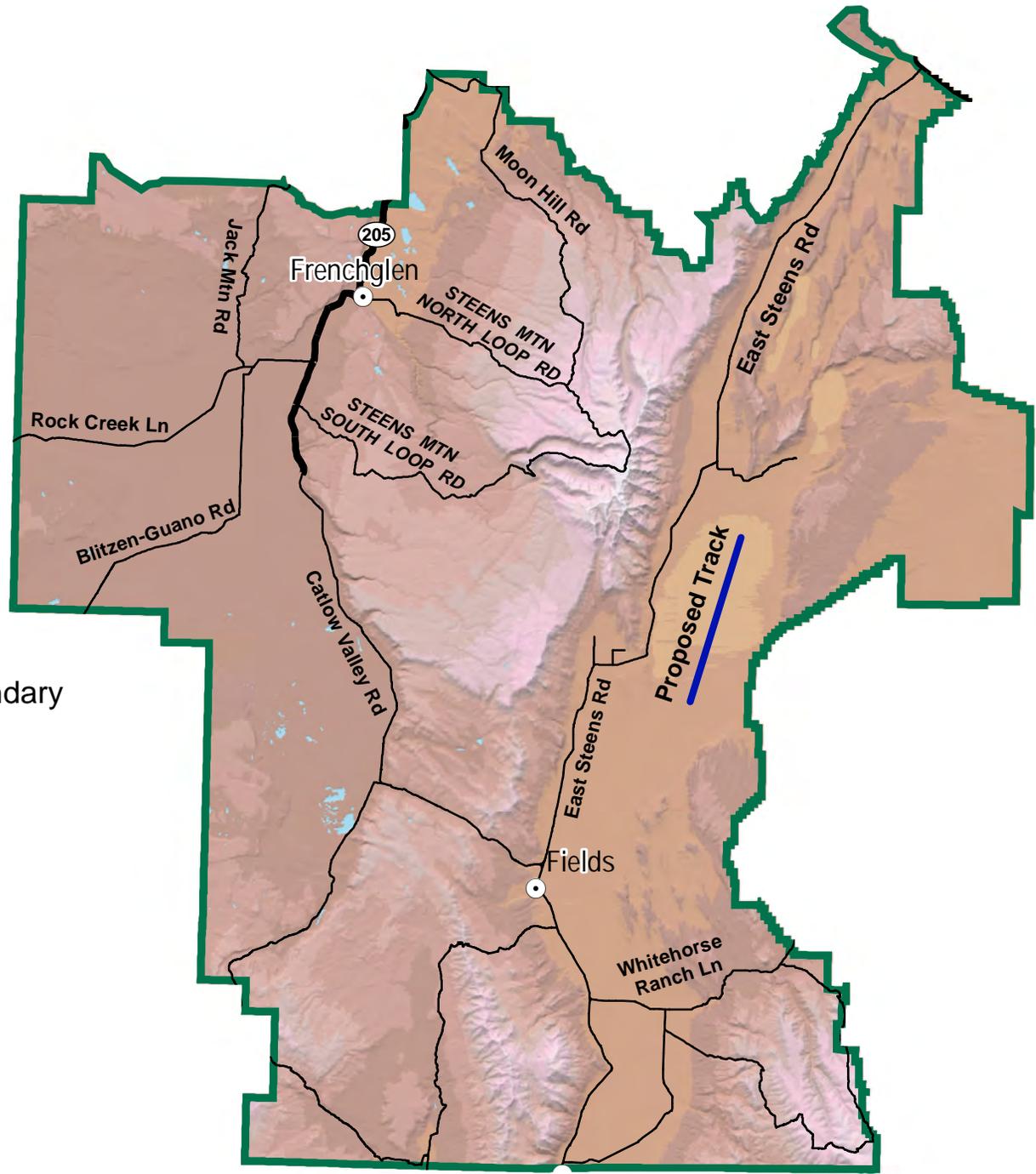
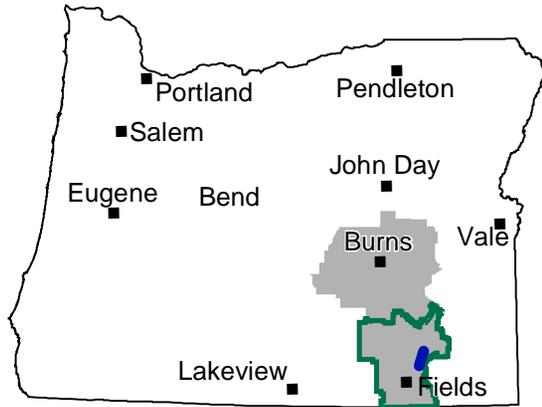
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APPENDIX A

