

Questions and Answers about the Little Fish Lake Wild Horse Gather

Q. Why is the BLM gathering in the Little Fish Lake Herd Management Area?

- Drought conditions in 2013 have resulted in insufficient amounts of forage to support the existing population of wild horses within the Little Fish Lake HMA. Upon review of drought monitoring data, the Tonopah Field Office has decided that wild horse capture and removal is the appropriate Drought Response Action (DRA) for immediate protection of wild horses, rangeland, and wildlife resources. Prior to the conclusion that wild horse removal from the HMA was necessary; other DRAs were examined and deemed infeasible for this particular situation.

Q. What is BLM doing to prevent health problems with wild horses during the gather?

- Additional pen space will be provided for weaker animals to keep them separated from stronger ones for added care.
- Water will be available at the trap location in the event animals cannot be loaded immediately and taken to temporary holding corrals.
- A veterinarian will be on call to address unforeseen issues.

GATHER PROCESS QUESTIONS

Q. Where is the BLM gathering the wild horses?

- The gather area is exclusively within the Little Fish Lake HMA. Actual locations for the trap site, temporary holding, and other gather operations will depend on the location of the wild horses when the gather process begins.
- A map of the Little Fish Lake HMA is available at <http://on.doi.gov/1HtuItD>.

Q. When did BLM last gather in this area?

- 71 horses were gathered from the HMA in July 2005 in association with the U.S Forest Service Little Fish Lake Wild Horse Territory. A total of 323 horses were removed from the HMA and WHT between July 2005 and February 2006.

Q. How many wild horses will be removed during this gather?

- Approximately 150 wild horses will be gathered. Approximately 50 horses will be released back onto the range and 100 will be transported to the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Corrals in Ridgecrest, California.

Q. How does the BLM gather wild horses?

- The BLM uses a gather contractor to gather wild horses from HMAs where the BLM has determined that excess animals exist. The contractor will set up panels and let the wild horses get accustomed to them. Once the wild horses are captured, they will be sorted and loaded onto trailers for transport to Oregon's Wild Horse Corral Facility in Burns, Oregon. If needed, the ground crew may assist by roping the wild horses from horseback.

FERTILITY CONTROL QUESTIONS

Q. Will the BLM use fertility control on this gather?

- Yes. All mares released back onto the range will be treated with the fertility control drug Porcine Zona Pellucidae (PZP-22).

LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT OF HA QUESTIONS

Q. What is the environment like in the HMA?

- The HMA encompasses an area 7 miles wide and 8 miles long. Elevations within the HMA range from a high of 7,200 feet on the mountain slopes to a low of 6,500 feet in Fish Lake Valley. The area generally receives 8 inches of precipitation in the valley bottoms and up to 12 inches on the mountain slopes. The vegetative communities are dominated by the sagebrush steppe vegetation type, followed by the alkaline meadows and bottoms vegetation type (which tend to occur in the broad valleys), and in the higher precipitation zone are the sagebrush and dispersed pinyon-juniper woodland vegetation types. Important species include Indian ricegrass, bottlebrush squirreltail, winterfat/white sage, and black sage brush. Multiple perennial streams and spring sources are known throughout the HMA, albeit several are on private land.

Q. Does wild horse overpopulation impact wildlife and plants?

- Yes. Wild horses often graze the same area repeatedly throughout the year. Forage plants in those areas receive little rest from grazing pressure, and continuous grazing does not allow plants sufficient time to recover from grazing impacts. Such overgrazing results in reduced plant health, vigor, reproduction, and ultimately to a loss of native forage species from natural plant communities. Over time, this greatly diminishes habitat quality as abundance and long-term production of desired plant communities is compromised. If wild horse populations are not controlled in this area, forage utilization will exceed the capacity of the range.

Q. Why don't you just make more land available to the wild horses?

- The BLM would need approval from Congress to expand herd areas for wild horses and burros. By law, wild horses and burros can only be managed on areas of public lands where they were known to exist in 1971, at the time of the passage of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971.

CONTRACTOR QUESTIONS

Q. How does the BLM select its gather contractors?

- The BLM's national gather contracts were awarded in 2010 following an in-depth technical review of the proposals received from the prospective contractors. Among the key elements of the technical review was evaluation of the prospective contractor's

knowledge, skill, and ability to gather and handle wild horses and burros in a safe, effective, and humane manner.

