



**Bureau of Land Management  
Battle Mountain District  
Annual Report  
January 2013**



**Phoenix Project: Phoenix Pit**

## The Establishment of the Battle Mountain Grazing District in South-Central Nevada, 1947-1951

The Battle Mountain District was the last district in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to be established. The Battle Mountain District is actually the Nevada (N) - 6 grazing district and was legally formed in 1951. Like all BLM Districts in Nevada, the Battle Mountain District's origin was tied to the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934.

During the years prior to becoming a grazing district, many relevant discussions and negotiations took place between the BLM and the local ranchers. During that time, area ranchers held a series of public hearings to determine whether or not to form a grazing district. Failure to do so would have resulted in all of the public land in central Nevada being designated as leasable to grazing under Section 15 of the Taylor Grazing Act. The dilemma facing the ranchers was either to form a district and accept increased federal regulation or face the reduced protections to their grazing operations resulting from leasing under Section 15. The following is a historical account of the major events that took place leading to the establishment of the N-6 Grazing District and subsequently the formation of the Battle Mountain District.

After considering the matter for more than a year, livestock operators in the region met in Tonopah on December 4, 1948, where they voted 48 to 6 in favor of a grazing district. The lopsided margin by which local ranchers approved the formation of what became N-6 Grazing District, though, is somewhat deceiving. Later documents indicated that the majority of stockmen in the area remained "opposed to any form of range regulation" and only "accepted the district as the lesser of two evils," since they believed that "leasing was definitely not applicable" to the area.

The opposition to the establishment of District 6 did not cease with the December 1948 vote in favor of creating the district. Ranchers in Nye, Lander, Eureka, Esmeralda, and Lincoln counties argued that much of the unregulated grazing land in the area was "absolutely useless for grazing purposes." Because of this, many claimed that there was "no reason in the world" why the federal government should force them to accept federal regulation. Others worried that, once a grazing district was formed and grazing fees were implemented, they would be "forced out of business." The approval of a grazing district also reflected the acknowledgement that, while Section 15 leases "would have ensured less oversight," grazing permits established under the 1934 law "were far more secure in the long term."

While opposition to the creation of District 6 clearly existed throughout the 1930s and 1940s, historical evidence also indicates that some south-central Nevada stockmen actually favored the increased federal regulation offered by the Taylor Grazing Act. In spite of ongoing opposition to grazing district formation throughout this period, some ranchers in the Nye County region submitted a petition in 1940 asking for their organization to become part of a grazing district. Writing in May 1947, then BLM Director Fred Johnson recalled that "the livestock men of the state" had voted "overwhelmingly in favor of placing the entire state in grazing districts" during the January 1935 meetings pertaining to the initial formation of grazing districts in Nevada. Interestingly, most of the ranchers in what is now the Battle Mountain District did not favor becoming a district.

## The Establishment of the Battle Mountain Grazing District in South-Central Nevada, 1947-1951

(cont.)

Irrespective of the views favoring or opposing the creation of District 6, on February 9, 1951, BLM Director Marion Clawson published a notice establishing the district—the last such district created under the Taylor Grazing Act. As originally established, the district's boundaries encompassed roughly 7.37 million acres of public lands located primarily in Nye, Lander, and Eureka counties. While responses to the creation of District 6 were mixed, they included a heavy dose of opposition from those who had long opposed federal regulation of the area's public lands.

Among the “barrage of letters” received by the Interior Department in the wake of Clawson's February 1951 order were communications from Nevada Governor Charles Russell, Nevada Congressman Walter Baring, and Central Nevada Stockmen's Association President Richard Magee, all of whom strongly opposed the establishment of District 6. Each of these letters called on the secretary to take necessary action such that “the organization of the district be stopped.” In his responses, Secretary of the Interior Oscar Chapman assured each correspondent that he had considered “all the factors” affecting the issue and had concluded that, “once the district was established and in operation the stockmen using it would be much better satisfied with the conditions, and the stability of their operations would be greatly enhanced.” He then outlined the “guiding principles” that led to the creation of District 6.

Secretary Chapman further stated that information indicated that there was an urgent need for supervision of the use of the area not only to prevent overgrazing but also to provide for proper range development and improvement contemplated under the Taylor Grazing Act.