Bird Species	Alvord Desert & Hot Springs		
	2004	2005	2006
Canada Goose	X	X	X
Mallard	X		X
Gadwall	X	X	X
Green-winged Teal			X
Northern Pintail	X	X	X
Northern Shoveler	X	X	X
Cinnamon Teal	X	X	X
Great Blue Heron		X	X
White-faced Ibis	X	X	X
Turkey Vulture		X	
Northern Harrier		X	X
American Kestrel	X		X
Prairie Falcon	X	X	X
Peregrine Falcon	X		
Chukar		X	
California Quail		X	
Sandhill Crane	X	X	X
Snowy Plover	X	X	X
Semipalmated Plover		X	
Killdeer	X	X	X
American Avocet	X	X	X
Black-necked Stilt	X		
Willet	X	X	X
Spotted Sandpiper		X	
Long-billed Curlew	X	X	X
Western Sandpiper	X	X	
Least Sandpiper		X	
Baird's Sandpiper		X	
Wilson's Snipe	X	X	X
Wilson's Phalarope	X	X	X
Ring-billed Gull		X	X
California Gull	X	X	
Caspian Tern		X	
Mourning Dove	X		
Short-eared Owl			X
Common Poorwill	X	X	
Western Kingbird	X		
Loggerhead Shrike	X		X
Black-billed Magpie	X		
Common Raven	X		X
Horned Lark		X	X
Tree Swallow		X	
Barn Swallow	X	X	
Northern Mockingbird			X
Sage Thrasher	X	X	
Lark Sparrow		X	
Western Meadowlark		X	X
Yellow-headed Blackbird	X	X	X
Red-winged Blackbird	X	X	X
Brown-headed Cowbird			X

North American Eagle

Map 1

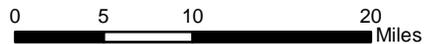


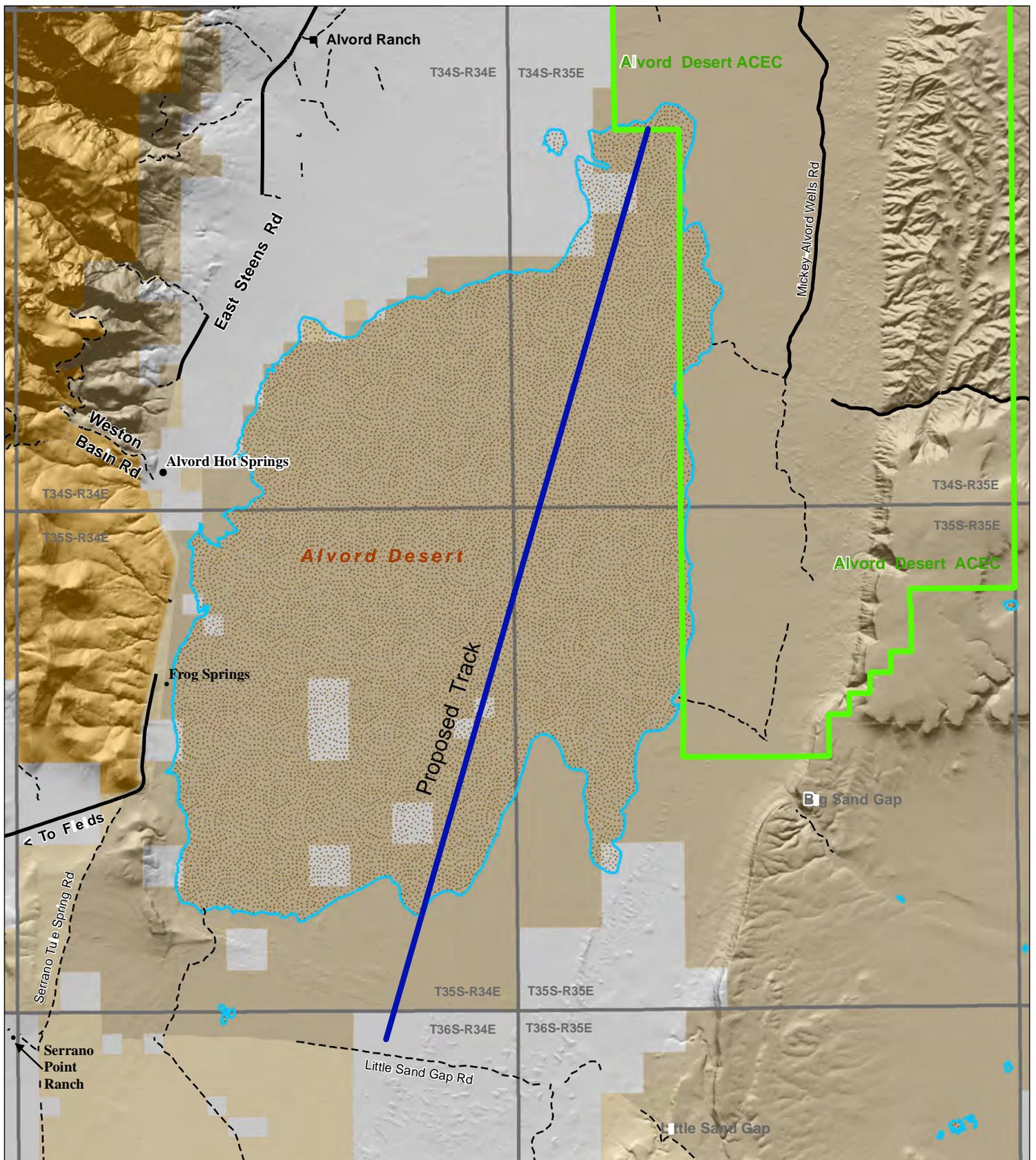
-  Proposed Track
-  Andrews Resource Area Boundary
-  Burns District Boundary

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6/29/2012 khazen

Note: No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data was compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Burns District, Oregon
Andrews Resource Area





North American Eagle Map 2

- Proposed Track
- Steens Mtn Wilderness
- Dry Lake
- BLM Wilderness Study Area
- Non-Paved Improved Road
- Bureau of Land Management
- Natural Road Surface
- Private
- Area Critical Enviro. Concern



US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 Bureau of Land Management
 Burns District, Oregon
 Andrews Resource Area



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