

APPENDIX F

Litter Cleanup Plan and Public Lands Awareness Campaign

SLOAN CANYON NCA LITTER CLEANUP PLAN AND PUBLIC LANDS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The congressionally designated Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA) consists of nearly 48,438 acres that encompass a diverse landscape, ranging from the North McCullough Wilderness (Wilderness) to borders with densely populated urban areas. The Sloan Canyon NCA Act (Title VI of the Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002), which established the NCA, requires the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop a management plan for the NCA, including a plan for litter cleanup and a public lands awareness campaign in and around the Conservation Area. Incorporating this Litter Cleanup Plan and Public Lands Awareness Campaign into the Approved Resource Management Plan provides adaptability and efficiency in implementing cleanup actions by identifying management priorities and related potential decisions and helps ensure that an effective anti-litter message is delivered.



Northeast portion of the NCA depicting illegal disposal of automobile



Illegal paintball course (Northeast portion of the NCA)

the BLM Las Vegas Field Office, and the enforcement of illegal dumping was difficult. The litter and trash problem is compounded by the area's increased use as a result of the changing population of Clark County, Nevada, which is one of the fastest-growing counties in the nation and includes the areas immediately surrounding the NCA. In addition, awareness of the NCA since its designation is expected to increase visitation to the area and consequently the potential for additional litter. Nonetheless, the increased BLM management presence should help reduce litter and trash dumping.

Litter and trash are fundamental problems affecting the NCA, and related concerns were brought forward during the public scoping process. Materials currently found within the NCA range from litter associated with the NCA's proximity to the urban area, to trash including abandoned automobiles, appliances, furniture, and shell casings. In addition, the illegal dumping of construction and landscaping debris is common near the NCA boundary.

Other contributing factors to the litter problem include prior recreational use and the lack of public education and awareness. Furthermore, before the establishment of the NCA, this area was part of the 3 million acres of land under the responsibility of

1.0 LITTER CLEANUP PLAN

To proactively address the litter problem, the BLM Las Vegas Field Office has implemented an interim management plan, which was implemented during the Sloan Canyon RMP planning process. The purpose of this interim management, which is based on existing laws, regulations, and guidance, including the *Proposed Las Vegas Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement* (BLM 1998a in the *Sloan Canyon Proposed RMP/FEIS* Reference List), is to maintain the resources and values that were the basis for creating the NCA while more detailed planning is in progress. Numerous elements comprise the interim management plan for the NCA, but those pertaining to litter focus on cleaning up some of the most damaged areas, establishing the boundaries of the NCA through signing, educating the public on the NCA's existence and applicable regulations, and enforcing current rules. The two basic elements of current litter control, which will be further discussed in this plan, are litter cleanup and prevention via law enforcement and education.

Currently, the Sloan Canyon NCA management is hosting volunteer desert cleanups on a nearly monthly basis, including a major National Public Lands Day event in October 2004. During that event, 250 volunteers picked up more than 35 tons of trash, and the City of Henderson Public Works Department and volunteer off-highway vehicle (OHV) user groups removed more than 20 automobile bodies. During the interim period, signs have been placed along the NCA boundary and at main access points leading to the Wilderness boundary. A program for visitor contact and education by NCA staff and BLM law enforcement was undertaken, with an introductory warning period for OHV use, recreational target shooting, and camping in portions of the NCA subject to BLM and Clark County use closures. This warning period was followed by enforcement actions by BLM and local law enforcement. This Litter Cleanup Plan is intended to build on the progress made during interim management and eventually result in an NCA that is litter-free as possible. Because of the magnitude of the existing litter deposits and the large area affected, a two-pronged approach of cleanup and prevention would be used to reach this goal.

