



**BLM-WINNEMUCCA DISTRICT (WD)
PROGRAM OVERVIEW
Justin Drew, District Manager
September, 2016 through March, 2017**

FLUID MINERALS/ENERGY

Black Rock Field Office (BRFO)

San Emidio: San Emidio has received authorization to drill their two observation wells. Drilling commenced in early July 2016.



Humboldt River Field Office (HRFO)

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: Terra-Gen Power, Dixie Development Company had two approved projects. One is for drilling and testing up to 15 observation wells. The second is for utilization plan (a 70 megawatt power plant) and inter-tie power lines that was recently acquired by Ormat. Ormat was recently authorized to drill two separate production wells and they are in the process of getting an approval for two Temperature Gradient Core Holes in the area.

Brady Hot Springs: A proposal has been submitted by Ormat to replace the flash plant that is currently operating and replacing it with an upgraded plant. The plant is operating normally.

Leach Hot Springs. Ormat reports that no additional exploration is anticipated at the site at this time.

Baltazor Hot Springs: The baseline studies for the Sandhill Skipper are complete and the company is considering moving forward with power plant development.

Geothermal Leasing (WD): *One lease parcel will be put up for lease in October of 2017. These parcel is located about 30 miles southwest of Lovelock in Washoe County*

SOLID MINERALS

Black Rock Field Office

Hycroft Mine: Since July 2015, Hycroft suspended mining operations. They continue to process gold and silver through the operation of the heap leach pads and processing plants. They still do not plan to restarting mining operations for the near term. Both NDEP and the BLM have placed the mine in non-compliance due to leaking cyanide ponds.

Baseline studies are still continuing for their Phase II expansion EIS. 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.

Humboldt River Field Office

Coeur Rochester Inc. (CRI): CRI is planning to submit a modification to their Plan of Operations for their Rochester and Packard mines, which will be Plan of Operations Amendment 11 (POA 11) This will be a significant mine expansion, and work on baseline studies are underway.

**This is the mine the RAC group toured at their last meeting on the Winnemucca District in June.*



RAC Tour of the Coeur Rochester Mine

Rye Patch Gold: Two exploration plans were received from Rye Patch Gold: Wilco in the Coal Canyon area and Lincoln Hill in the lower Rochester area. The Plans of Operation for both Wilco and Lincoln Hill have been deemed complete and the NEPA kick off meeting was held September 16. Baseline studies are being finalized and the Preliminary EA is being drafted

Twin Creeks Newmont is submitting a modification to their Plan of Operations for a new tailings facility. Baselines have been completed for the Sage Tails project and the modified Plan of Operations is projected to be submitted this month.



Twin Creeks geology in the pit

Florida Canyon Mine: The Florida Canyon Mine was recently purchased by Rye Patch Gold. Rye Patch gold received financing to bond and build the permitted leach pad. Mining has restarted at the mine and they are loading the new leach pad.

Standard Mine: Standard Mine was purchased by Rye Patch Gold along with the Florida Canyon mine. Mine operations are idle at this time but processing of existing heap leach facilities and reclamation will continue for a few years. There is a small amount of additional mining that could be done under the approved Plan of Operations.

Lithium Nevada - Kings Valley Lithium Exploration: In 2015 Wester Lithium became Lithium Nevada it has an approved Plan of Operations for lithium exploration near Thacker Pass, north of Winnemucca, Nevada. LNC is continuing to refine the lithium processing operations at its demonstration plant in Germany. In February, 2015, the BLM approved another bulk sample that would be shipped overseas for testing. General communication and coordination has occurred regarding the planned lithium mine, but nothing has been submitted, to date.

Lithium Nevada- Kings Valley Clay Mine: Lithium Nevada submitted a mine plan of operations for specialty clay on October 5, 2012. The anticipated market for the specialty clay is the manufacture of high temperature/high pressure drilling fluids. This proposal is considered to be compatible with the still anticipated lithium mine. The Final EA, Finding of No Significant Impact, and Decision Record were signed on March 5, 2014. Clay mining operations have not begun, to date.

