



BLM-Carson City District Manager's Report

**October 12, 2017
Winnemucca, Nevada
Presented by Ralph Thomas**

RMP

The CCD PRMP (administrative draft is being reviewed by the WO RMP Review Team. The PRMP Federal Register Notice is under review by BLM staff in Nevada and Washington DC and will soon be published.

Upcoming Dates

Publish PRMP/FEIS
Issue CCD RMP ROD

November 2017
Spring/Summer 2017

Landscape Projects:

Desatoya Landscape Restoration Project

The Decision Record (DR) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the project Environmental Assessment (EA) was signed in July, 2012. The project proposed to treat approximately 32,700 acres over a 230,000 acre project area and be implemented over a 10 year period. The project goals and objectives are; enhance sagebrush and degraded wet meadow habitat for sage-grouse and other sagebrush dependent species; reduce fuel loads and catastrophic fire risk; enhance Pinion Juniper (P/J) woodland habitat for declining P/J dependent bird species and mule deer; and protect or enhance riparian habitat that supports aspen, cottonwood and diversity of bird and mammal species. Implementation continues successfully in its fourth year. Partners include UNR, NRCS, NDOW, USGS, USDA-ARS, BOR, GBBO, and Smith Creek Ranch. The BLM has secured additional funds to support UNR and the USGS in determining the success of the treatments to date.

Pine Nuts Land Health Project

The project was initiated in 2014 and identified approximately 24,564 acres for treatment and will be implemented over a 10 to 15 year period. The objectives of the project are to restore and maintain sagebrush habitats with a special emphasis on improving habitat for

the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of the greater sage-grouse; restore and maintain riparian plant communities and wet meadows/springs; protect and enhance historic pinyon-juniper woodland habitat; reduce the potential of large-scale high severity wildland fire; provide for public and firefighter safety and protection of property and infrastructure; and provide woodland products to the public, tribes, and commercial entities. To date, approximately 12,929 acres have been treated for sage-grouse habitat restoration. The district anticipates implementing three to five habitat restoration/fuels projects this fall and winter (3000+ acres) in the Pine Nuts, contingent on funding.

Virginia Mountains Vegetation Management Project

The Decision Record was signed in February. The Proposed Action is to implement vegetation treatments on approximately 22,388 acres over a ten-year period in the Virginia Mountains, north of Reno and west of Pyramid Lake in Washoe County, Nevada. This project proposes using a landscape approach to identify and prioritize vegetation treatments to increase the resistance and resilience of plant communities to disturbance. The decision was appealed to IBLA by Wildlands Defense and a petition for stay was submitted. The IBLA denied the appeal and petition for stay. Prior to the Long Valley Fire it was anticipated that between 2,000-3,000 acres would be treated each year. The project will need to be reevaluated to determine if and what areas remain to be treated.

Cow Canyon, Clan Alpine, and Dixie Valley Landscape Project

The Cow Canyon, Clan Alpine, and Dixie Valley Landscape EA was completed and a Decision Record was signed in March 2017. The alternatives included grazing permit renewals; range improvements; community gravel pit establishment; invasive, nonnative and noxious weed treatments, interim visual resource management class establishment and adaptive management practices.

Fuels Management Staff – Project Implementation

The fuels management program's efforts continue to focus on reducing the potential for large scale high severity wildfire and improving the health of sagebrush ecosystems that provide important habitat for sage-grouse and other wildlife species. Implementation will start in October on six different fuels and vegetation management contracts across the District. Two mastication treatments and one cut and lop treatment will be completed as part of the Desatoya Landscape Restoration project. Two cut and lop treatments will be completed as part of the Pine Nut Land Health project. The final contract will be issued for the re-treatment of a fuel break constructed in 2011 adjacent to the community of Smith Valley.

Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R)

Carson City District experienced multiple large fires during the fire season that were above threshold requiring ES&R assessment. ES&R plans were submitted for all large fires. The plans focus on re-establishing sagebrush habitat, erosion prevention, damaged fence and range improvement sites and weed abatement. Plans were developed with input from permittees, NDOW and other impacted public/agencies.

Drought Monitoring

Due to the significant amount of rainfall and snow last winter the district did not perform drought monitoring this year.

Fire & Aviation

Wildfire Suppression

A significantly wet winter across western Nevada produced an above average grass crop, more than NV has seen in a number of years. With this significant fuel loading, an increase in both human and lightning caused fires occurred.

Fire resources for the Carson City Interagency fire program in 2017, included the following:

- 10 fire engines located at six fire stations
- 1 Type 1 Interagency Hotshot Crew (Silver State Hotshots, 20 person hand crew)
- 1 Initial Attack Module (Eagle Valley, 10 person hand crew)
- Stead Air Tanker Base

Due to the above average grass crop fires were extremely resistant to control. The Earthstone, Long Valley, Preacher, Draw, Bravo 17 and Tungsten fires account for the bulk of the acreage. Within the Carson City District approximately 145,500 acres of BLM and 104,000 acres of BIA have burned to date. Approximately 1,220,000 acres have burned across all jurisdictions in Nevada. Suppression costs for Carson City BLM/BIA fires in 2017 exceeded \$20,000,000.



Tungsten Fire September 2017



Long Valley Fire July 2017

Aviation Management

The Stead Tanker Base (STB) delivered 2,148,480 gallons of fire retardant for suppression efforts in 2017. The previous STB record for most fire retardant gallons delivered was set back in 1994 (23 years ago), when 1.3 million gallons of retardant was delivered. As of this report, STB leads the nation in the most retardant gallons delivered in 2017.



Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT T-842 taking on the two millionth gallon of fire retardant at the Stead Tanker Base (09-02-2017))

Fire Mitigation and Education/Trespass and Investigation

On June 30th, 2017 Carson City District went into fire restrictions. All of the signs on the District were changed to reflect that.

Seventeen origin and cause determination investigations were conducted for human caused fires on the District. An additional ten were completed for the BIA. BLM assisted cooperators with six additional fire investigations. Four trespass cases will be recommended to go forward for cost recovery and will await the Solicitor's decision.

Smokey Bear participated in thirty-seven events delivering prevention messages to thousands of kids and adults. The presentations included twenty five elementary schools, Nevada Juneteenth Celebration 2017, Firefighter Appreciation Night at the Reno Aces, Earth Day, and the Great Reno Balloon race just to name a few.



Smokey Bear at Reno Aces game



Earth Day Event at Pyramid Lake

Renewable Energy

Geothermal

Work at Ormat's Tungsten Mountain Geothermal Development Project is progressing. A Site License for construction of a power plant has been issued. The power plant is projected to be on line by this fall.

The Stillwater Field Office is compiling public, agency and tribal comments for the Dixie Meadows Utilization Project of Ormat. Analysis of the comments will determine the next steps for the project. Concerns about the overall project, the existing wetlands and associated habitat have been expressed by the public and Tribe.

On September 17, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received an emergency petition to list the endemic Dixie Valley Toad as an endangered species that is threatened by the Dixie Valley Geothermal development.

Five geothermal parcels are to be offered for lease on October 21.



Dixie Valley Toad

Solar Energy

Liberty Utilities (Luning Solar) conducted a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Luning solar facility on April 15. The facility will generate 50 MW which will service the South Lake Tahoe area.



Luning Solar Project proponents cut ribbon



Ken Collum, Stillwater Field Manager discusses Luning Solar Project with company official

Ormat has submitted a solar energy application to supplement the Tungsten Mountain Geothermal Project.

EGP Salt Wells Solar LLC, a subsidiary of Enel Power is proposing to co-locate a solar generation facility at their existing geothermal plant in Salt Wells located just east of Fallon in Churchill County. This application proposes a 150 acre, 19 MW facility. The right of way application is being processed.