1.1 Litter Zones

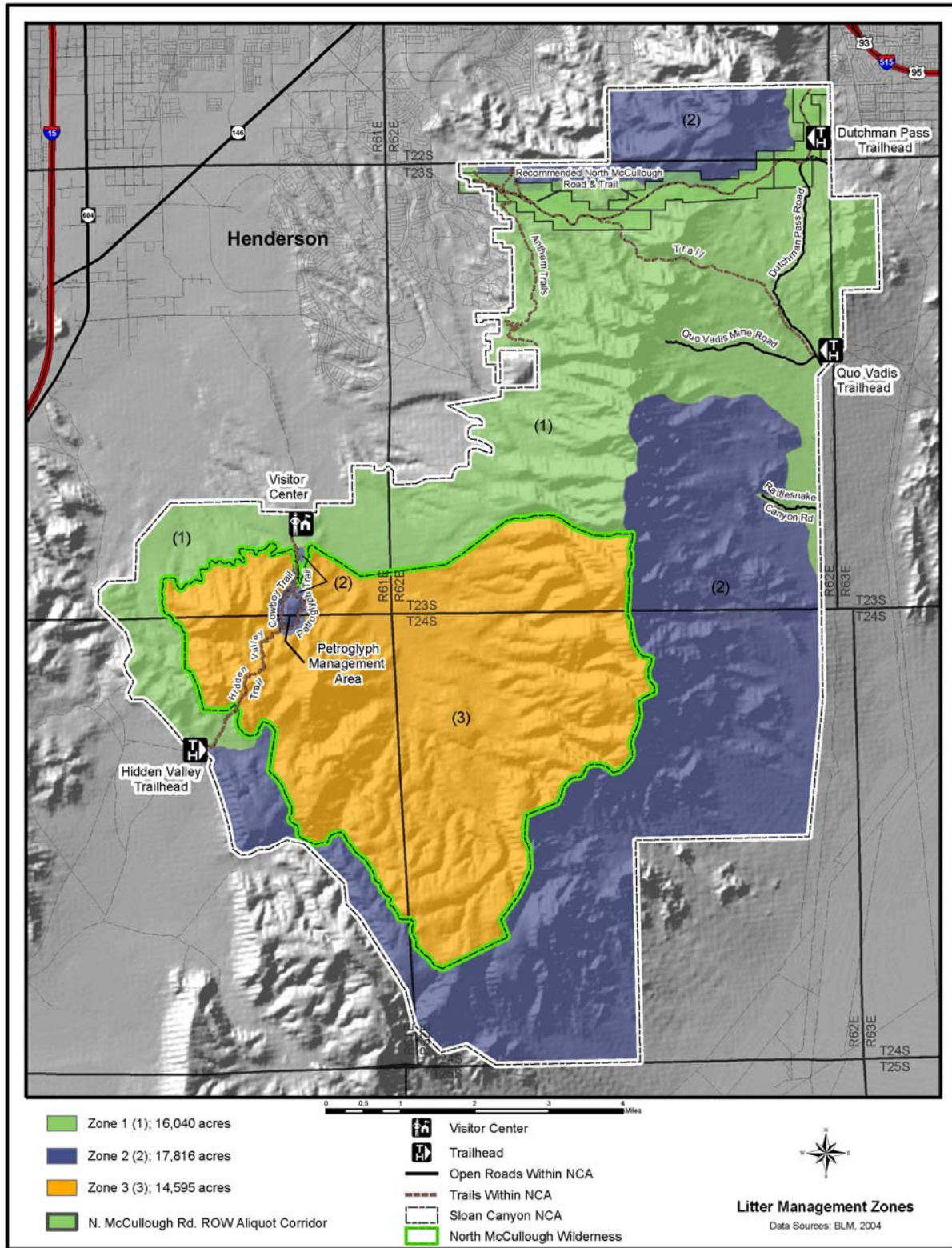
To facilitate implementing the Litter Cleanup Plan, the NCA was divided into three litter zones based on the Management Emphasis Area zones described in the Approved RMP, current litter conditions, accessibility, and proximity to future developed areas (Figure F.1).

Zone 1, High Litter Management Area—Mainly is the northern portion of the NCA near the urban interface that historically contained large amounts of litter and dumping. Although at present some of the area has been cleaned up through volunteer efforts, this zone is easily accessed by illegal dumpers and continues to have a high priority for cleanup and enforcement. These heavily littered areas are considered to have high probability for future litter concerns.

Zone 2, Moderate Litter Management Area—Forms the southeastern and southwestern border of the NCA and the highly visited Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site. Zone 2, which has medium to low concentrations of litter, would require moderate litter management and enforcement. Once existing litter is removed, it could be kept at a minimum through public awareness and education.

Zone 3, Low Litter Management Area—Consists of the Wilderness, where the amount of litter is very low. Because visitation is also low, this area is anticipated to need minimal litter management and enforcement. However, as this area is managed to maintain natural and primitive characteristics, litter cleanup would be an important aspect.