Spring Valley Exploration Project: The property has changed ownership 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 and bi-weekly meetings are on-going.

In the fall of 2016, MMC purchased adjacent land, mining claims, and portions of associated plans of operation for the Trenton Canyon Mine (NVN-065477) and Trenton Canyon Exploration (NVN-067501) Projects (Valmy Acquisition) from Newmont Mining Company. Although no new disturbance was proposed for these newly acquired lands, the existing authorizations were proposed to be included in the existing Marigold Mine plan of operations. On January 10, 2017, MMC submitted a revised plan that combined the existing Marigold Mine Plan, the Valmy Acquisition, and an update (increased dewatering rates) to the proposed Mackay Optimization Project. The BLM determined that the modified Mackay Optimization Project was complete on 02/06/2017.

On October 13, 2016, a cultural incursion occurred that damaged an NRHP eligible archaeological site (see additional information under Cultural). Consultation with the Battle Mountain Tribe and mitigation activities are on-going and may need to also be addressed in the EIS for the Mackay Optimization Project.



Mine shovels and tracks 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 currently being mined.

Relief Canyon Mine: The mine was authorized to restart under the existing 1984 Plan of Operations on September 25, 2014. A mine expansion EA was signed in August of 2016.

The modification to the Plan includes:

- Expand the existing pits by approximately 68.3 acres while staying above the water table;
- Construct a new waste rock storage area;
- Close the old heap leach pads (Cells 1-4) by placing a three foot cover of overburden and waste rock;
- Increase the height for the new heap leach pads (Cells 6 and 7) from 54 feet to 200 feet;
- Add additional exploration drill roads and sites;
- Include a new Class III landfill integrated into the new waste rock storage area;
- Potentially process ores from other sites on the existing heap leach facilities; and
- Improve or add ancillary facilities including site communications, wells, piezometers, on-site analytical laboratory, warehouse facilities, storm water ditches, fencing, and roads.

These amendments will increase the total disturbance from 396.9 acres to 608.7 acres.

Mineral Materials

Preparations have been made to start an EA to designate Community Pits in Washoe County to facilitate use by Washoe County Road Department and the Public.

Hazardous Materials/Abandoned Mine Lands

A plan is being developed for covering the calcine pile located on McDermitt mine and BLM property. Material sites were evaluated for covering the pile and a final workplan will be developed with the intention of covering the pile in the fall 2017.

We are in the process closing a number of abandoned mines in the Rosebud area. We just completed a number of closues in the Desert Queen area. The project has been in cooperation with the Nevada Bureau of Mines, Nevada Department of Wildlife and the BLM.

The fencing around the Imlay Drum Site and American canyon was completed in December of 2016



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

**CULTURAL,
LANDS, AND
REALTY**

**Black Rock
Field Office**

Lands and Realty:

We received applications for 15 existing range improvements, two access routes to private inholdings (surrounded by Wilderness) and two FLPMA ditch right-of-ways. Baseline surveys have been completed. During scoping we received seven (7) comments from the public. These are being reviewed. Resource specialists are working on the EA.

On January 23, 2017, the Black Rock Field Office received a new communication site application proposed to be placed within Union Pacific Railroad's (UPRR) ROW at Trego, directly adjacent to the Black Rock NCA. Letter requesting more information have been sent to the applicant and UPRR.

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. We are reviewing their application.

On March 1, 2017, we received an expression of interest letter to purchase public lands in Hualapai Flat. We are reviewing our Land Use Plan to check for conformance.

Cultural:

The Treatment Plan data recovery report and two interpretive products for the original Phase I Hycroft Mine Expansion project have been submitted to BLM and is currently in review. Hycroft is studying ways to accomplish the relocation of a small railroad tie cabin to its original location as part of the mitigation for the project.

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 sites will be prepared. An additional Treatment Plan for the powerline associated with the mine expansion has already been approved and will be implemented before the powerline 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 has just contracted with an archaeological firm to survey areas that may have been damaged by fire suppression activities related to the Poodle Fire in 2016. The survey report will record archaeological sites along the dozer line, evaluate them for historic significance and recommend whether they have been damaged. Some sites may be further investigated or mitigated at a later date.

