



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

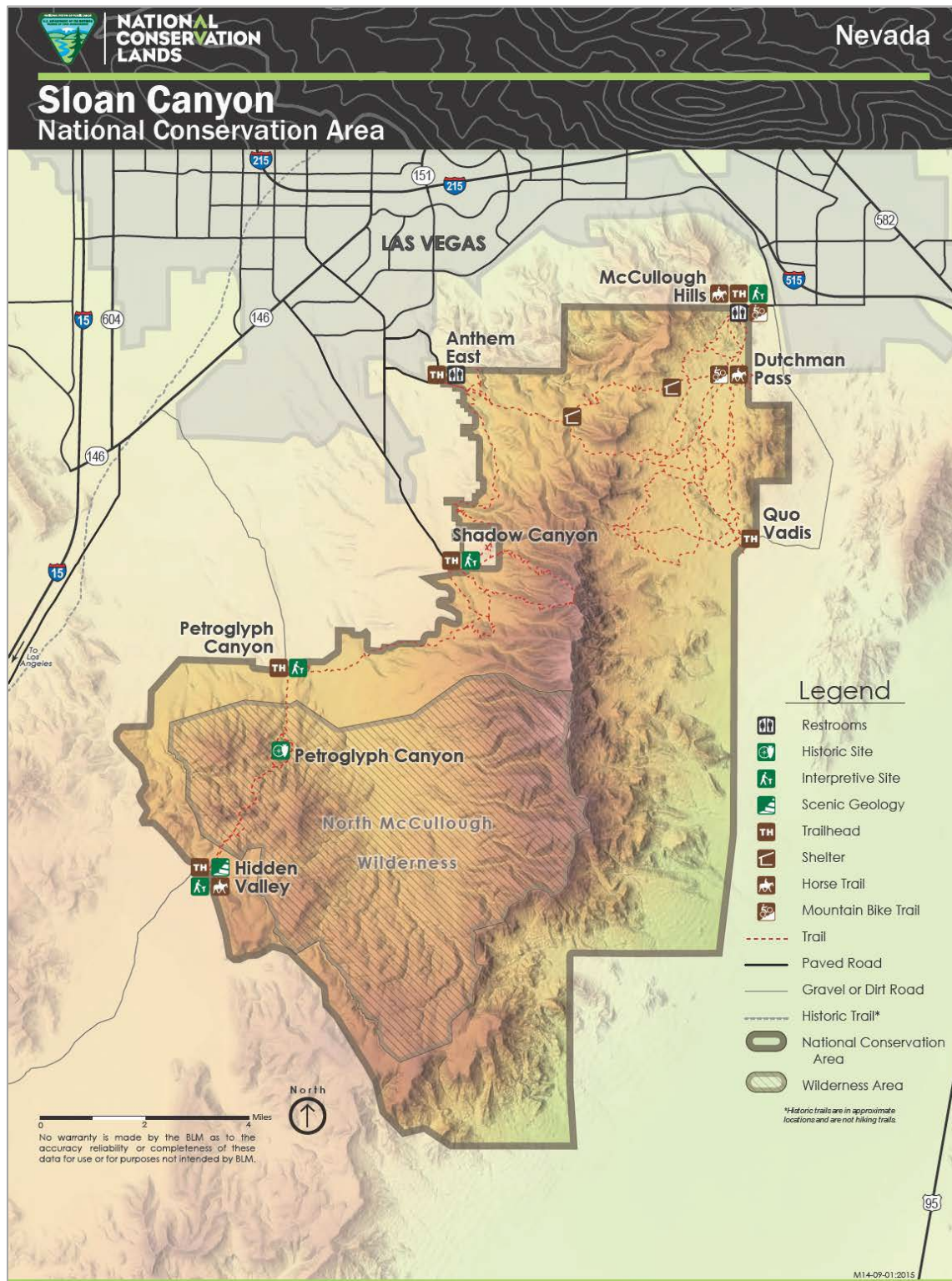
Nevada
2022: Annual Manager's Report

Sloan Canyon

National Conservation Area



Map



Accomplishments

Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area (SCNCA) accomplished many projects that have been pending for several years and started new projects that are a vital part to the success for SCNCA's future.