Figure F.1. Litter Management Zones



Monitoring would be used to measure the effectiveness of the Litter Cleanup Plan and track changes in litter levels. BLM would conduct visual surveys of the NCA to determine the effectiveness of litter removal and identify areas within the NCA that require special or additional litter cleanup efforts.

1.2 Cleanup Phase

The first step in creating an NCA that is as litter-free as possible is to remove existing trash and litter. Volunteer programs historically have been the primary mechanism for cleaning up the NCA, and this tradition would continue, focusing on Litter Zone 1 first, until the current litter is removed. BLM would maintain partnerships with local communities such as the City of Henderson, businesses, and organized volunteer groups to help ensure a successful removal campaign. It is anticipated that much of the existing litter would be removed before completion of the RMP planning process. In the Wilderness, the techniques employed to remove the litter would be those that cause the least impacts. Portions of the NCA, such as areas that have been used for target shooting, would require special cleanup processes. In these areas, the surface might need to be scraped to remove all accumulated material, and the vegetation restored. Once an area is deemed “litter-free,” the level of new litter within the NCA would be monitored, and cleanup events would be scheduled as needed.

1.3 Prevention Phase

BLM would develop anti-litter educational messages aimed at all NCA visitors. In addition, litter enforcement activities would be increased.

1.3.1 Education

During the cleanup phase and into the foreseeable future, BLM would encourage visitors to maintain and take pride in the condition of the NCA through education and by developing an awareness of the litter problem and its associated impacts on the NCA’s natural resources. Those visitors who understand the values of the NCA, along with homeowners bordering the NCA, could become strong advocates and good stewards. Litter not only adversely affects the natural environment, visual amenities, wildlife, and human health, but controlling it also affects funding and staffing resources. Litter prevention costs less than litter cleanup.

Particular attention would be given to developing appropriate outreach materials and educational programs, particularly anti-litter educational programs directed to various user groups of the NCA. A comprehensive litter messaging strategy or outreach themes would be developed as part of a detailed interpretive planning and would likely include “Leave No Trace” outdoor ethics.

BLM would seek to exemplify and encourage good stewardship of natural resources by reducing, reusing, and renewing materials where possible. For example, a recycling program would be adopted to further promote litter prevention and to provide educational messages on the importance of reusing limited resources. In addition, to reduce the amount of paper that might become litter, BLM would use website communication instead of printed materials where possible. NCA maps and other information could be viewed online or via interactive exhibits at visitor facilities.

1.3.2 Law Enforcement

Although education and public awareness efforts can provide considerable assistance in changing behavior patterns to abate litter problems, enforcement is an important tool that can make a lasting difference. The purpose of enforcement is to minimize the impact of littering and dumping, promote and

achieve compliance with the law, and enable courts to uphold the law by punishing offenders and deterring others.

The term “enforcement” has a broad meaning, and BLM would take a range of actions, such as offering information, advice, and warnings; penalty notices that could require action within a specified time period; and prosecutions. BLM would work in cooperation with local agencies to promote a consistent approach, including policies and guidelines for the enforcement of dumping and littering regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations 9640.1 [f] and [k]). Enforcement duties would include tagging and towing abandoned vehicles, issuing warnings, and investigating illegal dumping within the NCA. BLM would explore the possibility of developing a trash reporting hotline and consider the development of NCA-specific special regulations, such as banning spray paint cans from the NCA.

2.0 PUBLIC LANDS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Sloan Canyon NCA Act also requires BLM to develop a plan for a public lands awareness campaign. As part of this plan, BLM would seek to increase cooperation with the other public land agencies (United States Forest Service, National Park Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Nevada Department of Wildlife) to develop messaging on a variety of public lands issues, including the enforcement of existing litter laws and regulations. The campaign would include establishing and maintaining relationships with other federal, State, and local governments (City of Henderson, Boulder City, and Clark County) to assist in public lands messaging.

Several existing programs, foundations, and partnerships address littering on federal lands in southern Nevada. The Sloan Canyon NCA would optimize resources and increase efficiency by utilizing and integrating with these established programs to increase public education and awareness and to maintain and improve on current volunteer programs. In addition, public land agencies would develop strong relationships with local media for delivering public lands messages, including anti-littering messages and notifications of upcoming cleanup events.