

## **Summary**

On December 20, 2006, Public Law 109-432 created in Nevada, 12 new Wilderness Areas and expanded 2 existing Wilderness Areas. Eight of those areas are managed by the BLM Ely District Office.

This Act is modeled after the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA), the Clark County Lands Act; and Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act (LCCRDA), the Lincoln County Lands Act.

## **Land Disposal**

Currently more than 94 percent of White Pine County land is managed by federal agencies. The Act set up an account to dispose of up to 45,000 acres of public lands out of BLM management and into private ownership.

The White Pine County Lands Bill distributes 5 percent of land sales proceeds to the state education fund; 10 percent to White Pine County law enforcement, fire protection, transportation and natural resource planning; and 85 percent to a special account that funds protection of wilderness areas in White Pine County, supported a three-year study for a potential extension of the Silver State OHV trail, promoted resource protection and carried out a county-wide recreation study.

## **Wilderness Areas**

The Act designated approximately 538,000 acres of wilderness in 12 new wilderness areas and expanded the Mount Moriah and Currant Mountain Wilderness Areas. Eight of those areas are managed by the BLM Nevada Ely District Office.

Congress designates Wilderness Areas, which are defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964 as a place "...Where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Designation is meant to ensure that the land is preserved and protected in its natural condition. Wilderness Areas can contain ecological, geological or other features that have a historic, scenic or scientific value.

Wilderness Areas offer visitors outstanding opportunities for solitude, as well as primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Caving, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, primitive camping, rock climbing and rocking hounding are all allowed inside Wilderness Areas. Mechanized forms of transportation, such as automobiles, ATVs, motorcycles and mountain bikes, are not allowed inside Wilderness Areas.

## **Transfers of Administrative Jurisdiction**

The Act simplified land management system around the Great Basin National Park to protect the park's unique natural resources by transferring jurisdiction of land from the Forest Service to the BLM. The Act transferred jurisdiction of land from the BLM to the

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for inclusion in the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The Act simplified management of the Bald Mountain Wilderness by transferring jurisdiction of land from the BLM to the Forest Service.

### **Public Conveyances**

The Act conveyed land for two existing state parks and one state wildlife management area to expand and improve the management of these areas. The Charcoal Ovens State Park received about 658 acres of land currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management for part of the park; Cave Lake State Park received a conveyance of land totaling 2,960 acres; and Steptoe Valley Wildlife Management area received approximately 6,281 acres to expand this popular waterfowl and wetlands area.

The Act also conveyed two small parcels of land for the expansion of the airport and industrial park to support future economic development in White Pine County.

### **Silver State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail**

The Act directed the Secretary of the Interior to complete a study of routes for the Silver State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail. Following the study, the Secretary shall designate the trail if it is consistent with certain principles set out in the legislation including that it is a continuation of the Silver State trail previously designated under Public Law 108-424, and that it will not have significant negative impacts on the natural and cultural resources.

### **Transfer of Land to Be Held in Trust for the Ely Shoshone Tribe**

The Act transfers 4 parcels of land totaling 3,526 acres to the Ely Shoshone Tribe for traditional, ceremonial, commercial and residential purposes.

### **Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project**

The Act provides for the implementation and enhancement of the Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project. The mission of the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition is to restore the dynamic and diverse landscapes of the Great Basin for present and future generations through collaborative efforts. These healed, diverse landscapes will be a result of restoration achieved and maintained with naturally occurring disturbances such as fire, in combination with other management prescriptions, including traditional uses.

### **Amendments to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998**

This title amends the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (SNPLMA) to improve the effectiveness of the Act, while proposing new conservation-oriented expenditure categories from the Special Account.

Specifically, for SNPLMA Special Account expenditure categories, the WPCCRDA provides new authority for (1) three comprehensive, ten-year hazardous fuels and fire prevention plans for the Spring Mountains, the Lake Tahoe Basin, and the eastern Sierra in Douglas and Washoe Counties, and Carson City; (2) the Bureau of Land Management to clear and protect public lands in the Las Vegas Valley that are reserved for affordable housing, alleviating problems with dumping; (3) authority for Washoe County to access parks and trails funds from the Special Account to purchase remaining Ballardini Ranch lands for use as a passive park and natural area; (4) implementation of the Clark County Multispecies Habitat Conservation Program; and (5) authority for White Pine County to nominate conservation and parks projects to be funded by SNPLMA.

For SNPLMA improvements, the Act also speeds the progress of local governments' parks and trails projects by replacing a cumbersome reimbursement system, which constrains the financial ability of local governments to finance projects, with a requirement that local governments be paid up front.