Lands and Realty

Bureau of Reclamation

The BOR has expressed interest in moving ahead with the revocation of approximately 275,000 acres to be returned to management by the BLM. The project is currently on hold as BOR and BLM develop the Interagency Agreement.

NAS-Fallon FRTC Withdrawal

The Navy has had several cooperating agency meetings to gather input from other agencies and Tribes and is considering alternatives for the project area. BLM is preparing a letter to submit to the Navy requesting FY 2018 funding.

Dodge (Spencer) Color-of-Title

CCD received a Color-of-Title application from the Spencer family (40 acres) for lands their family has paid taxes on since the early 1900's. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Decision Record (DR) have been signed. The Office of Valuation Services (OVS) is reviewing the final appraisal report.

Washoe County School District R&PP Lease (Sun Valley school site)

The WCSD proposes to build a new school campus. CCD has prepared a Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) and sent out for public review and comment. The comment period closed on July 18th. A FONSI and DR are being drafted. The PEA analyzes the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects from issuing a Recreation & Public Purposes Act (R&PP) lease, and eventual patent, of 80 acres of public land to the WCSD.

Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) Silver Springs Maintenance Station

NDOT is seeking to build a maintenance facility on public lands managed by BLM near the Silver Springs Airport. An Environmental Assessment is currently being prepared to by NDOT to evaluate effects of the proposed R&PP lease, and eventual patent, of public lands.

Nevada Iron ROW

CCD met with a representative from Nevada Iron Property's regarding their desire to obtain a ROW for future ore haulage via a road or a rail line through lands currently identified as the proposed expansion area (B-20) under the DON's withdrawal expansion application. The proposed mining operation is located on private land, east of the expansion area. There were two alternative access routes to the current mine project area identified during the discussions that would avoid impacting the proposed expansion area.

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA)

Three nominations were received in Round-17 for consideration by BLM for acquisition of conservation easements. CCD reviewed and supported the nominations. The projects submitted were; the Dangberg Ranch property (\$13,774,700 – 1377 acres), the Van Sickle Station Ranch property (\$4,465,300 – 446 acres), and the J&S Land and Cattle Home Ranch property (\$3,853,300 - 314 acres).

CCD is currently working on Round-15, Bently Pine Nut Acquisition (14,522 acres). Specialists are currently in the process of ground-truthing the Bently offered parcels -- to finalize which parcels the BLM will pursue for acquisition. In selecting parcels for acquisition, the focus is on connectivity of habitat, as well as in enhancing the ease of management.

Acquisition of Public Lands

Atlantic Richfield Co. (ARC) has provided a formal request to acquire certain public lands at the Anaconda Mine Site (Yerington). BLM and ARC will begin detailed discussion, planning, and other efforts around ARC acquiring the indicated land.

Legislated Lands Actions

The two land conveyances that were authorized under the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Act) are on hold. Conveyance to the City of Fernley, Nevada will begin upon request from the City to acquire the parcels. No request has yet been received. Conveyance to Storey County, Nevada is on hold until the BLM, working with the Washington Office of BLM and Storey County, determines how to proceed with certain provisions of the Act. In the meantime, the SFFO is continuing to prepare for the conveyance so that we are ready to move forward when direction is received.

Mining/Minerals Permits, Plans, and Operations

Lithium exploration at the Teels Marsh area in Mineral County has been put on hold as Dajin Resources seeks additional financial support. This project is less than five acres and is a “Notice” level operation.

Rawhide Regent Expansion plan Amendment – Currently BLM has been reviewing and commenting on the baseline studies submitted by Rawhide Mining LLC. The operator is working on completing additional baseline study reports and are incorporating BLM comments. Once baseline analysis are deemed acceptable the operator can submit their EA and the project can move forward into the NEPA review.