The Black Rock Field Office has several cultural resource projects underway. The Anthropology Department at UNR is studying Depression Era mining near Rabbithole Spring, completing a project started several years ago. Two projects started in the late fall of 2016 were delayed by weather and some of the fieldwork still remains to be completed. Archaeological survey continues at Soldier Meadows, adding survey coverage to two recent inventories along the southern edge of the ACEC. The other project involves metal detector survey of two sections of the Applegate Trail. Archaeological testing to support the planned Recreation Management Plan at Trego Hot Springs will take place in the spring, when weather conditions permit.

Humboldt River Field Office

Lands and Realty:

We are working on the cadastral survey request for the Pine Forest Land Exchange.

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

Winnemucca processed an amendment for CC Communication's Right of Way (ROW) N-46572 on Desert Peak to add 20' to their 60' tower.

An amendment for the Coeur Rochester Seven Troughs Communication Site was processed to add a new 10 X 12 building, to replace the old building, and a 6' chain link fence.

A right-of-way (ROW) was issued to Mr. Nuffer for repair and maintenance of Pass Creek Road.

A ROW was issued to Pershing County for the American Canyon Road, which was part of the Coeur Rochester Plan of Amendment (POA).

Amendments for the BLM Alta and New York Communication Sites were processed.

On December 16, 2016, a Land Use Permit N-94836 was issued to **Oreana Energy LLC** for mining Zeolite minerals in the Trinity Pass.

On December 21, 2016, a right-of-way grant was amended for N-89138 Nevada Cement's road going to their Relief Canyon Mine.

On January 25, 2017, an Internal Disciplinary Team (IDT) Meeting was held to discuss the proposed C-Punch Land Sale in the Granite Springs Valley.

On October 7, 2016, the Nevada Native Nations Land Act (H.R. 2733/Public Law 114-232) was signed into law. The law states that certain lands have been conveyed (transferred) and are held in trust by the United States for Indian Tribes in Nevada. The Ft. McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe are the two tribes in the Humboldt River Field Office who now have lands held in trust for them. On December 22, 2016, the Humboldt River Field Office sent letters to the ROW holders who have ROWs in the transferred lands, notifying them to contact the Bureau of Indian Affairs office having jurisdiction over the lands.

The Humboldt River Field Office is working in cooperation with the Carson City BLM Office on 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.

We are in the initial stages of baseline surveys and development of the first couple chapters of the environmental assessment for an access road to service a proposed utility scale photovoltaic facility on adjacent private lands.

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

Cultural:

The Native American Arts and Crafts Fair was held at the Humboldt Museum November 19, 2016.

BLM archaeologists gave the 4th grade class from Sage Ridge School in Reno a tour of the Marzen House Museum and Lovelock Cave on December 13, 2016.

Planning for the twelfth annual Lovelock Cave Days has commenced. The event is scheduled for May 16-18, 2017 and will include fourth graders from Humboldt and Pershing County Schools as well as Gerlach and a homeschool group.

Work is underway on an outdoor exhibit focused on prehistoric and historic use of the Humboldt River transportation corridor. The BLM is working with the Southern Nevada Conservancy (SNC), the Humboldt Museum and other partners on this exhibit which will be located behind the Humboldt Museum in Winnemucca overlooking the Humboldt River, the emigrant trail, the railroad, and I-80. Planning and design of the exhibit, collection of background data, and draft text for interpretive signs has been completed. The contract for the construction of the shade

structure, concrete floor and seating has been awarded . Construction for the outdoor pavilion is anticipated to begin in April and will include burying of a time capsule with items from the BLM, Humboldt Museum, and SNC.

BLM is also partnering with SNC, the Marzen House Museum, NDOT and Rye Patch Gold on another outdoor exhibit at the Marzen House Museum in Lovelock which will focus on the Forty Mile Desert and the California Trail. A large metal sculpture of a wagon and oxen will be installed across from the Marzen House near I-80 and a kiosk with two panels interpreting the Callifornia Trail will be installed outside at the Marzen House. 75% of the metal sillouette sculpture has been completed and it is anticipated it will be installed in April or May.