During the 1960s and 1970s, protests against federal regulation of grazing lands increased exponentially, both in Nevada and throughout the West, in response to the rise of multiple-use policies that increasingly governed public lands. Congress's passage of the Classification and Multiple Use Act in 1964 and the 1976 Federal Land Policy Management Act engendered ever more stringent opposition to federal regulation of public-domain grazing lands, leading to the so-called Sagebrush Rebellion. The Sagebrush Rebellion, particularly within the Battle Mountain District, was initially sparked by the rise of these multiple-use policies in the 1960s and 1970s which continued to inform much of the discussion surrounding grazing-land management in the West, even up to the present day.

Today, the Battle Mountain District encompasses over 10.5 million acres of public land and consists of a district office and two field offices. This evolution was due in part to an administrative change in the jurisdictional boundaries which occurred in the 1970s that resulted in much of southern Nye County and all of Esmeralda County being reassigned from the Las Vegas District to the Battle Mountain District.

**2013 Priorities:**

**Rockwood Lithium - Silver Peak**  
- This geothermal project anticipates proceeding into the development stage. Rockwood Lithium is currently exploring for a quality geothermal resource and will provide a utilization plan for the development of the geothermal resource to produce 5 megawatts of electricity to support the lithium production mining operation.



Crescent Dunes Solar Project

**Ormat dba ORNI 39, LLC:  
McGinness Hills** -This geothermal project is located 27 miles north of Austin. Construction of one 40-megawatt binary air cooled power plant was completed in fiscal year 2012. Ormat is currently exploring for geothermal resources so the approved second binary air cooled power plant can be developed.

**Indeck Tonopah Solar, LLC:  
Tonopah** - Indeck Tonopah Solar, LLC plans to construct an overhead 60 kV transmission line from a new facility substation located on the Nye County owned Tonopah Airport which will terminate at the existing Nevada Energy (NVE) 60 kV transmission line. This will also include a new 60 kV interconnection switching station to be located just south of the existing NVE transmission line. The project will connect to a 16 megawatt solar energy production facility to be built on Tonopah Airport non-federal property. The Energy Center will provide a renewable energy resource to the NVE system within the Town of Tonopah in Nye County.

**2012 Accomplishments:**

**Tonopah Solar Energy, LLC  
Crescent Dunes** - The 653 foot tall power tower receiver and mounting blocks for the mirrors are being installed. The hot and cold salt storage tanks and the power generation block were initiated in February 2012. When completed, the project will produce 110 megawatts of power.

**Rockwood Lithium - Silver Peak**  
- The exploration EA was completed and the Decision Record was signed in December 2012. Rockwood is currently conducting exploration activities to further define the geothermal resource.



McGinness Hills Geothermal Project

## Mount Lewis Field Office

### 2013 Priorities:

**Newmont Buffalo Valley Mine** - BLM has reviewed and accepted all baseline reports, determined that the Plan of Operations is complete and has determined that the project will be analyzed under an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which, is currently in progress.

**American Vanadium Gibellini Project** - BLM is evaluating an open pit vanadium project southeast of the town of Eureka. The Plan of Operation was submitted, reviewed by the BLM and deemed complete in January 2013. NEPA will be initiated in February 2013.

### 2012 Accomplishments:

**Eureka Moly Mount Hope Project** - The Draft EIS for the Mount Hope Molybdenum Project was issued to the public on December 12, 2011. The public comment period ended March 1, 2012. BLM issued the Final EIS in October 2012. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in November 2012 and General Moly has begun initial construction.

**Newmont Greater Phoenix** - BLM is in the baseline analysis stage and expects an Amendment to the Plan of Operations to be submitted. This amendment will expand the existing Phoenix Project Operation.

**Newmont Copper Basin Exploration Project** - BLM is in the baseline analysis stage and expects a Plan of Operations to be submitted.

**Newmont Mule Canyon** - Newmont is evaluating the possibility of resuming mining at this site. If mining is not resumed, the closure process will continue. Newmont continues to operate under terms and conditions of an Interim Water Management Plan.