Isabella Pearl - Currently BLM specialists have been reviewing and commenting on the baseline studies submitted by Walker Lane Minerals Corp. for the Isabella Pearl Mine Project in Mineral County. The operator is working on completing the study reports by incorporating BLM and NDEP comments. Once baseline analysis are deemed acceptable the operator can submit their EA and the project can move forward into the NEPA review.

Notices

There are currently 74 active and pending Notices of Intent to conduct exploration on the district. Thirty new and amended notices were processed for the year.

Permits

The State of Nevada plans to submit a proposal to explore for mineral materials adjacent to the Anaconda Copper Mine Site for purposes of extracting material to cap the Anaconda OU-8 heap leach piles. They are seeking a free use permit for up to 20mm cubic yards of material. An exploration request associated with the free use permit is currently being processed.

AML/Hazmat

Comstock Mining Inc. (CMI)

(CMI) reported two breaches of their containment system from their precious metals processing facility near Virginia City resulting in overflow of storm water mixed with process solution onto adjacent public land. Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (NDEP) and BLM conducted field visits and acquired samples for evaluation in January and February. CMI submitted a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to NDEP presenting results of initial soil and water testing along the discharge path. Based on the results of sampling and the preemptive measures implemented by CMI, NDEP determined no further action (i.e. soil excavation or water treatment) would be warranted in association with the releases.

Anaconda Mine Site

The Anaconda Copper Mine Site (Site) is located in Lyon County, Nevada, near the city of Yerington. The Site is an abandoned open-pit copper mine that was operated from 1918 to 1999. Portions of the Site currently are privately owned and approximately 50% of the Site is public lands administered by BLM. Cleanup actions at the Site started in the early 2000's under the guidance of the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (NDEP). Currently, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and BLM are the lead agencies and NDEP is the support agency.

The Site has been divided into eight (8) manageable Operable Units (OU) by the EPA. OU-8 was deemed the most urgent to take action on because acidic drain-down fluids from the OU-8 heap leach pads (HLPs) continue to accumulate in the fluid management system (FMS) evaporation ponds and the ponds are expected to reach capacity two to four years from now. Action is needed to prevent the ponds from overflowing and causing a release. EPA developed a plan to remediate the more immediate cleanup needs for OU-8. The Feasibility Study and Proposed Plan were made available to the public for review in November 2016. The Decision Record was signed in July 2017. This is an interim ROD because it only addresses the cleanup for OU-8's Heap Leach Pads and the Fluid management System and not the rest of the site.

There is a current proposal to list the site on the National Priority List (NPL (Superfund)). In addition, there is an alternative proposal from NDEP to EPA to defer the site from listing. NDEP proposes under a deferral agreement to engage and hold Atlantic Richfield Co. (ARC) responsible to clean up the entire site including the public land portion to the CERCLA equivalency standard. If the Site is deferred from listing, ARC will cover most of the cleanup costs, including BLM's share (\$7mm to \$9mm).

EPA, BLM and NDEP have met, consulted, and coordinated with both the Fallon Paiute and Walker River Piute Tribes. The BLM has participated in several community involvement meetings with NDEP and EPA to gain acceptance from the community and stakeholders on the proposed remedial actions for OU-8 and the possibility of deferring the Site from the NPL.

Grazing Management

Walker River State Park - Pitchfork, Rafter 7 and Flying M Ranches

The Carson City District is currently working with Nevada State Parks in their acquisition of the Pitchfork, Rafter 7 and Flying M ranches.

The acquisition of these ranches, while not BLM land, do hold grazing preferences to six (6) BLM allotments in the Stillwater Field Office. These allotments are Lucky Boy, Perry Springs-Deadman, Nine Mile, Gray Hills, East Walker and the River allotment. These allotments sit within the watershed of the East Walker River west of Hawthorne, NV. Grazing management on these allotments is expected to follow similar terms and conditions. Staff is currently in the process of transferring grazing permits from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to lease of the base property now owned by Nevada State Parks

Cow Canyon, Clan Alpine, and Dixie Valley Landscape Project

The Cow Canyon, Clan Alpine, and Dixie Valley Landscape EA was completed and a Decision Record was signed in March 2017. Permits for the three allotments were signed in July.

