

# U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management

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## Coppersmith OHV Route Restoration



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## Coppersmith OHV Route Restoration

## **CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE AND NEED**

### **Background**

In June 2004, the Surprise Field Office (SFO) completed an inventory of Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) routes within the entire resource area. These routes were designated in the 2008 Resource Management Plan (RMP) as closed, open or unauthorized. Since the RMP, BLM has closed many routes that were unauthorized. However, additional routes have either been created or have been identified since the 2004 inventory. The majority of these unauthorized OHV routes are less than a mile in length and terminate at lookouts, fence lines or drainages. None of these serve beneficial purposes for resource management and do not lead to important recreational resources. Some of the routes identified for closure in this EA were also created from a trespass case that occurred in 2013.

### **Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the project is to close and reclaim several small routes, preventing them from increasing in width and/or length in the future. BLM also wishes to prevent any additional degradation to the present resources and landscape.

The need for the project is to restore lands not currently available to OHV use to their current natural conditions and protect native wildlife habitat and cultural resources.

### **Decision to be Made**

In accordance with NEPA and the Council of Environmental Quality implementation regulations the BLM has prepared this environmental assessment for the authorization of the restoration of unauthorized routes in the Coppersmith Hills.

### **Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, and Plans**

#### Cultural Resources

Under the National Historic Preservation Act The California Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has responsibility to manage cultural resources on public lands pursuant to the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, the 1980 Rangeland Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Places (WO IM 80-369), the 1997 Programmatic Agreement Among the BLM, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers Regarding the Manner in Which BLM Will Meet Its Responsibilities, and the primary agreement, which dictates how the BLM in California will meet its responsibilities under the above Statutes and Regulations, the 2014 State Protocol Agreement among the California State Director of the BLM, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Nevada State historic Preservation Officer.

#### Threatened or Endangered Species

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) requires federal agencies to complete formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for any action that “may affect” federally listed species or critical habitat. The ESA also requires federal agencies to use their

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authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of endangered, threatened and candidate species. The BLM has conducted formal and informal Section 7 consultations and submitted biological assessments for the following;

### **Scoping**

The BLM Surprise Field Office conducted internal scoping with an interdisciplinary team of specialists as well as coordination and scoping with the local tribes. The project proposal was also publically scoped from March 3<sup>rd</sup> thru April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014. One comment was received from a local property owner and permittee and is discussed in Chapter 6. The draft EA was scoped from June 5<sup>th</sup> thru June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Two comments were received and are addressed in Chapter 6

### **Conformance with BLM Land Use Plans**

This proposed action is subject to the following use plan(s): Surprise Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Records of Decision (ROD), approved on April 2008. The proposed action has been determined to be in conformance with these plans as required by regulation (43 CFR 1610.5-3(a)). "Routes would be maintained, modified, created, or obliterated in order to meet land health standards, water quality standards, wildlife habitat needs, and changing public needs and desires." See page 2-58

## **Chapter 2 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES**

### **Alternative 1: Proposed Action**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Surprise Field Office would utilize CA OHV Grant funding to restore and barricade 5 unauthorized routes that range in lengths from 300 feet to 1.25 miles. All of these routes were created by OHV's that traveled off of designated routes. These routes are located off of Bare Creek Road in Townships 37N and 38N North, Ranges 17E East. The proposed project would restore 2.15 miles, 5.23 acres of unauthorized OHV routes.

The Project consists of five unauthorized routes.

1. 800 linear foot OHV trail that leads from a dispersed campground to a drainage overlook.
2. 305 linear foot OHV trail that connects two dispersed camp sites.
3. 0.35 mile OHV duplicate route
4. 1.25 mile OHV routes leading to rock collection and firewood cutting sites
5. 0.35 mile OHV routes leading to rock collection and firewood cutting sites

Total 11,401 linear feet or 2.15 miles, 5.23 acres

Reclamation techniques include ripping the road surface with a small dozer to break up compacted soil, create pits and hills along the road to allow maximum snow and rainfall retention. Broadcast and drill seeding native vegetation would generally be done in the spring and fall. After the seed has been distributed uniformly over the area by mechanical broadcasting devices, the ground would be raked or dragged to cover the seed. The entrance to each unauthorized route would be blocked with a barricade of rocks and/or earthen berm. The first 50-100' of the route would be vertically mulched to mask the road during the reseeding effort to prevent future use. After the first year, seeded areas would be evaluated and success determined. If 50% ground cover is not met, reseeding will continue.

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Reclamation Techniques Defined:

**Vertical Mulching:** This technique would involve randomly placing vegetation litter (e.g. dead plants, branches etc.) to camouflage the route and discourage use. Native plant litter adjacent to the site would be used or brought in from a similar site where native vegetation was removed for a specific project such as road maintenance.

**Broadcast Seeding:** Broadcast seeding involves spreading seeds on the soil surface. Seeds can be dispersed by hand or mechanical spreaders. A high seeding rate of 500 pure live seed (PLS) /m<sup>2</sup> is recommended. To increase germination potential and reduce seed herbivory, seeding would be followed by raking or dragging a small chain over the surface to cover the seed.

