



**BLM-WINNEMUCCA DISTRICT  
PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

**Robbie McAboy, Acting District Manager  
January 2018**

## FLUID MINERALS/ENERGY

### Black Rock Field Office

**San Emidio:** San Emidio has inquired about an expansion of their operation to add an additional power plant. San Emidio has drilled two observation wells and feels the resource exists. They are doing cultural and wildlife baseline studies for the future plant expansion proposal.

### Humboldt River Field Office

**Blue Mountain:** The plant is operating normally and currently producing approximately 40 megawatts. Blue Mountain was purchased by Alta Rock in June of 2015.

**New York Canyon:** Ormat is doing exploration work in an effort to develop the property. Baseline studies are being prepared for a proposed transmission line to connect the property to the power grid.

**North Valley:** Ormat is conducting baselines in preparation for geothermal exploration and development at this site.

**Brady Hot Springs:** Ormat is replacing the current operating flash plant with an upgraded plant. The plant is operating normally.

**Star Peak Geothermal:** Open Mountain Energy has acquired the Humboldt House geothermal property south of Florida Canyon Mine adjacent to I-80. They are currently in the process of evaluating the existing facility with the intent to upgrade the plant and start production in 2019.

**Baltazor Hot Springs:** Ormat has hired a cultural contractor to do baselines in preparation for geothermal exploration and development at this site.

**Geothermal Leasing:** One Lease parcel will be put up adjacent to the Desert Peak geothermal facility.

## SOLID MINERALS

### Black Rock Field Office

**Hycroft Mine:** Mining operations remain suspended at Hycroft since July 2015.

Baseline studies are complete. One of the separate actions analyzed under the Phase II expansion EIS would involve the taking of a Golden Eagle nesting site and/or territory. The EIS will include necessary NEPA analysis and subsequent Eagle Conservation Plan/take permit(s), developed in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The USFWS, BLM, and NDOW are currently coordinating on potential mitigation for the eagle nest and territory. Anticipated release of the preliminary EIS is June 2018.

## Humboldt River Field Office

**Coeur Rochester Inc. (CRI):** CRI has submitted Plan of Operations Amendment 11 (POA 11) and baselines are currently ongoing and a request for quotes has been sent out to prospective EIS NEPA contractors to draft the NEPA document. POA 11 will be a significant expansion for CRI.



*RAC Tour of the Coeur Rochester Mine*

**Rye Patch Gold:** The EA for Lincoln Hill and Wilco is currently being drafted. It is expected to be completed mid-2018.

**Twin Creeks:** Baselines have been completed for the Sage Tails project and the modified Plan of Operations is expected to be completed in 2018.



*Twin Creeks geology in the pit*

**Florida Canyon Mine:** Mining continues at the mine and they are loading the new leach pad. Evaluation of a major expansion expanding the pit below the water table continues.

**Standard Mine:** Mine operations are idle at this time but processing of existing heap leach facilities and reclamation will continue for a few years.

**Lithium Nevada - Kings Valley Lithium Exploration:** We expect a PoO to be submitted mid-2018. Meetings with Lithium Nevada, BLM, NDOW and FWS are occurring to establish baseline requirements.

**Lithium Nevada- Kings Valley Clay Mine:** Clay mining operations have not commenced.

**Spring Valley Exploration Project:** The property has changed ownership and the new owners are preparing to revive exploration and permitting activities.



*Exploration drilling conducted at Spring Valley*

**Marigold Mining Company:** Operations are continuing at the mine. The BLM received a modification to the Marigold Mine Plan of Operations (called the Mackay Optimization Project) and a notice of intent to prepare an EIS. The Mackay Optimization Project proposes to combine numerous pits into three larger pits and to extend mining operations below the water table. The modification was determined to be complete on September 3, 2016. Review and submittal of baseline reports is complete. The groundwater basin that Marigold resides also contains the Lone Tree, Twin Creeks and Turquoise ridge mines, the Valmy power station and the Humboldt River.



*Mine shovels and trucks in the Mackay Pit at Marigold Mine. The diesel shovel is on the left and is approximately the same size as the haul trucks. The new electric shovel on the right towers over the haul trucks and can fill them with two buckets. A haul truck is dumping waste on the Northwest Waste Rock Storage Area in the background.*

**Lone Tree Mine – Brooks Amendment:** The Brooks deposit is continuing to be mined. A minor pit expansion was authorized this year and exploration continues adjacent to the pit.

**Relief Canyon Mine:** The mine is preparing baseline data for a major mine expansion that will take the pit below the water table. Relief Canyon has contracted with an engineering firm to establish the groundwater model. They have been in coordination with BLM and NDEP. We have a meeting scheduled with Relief Canyon and Coeur Rochester to discuss groundwater issues in February 2018, due to both properties being adjacent to each other and both evaluating major pit expansions going below the groundwater table.

### **Mineral Materials**

The Washoe County gravel pit preliminary Environmental Assessment is anticipated to be released for public comment by February 2018.

### **Hazardous Materials/Abandoned Mine Lands**

A settlement agreement has been reached between BLM, EPA and Barrick to cover the calcine pile at the McDermitt mine. Work covering the pile will be complete by mid-2018.

The drums at the Imlay site were removed in September 2017.



*Dry Canyon Mine producing magnesium used in nutritional supplements operated by MIN-AD.*

## **CULTURAL, LANDS, AND REALTY**

### **Black Rock Field Office**

#### **Lands and Realty**

On March 1, 2017, the Black Rock Field Office received a new communication site application to construct a site in the Kamma Mountains near Hycroft Mine. This project was approved in late 2017.

On March 1, 2017, we received an expression of interest letter to purchase public lands in Hualapai Flat. This is in accordance with our Land Use Plan and we have had initial meetings with the proponent and asked them how they would like to proceed.