Pilot-Table Mountain Permit Renewal monitoring

The ID team worked through the summer to complete rangeland health assessments, utilization monitoring and more spring inventories. Field work will be completed by October 31. This data will then be used to complete an allotment evaluation and to make a determination of rangeland health for the Pilot-Table Allotment.



Collecting rangeland health data on the Pilot-Table Mountain allotments

Edwards Creek, Carson, and Porter Canyon EA

The Edwards Creek, Carson, and Porter Canyon Allotments S&G documents are written and are currently being reviewed. The draft EA has been written and is currently being revised by the ID team and will possibly be released for public review this summer.

Eastgate Allotment EA

Work on the EA and permit renewal process for the Eastgate Allotment will begin this field season and will include the collection of photo points, frequencies, line-point transects, PFCs, rangeland health assessments and utilization.

Plumas Station

The data analysis for the Plumas Station grazing permit renewal is complete and it is anticipated that a fully processed grazing permit will be issued in the winter of 2017.

Wild Horse and Burro

Marietta Burro Range

The Marietta burro bait gather concluded on August 4, with 129 burros being captured and removed to the holding facility in Fallon. The Animal Management Level (AML) for the Marietta Burro Range is 78–104 burros, the estimated remaining number of burros is 280. Because of limited holding capacity the district was only approved to remove 129 burros. Fourteen of the burros have been adopted to adopters within the Carson City District.



Marietta Burros



Marietta Burro



Marietta Bait Gather site

Pine Nut Mountains Wild Horse Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP)

The Pine Nut Mountains HMAP, FONSI and DR have been reviewed by the Solicitor. The plan includes guidance and direction for gathers, PZP treatment, habitat projects, and resource condition monitoring for the Herd Management Area. The plan also calls for an evaluation of the Fish Springs area for possible future designation as a Herd Management Area. The Sierra Front Field Office is currently responding to comments received from Nevada State Office staff, and intends to finalize the document during the winter/spring of 2018.

Range Condition Monitoring and Census Flights

CCD completed use pattern mapping on Flanigan, Dogskin, Granite Pk., Pine Nuts, and Lahontan HMA's. The district completed field monitoring on Marietta, Clan Alpine, Pilot Table HMA's. The district completed census flights on the South Stillwater, Clan Alp, Desatoya, and Pilot Mt. HMA's.

The census results are: Clan Alpine HMA, estimated number 995 (AML 612 – 979), Desatoya HMA, estimated number 465 (AML 127 – 180), Pilot Mt. HMA, estimated number 583, with over 350 of the 583 horses on the Army Depot in Hawthorne NV, (AML 249 – 415), and South Stillwater, estimated number 9 (AML 8 – 16).

Saddle Trained Horse Adoption

A saddle trained wild horse adoption was held at the Northern Nevada Correctional Center in June. Fourteen horses and one burro were offered and all were adopted. The successful bids ranged from \$150.00 to \$2,400.00, the average bid was \$1,144.00.



Successful bidder



Inmate pulling cart with children

Heritage Program Education and Outreach

The district has reached out to the community's primary and secondary educational programs and also continues to support the Nevada State Office by coordinating the statewide Program Archaeology and leading the education and outreach programs. In coordination with the Churchill County Museum weekend public tours and educational outreach are being conducted at Hidden Cave.