**Drill Seeding:** Drill seeding requires the use of specially designed implements pulled by a tractor or atv to rip soil, drop seeds and cover them at a desired depth. Seeding rates are 125-250 PLS/m<sup>2</sup>. Drill seeding provides even seed coverage, increased seedling rates and accurate seed metering.

**Pitting:** Pitting would involve creating small depressions on the soil surface to catch seeds, rainwater, topsoil and plant litter. Pitting consists of using tools to dig basins rather than create impressions on the soil surface. Pitting is more appropriate on sandy soils. Pit size varies from 1.5 to 2.4 m long (5 to 8 ft.) and 0.15 m deep (0.5 ft.) with a sloped bottom.

### **Map 1: Proposed Action**

#### **Alternative 2: No Action**

Under the No Action Alternative, the route would remain in place. OHV use would continue to be “open” on the routes.

## **CHAPTER 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

### **Supplemental Authorities of the Human Environment**

The following supplemental authorities of the human environment are specifically required by statute, regulation, and executive order and must be considered in the Proposed Action and Alternatives. Supplemental Authorities of the Human Environment are those elements that are subject to the requirements specified in statute, regulation, or executive order, and must be considered in all EAs (BLM H-1790-1, Appendix 5). These authorities have either been analyzed in the Environmental Assessment or are not present or not affected by the Proposed Action or Alternatives.

Resource Issue Area	Supplemental Authority	Not Present	Present Not Affected	Present May Affect	Comments
Air Quality			✓		The activities inherent in the proposed action are not of the nature and scope that would have impacts on air quality.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (s)		✓			There are no ACEC's located within the Project Area.
Cultural Resources	National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 USC 470)			✓	Analyses of the potential for the Proposed Action to result in environmental effects related to Cultural Resources are presented in <b>Section 3.1</b>
Environmental Justice	E.O. 12898, "Environmental Justice" February 11, 1994	✓			Implementation of the Proposed Action would not disproportionately affect low income or minority populations.

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Essential Fish Habitat	Essential Fish Habitat Magnuson-Stevens Act Provision: Essential Fish Habitat (EFH): Final Rule (50 CFR Part 600; 67 FR 2376, January 17, 2002)	✓			There is no Essential Fish Habitat located within the Project Area.
Farmlands, Prime and Unique		✓			There are no Prime or Unique farmlands located within the Project Area.
Floodplains	E.O. 11988, as amended, Floodplain Management, 5/24/77	✓			There are no FEMA-mapped 100- or 500-year floodplains within the Project Area.
Invasive, Non-native Species			✓		Cheat grass and non-native weed species are present within the projects area.
West Nile Virus			✓		There would be no effect to West Nile Virus spread from the Proposed Action.
Global Climate Change			✓		There would be no effect on Global Climate Change from the Proposed Action.

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Livestock Management			✓		Livestock grazing does occur within the project area however due to the scope and size of the proposed action there would be no impacts to livestock grazing.
Native American Religious Concerns	American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (42 USC 1996)		✓		No Native American Religious Concerns were expressed during consultation with the Fort Bidwell Tribe, Cedarville Rancheria, and Summit Lake Paiute Tribe.
Recreation				✓	Recreation would be limited to designated routes within the project area. <b>Section 3.4</b>
Social and Economic Values			✓		Analyses of the potential for the Proposed Action to result in environmental effects related to Social and/or Economic Values are discussed in the Livestock Management section.

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Soils				✓	Analyses of the potential for the Proposed Action to result in environmental effects related to Soils are presented in <b>Section 3.2</b>
Visual Resource Management				✓	The project area falls within a VRM class II. The proposed action helps enhance the VRM attributes and results in no impacts.
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (43 USC 6901 et seq.) Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended (43 USC 9615)			✓	Implementation of the Proposed Action would not result in hazards materials/waste exposure to people or the environment, nor would implementation result in effects related to solid waste.
Water Quality	Safe Drinking Water Act, as amended (43 USC 300f et seq.) Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 USC 1251 et seq.)			✓	Implementation of the Proposed Action would not affect ground water.

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Wetlands /Riparian Zones	E.O. 11990 Protection of Wetlands 5/24/77		✓		The Proposed Action is expected to have a negligible effect on the Wetlands and Riparian Zones and composition would remain sustainable.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended (16 USC 1271)	✓			There are no designated Wild and Scenic rivers within the Project Area.
Wilderness (lands with wilderness characteristics)	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 USC 1701 et seq.); Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 USC 1131 et seq.)	✓			The project area is not within a WSA.
Wild Horse and Burros			✓		Implementation of the Proposed Action would not affect Wild Horse and Burros
Wildlife and Threatened/Endangered Wildlife Species	Endangered Species Act of 1983, as amended (16 USC 1531) E.O. 131186, “Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds” January 10, 2001			✓	There are no known federally-listed species in the Project Area.  Analyses of the potential for the Proposed Action to result in environmental effects related to Wildlife are presented in <b>Section 3.3</b>

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Vegetation and Threatened/Endangered Vegetation Species	Endangered Species Act of 1983, as amended (16 USC 1531)		✓		The Proposed Action is expected to have a negligible effect on the native plant community and the vegetation community structure and composition would remain sustainable.
Fire and Fuels Management		✓			There would be no effect on Fire and Fuels Management from the Proposed Action.