#### **Cultural**

The Treatment Plan for the original Phase I Hycroft Mine Expansion project has been completed. The relocation of a small railroad tie cabin to its original location was finished in the summer of 2017.

Hycroft is continuing expansion plans in the area around the existing Plan of Operations boundary and additional archaeological surveys have been completed as part of the planning process. The report for the Phase II expansion has been finalized and a Treatment Plan for the

affected site is in preparation. An additional Treatment Plan for the power line associated with the mine expansion has already been approved and will be implemented before the power line is constructed. Depending on the project alternative selected in the environmental review process several prehistoric sites may be excavated and mitigation for visual impacts to the historic Applegate Trail may also be included.

BLM is finishing review of a report on cultural sites damaged by fire suppression activities related to the Poodle Fire in 2016. Out of 40 newly discovered National Register eligible sites, 7 will require further mitigation such as data recovery and more intensive mapping.

The Black Rock Field Office has several cultural resource projects underway. Archaeological survey continues at Soldier Meadows, adding survey coverage to two recent inventories along the southern edge of the ACEC. Excavations occurred at Trego Hot Springs in the spring of 2017. The BLM is awaiting the final report.

## **Humboldt River Field Office**

### **Lands and Realty**

ROW grants were renewed and amended for NV Energy's Rochester 24.9 Kv power line and substation and for NV Energy's Oreana Lovelock 120 Kv. A ROW grant was also issued to BLM for their Orovada Fire Station.

A second patent was signed on July 24, 2017, to the City of Winnemucca for their Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Application, for sec. 32, for the construction of a new water treatment facility.

The Unionville Cemetery R&PP EA is complete and is awaiting signature. Submission of the Notice of Realty Action is awaiting completion of the appraisal by Pershing County. Pershing County and BLM have approved the Statement of Work for the appraisal. IVIS is reviewing documentation submitted by the BLM and will soon be sending Pershing County a list of Qualified Appraisers so that Pershing County can complete the appraisal.

Pine Forest Land Exchange - An appraisal and Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) has been completed on the private portion of the land exchange.

We are working our way through eight Desert Land Entry applications. This project is currently paused.

Two BLM Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) meetings have been held for the proposed C-Punch Land Sale, in the Granite Springs Valley. Baseline study needs have been identified and the NEPA kick-off meeting was held October 5, 2017. BLM has requested cost recovery fees in order to proceed with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the EA for the sale.

The Humboldt River Field Office is working in cooperation with the Carson City BLM Office on the Naval Air Station – Fallon EIS, which involves the reservation and withdrawal of 604,744

additional acres of public lands located near the Naval Air Station (NAS) Fallon Ranges, Nevada. The Fallon Range Training Complex (FRTC) is required for military use to support deployment combat training for U.S. Naval Aviation and Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Forces. The Department of the Navy (DON) is requesting to expand the bombing ranges and the Dixie Valley Training Area to meet FRTC requirements. The Draft EA is expected to be released for BLM's comments on January 12, 2018, with a due date of January 19, 2018.

N-96197 Aurora Solar (Avangrid) LLC Project – BLM held one pre-application meeting on June 14, 2017, and one IDT Meeting on November 2, 2017. BLM is awaiting receipt of Aurora's right-of-way (ROW) application and Plan of Development (POD).

N-89138 Nevada Cement Co – BLM is currently deciding the NEPA level for their application for amendment of an existing road and construction and maintenance of a new road.

N-95713 Ormat Nevada Inc. – BLM held an Inter-disciplinary Team (IDT) meeting on November 30, 2017, to discuss their application and Plan of Development (POD) for a transmission line ROW for the New York Canyon Interconnection Project. The 120Kv generation tie line would deliver power from the New York Canyon Substation adjacent to the proposed power plant and would tie into the NV Energy power grid at the existing Oreana Substation, for a total of 35 miles.

GP Joule Solar Project and Access Road. A Preliminary Environmental Assessment has been completed for an access road to service a proposed utility scale photovoltaic facility on adjacent private lands. The PEA has been sent out for public review.

We are in the initial stages of a modified competitive land sale in Silver State Valley, Humboldt County, NV.

## **Cultural**

Work will begin soon to organize the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Lovelock Cave Days which will likely be held in May 2018. The event takes place at Lovelock Cave and the Marzen House Museum in Lovelock and brings fourth graders from Humboldt and Pershing County Schools as well as Gerlach School and a homeschool group from Winnemucca. Multiple partners assisted including Nevada Outdoor School, California Trail Interpretive Center, Native American tribal members, local mining companies, and Ducks Unlimited.





An opening was held on October 7, 2017 in Winnemucca for an outdoor exhibit focused on prehistoric and historic use of the Humboldt River transportation corridor. The BLM worked with the Southern Nevada Conservancy (SNC), the Humboldt Museum and other partners on this exhibit which is located behind the Humboldt Museum in Winnemucca overlooking the Humboldt River. The exhibit includes six interpretive panels covered

by a shade structure. Planning is in progress for a final phase of the project, metal silhouette sculptures of various phases of historic use of the Humboldt River corridor to be installed on a wall of the museum near the exhibit. Lowry High School in Winnemucca is interested in being involved in the fabrication of these metal sculptures.



The BLM, in partnership with SNC, the Marzen House Museum, NDOT and Rye Patch Gold has completed an outdoor exhibit at the Marzen House Museum in Lovelock which focuses on the Forty Mile Desert and the California Trail. A large metal sculpture of a wagon and oxen has been installed across from the Marzen House near I-80 and a kiosk with two panels interpreting the California Trail has been installed outside at the Marzen House. A final phase of the project,

development of a children's educational kit on the California Trail is in progress. An opening is planned for spring 2018.

A number of Class III Section 106 inventories have been completed or are in progress for mining and geothermal operations, Abandoned Mine Lands, Lands and Realty, Fuels and ES&R, Range,

and Recreation projects, etc. These include inventories for the Coeur POA 11, New York Canyon Transmission Line, Harney Electric Communication Site, and the Hot Springs and Poker Brown Fires.