The Lovelock Cave Back Country Byway Junior Ranger Activity Book was updated and reprinted. This children's activity book has been a mainstay of Lovelock Cave Days for the last eleven years as well as being used by visiting families. The new guides have been distributed to the Lovelock Chamber of Commerce and the Marzen House Museum. They will also be given to fourth grade classes participating in Lovelock Cave Days.

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 Pine Forest Exchange, Marigold Expansion, the Western Lithium project, and the Rye Patch Gold Oreana Project.

The first phase of the implementation of the cultural resource mitigation plan for Coeur Amendment 10 began in August 2016 and is anticipated to be completed this Spring. Planning has begun on the second phase, an interpretive sign at the Marzen House Museum in Lovelock.

Work on the Unionville Cemetery R&PP/EA has commenced. An MOA has been signed with Pershing County and the NORA has been completed and submitted to NSO.

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 area and are under review. These studies are being funded by the Pyramid Lake Tribe.

RECREATION

Black Rock Field Office

Special Recreation Permits (SRPs):

Burning Man

This year marked the 25th anniversary of the Burning Man event on the public lands of the Black Rock Desert playa. The 2016 Burning Man event wrapped up on September 5th with peak population of 67,290 paid participants on Friday September 2, at 11:30am. Beginning on September 19, 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. On October 4, six BLM staff and 37 BRC Playa Restoration crew members conducted the Post-

Event Inspection concluding that, cumulatively across all four Core Inspection Areas, the Playa Restoration crew was successful in meeting the 2016 Burning Man SRP Cleanup Standard of less than 1.0 ft²/acre with an average measurement of 0.77 ft²/acre at 60 monitoring sites. BLM processed a total of 80 on-site vendor SRP's for this year's event. Overall, BRC was given a Satisfactory performance review on their 2016 SRP Annual Evaluation. The 2016 event Close-Out process has been completed and the 2017 Burning Man event Planning process has begun.



Space Whale, stained glass and steel art piece. M. Vermeys, 2016.

Hunter/Guide Permits

To date, 21 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.

Planning is now underway for the Black Rock Rendezvous to be held over Memorial Day weekend in May. Informational talks and discussions, tours to points of interest around the NCA, and service projects will be held over the weekend. In 2016 over 200 people attended the event which also includes a Kid's Camp, Dutch Oven cookoff, and campfire activities. Proposed projects for FY 17 include the Calico Wilderness route naturalization and clean up areas.

Outreach: The recent renaming of the National Conservation Lands System to the National Conservation Lands (NCL) also came with a new look. New signs with the NCL layout and logos have arrived at the office and installation has been occurring this spring and summer.

Special Events



Black Rock Field Office NPLD 2016 – Desert Dace Day Volunteers

First Annual Desert Dace Day - On September 25, 2016, BLM, USFWS, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Friends of Black Rock/High Rock and Nevada Outdoor School participated in the first annual Desert Dace Day as part of NPLD at the Soldier Meadows ACEC. 35 volunteers worked on a habitat enhancement project for the Desert Dace, a threatened fish species only found in Soldier Meadows. 10 volunteers also helped improve the Soldier Meadows Cabin by installing steps, painting the walls, and painting benches.



The NPLD shirts included a special design to commemorate the first annual Desert Dace Day.

Partner Group Activities

Friends of Black Rock High Rock helped to coordinate Black Rock NCA Artist in Residence Program for 2016 and two artists, a photographer from Reno and a ceramic artist from Elko exhibited their artwork at receptions in Gerlach, Winnemucca, and Reno. Applications are

now open for the 2017 program. 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 is working with Friends of Nevada Wilderness to plan projects for the FY 2017 field season. Projects will include 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 2016 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 Outfitters and Guides permits have been processed. On average the Winnemucca District processes about 25 hunter/guide permits per year.

Travel Management Inventories

Travel Management inventories have begun in the Sage Grouse Focal Areas.