Q. What contractor will be conducting the Little Fish Lake Wild Horse Gather?

- Cattoor Livestock of Nephi, Utah.

Q. Does the contractor use whips to move the wild horses through the pens and chute?

- The BLM uses flags or noise-making paddles to move wild horses through the pens and chutes. The flags are usually made by attaching a plastic grocery bag to the end of a sorting stick or buggy whip. The flag prevents the stick or whip from hitting the horse with any sort of impact or sting to it. Seeing and hearing the plastic flag motivates the animal to move away from the source of the stimulus. This technique is similar to those used for domestic and wild horses being trained using resistance-free methods.

POST GATHER QUESTIONS

Q. What happens to the wild horses after they are gathered?

- They will be transported to the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Corral in Ridgecrest, California where they will be prepared for the BLM adoption program, or for long-term holding. The animals will be checked by a veterinarian, receive vaccinations and freeze marks, and will be made available for adoption within a few weeks of arriving at the facility. More information about the Ridgecrest Facility can be found at <http://on.doi.gov/1Kzko2n>.

Q. Will any of the wild horses be sent to slaughter?

- No. A December 2004 amendment to the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act authorizes the BLM to sell sale-eligible animals "without limitation," however the BLM has not and is not selling any wild horses to slaughterhouses or to "killer buyers."

Q. Why is the BLM still removing wild horses when there are already 48,194 wild horses and burros in holding?

- The BLM removes wild horses and burros from the range each year to protect public lands from the environmental impacts of herd overpopulation, such as soil erosion, sedimentation of streams, and damage to wildlife habitat. Although the BLM tries to place as many removed animals as possible into private care through adoption or sales, the public's demand for adoptable wild horses has declined sharply in recent years, leaving the agency in the position of gathering excess horses while its holding costs spiral upward.

RANGE/GRAZING QUESTIONS

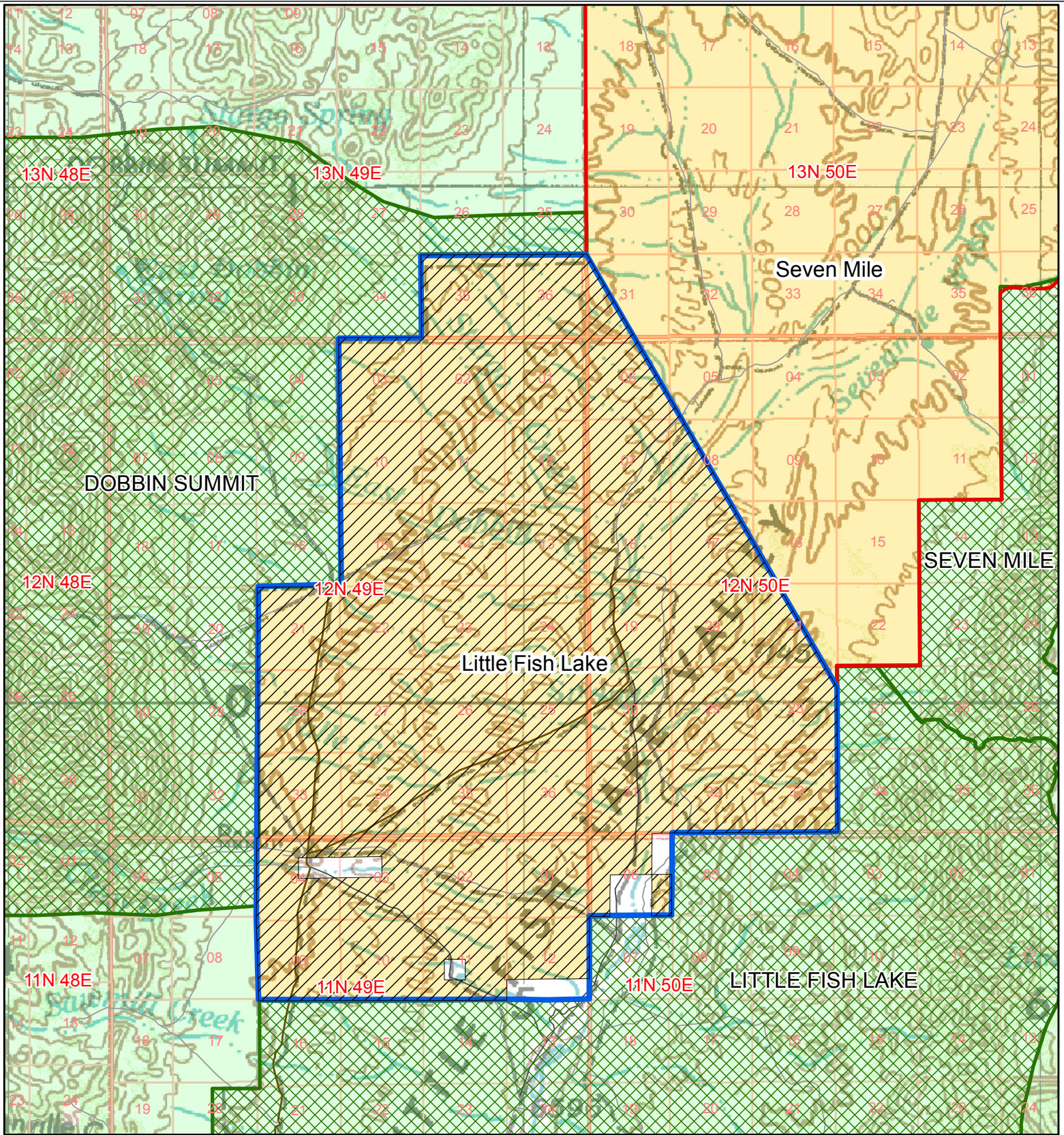
Q. Is there livestock grazing in this area?