Fieldwork for the first phase of the implementation of the cultural resource mitigation plan for Coeur Amendment 10 was completed and analysis of findings is in progress. The second phase, an interpretive sign on the mining camp of Panama to be added to the Rochester Exhibit at the Marzen House Museum in Lovelock is underway.

Native American consultation on geothermal leases, wild horse gathers, renewable energy projects, range developments, and other projects has been completed. Ethnographic studies and cultural resource inventories have been completed for the Black Warrior Peak and have been reviewed and accepted by SHPO. These studies are being funded by the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe.

Archeological sites in the Winnemucca Lake area are being revisited and site forms updated.

BLM archeologists worked with the Friends of Nevada Wilderness to further document the California Trail. In addition, from July 10-14<sup>th</sup>, BLM archaeology staffed work with Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) pilots from the BLM National Aviation Office to complete multiple UAS flights along the California National Historic Trail in the Winnemucca District. Looking for evidence of the trail from the ground can be very difficult using traditional archaeological methods, and UAS technology can provide an extremely accurate bird's-eye view of trail. The high-resolution photometric data collected from these flights will help district archaeologists to more accurately document and study California Trail routes.

## **RECREATION**

### **Black Rock Field Office**

#### **Special Recreation Permits (SRPs)**

This year marked the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Burning Man event on the public lands of the Black Rock Desert playa. The 2017 Burning Man event wrapped up on September 4<sup>th</sup> with peak population just over 69, 500 paid participants. 92 vending permits were issued. There was one participant death this year. Black Rock City (BRC) LLC “Playa Restoration Crew” began collecting and disposing of debris, aka, Matter Out of Place (MOOP) within the designated Closure Order area. BRC met their target goals in the playa clean-up. BLM processed a total of 8 on-site vendor SRP’s for this year’s event.



*The “Man” before the burn and the Black Rock City skyline*

### **Hunter/Guide Permits**

To date, 17 SRPs to hunter and guide outfitters have been issued. These groups work throughout both field offices. The WD initiated the NEPA process for a district-wide programmatic Hunter and Guide Outfitter SRP to look at increasing the number of permitted outfitters.

### **Special Events**



*Black Rock Field Office NPLD 2016 – Desert Dace Day Volunteers*

Second Annual Desert Dace Day - On September 30, 2017, BLM, USFWS, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Friends of Black Rock/High Rock and Nevada Outdoor School will participate in

the second annual Desert Dace Day as part of NPLD at the Soldier Meadows ACEC. This project will be putting data loggers in the waterways and clearing debris from the water channels.

### **Partner Group Activities**

Friends of Black Rock High Rock helped to coordinate Black Rock NCA Artist in Residence Program for 2017 and two artists, one a musician and another a painter using pigments from the NCA spent time out in the NCA this summer. Work on a project to publish excerpts from visitor comment journals from Steven's Camp is continuing. The journals have been saved for many years and make fascinating reading. This partnering agency is also starting to work on brochures for the High Rock Canyon Trail/Stevens Camp and an OHV recreation brochure for the NCA.

The Black Rock Field Office has worked with Friends of Nevada Wilderness on a variety of projects for the FY 2017 field season. Projects included: continuing with installation of wilderness boundary markers, wilderness monitoring, and restoration of trespass routes in wilderness areas.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness also assisted the BLM with an Interpretive Camp during the 2017 Burning Man event. Interpretive displays, games, fairy shrimp hatching, and other activities allowed BLM staff and partners to contact over 7,000 people with information about the NCA and public lands.

### **Humboldt River Field Office**

#### **Commercial Special Recreation Permits**

Numerous motorcycle race and Outfitters and Guides permits have been processed. A WDO Outfitter and Guide Programmatic EA is nearly complete. The proposed action is to raise the number of allowable permits issued.

#### **Travel Management**

Travel Management (TM) inventory in all Sage Grouse Focal Areas (SFAs) (730 miles of inventory) has been completed. Funding was received from NSO in FY18 for a SFA TM Plan and the contract has been awarded. The TM Plan/EA for the SFAs is planned to be initiated in early 2018.

#### **Other Activities**

##### **Porter Springs Recreation Area**

Implementation of the 2007 Porter Springs Recreation Management Plan continued with the installation of a kiosk and 5 interpretive panels. In accordance with the plan, vehicles will park outside the fence and walk in camping only will be allowed. Two new picnic tables have been placed outside the fence in the parking area and the fence has been reinforced. A public opening of the site is planned for the spring or summer of 2018.



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### Pine Forest Recreation Area

Friends of Nevada Wilderness (FNW) serviced bathrooms and painted the kiosk at Onion Reservoir. Wilderness area boundaries were also marked by marked by FNW.

### **Special Events**



A successful National Public Lands Day (NPLD) was held at Bloody Shins Trail and Water Canyon Recreation Area on October 14, 2017. At Bloody Shins Trails Complex, a new bulletin board sign with map was installed, trails were rehabbed and marked, and the kiosk and bench were painted. At Water Canyon, benches were installed, work on a new pollinator garden was started, trail maintenance was completed, artificial dams were removed from creek, hazard trees were cut and chipped and mulch was spread. Prior to the event, Rotary Club installed roofs on

the 3 kiosks they had built during the 2016 NPLD and installed BLM interpretive signs in the kiosks. Over 70 people participated in the event. As part of the NPLD event, an awards ceremony was held to express appreciation for the numerous partners who have consistently volunteered their services to maintain and enhance Water Canyon.



## **WILDERNESS**

### **Lands with Wilderness Characteristics**

Winnemucca District continues reviewing and updating inventories for Lands with Wilderness Characteristics district-wide for projects undergoing NEPA analysis. To date, 63,000 acres have been completed. Field inventories for approximately 645,877 acres have been completed.