**McCoy-Cove** - Reclamation is ongoing. Compliance inspections continue on a periodic basis.

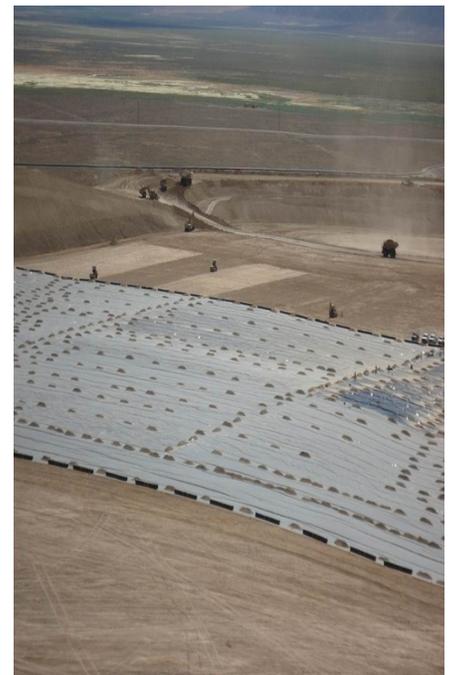
**Barrick Cortez Hills** - The Supplemental EIS was completed in January, 2011 and a ROD and Plan Approval were issued in March, 2011. The Decision was litigated by the Te-Moak of the Western Shoshone Tribe of Nevada, the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe, the Western Shoshone Defense Project and Great Basin Resource Watch. On January 4, 2012, the U.S. District Court of Nevada issued a ruling favoring BLM's Decision. An appeal to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has been filed by the litigants. Operations continue without affect from the litigation.

**Barrick Cortez Hills-Pipeline Complex** - Cortez Hills pit has been the center of mining activity since the 2008 ROD. There are previously approved activities (pre-

2008) throughout the Cortez Hills plan boundary that Barrick continues to develop; for instance, the Pipeline Pit Complex, road reroutes, tailings expansions, and concurrent reclamation. An amendment to the Plan of Operations was authorized that allowed for a 35 acre expansion of the Cortez Hills pit.

**Barrick Cortez Hills North Waste Rock Facility** - An amendment to the Plan of Operation (APO) was submitted to the BLM in January 2013 for waste rock reconfiguration, fence construction, and increased ore shipment to processing facility and deemed complete. NEPA, (EA) was initiated February 2013.

### Barrick Horse Canyon Cortez Uni-



Cortez Hills Tailings Expansion

# Minerals Management

## Mount Lewis Field Office (cont.)

**Coral Gold Resources Robertson Project** - An Amendment to the Plan of Operations is being prepared to expand the project. Currently, baseline analyses are underway. The EA has been reviewed by the BLM and is being revised based on the review.

**McEwen Mining (formally US Gold Corp) Tonkin Springs Closure** - An Amendment to the Plan of Operations was submitted to the BLM and was deemed complete. It is an existing mine that is in various stages of reclamation but a more detailed closure plan is needed for long term water management. BLM is currently working on the draft EA.

**Victoria Resources Cove-Helen Project** - BLM is processing an underground mining project in Newmont's Cove Pit. BLM continues to work with the proponent to complete the Plan of Operations and accept all baseline data. Revised PoO submitted January 2013 and BLM is reviewing.

**Klondex Fire Creek Exploration Project** - Project development continues under an exploration Plan of Operations.

**Klondex Fire Creek Underground Mining Project** - BLM is currently working with Klondex on baseline analyses to support the submittal of a Plan of Operations for an underground mine. This will be an

expansion of existing underground operations.

**Golden Oasis Toiyabe Exploration Project** - BLM is currently working on baseline analyses to support the submittal of a Plan of Operations. A submittal is expected by the end of 2012.

**Halliburton Pleasant View Exploration Project** - Baseline analyses have been completed. The project is about 15 miles east of Battle Mountain. EA comment period ended January 10, 2013. Decision record signed February 4, 2013.

**Halliburton Ann Project** - BLM is working with the Forest Service (lead agency) to process a new barite mine located on Forest Service lands with mine facilities located on BLM lands. The project is located on the east side of the Toquima Range near Northumberland. Currently, the project is undergoing baseline analyses.

**General Metals Wilson Independence Project** - BLM is in initial discussions with the proponent and the beginning stages of baseline development have begun. The project is just southwest of Newmont's Phoenix Project. There has not been a Plan of Operations submitted.

**BH Minerals Lookout Mountain Exploration Project** - Project de-

velopment continues. Proponent was provided baseline needs assessment to collect baselines by the BLM.

**Barrick Ruby Hill Mine** - BLM is processing an Amendment to the Plan of Operations that includes a pit expansion and additional processing facilities. Approval of the expansion occurred in November of 2012. Barrick is currently in initial discussions with BLM on another expansion



Ruby Hill Mine

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amendment PoO.