- Currently, no livestock graze in the Little Fish Lake HMA. Permittees in the area have voluntarily not grazed Little Fish Lake Valley for several years (since fall 2013) due to the lack of forage. Previous use has been drastically reduced due to lack of forage.

ADOPTION QUESTIONS





Q. How can I adopt one of the wild horses?

- The excess wild horses removed from the range are offered for adoption to qualified people through the BLM's Adopt a Wild Horse or Burro Program. Potential adopters must have the proper facilities and financial means to care for an adopted animal, and we always hope that they have experience working with a wild horse or burro, which will help ensure the gentling process. During the first year, the government retains title to the animal(s), and will conduct compliance checks throughout the year in an effort to ensure as much as possible that the animal is properly being cared for and has gone to a good home. At the end of the first year, if the adopter has complied with all the adoption stipulations and has properly cared for their mustang or burro for one year, he or she is eligible to receive title, or ownership, from the Federal government.
- Since 1971, when Congress passed the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, the BLM has adopted out more than 230,000 horses and burros.
- To apply to adopt a wild horse or burro on-line, please go to the BLM's adoption website at: <http://on.doi.gov/15QolPH>
- If you are interested in adopting directly from one of the BLM's holding facilities, please visit the agency's facilities page.
- For more information about the BLM's Adopt-A-Horse or Burro program, please visit http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/wild_horse_and_burro.html, or you may call 1-800-4Mustangs with any questions about the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program.






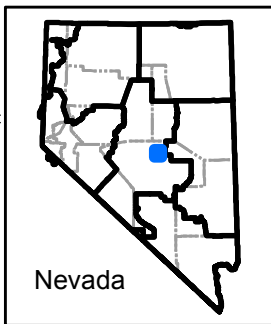
Little Fish Lake HMA

Allotment Boundaries

-  Wagon Johnnie
-  Seven Mile HMA
-  Little Fish Lake HMA and Gather Area
-  USFS WHT Boundaries

Land Status

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Forest Service
-  Private



Nevada

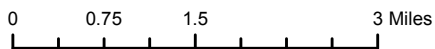
United States Department Of The Interior

Bureau of Land Management
 Tonopah Field Office
 1553 S. Main Street/P.O. Box 911
 Tonopah, NV 89049

Map Date: 12/31/2014



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 were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.



1:100,000

2015 Little Fish Lake Gather Fact Sheet

What: Little Fish Lake Herd Management Area Wild Horse Gather

Where: Located in Nye County approximately 65 miles northeast of Tonopah, NV.

