

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998, as Amended

Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisitions - Project Summary

Round 18

Project Name: McCullough Springs Land Acquisition

Round: 18 **Tab #:** 1

Funding Requested: \$323,385



Acquiring Agency: BLM

Nominating Entity: BLM

County: Clark, NV

Acres: 40.00

Water: N/A

Location: West of Searchlight, NV between the Piute-Eldorado Area of Critical Environmental Concern and the South McCullough Wilderness, in the South McCullough Mountains

Project Description:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would acquire the +/- 40-acre McCullough Springs parcel; the only private property located between the South McCullough Wilderness and the Piute-Eldorado Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Acquisition of this private inholding unifies BLM management of over 100,000 acres of federal land in the Wilderness and ACEC. It also protects water resources and riparian and wildlife habitat for desert bighorn sheep, yellow two-toned penstemon, mule deer and many other wildlife species, protects cultural resources including rock art and grinding stones, and facilitates recreational access for hunting, birdwatching, and hiking. This project enhances connectivity and recreational opportunities by improving access to the South McCullough Wilderness. It sustains a rare natural water source, maintaining wildlife access in perpetuity.

Resource Values:

The ± 40-acre property connects over 100,000 acres of federal lands and is hydrologically linked to McCullough Springs, a critical water source for many wildlife and plant species including an important population of desert bighorn sheep and yellow two-toned penstemon, both sensitive species identified on the property. Two important springs are located just downstream of the subject parcel. Due to hydrologic connectivity the preservation of this parcel will provide for better management of these springs (i.e. prevention of negative impacts to springs from upstream development of perched aquifer). The adjacent lands, Piute-Eldorado ACEC, contains the largest area of high-density tortoise habitat in Nevada and protects desert bighorn sheep, visual quality, and other resource values. Expansion of the ACEC to include the property will be analyzed, so that BLM will be able to restore areas around the springs that harbor invasive plants and serve as a seed source for dispersion of weed seeds by wildlife.

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Project Name: Torino Ranch Conservation Easement

Round: 18 **Tab #:** 2

Funding Requested: \$10,103,900



Acquiring Agency: USDA FS

Nominating Entity: USDA FS

County: Clark, NV

Acres:

42.44

Water:

N/A

Location: Within the boundary of the Springs Mountains National Recreation Area; adjacent to La Madre Mountain Wilderness, Upper Lovell Canyon

Project Description:

The U.S. Forest Service would acquire a conservation easement on a ± 42.44 acre private in-holding referred to as the Torino Ranch (Ranch), located within the boundary of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. What happens to this property in the future could determine the patterns of use that will occur in Lovell Canyon, the adjacent La Madre Mountain Wilderness, Upper Lovell Canyon, and the back side of Mt. Charleston. Presently, the property is serving as the great protector of these wilderness lands on the back side of Mt. Charleston. Utilizing a conservation easement to protect the conservation attributes allows the Ranch to remain in private ownership to continue the youth camp for children with life threatening illnesses and disabilities while providing a contribution to the local economy and maintaining the ecological balance in Lovell Canyon.

Resource Values:

There were 112 bird species, 20 mammal species, 5 butterfly species and 5 reptile species that were inventoried on the property in 2007. The survey particularly discovered three special status species, the Palmer's Chipmunk, Northern Goshawk, and Phainopepla. In addition, the property serves as an oasis and important watering hole for wildlife and is known to attract an abundance of wildlife such as elk, deer, bighorn sheep, bobcats, mountains lions, foxes, squirrels, rabbits and an abundance of birds, including golden eagles and several varieties of hawks. It is also a haven for pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and dragonflies. As a result of the abundant water features on the site, there is a significant amphibian population such as frogs, toads, and salamanders. Spring Mountains Landscape Analysis performed for the USFS by Entrix documents existing conditions and information for the 85 special status species of plants, vertebrate wildlife, insects, and snails that are potentially present on the Spring Mountain National Recreation Area of which Lovell Canyon is a part.

The property serves as an oasis and important watering hole for wildlife as well as cover for numerous species. Acquisition of the conservation easement would protect the water sources and ecological resources of the land. The

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property has become a critical wildlife corridor between the east and west sections of the La Madre Mountain Wilderness Area.