Other Activities

Water Canyon Recreation Area (WCRA). A very successful NPLD was held in Water Canyon (WCRA) Water Canyon Recreation. On November 5, 2016 a highly successful National Public Lands Day was completed with numerous community partners including Rotary Club, NOS, Girl Scouts, and Jeep Junkies. Picnic tables were painted, trails rehabbed, new signs and new kiosks for interpretive signs installed. With funding assistance from Rotary Club, work has begun on revision and reprint of the Water Canyon nature trail guide and a new sign for the entrance kiosk.

In late October, 2016, BLM State engineers conducted an inspection of the two bridges of the Water Canyon Recreation Area Interpretive Trail. The results of the inspection determined an immediate need to remove the first bridge due to safety concerns. This was accomplished within four days. Proposals are under discussion to replace the bridge with one that meets BLM engineers approval, or with a design incorporating a culvert.

Porter Springs. Implementation of the 2007 Porter Springs Recreation Management Plan continued with the installation of a vault toilet. Picnic tables have been ordered and will be installed when weather allows. Draft temporary interpretive signs have also been completed and will be installed in the near future. The NEPA requirements have been completed for these actions.



In late June, staff from the Humboldt River Field Office spent a day installing a jack-leg fence around the spring, cleaning up trash and debris, and planning for other projects at the new recreation site, set to open next fall.

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, 43,363 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. This quarter the WD wilderness and outdoor recreation planners developed project events for the FY 17 field season.



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 2016. The rider rode for approximately 8 weeks on 11 streams, which included LCT habitat. The rider removed stray or non-compliant livestock from the riparian areas on a daily basis. 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.

BLM has completed Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the Programmatic Normal Year Fire Rehabilitation and District-Wide Vegetation Management Plan. The consultation was for the proposed project's effects to the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout and the threatened desert dace and its designated critical habitat in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

During the summer field season, we will continue to deploy thermographs and collect Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) data on riparian areas in allotments scheduled for Rangeland Health Assessments.

The Field Office is working with NDOW on the development of an Elk Herd Management Area, the first in Humboldt County. The planning board, established for the program, includes agencies, county representatives, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and interested ranchers.

BLM SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES



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

Greater Sagegrouse

Mortalities and injuries associated with rangeland fence collisions threaten Greater Sagegrouse populations. Approximately 200 miles of fence line has been identified within sagegrouse 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 sagegrouse within the state of Nevada.

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. The HMAs within the Smoke Creek Complex are the Fox and Lake and Buffalo Hills HMAs. A preliminary EA for the Blue Wing Complex was released for public review in January 2017. HMAs within the Blue Wing Complex include the Lava Beds, Kamma Mountains, Blue Wing Mountains, Seven Troughs, and

Shawave , as well as four HAs: Antelope, Selenite, Truckee, and Trinity. The Smoke Creek Complex EA is expected to go out for public review late spring or early summer. 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). The East Pershing EA will include coordination between the HRFO, Battle Mountain District and the Carson City District as portions of HMAs and HAs within the complex lie within the jurisdictional boundaries of those districts.

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

Census flights are planned for winter on FY2018. These flights will cover both the Blue Wing and East Pershing Complexes.

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.

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 have 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.

Staff members attended MIM (Multiple Indicators Monitoring) training that was held on the Winnemucca District the week of Aug. 8th. This will help staff better able them to monitor riparian areas throughout the District.

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 majority of grazing bills for the allotments that the BRFO administers have been issued, only those that begin grazing in April or May remain.

The BRFO completed the Happy Creek Cattleguard CX. Sometime later this year BLM will install two cattleguards 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

Beginning in January of 2017 one new Rangeland Management Specialist has joined the range team and filled behind a specialist that left for Idaho. The new specialist is quickly coming up to speed with all of the activities happening within the field office. Also the Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist position that has been vacant for some time has not yet been filled on a permanent basis. The position continues to be filled in the acting role.

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. March 1 marks the beginning of the 2017 grazing season. With the good winter that has occurred the outlook is good and staff is busy working with operators and processing applications and bills.