Interdisciplinary Team Review and Supplemental Authorities: The affected environment of the project area was described by an interdisciplinary Team Analysis Record Checklist. A copy of this checklist is attached to this EA. The Checklist indicates which resources are either not present in the project area or would not be impacted to a degree that requires detailed analysis. Supplemental Authorities are those elements that are subject to the requirements specified in statute, regulation, or executive order, and may be considered in EAs (BLM H-1790-1 Appendix 1). Supplemental Authorities are included in the checklist. Resources potentially affected are described in Chapter 3 and impacts on these resources are analyzed in Chapter 4.

### 3.1 Cultural Resources

#### A. Affected Environment

The consideration of cultural resources is a critical component of Bureau of Land Management practices on Public Lands in the Surprise Field Office. Cultural resources are locations or objects of human activity, occupation, or use. These resources include archaeological, historic, architectural sites, structures, and places with important public and scientific values; and locations of traditional cultural or religious importance to specific social or cultural groups. Cultural resources discussed in this section include districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, and traditional cultural properties listed on or eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The cultural resource component of the affected environment is covered by several legislative authorities including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (NHPA), the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and Executive Order (E.O.) 13007, and the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and the State Protocol Agreement between BLM California and California and Nevada SHPO (2014).

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In 2014 the Surprise Field Office (SFO) Archaeologist conducted a National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 compliance inventory of the routes. The inventory is designed to identify any cultural resources that may be affected by the proposed action of restoring the unauthorized routes. The horizontal Area of Potential Effect (APE) is defined as 100 meters buffer around the project area. The vertical APE is defined as 24 inch depth within the project area. As a result of the inventory the SFO Archaeologist identified two archaeological sites either directly or indirectly impacted by the unauthorized routes. Both sites were determined eligible for the National Register of the Historic Places.

The BLM formally consulted with the Cedarville Rancheria (on February 14, 2014), the Fort Bidwell Tribe (on March 13, 2014), and the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe (on April 12, 2014) regarding this project. No comments or concerns from any of the tribes were expressed. Therefore, no known impacts are expected to the tribes, and this issue will not be further discussed in this EA.

#### B. Environmental Consequences

**PROPOSED ACTION:** The proposed action would have beneficial effects to the cultural resources; by restoring the unauthorized route that directly impacts one site erosion will be reduced within the site. Erosion can negatively impact a site by dispersing artifacts and damaging the integrity of the site. Route rehabilitation would also reduce the threats of illicit vandalism of sites by decreasing site accessibility. Project actions would benefit, protect, and avoid all cultural properties as defined by the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA) and the implementing regulations found at 36 CFR §800 and 36 CFR §60.4.

**NO ACTION:** The no action alternative would allow impacts to cultural sites to continue and expand along existing routes more quickly since route restoration would occur on a case by case basis. In some instances, adverse effects to significant cultural properties could occur from continuing OHV activity on routes crossing through or near sites.

### **3.2 Soils**

#### A. Affected Environment

The soil classification for the Tuledad Allotment is contained in the Surprise Valley/Home Camp Soil Survey (an Order III soil survey). The soil survey has been updated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Reno State Office to current standards and can be found on the NRCS web site.

#### B. Environmental Consequences

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Implementation of the proposed action would reduce the impacts of soil erosion because the area of bare ground would decrease. Impacts would include increased soil stabilization, maintenance of biotic soils resources, rill reduction and soil surface texturing which would reduce wind erosion.

**NO ACTION:** Under the no action alternative, soil resources would continue to be susceptible to erosion and structural alteration leading to a long-term loss of overall soil productivity.

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### **3.3 Wildlife/T&E Species, BLM Sensitive Species/Migratory Bird Species**

#### **A. Affected Environment**

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

In March 2010, the USFWS announced its listing decision for the Greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) as “warranted but precluded”. At this time the species is officially considered a Candidate Species for listing, but does not receive statutory protection under the ESA. Candidate species designation means the USFWS has sufficient information on biological vulnerability and threat(s) to support issuance of a proposed rule to list, but issuance is precluded by higher priority listing actions. Individual states continue to be responsible for managing sage-grouse. “Candidate species and their habitats are managed as Bureau sensitive species”, (BLM Manual 6840, December 2008). The Greater sage-grouse is discussed below.

The Greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) is a large gallinaceous bird associated with sagebrush steppe habitats. Sage-grouse breed at communal strutting grounds (“leks”) where males display for females. Leks are located in open, low sagebrush habitats or in other areas with sparse, low vegetation. Sage-grouse females nest most commonly within two miles of the lek; but some females may nest much further away depending on surrounding habitat conditions (Knick and Connelly, 2011).