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Packet Development

SCNCA submitted a capital improvement proposal to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Working Group for consideration to cover the costs of constructing the Visitor Contact Station (VCS), expanding the interpretative elements, designing, and installing an entrance gate, and installing a boundary fence. This package was accepted by SNPLMA and the Working Group. SCNCA continues to use the overall project funding that was approved at \$19.8 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 to complete the project.

Wilderness Accomplishments

In FY2022, the Wilderness Specialist for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Southern Nevada District, completed the Commercial Services Needs Assessment for the Petroglyph Management Area (PMA) within SCNCA and North McCullough Wilderness Area. This was a priority as the NCA experiences unprecedented visitation due to the rapid growth of the adjacent Las Vegas and Henderson valleys. The completion of this critical assessment will allow further development of a Minimum Requirements Decision Guide, help provide direction to manage visitor-use in the PMA, and assist the agency's preservation of wilderness character in the North McCullough Wilderness Area.



Implementation Management Strategy

In FY2022, the Implementation Management Strategy was approved by the State Director in early April. It will be revised as needed or every 5 years to adapt to changing use, climate, funding, and external pressures. The strategy focuses on use of the special account on staffing and infrastructure. The special account use will be mitigated through aggressive fundraising and partnerships going forward.

Congressional Cadastral Standard Operating Procedures Guide

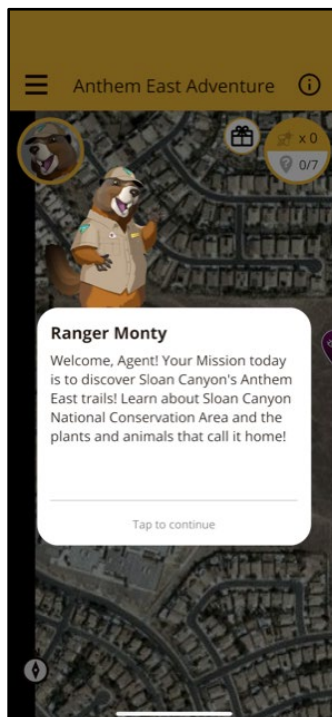
SCNCA, working with the Nevada State Office and the Southern Nevada District Office's cadastral teams, created a Standard Operating Procedures Guide to complete SCNCA's congressional mapping. In 2021, this project was made a priority by the Deputy State Director. Due to staffing limitations, this project has been postponed until FY2024 and FY2025.

Staffing

In FY2022, SCNCA tried to hire an Outdoor Recreation Planner. Unfortunately, the candidate ultimately declined the offer. This position remained open throughout FY2022. The contract for our Experienced Services Program interpretive specialist was renewed. With approval of the Implementation Strategy, BLM expects growth in staffing in coming years.

Agents of Discovery

Agents of Discovery launched three different missions during FY2022. The most successful being the Earth Day mission at the McCullough Hills trailhead.



SCNCA Contact Station Design

A design for a new VCS was completed in August 2021. The new contact station is expected to draw throngs of guests from around the world and offer an alternative recreational opportunity to the world-renowned Red Rock Canyon Visitor's Center at the other side of the Las Vegas Valley. A few design challenges were averted while working closely with the City of Henderson (COH). COH had requested SCNCA to develop and install fire hydrants along Nawghaw Poa Road which would have required a very expensive pumping system with costly maintenance. SCNCA collaborated with COH Fire Department to accommodate for safety measures at the future VCS building. COH agreed to a new design which included a 30,000-gallon water storage tank, two fire hydrants installed at the building and a small capacity fire sprinkler system.



Tribal Community Involvement

During FY2022, SCNCA staff continued working with tribes from Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and California, each with cultural and spiritual connections to SCNCA. The sharing of culture, tradition, symbolism, and language has profoundly impacted the collaborative effort to share the story and significance of SCNCA in interpretive planning for the VCS and the Jr. Ranger book.

Challenges

Wilderness Challenges

The impacts to the North McCullough Wilderness Area continue to include loss of solitude, degradation of cultural resources, threats to the Desert Bighorn Sheep population, motorized and mechanized incursions, and impacts to the natural quality of wilderness character.

SCNCA shares a swiftly growing wildland-urban interface along its border with the continuously developing community of Henderson, Nevada. While SCNCA progresses forward with plans to construct a VCS and expects this to assist the BLM in managing visitor-use, including providing the public with wilderness education, the development will also add publicity to the NCA and contribute further to the popularity of the area. These factors have consequently added to the challenges managing the North McCullough Wilderness and our obligation to preserve the outstanding opportunities for solitude, unconfined recreation, and cultural features of value.