ESR, NOXIOUS WEEDS, AND FORESTRY

ESR

The following Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation projects were implemented on lands burned in the 2016 fire season:

Marigold – The Marigold Fire burned 293 acres with 77 acres administered by BLM and 216 acres of private land within the North Buffalo Grazing Allotment. The 77 acres managed by BLM was broadcast seeded with a highly competitive seed mix to stabilize soils, restore wildlife habitat, and prevent the burned area's conversion to invasive annual grassland. Also a temporary fence was constructed around the treatment area to protect the seeding during plant establishment.

Sand Pass – The Sand Pass Fire burned 1,130 acres with 441 acres administered by BLM and 689 acres of private land within the Sand Pass and Bloody Runs Allotments. One hundred acres managed by BLM was broadcast seeded in bands with a highly competitive seed mix to stabilize soils, restore wildlife habitat, and prevent the burned area's conversion to an invasive-dominated

state. A closure decision has been issued restricting grazing within the burned area while the land recovers.

Poodle – The Poodle Fire burned 6,557 acres of BLM administered lands within the Buffalo Hills Grazing Allotment. Three thousand nine hundred acres was aerially broadcast seeded with a native seed mix to stabilize soils, restore wildlife habitat, and prevent early colonization by Medusahead rye, a Category B noxious weed already present within the fire boundary.



Aerial seeding the Poodle Fire

Monroe and Rock Hill – The Monroe and Rock Hill Fires burned a cumulative total 12,986 acres with 6,141 acres administered by BLM and 6,845 acres of private lands within the Star Peak, Dolly Hayden, and White Horse Grazing Allotments. Because the two fires are adjacent to one another they have been combined into one multi-part treatment plan. Two thousand five hundred acres managed by BLM was sprayed with pre-emergent herbicide as a seed bed preparation for drill seeding, broadcast seeding, and shrub seedling planting to occur during the next two years.

NOXIOUS WEEDS

Winter weeds work consisted primarily of compiling and reporting weeds treatment from the previous year, completing winter project work, and planning future weed treatments. In FY2016, 8,304 acres of weed infestations within the Winnemucca District were treated with herbicide. Two major projects have been completed so far in this fiscal year:

Limerick Canyon – Removal of 22 acres of salt cedar by the BLM fire crew using chainsaws and herbicide in the Humboldt Range.

Calavera Meadow – Chemical treatment of 1.5 acres of Canada thistle within the Calavera Meadow Greater Sage-Grouse exclosure in the Montanas. This infestation has decreased from over 4 acres in size due to ongoing weed management.

As the growing season begins the BLM weeds program will be treating weeds throughout the district and working with partner organizations to survey, treat, and map weed infestations.

FORESTRY

The Fencemaker region of the Stillwater Range possesses the Winnemucca District's only large stand of pinyon pine and is the leading source of forest products within the district. In December 2017, a total of 154 Christmas tree cutting permits were issued, including five free permits to fourth graders as a part of the 'Every Kid in a Park' program. Much of the forest within the Stillwater Range is a part of the Stillwater Area of Critical Environmental Concern



Local residents harvest their first Christmas tree in the Stillwaters

(ACEC) due to its cultural importance to Great Basin Tribes. The Winnemucca Forestry program has been cooperating with the Cultural Resources program to secure funds to inventory the ACEC and develop a management plan.

FIRE

The Fire Danger across the Winnemucca District was in the Moderate range last Fall and has since fallen to Low for the winter. Abundant moisture this winter has taken the district out of drought for the first time in years, but could produce a healthy crop of grasses this spring which could lead to an above average 2017 fire season.

Engine crews and overhead responded to the Little Valley Fire in western Nevada in October and also traveled to the Southeast to assist Tennessee and North Carolina in November and December.

Fire supervisors have attended recruiting events at local high schools and job fairs across the district and have done numerous outreaches via radio, local newspapers and social media this winter.

Permanent and Temp Seasonal hiring continues.