### **Wilderness Management**

Winnemucca District continues to work with private land owners for the land exchange as identified in the designating legislation.



## **WILDLIFE, WATER AND VEGETATION**

### **Black Rock Field Office**

The Black Rock Field Office, in coordinating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Great Basin Bird Observatory, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation initiated a Riparian Rider project to improve Migratory Bird Habitat and improve Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT) streams in the BRFO in 2017. The project is planned to run through 2019.



*The Soldier Meadows Working Group (SMWG), including the BRFO, HRFO, USFWS, NDOW, and NNHP, are in the early stages of developing a Soldier Meadows ACEC EIS to address the recovery possibilities for the Desert Dace (listed threatened fish species).*

In addition to the ongoing work with other agencies and partners on improving T&E habitat, the staff also support other multiple use projects, such as mining projects, grazing permit renewals, right of ways, and geothermal projects.

### **Humboldt River Field Office**

The primary workload of the staff continues to be providing input into use authorizations, grazing permit renewals, mining notices, right of ways, mine expansion proposals, geothermal projects and drought monitoring.

BLM, in collaboration with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NDOW, and a Permittee, is working to improve T&E habitat within the Montana Mountains. The T&E habitat includes three Lahontan cutthroat trout streams, along with habitat for sage-grouse and pygmy rabbits.

Work in 4<sup>th</sup> of July Meadow resumed with the construction of low-rise check dams to capture water and sediment and promote the development of floodplains dominated by riparian vegetation. We also planted about 300 forb seedlings grown locally from seed collected within the district through the Seeds of Success program.

A Programmatic Riparian Management and Restoration EA has been initiated, and we expect the draft EA to be issued by the end of FY18.

During the summer field season, we will continue to deploy thermographs and collect Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) data on riparian areas across the Field Office. The Springs



Inventory project will also continue, focusing on allotments currently undergoing the grazing permit renewal process.

## **BLM SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES**

### ***Greater Sage Grouse***

Mortalities and injuries associated with rangeland fence collisions threaten Greater Sage Grouse populations. Approximately 200 miles of fence line has been identified within sage grouse habitat. To reduce this threat, a fence marking project was initiated. Since the project's inception, 72 miles of fence marking has been completed. In coordination with the BLM Wildland firefighters, the district was able to complete over 60 miles of fence line in 2016. The majority of fence marking has been targeted within Montana Mountain range located within the Lone Willow PMU. This area is a Sagebrush Focal Area (SFA) having the highest quality habitat for sage grouse within the state of Nevada.



*Photo of a marked fence in Water Canyon showing placement of markers.*

## WILD HORSES AND BURROS



Staff is currently working on Environmental Assessments for the Blue Wing, East Pershing, and Smoke Creek Complexes. These EAs will analyze the impacts of gathering, treating with fertility control, and/or removing wild horses and burros.

East Pershing Complex EA: The East Pershing Complex includes three HMAs (Augusta Mountains, North Stillwater Range, and Tobin Range) and four HAs (Augusta Mountains, East Range, Humboldt, and Sonoma Range). Posting the final EA is planned for early February.

An emergency horse-gather was conducted in the Fox-Lake HMA due to the Tohokum 2 fire. 186 animals were captured and taken to the holding facility in Fallon, NV.

### **Black Rock Field Office**

HMAs within the Black Rock Field Office are being monitored for forage and water availability and wild horse and burro animal health. Forage, water, and wild horse and burro conditions are continually monitored through the year to insure availability of water and forage for the wild horses and burros, along with maintaining a healthy body condition. Snow and flooding conditions are also being monitored to ensure proper health of the animals and land.

### **Humboldt River Field Office**

Inquiries are being made to begin using fertility control as a principal means to reduce numbers of wild horses and burros. Efforts have begun to outreach to the public for volunteers to assist with fertility control projects. Two BPSS proposals have been submitted for funding to begin long-term PZP darting projects in FY17 and FY18.

During November-December 2016, the HRFO along with the Elko District Tuscarora Field Office conducted a large scale gather of the Owyhee Complex including the Owyhee, Rock Creek, Little Owyhee, and Snowstorms Mountains HMAs. During the operation 1,832 wild horses were gathered, 1,412 were removed and shipped to Palomino Valley Center near Reno,

199 mares were treated with PZP-22 a twenty-two month contraception then released back to the respective HMAs they were captured from, along with 203 older stallions.

Aerial surveys for the Blue Wing and East Pershing complexes are planned for January and February 2018.

## **RANGE**

### **Black Rock Field Office / Humboldt River Field Office**

Range staff spent the summer months monitoring grazing allotments in accordance to allotment management plans for both pre and post livestock use. Permittee involvement in the monitoring process is always welcomed as it gives the permittee the opportunity to see how we collect the data as well as allow the permittee to make any adjustments, if needed, to their livestock management based upon the data collected from the allotments. Some livestock permittees continue to voluntarily reduce their livestock numbers or implement other temporary changes as necessary based on vegetation or water concerns the range staff or operators may have.



### **Black Rock Field Office**

BRFO staff are still working on the Assessments for the Soldier Meadows, Buffalo Hills, Coyote, and Leadville Allotments. Additional data for sage-grouse requirements (Habitat Assessment Framework-HAF) will need to be collected on existing LHA sites on these allotments this spring and summer to be incorporated into the Assessments for these allotments. The Evaluations and NEPA will proceed forward after the Assessment is completed.

Winter help (career seasonal fire staff) have been assisting the Range Specialist with inspecting range improvements on the BRFO allotments. The data that is collected is input into the Range Improvement files and used to update the Corporate GIS layers as well as the RIPS database to help ensure on the ground accuracy and that existing project are accounted for.

The BRFO completed the Happy Creek Cattle guard CX. Sometime later this year BLM will install two cattle guards along the Happy Creek/Bottle Creek Allotment boundary fence where there have been continual issues with gates being left open and livestock trespass on a closed pasture, which also contains an LCT Recovery stream.