Sage-grouse nest on the ground, most often under taller sagebrush cover (15-38% shrub canopy; 36 -79 cm shrub height) such as the “big” sagebrush types and Wyoming sagebrush (Connelly, 2000). Successful nesting habitat generally contains taller grass cover in association with this sagebrush (Connelly, 2000) although there is some variability across the range of sage-grouse. Although many nests have been found in lower quality habitats (i.e. rabbitbrush dominated habitats or habitats with lack of perennial grasses and nesting cover) these are almost always unsuccessful due to nest abandonment and predation. Sage-grouse utilize sagebrush as both winter and nesting habitat. Sage-grouse feed on sagebrush buds and forbs throughout much of the year, especially early spring through fall. Peak egg-laying and incubation varies from late March through mid-June, with re-nesting stretching into early July. Brood-rearing habitats are wet meadow and riparian areas where the young can find insects which are critical to supply protein during the first few weeks of life. Estimated summer home range is 2.5 – 7 km<sup>2</sup> (618-1,730 ac) (Connelly, 2000). Forbs are important food sources for brood rearing and pre-nesting hens. Both project sites are located within habitat although current use in these areas is slight due to juniper encroachment.

#### **B. Environmental Consequences**

**PROPOSED ACTION:** The proposed action would allow effective implementation of RMP actions to protect wildlife species and their associated habitats. The route closures would prevent further habitat fragmentation from unauthorized routes and would prevent potential exotic plant species being introduced into these areas via seeds dropping off of vehicles, which could threaten native plant communities that wildlife species depend upon for completion of life cycles. Route realignment, barricades, and vertical mulching in areas would be beneficial to local wildlife by increasing the amount of habitat available in the long term. The proposed action would also assist in implementing RMP actions to maintain and enhance goals directed towards wildlife

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**NO ACTION:** Under this alternative, it would be more difficult to effectively implement seasonal and yearlong protection for important wildlife habitats identified in the RMP, or to monitor OHV activities and identify where impacts are occurring. The ability to address problems rapidly and effectively as they arise may be diminished. Wildlife may be subject to greater disturbance and habitat quality may decline due to fragmentation from unauthorized routes and potential introductions of exotic plant species that would threaten the sustainability of native plant communities that wildlife depend upon.

### **3.4 Recreation**

#### **A. Affected Environment**

The primary recreation in the vicinity of the project area is wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, OHV/pleasure driving and camping. Rock hounding, photography, mountain biking, and hiking also occur to lesser degrees. Abundant wildlife and a diverse landscape provide the public with opportunities for wildlife viewing and photography among other uses.

#### **B. Environmental Consequences**

**PROPOSED ACTION:** This alternative would benefit OHV recreation by maintaining, redesigning or relocating motorized access routes and/or correcting related resource disturbances by applying a range of management considerations to improve environmental values and facilitate motorized access. In localized areas, some decrease would occur to motorized use or access when routes would be closed after all other alternatives have been exhausted and other motorized access considerations made.

The proposed action would also allow the BLM to respond quickly to repair smaller problems before they become bigger and more complex. By restoring and maintaining damaged areas under this alternative as well as incorporating proactive measures such as route maintenance, education, visitor services, volunteer use and law enforcement presence, RMP and semi-primitive motorized objectives would be met more readily. This would result in a more sustainable OHV program in the long term, improving environmental values for motorized access enthusiasts who seek these values. It would also facilitate vehicle passage for visitors seeking semi-primitive motorized recreation experiences.

**NO ACTION:** The no action alternative would allow areas of environmental impact to remain in their present state for longer periods of time. Additionally, uncorrected surface damage would tend to grow in size, whether from natural occurrence such as poor drainage and rutting to driving off-route to avoid wet areas. This could result in additional or extended OHV prohibitions as well as diminish the semi primitive motorized recreation experience as a consequence of route proliferation, reduction of wildlife habitat, and deterioration of localized visual resources.

### **Chapter 4 Environmental Impacts**

The following information regarding past, present and future relevant actions for cumulative impacts applies to all alternatives and for all resource impacts discussed below.

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Cumulative impacts are the “incremental impacts of a proposal when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of which agency or person undertakes them” (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.7)

### **Cumulative Assessment Area**

The Cumulative Assessment Area for this EA would be the Tuledad Grazing allotment.

### **Past Actions**

Specific management for OHV use was identified in the 2008 Surprise RMP. Multiple use actions such as livestock grazing have occurred on the lands for the past 100 years. Dispersed recreation also occurred on these lands. General activities include: rock hounding, sightseeing, hunting, fishing, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, camping, and wildlife viewing. Most recreation use occurs during the summer, spring and fall, and associated with hunting activities. Lightning-caused wildfires have played a significant role in modifying the vegetation communities and wildlife habitat within the project area.