**Montezuma Mines Red Canyon Exploration Plan of Operations** - The project is continuing development.

## Tonopah Field Office

**Donnybrook Platinum Resources (formerly known as Rodinia Minerals, LLC) Drilling Project** - Donnybrook has revised their prior Plan of Operations, for lithium

2013 Priorities:

**Diatomite Mine: Global Silica, Inc. Monte Cristo Mine** - The draft EA associated with the proposed open pit mine was made available for public review. The public review period ended on December 28, 2012. Comments are currently being addressed and a decision on the proposal will be made in the second quarter of FY 2013.

**Corvus Gold Nevada North Bullfrog Exploration Project** - The draft EA associated with the exploration plan of operation is nearing completion and will be made available for public review during the second quarter of FY 2013.

**Mineral Ridge Gold LLC, Mineral Ridge Gold Mine** - EA out for public review with a 30 day comment period February 2013.

**Solauro Industries Georgia Tailings Remediation Project** - A revised Plan of Operations is currently under internal review. Once the Plan is deemed complete, a draft EA will be prepared. It is expected that the draft EA will be made available for internal review in the third quarter of FY 2013.

**Metallic Goldfield** - Metallic Goldfield has completed most of the

required baseline studies for the proposed open pit mine north of Goldfield, Nevada. A Plan of Operations is expected to be submitted in the second quarter of FY 2013.

**True Oil, LLC Application for Permit to Drill** - True Oil has changed the location of the well that was proposed to be drilled in FY 2012. A Notice of Staking was received for the new well with a proposed drill date in the second quarter of 2013.

**Kelpetro Operating Nevada, Inc.** - Kelpetro's APD for a proposed well was not drilled in FY 2012 due to expiration of the lease. A second APD was submitted by Kelpetro in 2013 for another well with a proposed drilling date in second quarter of 2013.

2012 Accomplishments:

**Donnybrook Platinum Resources (formally known as Rodinia Minerals, LLC) Drilling Project** - Donnybrook has revised their prior Plan of Operations, for lithium exploration, from 71 to nine drill holes. The revised Plan of Operations has been deemed complete. The first draft of the EA was reviewed and comments submitted to Donnybrook. The final review of the document will occur in the first quarter of FY 2013.

**Major Oil International, Inc.** - An APD has been submitted by Major Oil to drill a second oil well in Hot Creek Valley, 20 miles northeast of Warm Springs, NV. An EA is currently in development.



Round Mountain Project

## Mount Lewis Field Office

### 2013 Priorities:

#### **Homestake Ruby Hill Land Sale -**

This project proposes to offer, by direct sale, 150 acres of public land to Homestake Mining Company near their Ruby Hill Mine near Eureka. Only the surface estate is proposed for sale. The land is identified as disposable in the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Management Plan (RMP). An EA was prepared and no substantive or adverse comments were received during the public scoping process. A Finding of No Significant Impact was signed in February, 2011.

Before the sale can occur, a Notice of Realty Action (NORA) must be published in the Federal Register and local newspapers provided another opportunity for public comment.

A NORA was submitted to the Washington Office for final review and publication in May, 2012 and was returned in August with a request for more information. Homestake (Barrick) has stated that they wish to continue pursuing the sale. Work on another NORA package is underway.

#### **Relocation of Roberts Creek Road -**

Roberts Creek Road passes through the Roberts Creek Ranch, close to the main residence. To mitigate the ongoing issues of dust, safety and open gates and the anticipated traffic increases resulting from the Mount Hope Project, Eureka County has submitted an application to relocate Roberts Creek

Ranch Road away from the ranch buildings. The proposed relocation would cross both public and private land. An EA will be required.

#### **Eureka County Modification of Saddle Brown-Hwy 278 Intersection -**

Eureka County submitted a Right of Way (ROW) application to modify the intersection of Saddle Brown Road and Hwy 278 located at the southern end of Garden Pass. The project would result in a safer approach for traffic, particularly in anticipation of increased traffic in support of the Mt. Hope project. The NEPA for the ROW is scheduled to be completed in late January or early February, 2013.

#### **Arizona Nevada Tower Corporation (ANTC) -**

ANTC has submitted five applications for communications facilities within the Battle Mountain District. Two of the proposed sites, Dyer and Palmetto, are in the Tonopah Field Office. The three in the Mount Lewis Field Office are located at Kingston, Hickison Summit and Prospect Peak. The five proposed sites are being combined into one EA as connected actions.

ANTC was awarded a \$7.6 million federal grant for the construction and operation of its Central Nevada Community Anchor Wireless Backhaul Solution project. The award will allow ANTC to further develop infra-

structure that will fuel long-term economic growth and opportunity throughout rural Nevada. ANTC has until December 2014 to complete those portions of the project receiving federal financial assistance. ANTC is currently preparing an EA. BLM is waiting on funding for the Cost Reimbursement Account from ANTC.