Fire Management is currently meeting with district Cooperators to sign 5 year fire protection agreements and annual operating plans. Fire Management is also involved in working with the State of Nevada's first Rural Fire Protection Association (RFPA) to ensure the program is successful for all parties involved. The RFPA is modeled after associations that have been formed in adjoining states.

Operations/Aviation/Dispatch (anticipated for 2017 Fire Season)

- 10 Fire Engines staffed at Winnemucca, McDermitt, Lovelock, and Gerlach stations.
- 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
- 2 Water Tenders staffed, 1 in Winnemucca and 1 in McDermitt.
- 1 6500 gal. water trailer w/ transport
- 2017 Anticipated Aircraft: 2 Single Engine Air tankers (SEATs) in Winnemucca.
- 1 Center Manager and 1 Assistant Center Manager (BLM positions) are vacant. 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 Poodle Fire started on July 31st, 2016, from lightning in the Poodle Mountain WSA, northwest of Gerlach, NV. The fire burned in Priority and General Sage grouse habitat.

2016 Fire Season Final Stats

- Winnemucca District fire resources responded to 72 fires for a total of 24,592 acres.
- The 5 year average is 82 fires for 97,266 acres and the 10 year average is 75 fires for 72,239 acres
- Central Nevada Interagency Dispatch Center (CNIDC) dispatched 105 fires for a total of 29,026 acres.
- CNIDCs 5 year average is 121 fires for 105,671 acres and 10 year average is 113 fires for 92,496 acres.

Fuels Management

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

Montana Mountains Habitat Restoration: Multiple projects were performed by the fuels/fire staff to support habitat restoration in the Montana Mountains area. This includes approximately 2,000 a 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 project include areas previously treated with herbicide to control invasive speices being replanted with perennial plants. Approximately 2,500 acres were reseeded. This also helps reduce fire potential by eliminating or reducing the invasive annuals in the area.

Paradise WUI Green strips: Approximately 300 acres of fuel breaks in the Paradise Valley Area were maintained with a mowing and herbicide treatment. 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 fuelbreak protects the community of Unionville, and will receive in June 2016

Montana Mountains/Lone Willow PMU Project: This is a multifaceted project, which includes Healthy Lands, Hazardous Fuels, and FIAT projects, which are designed to protect T&E species habitat and restoration treatments to improve wildlife habitat. Projects completed to date include 3,534 acres of seeding treatments, 1,050 acres of sagebrush and bitterbrush hand planting, numbering approximately 103,000 seedlings, 3,243 acres of chemical treatment to control invasive annuals, 600 acres of riparian restoration and woody riparian species hand planting, 450 acres of mowing, and 100 acres of road fuelbreak maintenance.

Little Owyhee Roadway Fuelbreaks: These fuelbreaks 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 followup treatemtn of inviasve annuals. This includes the 1,500 acres completed this spring. 1,000 acres of previously mowed areas were treated with herbicide in October, with another 1,500 acres of mowing completed in December 2015/January 2016, followed by invasive annual weed control.

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 2,000 acres were treated in fall 2016, and will be reseeded and planted with seedlings next fall.

Currently in the planning stages is the Double H – Bilk Creek Cooperative Fuels Management Project. This will be the next landscape level project that will encompass the remainder of the Lone Willow Population Management Unit (PMU). This project will protect and restore important greater sage grouse habitat and other resource values through a combination of fuels

management and habitat restoration work. This planning process is scheduled to be completed and ready to implement in Fiscal Year 2018.

Also underway is the initial steps for planning in the Pine Forest Mountain Range for fuels and restoration activities, which will be kicked off later in fiscal year 2017.

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. A decision is planned on being released for this district wide plan in March of 2017. 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.

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.



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

Mitigation/Education/Prevention

There are currently 16 community events 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, which includes the 6 cases from the 2016 fire season.

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WINNEMUCCA DISTRICT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Winnemucca District is currently working on implementation of sage-grouse plan amendment.

Ruby Pipeline

In concert with Ruby Pipeline, LLC., the BLM monitors the revegetation outcomes along the right-of-way. Discussions are occurring to look at re-seeding sections along the Right of Way.