### **Present Actions**

Multiple use actions occur on a daily basis in the project area. Recreational uses as well as livestock grazing occur primarily between April and October. Casual recreational OHV use occurs throughout the year. OHV's must stay on designated routes.

### **Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions (RFFA)**

Cattle grazing is expected to continue on the Tuledad Allotment within the proposed action area, at roughly the same stocking levels and seasons of use as currently permitted.

Casual recreational use and OHV use is expected to continue at the same moderate levels to occur throughout the year on designated routes. Roads tend to expand or increase in size the longer they stay open. Illegal routes would get used more every year they are open. This in turn would allow them to increase in length and width. Over time these roads could lead to the creation of new sections of routes that get used by OHV users.

### **Cumulative Impacts to Affected Resources**

Impacts associated with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions are generally created by ground or vegetation-disturbing activities that affect natural and cultural resources in various ways. Of particular concern is the accumulation of these impacts over time. This section of the EA considers the nature of the cumulative effect and analyzes the degree to which the proposed action and alternatives contribute to the collective impact. Inter-related resources with similar impacts have been grouped together for the cumulative impact analysis.

#### **4.1 Cultural Resources**

A specific cultural resource is influenced by its environmental setting and the culture that produced it. Although this makes each cultural resource unique, the impacts caused by past, present and future actions tend to have similar effects on cultural resources. Since many Great Basin and northeastern California prehistoric sites are on the surface or near surface, any ground disturbing activities destroy site integrity, spatial patterning and ability to determine site function. Datable organic features are either destroyed or contaminated. Previous localized

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grazing, range improvements, road construction/maintenance, and OHV use have caused these types of impacts to cultural resources. Grazing has probably affected a larger number of sites than is documented. Looting occurs but inadvertent actions from recreation, rock hounding and other off-road activities affect cultural resources as well. Future increased OHV use within the field office could be especially damaging to the cultural resources located in these unique locations. The intense heat from wildfires has the potential to break artifacts and damage prehistoric rock art. In the foreseeable future, recreational use is expected to increase and these activities sometimes coincide with sensitive cultural resources causing displacement and mixed deposits of prehistoric/historic and modern debris. Vegetation management activities could increase the visibility of cultural sites potentially exposing them to increased looting. The restoration of the sage steppe habitat could increase the quantity and distribution of living cultural resources. Inventories associated with planning for vegetation management would increase the state of knowledge concerning the local and regional cultural setting.

**Direct and Indirect Impacts of Proposed Action:**

Under the proposed action the route would be closed which could safeguard these important resources from future degradation. All future route closure projects would be subject to the NHPA Section 106, all applicable BLM/SHPO protocols, and environmental requirement including NEPA requirements. BLM would continue to conduct monitoring and project inspections to determine if the projects have accomplished LUP goals and objectives. Therefore, the overall cumulative impact would be expected to be neutral to positive for cultural resources.

**Direct and Indirect Impacts of No Action Alternative:**

Under the no action alternative the routes would be left open and cultural resources may degrade over time. One of the routes has significant resources that if the roads were not closed these resources could be subject to theft or vandalism. Therefore, the overall cumulative impact would be expected to be neutral to negative for cultural resources.

**4.2 Soils**

**Direct and Indirect Impacts of Proposed Action:** Under the proposed action the routes would be closed and standards would be set in place to prevent future soil loss and erosion. Therefore, the overall cumulative impact would be expected to be neutral to positive for soils.

**Direct and Indirect Impacts of No Action Alternative:** Under the no action alternative the routes would stay in place and the soils may continue to be damaged by unauthorized OHV use. If these places are left open the soils could degrade further and impact more resources. The no action alternative cumulative impacts would be slightly negative due to continued impacts to erosion.

**4.3 Wildlife/T&E Species, BLM Sensitive Species/Migratory Bird Species**

**Direct and Indirect Impacts of Proposed Action:** Under the proposed action the routes would be restored to their natural state. Closing the routes would add additional habitat for wildlife once the reclamation process is complete. This would also have benefits to a variety of birds, small mammals, and big game by providing nesting and hiding cover, and forage at ground level. Wildlife management activities including monitoring sage-grouse would continue. No cumulative impacts would occur as a result of the proposed action.

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**Direct and Indirect Impacts of No Action Alternative:** Under the no action alternative these routes would be left open and could grow in size with future use. This could have negative effect on habitat and would result in continued habitat fragmentation. The no action alternative cumulative impacts would be slight, if any.

**4.4 Recreation**

**Direct and Indirect Impacts of Proposed Action:** The proposed action would promote OHV use on designated routes, prevent future damage to resources and would not lead to a loss in OHV recreation. Therefore, the overall cumulative impact would be expected to be neutral to positive for recreation.

**Direct and Indirect Impacts of No Action Alternative:** Under the no action alternative the area would not be restored which may cause continual degradation to resources. This damage could lead to a loss of OHV recreational opportunities. Therefore, the overall cumulative impact would be expected to be neutral to negative for recreation.