The PMA is entirely within the North McCullough Wilderness Area and continues to be a challenging site for the BLM to manage. However, with the completion of the Commercial Services Needs Assessment and emerging Minimum Requirements Decision Guide, the agency is actively developing an implementation plan to manage visitor-use in the PMA and preserve the cultural resources found in throughout the wilderness area. Below, a photo of the Petroglyph Trail that leads to the PMA.



Visitors

Recreation Visitation

In 2021, the SCNCA saw increased visitation largely attributed to the pandemic. While visitation numbers decreased slightly in FY2022, the development and use of social trails created during the pandemic continues. Newly developed neighborhoods within 200' of the NCA boundary suggest this will continue to be an issue. SCNCA is working with the COH Parks and Recreation Department and the COH Planning Division to properly plan future access points and trail systems that coincide with the management of the SCNCA and COH community goals.

Interpretation

SCNCA continues to evolve our interpretation strategies and are working with all ages to develop an interest in Sloan Canyon. Sloan Canyon Staff have worked very hard to develop a Tribal Interpretive Working group to help further the opportunities for tribal input and involvement for many years. Staff have developed innovative and effective solutions to help mitigate financial restrictions that prohibit some tribal members from being able to participate in the working group.

Visitor Education Opportunities

The SCNCA staff continues to revamp the education programming sector with updated school district curriculum. During the pandemic, there were no invites or opportunities to enter schools to conduct some of our best programs and further the BLM's Every Kid Outdoors program. In FY2022, the SCNCA staff participated in several education and outreach events.



Partnerships

Friends of Sloan Canyon

SCNCA continued our relationship with our primary partner, Friends of Sloan Canyon. The pandemic impacted many of our volunteer and outreach opportunities. The installation of the temporary mobile offices at Petroglyph Trailhead and easing of pandemic restrictions in FY2022 provided the opportunity to reengage with our partner.

Wilderness Partners

Friends of Nevada Wilderness continues to exemplify the benefits of partnership providing great help in FY2022. From conducting critically needed restoration of non-designated routes into the wilderness areas to providing wilderness stewardship opportunities to an ever-growing community, Friends of Nevada Wilderness consistently exceeds partnership expectations and will continue to work with the Sloan Canyon NCA in 2023 and beyond.

Science

Science Plan Draft

In August of 2021, Sloan Canyon began drafting the Sloan Canyon Science Plan. Work on the plan continued in 2022 with the promise of engaging USGS as a partner in the planning process.



Climate Impacts and Resiliency

Sloan Canyon has continued to feel the effects of the ongoing drought that is typically experienced in the west. There has also been habitat fragmentation, a growing wildland-urban interface, and rising temperatures across the southwest region.

With various climate related impacts, Sloan Canyon, with the help of the City of Henderson, has started to implement more direct notice to visitors about the drought, rising temperatures and the importance of hiking with snacks and water. Staff have recommended to visitors the importance of water and the staying on designating trails. Habitat fragmentation is a direct result of a growing urban interface surrounding to SCNCA. The team continued to work on supplemental rules to ensure protection of highly important ecosystems and will continue to monitor all aspects of SCNCA in future.



Social and Environmental Justice

The new VCS is designed to follow guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Architectural Barriers Act (ABA), and once built, will provide opportunities for people with disabilities have “ready access to and use of” federal buildings and facilities. The ADA-ABA areas will include the building interior space, the Amphitheatre, and the half-mile loop trail.

Staff has also been planning to incorporate tribal heritage in various ways into the new building such as, hands-on demonstrations, space for tribal vendors to sell their goods, allowing the tribes to sell their goods, and tribal story telling within the Amphitheatre. Bilingual interpretation is also planned. This will help the growing Spanish speaking population in Las Vegas and the United States have better and more meaningful access to their public lands in SCNCA.

Events

During COVID, very few events took place in Sloan Canyon. No Special Recreation Permits were received during 2022. Towards the end of the year, Friends of Sloan Canyon received a Letter of Authorization to start having Astronomy Nights at McCullough Hills Trailhead. With much success, an additional back-to-back day had to be added due to the high-level interest and low special group gathering levels allowed by BLM Policy.



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Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area

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