The District has provided several research opportunities to Academic Institutions to study the District's cultural and paleontological resources. A student from Texas A & M is conducting a multi-year study in the Walker Lake Valley to research prehistoric lifeways; another Ph.D. candidate from the University of Wyoming conducted a study a Hidden Cave to analyze paleoclimatic drought conditions by sampling tephra deposits; and a professor at Oklahoma State University is studying paleontological data in the Monarch Hill Formation near Eastgate, Churchill County, NV. CCD continues to encourage research opportunities to institutions of higher learning and these are fine examples toward achieving that objective.

Sierra Front Field Office and the Oregon California Trails Association recently completed a project to install signs and interpretive panes for the Fernley Swales segment of the trail. The partnership will continue with an annual clenaup of the site that is scheduled to occur in September 2017 for National Public Lands Day.

Recreation

Sand Mountain

Visitor use at Sand Mountain continues to be heavy. Plans are being designed to improve the camping area by leveling mounds and rock piles that prevent users from camping in some of the designated camp areas. Work is done weekly to maintain general signage and boundary markers.

Indian Creek

Indian Creek Campground experienced higher than average levels of use in 2017 due to several other area campgrounds being closed late into the season because of snow. The two campground hosts on site throughout the season have shared that there are many new users coming to the site, in addition many returning campers who visit every year. The increased exposure this season is likely to help increase visitation levels in coming years. The campground will close for the season on October 9.

2017 Upcoming OHV Events

All but the Northern Mono Chamber of Commerce are currently pending a Special Recreation Permit.

- Northern Mono Chamber of Commerce 9/26-30: ATV and UTV Jamboree west and south of Walker Lake
- Rebelle Rally 10/13-20 (Mineral County): Women's Off-Road Auto-Navigation Event

- Road Adventures 10/13-15 (Churchill County): Poker Run, Dead Camel Mountains Jamboree using street legal vehicles.

2017 Completed OHV Events

1. 5/20 High Desert Endurance, High Desert Classic- 41 participants ~50 mile horse endurance ride
2. 5/28 VORRA Hawthorne- 11 participants competitive UTV race on a 52 mile course
3. 7/15-16 Sierra Trail Dogs- 86 participants dual-sport motorcycle group camp & trail drive
4. 8/12 Modesto Ridge Runners (Letter of Authorization)- Poker run event with UTV's
5. 8/18-19 Best in the Desert- Vegas to Reno OHV competitive event; bike/quad category- 57 finishers, 35 did-not-finish (DNF); cars and trucks category, there were 147 finishers with 99 DNF's
6. 9/2 VORRA Fallon ~120 participants Competitive UTV race on a 42 mile course
7. Zero One Odyssey- SRP issued by Tonopah FO, no operations on Stillwater FO side yet, but we are part of the permitted route options. OHV non-competitive tours between May and Oct



VORRA Fallon race time trials

Other Military

Fallon Naval Air Station, SEALs

Throughout the year the SEALs send numerous requests for small unit training on existing roads for concurrence this activity falls under casual use.



Navy SEALs M-ATV (Mine-Resistant All-Terrain Vehicle)

Hawthorne Army Depot Cleanup

One site near Yerington and one near Hawthorne are being remediated for unexploded ordnance, on BLM managed lands, due to past army training operations.



Unexploded ordnance - Whiskey Flats, Hawthorne

Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement Rangers reported 181 law enforcement actions taken between Jan 1 and September 22, 2017. Enforcement actions include investigations, warnings, citations, and arrests. The most common violations included household and industrial dumping, abandoned vehicles, vagrancy, Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) violations, and drug and alcohol related offenses.

Law Enforcement Rangers reported 551 other actions including educational contacts, agency assists, medical response, patrol checks, and compliance checks.

Rangers provided monitoring, law enforcement, and security support for numerous special events including off road races, the Reno Air Races, Burning Man, and other permitted events, response to national emergencies, wild horse gathers and wildland fires.

Outreach, Partnerships, Cooperation, and Consultation

The district continues to outreach to other agencies, cooperators, Tribes, and the public to understand local and community issues and how we integrate their input into our plans and decisions.