Planned number of horses and burros to be gathered: Approximately 150 wild horses.

Planned number of mares to be treated with the fertility-vaccine PZP and released back to the range: All mares released back onto the range will be treated with PZP.

Planned number of horses and burros to be removed from the HMA: Approximately 100 wild horses.

Population to be left in HMA: Approximately 100

Planned duration of gather: The gather is expected to last 3-5 days.

Reason/s for the Gather: Drought conditions in 2013 have resulted in insufficient amounts of forage to support the existing population of wild horses within the Little Fish Lake HMA. Upon review of drought monitoring data, the Tonopah Field Office has decided that wild horse capture and removal is the appropriate Drought Response Action (DRA) for immediate protection of wild horses, rangeland, and wildlife resources. Prior to the conclusion that wild horse removal from the HMA was necessary; other DRAs were examined and deemed infeasible for this particular situation.

For general information about the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program, please visit:

Little Fish Lake Gather website: <http://on.doi.gov/1wJJqkY>

BLM's Website at: <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/whbprogram.html>.

BLM WH&B Facebook page: www.facebook.com/BLMWildHorseandBurro

BLM YouTube "playlist" (WH&B section): <http://blm.gov/c65c>

BLM National WH&B hotline and e-mail: 866-468-7926 (866-4MUSTANGS) and wildhorse@blm.gov

Quick Facts about the program:

http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/whbprogram/history_and_facts/quick_facts.html

Myths and Facts about wild horse management:

http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/whbprogram/history_and_facts/myths_and_facts.html

Information about the wild horse and burro adoption program:

http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/wild_horse_and_burro/What_We_Do/wild_horse_and_burro_0.html

Visitation Protocol and Ground Rules for the Little Fish Lake Gather

Opportunities for public viewing (i.e. media, interested public) of gather operations will be made available to the extent possible; however, the primary considerations will be to protect the health, safety and welfare of the animals being gathered and the personnel involved. The public must adhere to guidance from the on-site BLM representative. It is BLM policy that the public will not be allowed to come into direct contact with wild horses or burros being held in BLM facilities. Only authorized BLM personnel or contractors may enter the corrals or directly handle the animals. The general public may not enter the corrals or directly handle the animals at any time or for any reason during BLM operations.

BLM recognizes and respects the right of interested members of the public and the press to observe the Little Fish Lake wild horse gather. At the same time, BLM must ensure the health and safety of the public, BLM's employees and contractors, and America's wild horses. Accordingly, BLM developed these rules to maximize the opportunity for reasonable public access to the gather while ensuring that BLM's health and safety responsibilities are fulfilled. Failure to maintain safe distances from operations at the gather and temporary holding sites could result in members of the public inadvertently getting in the path of the wild horses or gather personnel, thereby placing themselves and others at risk, or causing stress and potential injury to the wild horses and burros.

The BLM and the contractor's helicopter pilot must comply with 14 CFR Part 91 of the Federal Aviation Regulations, which determines the minimum safe altitudes and distance people must be from the aircraft. To be in compliance with these regulations, the viewing location at the gather site and holding corrals must be approximately 500 feet from the operating location of the helicopter at all times. The viewing locations may vary depending on topography, terrain and other factors.

General Daily Protocol

A Wild Horse Gather Info Phone Line will be set up prior to the gather so the public can call for daily updates on gather information and statistics. Visitors are strongly encouraged to check the phone line the evening before they plan to attend the gather to confirm the gather and their tour of it is indeed taking place the next day as scheduled (weather, mechanical issues or other things may affect this) and to confirm the meeting location.

Visitors must direct their questions/comments to either their designated BLM representative or the BLM spokesperson on site, and not engage other BLM/contractor staff and disrupt their gather duties/responsibilities - professional and respectful behavior is expected of all. BLM may make the BLM staff available during down times for a Q&A session on guided public-observation days. However, the contractor and its staff will not be available to answer questions or interact with visitors.

Observers must provide their own 4-wheel drive high clearance vehicle, appropriate shoes, winter clothing, food and water. Observers are prohibited from riding in government and contractor vehicles and equipment.