BRFO range and wildlife staff have attended multiple meetings with NDOW and Local Area Working Groups on potential projects to improve sage-grouse habitat and the riparian rider project.

### **Humboldt River Field Office**

Staff also continues to focus on the Montana Mountains specifically in the Jordan Meadow allotment at the headwaters of Crowley Creek, Washburn Creek and Riser Creek, which are Lahontan Cutthroat Trout occupied streams. The grazing permittee along with Nevada Department of Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife and the BLM are continuing discussions on how to balance livestock use while working to protect the sensitive LCT and Sage Grouse habitat on the allotment. In addition the staff is gearing up to help the state permit renewal team tackle a 21-allotment grazing permit renewal EA. While the state team is not expected to be on the district until 2019, GBI crews are being hired this season and out years as funding allows to assist with the massive amount of riparian and upland data that is needed for this project.

## **ESR, NOXIOUS WEEDS, AND FORESTRY**

### **ESR**

Extreme fire activity has kept the Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) team busy throughout the 2017 fire season. The ESR team monitored treatment success and recovery of 12 fires from previous years while planning Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation activities on the following 15 new fires:

**Tohakum 2-** The Tohakum 2 Fire burned 93,114 acres within the Fox Range, Lake Range, Selenite Range, Poito Valley, Kumiva Valley, and San Emidio Desert. Planned ESR activities include broadcast seeding and cultipacking 1,000 acres, drill seeding 3,050 acres, aerial seeding 13,275 acres, constructing 8 miles of temporary fence to protect seeding treatments and invasive species management throughout the burned area. Approximately 12 miles of fence has already been repaired and 200 wild horses in danger of starvation were removed from the Fox and Lake Range Herd Management Area (HMA). Nearly half of the fire was on lands managed by BIA and Winnemucca BLM ESR projects are being coordinated with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and BIA ESR treatments.

**Twin Buttes-** The Twin Buttes Fire burned 562 acres in the Kumiva Valley. Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) treatments planned for the area include ground seeding 200 acres with native grasses and shrubs, closing the burned area to livestock grazing, and continued monitoring.

**Poker Brown-** The Poker Brown Fire burned 15,537 acres in the Trinity Range. In November 2017, 500 acres was drill seeded with native grasses and shrubs. Planned BAR treatments include closing the area to livestock grazing and continued monitoring.

**Poleline-** The Poleline Fire burned 38 acres in Paradise Valley, including 0.6 miles of fence preventing livestock from entering SR 290. The fence was repaired as an Emergency Stabilization (ES) treatment.

**Truckee-** The Truckee Fire burned 98,960 acres in the Truckee Range. Due to patchy burn intensity and few values at risk, noxious weed treatments are the only planned BAR treatments.

**Limbo-** The Limbo Fire burned 1,883 acres in the Poito Valley. In December 2017 500 acres was drill seeded with native grasses and shrubs. Planned BAR treatments include installing temporary fence to protect seeding treatments, treating noxious weeds, closure to livestock grazing, and continued monitoring.

**Limerick-** The Limerick Fire burned 14,592 acres in the Humboldt Range. Emergency stabilization of Sacramento creek began with the installation of 31 instream structures to prevent further streambed degradation. Planned ES activities are ground seeding 40 acres and aerial seeding 55 acres along riparian areas, installing in-stream riparian staking 3 miles with willow cuttings, installing 1.5 miles of temporary fence to protect seeding treatments, closure to livestock grazing, and continued monitoring. Planned BAR activities include aerially seeding 2,700 acres with sagebrush, planting 40 acres with sagebrush seedlings, treating noxious weeds, and continued monitoring.

**Barrett Springs-** The Barrett Springs Fire burned 3,295 acres in the Ten Mile Hills.

Planned BAR treatments include broadcast seeding and cultipacking 350 acres with native grasses and shrubs, closure to livestock grazing, and continued monitoring.



*An NDF crew installs a series of step falls to stabilize Sacramento Creek.*

**MM155-** The MM155 Fire burned 22,361 acres in the East Range. As an ES treatment, 4,250 acres will be treated with pre-emergent herbicide to prevent germination of Medusa head rye, a Category B noxious weed, and prepare the site for follow-up drill seeding. Planned BAR treatments include drill seeding 4,250 acres after herbicide pre-treatment, aerially seeding 1,500 acres with sagebrush, installing 6 miles of temporary fence to protect seeding treatments, livestock grazing closure, and continued monitoring.

**Grass Valley-** The Grass Valley Fire burned 10,544 acres in the Sonoma Mountain Range. Early detection and rapid response weed treatments will be conducted as ES treatments. Planned BAR treatments include aerial herbicide application on 1,000 acres as a seedbed prep and follow-up drill seeding, installation of temporary fencing to protect the seeding treatment, closure to grazing, and continued monitoring.

**Hot Springs-** The Hot Springs Fire burned 1,222 acres in the Hot Springs Range. In January 2018, 300 acres was drill seeded with native grasses and shrubs. Planned BAR treatments include constructing temporary fence to protect the seeding treatment, closure to grazing, noxious weeds treatments, and continued monitoring. Nevada Division of Wildlife is a partner in this project and provided funds and labor to drill seed 600 acres of private land within the burned area.

**Dry Hill-** The Dry Hill Fire burned 2,001 acres in the Dry Hills. Planned BAR treatments include aerially seeding 1,130 acres with sagebrush, constructing temporary fence to protect seeding treatment, closure to grazing, noxious weed treatments, and continued monitoring.

**Leonard Creek-** The Leonard Creek Fire burned 3,549 acres in the Pine Forest Range. Planned ES treatments will install in-stream structures to protect streambed integrity in New York Canyon. Planned BAR treatments include aerially seeding 1,500 acres, planting 500 acres with sagebrush seedlings, noxious weed treatments, closure to grazing, and continued monitoring.