**Chapter 5 PERSONS, GROUPS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED**

Tuledad Livestock grazing permittees	Summit Lake Paiute Tribe	Cedarville Rancheria
Fort Bidwell Tribe	Modoc Fish Game and Rec Comission	CDFW

**Chapter 6 Public Comment**

**Public Scoping Comment-** A comment letter was received by a local Grazing permittee during the initial project scoping process. This letter was not in favor of closing route 3 since it is used for driving livestock and camping.

Response:

BLM appreciated your comments and has taken into account all the factors you brought up when formulating the proposed action. Route 3 parallels the main road for .35 miles. The main road can be used for trailing livestock in the area so the need for the .35 mile route 3 is not necessary and would not cause a hardship on the livestock operations. The use of route 3 for camping is applicable but not necessary. Within a ¼ mile of route 3 there are numerous other sites that are used for camping. Closing this route would not cause hardship on camping in the area vicinity.

**Public Comment on the Draft EA-** Two comments letters were received during the draft EA public comment period. One from Kurt Stodtmeister and one Estill Ranches LLC.

Kurt Stodtmeister comment addresses the Tuledad grazing association’s opposition to any road closures. They state that the roads are insignificant and only used periodically. The roads lead to camp sites and private lands and should be left open. Federal monies should not be spent on these projects.

Response: BLM appreciates your comment and understand that the roads may appear to be insignificant due to the size and amount of use. However small insignificant routes are sometimes the best routes to close to help clean up the travel management system since these

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routes serve no purpose and have no beneficial use. Routes 1 and 2 are roads that lead from existing dispersed camping areas. BLM does not intend to close the routes leading to these camping areas. Routes 4 and 5 were put in illegally in 2013 and are required to be reclaimed. Route 3 parallels the main road and has no regular evidence of high use from camping. Closing these routes will also prevent the roads from expanding over time. Funding for these projects comes from a separate fund that can only be used for route restoration.

Estill Ranches LLC comments oppose the proposed action for older roads created prior to 1976. Some of the routes proposed are used for the operation’s sheep’s camps and that RS2477 applies. They state that the BLM’s definition of how the roads were created is incorrect and that he route should be left open.

Response: On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 BLM personnel met with a representative of Estill Ranches on concerns brought up about Route 3. BLM and Estill Ranches agreed that the main portion of the route (0.25 miles) would be left open for access and camping. The remainder of the route (0.10 miles) would be restored. The decision record will address this. See maps for details

**List of BLM Preparers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Responsible for the Following Section(s) of this Document</b>
Scott Soletti	Wildlife Biologist/Noxious Weeds Coordinator	Wildlife, Migratory Birds, T&E Flora and Fauna, Vegetation, Riparian/Water quality
Steve Surian	Sup. Rangeland Management Specialist	Livestock Management, Soils
Jennifer Rovanpera	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Paleontology
Roger Farschon	Ecologist	EA Preparation
Dan Ryan	Lands/Realty/Recreation Specialist	Project Lead- Recreation

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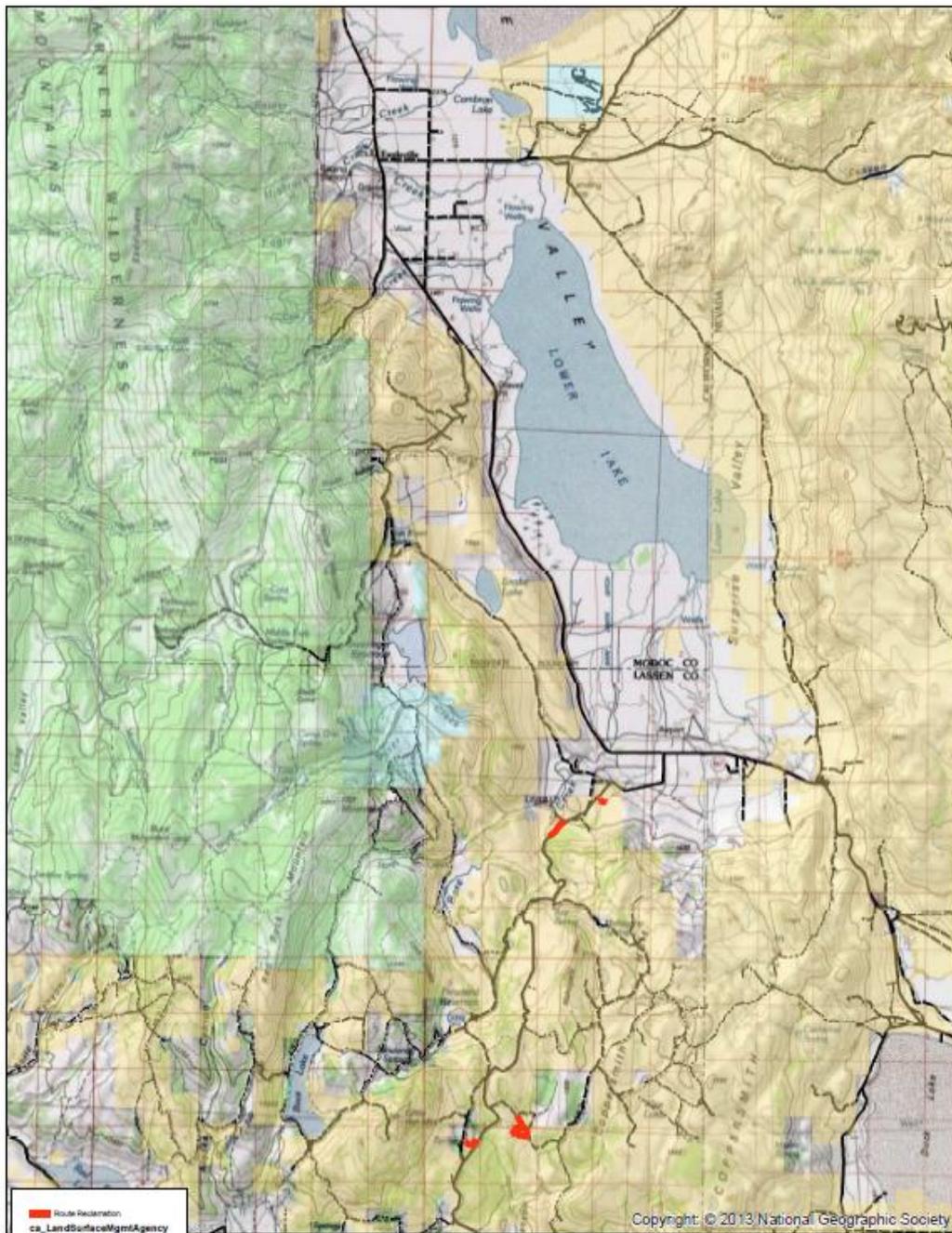
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## Maps