Gather operations may be suspended if bad weather conditions create unsafe flying conditions. BLM will establish one or more observation areas, in the immediate area of the gather and holding sites, to which individuals will be directed. These areas will be placed so as to maximize the opportunity for public observation while providing for a safe and effective horse gather. The utilization of such observation areas is necessary due to the use and presence of heavy equipment and aircraft in the gather operation and the critical need to allow BLM personnel and contractors to fully focus on attending to the needs of the wild horses while maintaining a safe environment for all involved. In addition, observation areas will be sited so as to protect the wild horses from being spooked, startled or impacted in a manner that results in increased stress.

BLM will delineate observation areas with yellow caution tape (or a similar type of tape or ribbon). Visitors will be assigned to a specific BLM representative on guided-observation days and must stay with that person at all times.

Visitors are NOT permitted to walk around the gather site or temporary holding facility unaccompanied by their BLM representative.

Observers are prohibited from climbing/trespassing onto or in the trucks, equipment or corrals, which is the private property of the contractor.

When BLM is using a helicopter or other heavy equipment in close proximity to a designated observation area, members of the public may be asked to stay by their vehicle for some time before being directed to an observation area once the use of the helicopter or the heavy machinery is complete.

When given the signal that the helicopter is close to the gather site bringing horses in, visitors must sit down in areas specified by BLM representatives and must not move or talk as the horses are guided into the corral.

Individuals attempting to move outside a designated observation area will be requested to move back to the designated area or to leave the site. Failure to do so may result in citation or arrest. It is important to stay within the designated observation area to safely observe the wild horse gather.

Observers will be polite, professional and respectful to BLM managers and staff and the contractor/employees. Visitors who do not cooperate and follow the rules will be escorted off the gather site by BLM law enforcement personnel, and will be prohibited from participating in any subsequent observation days.

BLM reserves the right to alter these rules based on changes in circumstances that may pose a risk to health, public safety or the safety of wild horses (such as weather, lightening, wildfire, etc.).

Public Outreach and Education Day-Specific Protocol (Optional)

A public outreach and education day provides a more structured mechanism for interested members of the public to see the wild horse gather activities at a given site. On this day, BLM attempts to allow the public to get an overall sense of the gather process and has available staff who can answer questions that the public may have. The public rendezvous at a designated place and are escorted by BLM representatives to and from the gather site.

Opportunities for public viewing (i.e. media, interested public) of gather operations would be made available to the extent possible; however, the primary considerations would be to protect the health, safety and welfare of the animals being gathered and the personnel involved. The public must adhere to guidance from the on-site BLM representative. It is BLM policy that the public would not be allowed to come into direct contact with wild horses being held in BLM facilities. Only authorized BLM personnel or contractors may enter the corrals or directly handle the animals. The general public may not enter the corrals or directly handle the animals at any time or for any reason during BLM operations.

What to Know Before You Go

Instructions for Visitors to the Little Fish Lake Gather Observation Days

When and where to meet: Call our *Wild Horse Gather Info Line* at 775-861-6700, option 3 for an update on the next day's gather activities, previous day's gather results, or to leave a message if you will not be attending an observation day for which you had previously RSVP'd.

Note: gather operations are dependent on the weather and could change with little or no notice.

Transportation: All visitors must have their own transportation – we cannot take people in government vehicles except in an emergency. The gather sites and temporary holding corrals might move around to several locations and the roads could get very rough in and around the gather area. Vehicles **MUST HAVE 4-wheel drive** with high clearance. Visitors must have spare tires (we suggest multiple spare tires!). Gas and full services are available in Tonopah, Nevada. *Cells phones are also a good idea if you get stranded, though coverage cannot be guaranteed.*

Amenities: Motels are available in Tonopah, Nevada.

Weather conditions: This is February in Nevada so plan for cold or warm temperatures. Dress accordingly and bring plenty of water! Don't forget a hat and gloves!

What to bring:

- Closed-toe sturdy shoes
- Bland-colored clothing (*no wild colors, please*)
- Sunscreen
- Food and water
- Binoculars
- Camera with zoom lens
- Small beach chair if you don't like to sit on rocks
- Layers of clothes for cold or warm weather

****We cannot guarantee that there will be a porta-potty at the holding site so plan accordingly.***