**Toulon-** The Toulon Fire burned 2,268 acres in the Trinity Range. Planned BAR treatments include aerially seeding 400 acres with sagebrush, closure to grazing, and continued monitoring.

**Mahogany-** The Mahogany Fire burned 5,121 acres in the Pine Forest Range. Planned ES treatments will install in-stream structures to protect streambed integrity in Antelope Creek. Planned BAR treatments include broadcast seeding and cultipacking 250 acres with native grasses and shrubs, aerially seeding 1,000 acres with native shrubs and grasses, planting 100 acres with curl-leaf mountain mahogany, noxious weed treatments, closure to livestock grazing, and continued monitoring.

## NOXIOUS WEEDS



*The Calavera meadow, once dominated by Canada thistle and tall whitetop, is being restored to a native state*

The Noxious Weeds program has been focusing on restoring high-value areas by chemical treatments followed up by seeding native plants and continued weed treatments. A pilot project is underway in Paradise Valley to replace Medusahead rye with native perennial grasses. Also the Calavera Meadow in the Montana Mountains is being restored by treating weed infestations and seeding locally collected seed.

Field-going staff have been instrumental in reporting new noxious weed infestations to be mapped and treated. Throughout the district more than 100,000 acres has been surveyed, treated, or monitored for noxious weeds.

## FORESTRY

It was a busy fall season for the Winnemucca District Forestry Program. Seed production companies are anticipating a high demand for native seeds next year for Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation activities in response to the many large fires throughout the Western US in 2017. To meet this demand, seed collection permits were issued to allow the harvesting of over 38,500 lbs of Sagebrush and Kochia on BLM managed lands within the Winnemucca District. Over 100 permits for harvesting Pinyon Pines and Junipers for Christmas trees and 40 permits for collecting cords of firewood were sold at the Winnemucca BLM office as well as the Pershing County Farm Bureau.

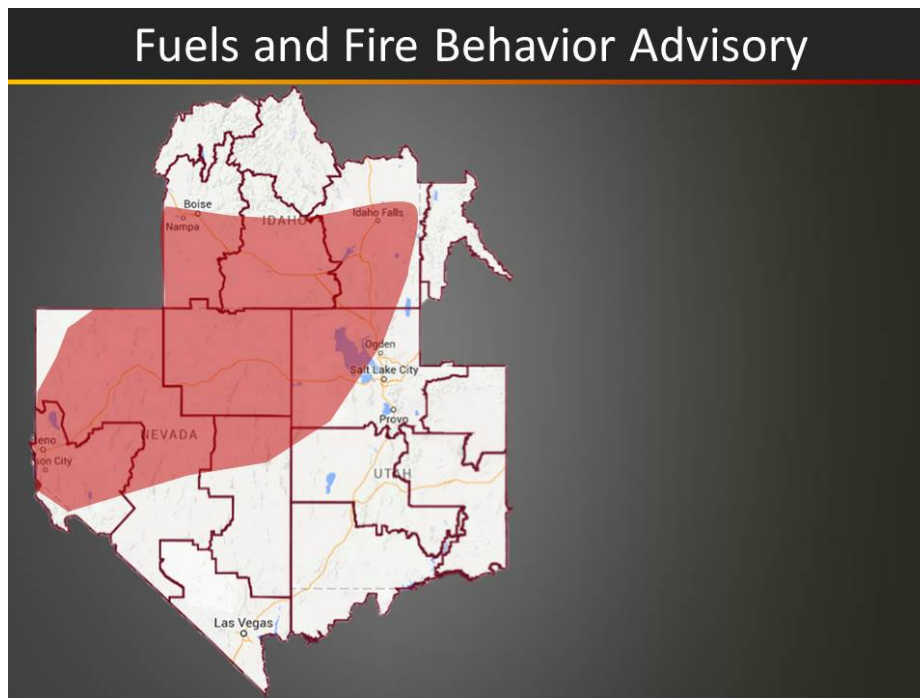


*Christmas tree harvest area in Fencemaker Pass, Stillwater Range.*

## FIRE

The Fire Danger across the Winnemucca District was Extreme for the majority of the summer and remained high until around Thanksgiving when conditions finally moderated to a Moderate level. We remain in Moderate Fire Danger due to lack of significant moisture and snow pack this winter to date.

Abundant moisture over the winter of 2016/2017 produced record grass crops and prolific fine fuels that exacerbated the fire conditions. Prolonged periods of heat coupled with little precipitation and plentiful lightning over the summer months combined for above average fire occurrence, activity and acres burned.



Suppression crews, aircraft and overhead were bolstered throughout the fire season by out-of-area resources to keep pace with the fire workload this year. A Mobilization Center was set up at Grass Valley School and remained in place for approximately 6 weeks to support the region during the increased fire activity. Up to 3 Task Forces were brought in to the area comprising of an additional 15 engines, 3 Dozers, 3 Water Tenders and various overhead, support and supervision.

Nevada's first Rural Fire Protection Association (RFPA) – Wildfire Support Group under the leadership of Mel Hummel was a big success this year in Humboldt County and contributed to the overall successful (although extremely busy) fire season. Their training, organization, local knowledge and close coordination with the BLM and NDF was noted as extremely beneficial to increasing the overall capacity to battle wildfires in Humboldt County.



The Winnemucca District renewed 5-year Cooperative Fire Protection Agreements and Operating Plans with all VFDs and Counties prior to the fire season. Despite the overwhelming success of the 24-hr mutual aid period, several Cost Share Agreements were necessary for fires exceeding the mutual aid period or when Assistance by Hire resources were used on wildfires burning multiple jurisdictions. These involved every county within the Winnemucca District.