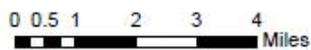
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### **Coppersmith OHV Route Restoration**

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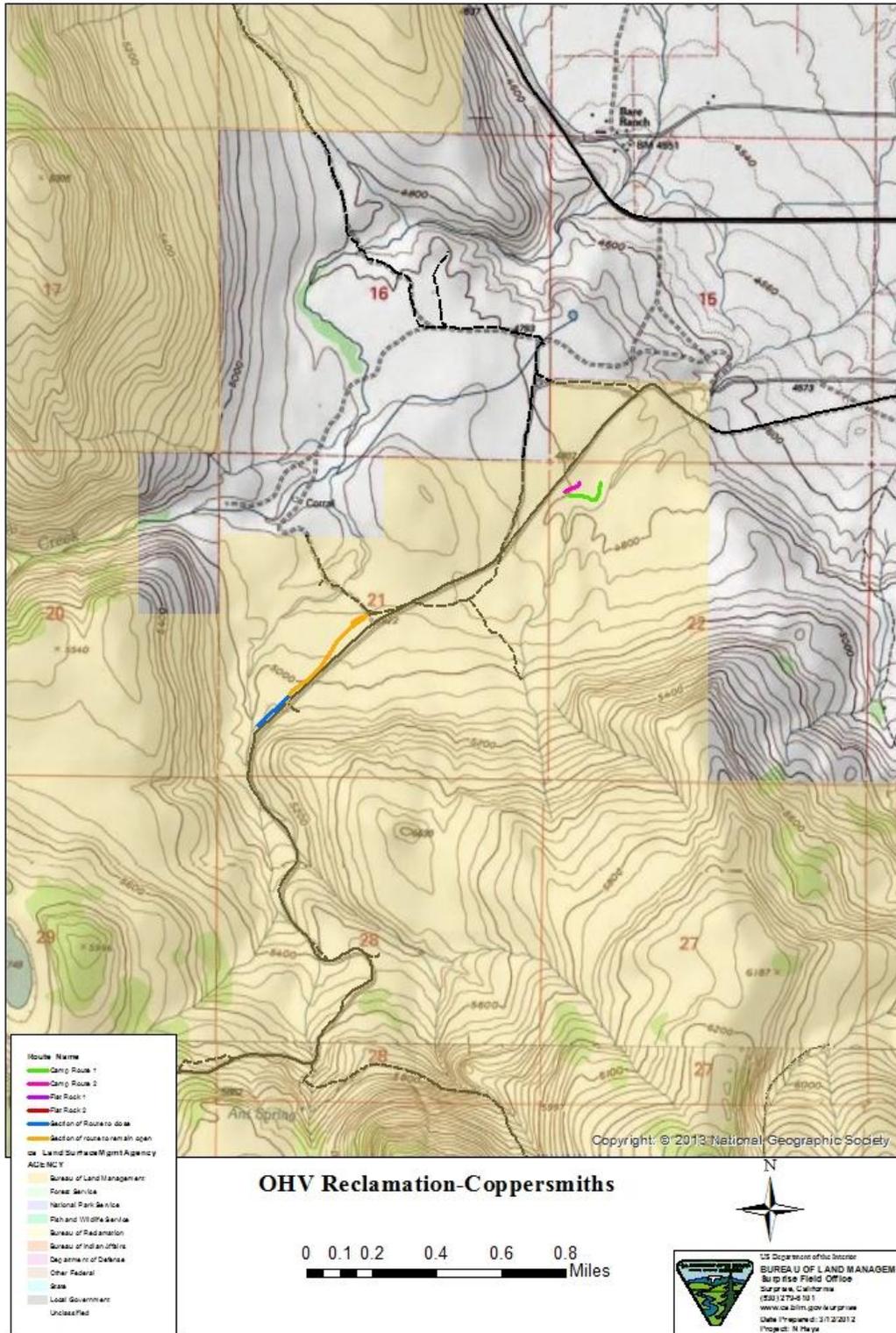