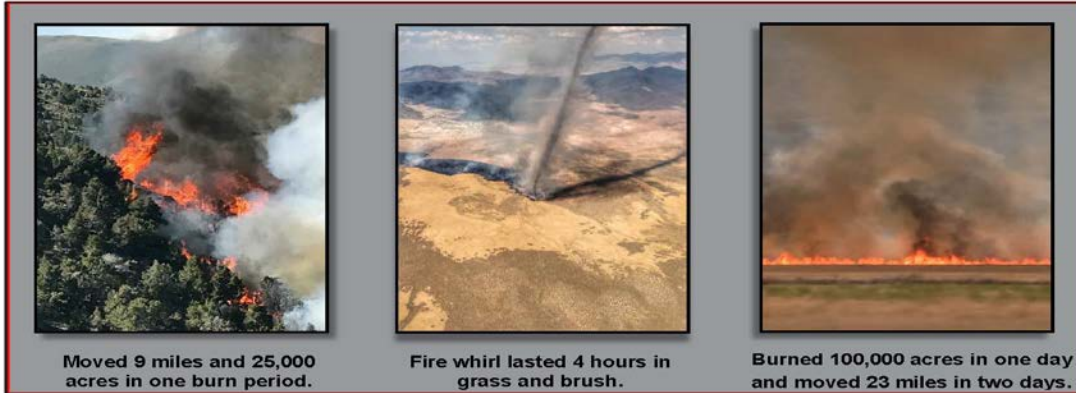
### **Operations/Aviation/Dispatch (Staffing during 2017 Fire Season)**

- 12 Fire Engines staffed at Winnemucca, McDermitt, Lovelock, and Gerlach stations.
  - Additional 1-5 Engines during step-up periods (Severity / preposition)
- 1 BLM-FS Service First Interagency Fire Engine staffed in Paradise Valley.
- 1 NDF Engine staffed at the Humboldt Camp.
- 3 Fire Dozers staffed in Winnemucca
  - 1 additional severity Dozer
- 2 Water Tenders staffed, 1 in Winnemucca and 1 in McDermitt.
  - Additional WT on Severity
- 1 6,500 gal. water trailer w/ transport – 2 Heliwells utilized
- 2017 Aircraft: 2-6 Single Engine Air tankers (SEATs) in Winnemucca. 1-2 SEATs in McDermitt, 1-3 helicopters in Winnemucca, 1 Air Attack, 1 Jumpship with up to 13 smokejumpers.
- The CNIDC Center Manager position was filled this summer, 2 Assistant Center Manager positions remain vacant. (BLM and FS positions). CNIDC dispatches for Battle Mountain and Winnemucca Districts- BLM, NDF Engine 5162 (located at Humboldt Camp), Santa Rosa and Austin-Tonopah Ranger Districts FS, and Northwestern Western Nevada BIA jurisdictions.
- The Winnemucca District Fire Management Officer has been filled. Donovan Walker (Former AFMO) is the new permanent Fire Management Officer
- The Desert Basin Fire Management Zone was dissolved on October 1, 2017 and resorted back to individual District Fire Management Programs.

### **2017 Fire Season Stats To-Date: Calendar year 2017**

- Winnemucca District fire resources has responded to 132 fires for a total of 326,030 acres (all jurisdictions).
  - The 5 year average is 82 fires for 73,042 acres and the 10 year average is 77 fires for 66,721 acres
- Lightning fires: 69 for 167,106 ac
- Human-caused Fires: 63 for 158,924 ac
- Miles of Dozer Line: 350

## GREAT BASIN EXTREME FIRE BEHAVIOR INFORMATION



*The extraordinary grass fuel loading in Central and Northern Nevada, Northern and Western Utah, and Southern Idaho is continuous and very dry.*

- ✓ As of the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, fires have burned more than two and half times the 10-year average in the Great Basin
- ✓ Fires are spreading rapidly. They can move faster than equipment can. **Ensure safety zones are adequate and available.**
- ✓ Fires are readily igniting through spotting. **Roads, rocky areas, and river bottoms i.e., natural barriers, may not stop fire spread.**
- ✓ Fires are burning with great intensity and have shown increasing resistance to control. **Watch your back.**
- ✓ Burn period is lasting longer (14 to 16 hours). **Fires are active later into the night and earlier in the morning.**
- ✓ Personnel observed fire burning in fuel types that typically do not burn, for example, desert scrub brush.