### OHV Reclamation-Coppersmiths

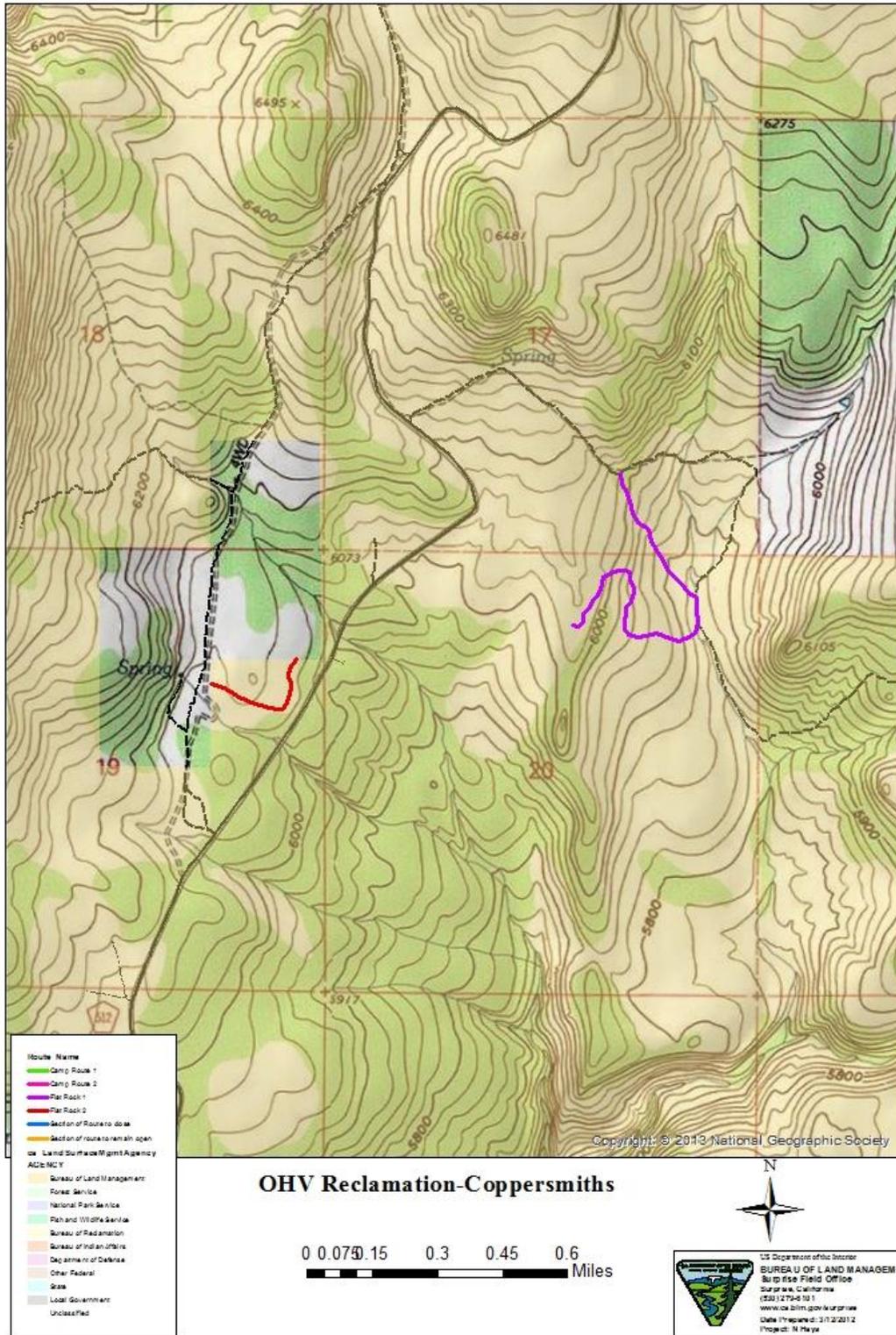


U.S. Department of the Interior  
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 Date Prepared: 01/20/12  
 Project: N-Hays

## Coppersmith OHV Route Restoration



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