### Acres Burned by County:

Churchill: 54,844.15

Humboldt: 45,704.19

Lyon: 182.29

Pershing: 122,289.63

Washoe: 68,224.19

### Acres Burned by Land Status:

BIA: 1,723

BLM: 238,759

BOR: 3,363

FS: 3,424

PVT: 78,761

**Acres Burned by GRSG Category:**

GHMA: 25,496.072

Non-habitat: 118,679.792

OHMA: 55,609.498

PHMA: 9,299.638

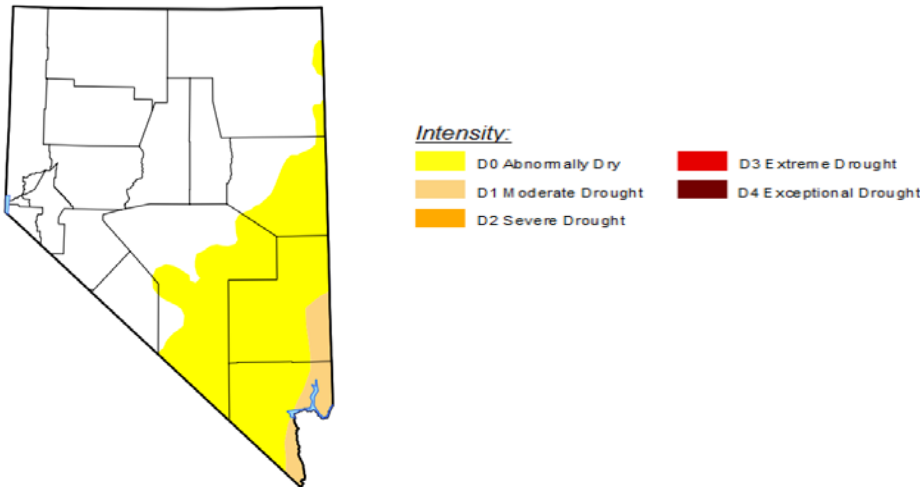
**HTF Santa Rosa RD:**

1 lighting-caused incident for 3,631.42 acres

**GRSG**

- PHMA: 3,631.42

Current Drought Monitor: December 26, 2017



**Fuels Management**

A total of 22,800 acres of hazardous fuels treatments that occurred during 2017 in the Winnemucca District. This includes maintenance of existing projects and initial treatment for multi-year projects. For FY 2018 there are 15,055 treatment acres planned, and 6,000 acres of monitoring. The fuels projects are currently underway and include a variety of maintenance treatments as well as new fuel breaks and habitat restoration projects.

**Highway Fuel Breaks:** Existing highway fuel breaks along Highways 95, 290, 140, and 400 will be disked between May and August of 2017, depending upon spring moisture, within the highway right of way to stop or slow fire originating along the roadways. The fuels breaks were

highly successful in 2017, with 5 of the 7 fires that impacted the fuels being halted from further spread. The fuel breaks will be maintained again in late spring of 2018, depending on soil moisture.

**Montana Mountains/Lone Willow PMU Project:** Multiple projects were performed by the fuels/fire staff to support habitat restoration in the Montana Mountains area. This includes approximately 2,000 acres of sagebrush seedling planting in previously burned areas. The seedling were a combination of approximately 200,000 seedling grown at a federal nursery and 50,000 seedling obtained for the Sagebrush in Prisons Project, where state prisons grow seedlings to plant for conservation purposes. Additional projects include 1,000 acres of areas previously treated with herbicide to control invasive species being replanted with perennial plants. This also helps reduce fire potential by eliminating or reducing the invasive annuals in the area. Additionally, approximately 6,000 acres were treated in to control invasive annuals, and will be reseeded the following fall. Also, approximately 2,000 acres of fuels breaks will receive maintenance treatments.

**Paradise WUI Green strips:** Approximately 600 acres of fuel breaks in the Paradise Valley Area will be maintained with a mowing and herbicide treatment, along with an additional 3,000 acres of chemical treatment targeting invasive annuals on previously burned areas. The treatments protect the community of Paradise Valley, priority sage grouse and LCT habitat in the area, and reduce invasive species in the valley.

**Unionville WUI Fuels Treatment:** This mechanical treatment is identified in the Unionville Community Wildfire Protection Plan and is maintained every year. The 12-acre fuel break protects the community of Unionville, and was completed in June 2017.

**Little Owyhee Roadway Fuel Breaks:** These fuel breaks are part of a larger planned comprehensive fuelbreak system that includes four BLM districts (Winnemucca, Elko, Vale, and Boise) across Nevada, Idaho, and Oregon. The project will be completed in phases with concurrent invasive annuals treatment and re-seeding if necessary. To date 3,500 acres have been treated by mowing, with follow up treatment of invasive annuals. The project will be expanded in once NEPA analysis is completed in fiscal year 2018, with projected implementation in 2019.

An additional project in this area is work on the old Quinn-Odell fire scar from 1996. Rehabilitation efforts on this fire were only marginally effective and so the process of rehabilitating this area and reducing invasive species to help reduce fire is underway. Approximately 1,000 acres were chemically seeded in fall 2016, and 1,000 acres in fall 2017. One Thousand acres were reseeded and planted with seedlings in October/November 2017, the remainder will be reseeded and planted with seedlings in fall of 2018.

**Santa Rosa Fuel Break Maintenance:** This fuel break runs from Paradise Hill to McDermitt along the western toe-slope of the Santa Rosa Mountains. This maintenance included 1,000 acres of mowing and 1,000 acres of herbicide treatment. An additional 500 acres has been chemically treated in fall of 2017.

A large undertaking during this fall/winter of 2017/2018 has been the repair and seeding of dozer lines installed during the fire season. This will reduce potential erosion and provide for more

rapid recovery. Approximately 400 miles of the over 560 miles of known dozer line that needs to be repaired from the fire season has been completed

Also underway is the initial steps for planning in the Black Range/Pine Forest Range for fuels and restoration activities. There is currently a contract that has been awarded for NEPA to be completed. Expected completion of the document is 2019.

The Programmatic Vegetation Management Plan for the Winnemucca District was released for public comment in July 2015, from which multiple comments were received. Comments were addressed and a Biological Assessment for formal consultation with the USFWS is completed. In late December 2016, a Biological Opinion was received which concludes formal consultation. The decision was issued in October of 2017, and one appeal was received. This comprehensive plan analyzes the breadth of tools available to manipulate and manage vegetation district wide for Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation, weed treatment, forest management, habitat restoration, and hazardous fuels projects.

*(Left) Highway Fuel Breaks (Hwy 290 shown here) are maintained early summer and have proven effective time and time again to keep fires small until resources can arrive on scene.*



*(Right) Highway 290 Fire, approximately 3/4 ac. held by BLM fuel break. June 30, 2015 near Paradise Valley, NV.*

### **Mitigation/Education/Prevention**

Sixteen community events are planned across the Winnemucca District, plus additional fire prevention and education events targeted at local schools. These include events such as Lovelock Frontier Days, the Ecology Fair, the Tri-County Fair and others that spread awareness of the importance of defensible space, human-caused fires on the district and how to prevent them, fire ecology, and fire safety principles.



*The Winnemucca District Fire program participates in many community events and programs throughout the year, bringing awareness of human-caused fires to the people of the community.*

### **Fire Trespass**

The Winnemucca District performs a fire investigation on all human caused fires. From these investigation there are currently 17 cases pending settlement. There are currently 11 additional cases from 2017 that are pending review to go forward for collection.