### 2012 Accomplishments:

#### **Improvements to the Hudson Ranch Road and the Old Access Road to the Buffalo Valley Mine -**

The Buffalo Valley Mine is a Newmont Mining project. The improved road would mainly be used for vendors delivering to the Buffalo Valley Mine. The NEPA for the road would be folded in with the NEPA for the mine. An application has been received from Newmont Mining on behalf of Lander County.



Buffalo Valley Mine Road

## Mount Lewis Field Office

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**Mt. Hope Power Line ROW** - The long and short term ROWs for the power line were granted when the EIS ROD was signed on 11/16/12. Construction is expected to begin in March, 2013. BLM will monitor for construction compliance. Bonds for both ROWs are in place.

**Mt. Wheeler Power Inc. New York Canyon Project** - The proposal for this project is to bring under a ROW two power lines (a portion along highway 50 near Eureka, and a portion located in Windfall Canyon) and add a new portion of line to connect to New York Canyon's existing line that is in disrepair. The replaced portion of the New York Canyon line would connect to the power line that furnishes power to the Prospect Peak Communications Site. Some of the critical users on the mountain top are Department Of Energy, Nevada Highway Patrol, various Eureka County agencies, Nevada Department of Information Technology (NDoIT) and BLM. The de-energized portion of the old New York Canyon line would be removed as well as the unused portion of line in Windfall Canyon that once furnished power to the Windfall Canyon Mine. We are still waiting for an updated application (SF-299). Mt Wheeler Power has not submitted an application for their proposed route.

**Verizon Wireless - Cellular Communications Site** - AT&T is currently located at the same location as the Barrick/Cortez mine. Barrick agreed to the placement of another communications facility within the mine boundary, as it will benefit them with enhanced phone service. After inspection of the AT&T building it was determined that there was not sufficient room in their facility to house the proposed Verizon facility. Verizon will place its antenna(s) on AT&T's existing tower. The ROW grant is in the process of being written.

**Verizon Wireless - Cellular Communications Site on Mount Moses, within the American Tower ROW** - Verizon is planning to collocate on the tower. There may be a conflict in raising the tower 20 feet in height as Verizon is proposing. American Tower would have to apply for an amendment to their ROW. As per the Communications Site Plan for

Mount Moses the tower height has been set for Mount Moses at 60'. A plan amendment would have to be completed to permit the additional 20' in height. We are currently waiting for cost recovery processing from Verizon and a corrected application from American Tower for the addition to their tower.

**Eureka County TV District (ECTVD) ROW on North Prospect Peak** - Eureka County TV District has decided to not upgrade their facility on North Prospect Peak. They have removed the equipment, however, before we can accept the relinquishment of the existing site they will be requested to remove the existing antennas, building and stairs and reclaim the area.



Eureka County TV District: North Prospect Peak: Improvement will be reclaimed

## Mount Lewis Field Office (cont.)

**Town of Austin Arsenic Remediation Project** - The water supply for the town of Austin no longer complies with the new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for arsenic. A source of arsenic compliant ground water has been identified southwest of the town but construction of a new water supply system is required to convey that water and bring the town's existing water supply into compliance. The project calls for a new well and pump station, a 7.8 mile long buried pipeline, a new 250,000 water storage tank, and a new booster pumping station. Most of the project will be located on public land.

A ROW application and plan of development for the project have been received. It has been determined that an EA will be required to comply with the NEPA. The supportive studies were completed and reports for wildlife, cultural resources, and soils have been received and reviewed. A site visit was made with representatives from the Duckwater and Yomba Shoshone Tribes. In November, 2012 after completing a public comment period, a Finding of No Significant Impact was signed, the EA was approved and the ROW was granted. Indications from the county are that construction will begin in March, 2013.

## Tonopah Field Office

### 2013 Priorities:

**Mt. Moriah Cemetery** - Nye County submitted a request for a direct land sale of approximately 7.5 acres of public lands. This cemetery is located on the outskirts of the historic town of Manhattan.

**Nye County - Silver State Shooting Park** - A land sale has been requested by Nye County for 320 acres, which was previously authorized under a Recreation and Public Purpose Act lease.

**Rights-of-Way and Leases** - Sierra Pacific Power Company dba NV Energy, has renewal and amendment applications pending. It is anticipated that approximately 28 applications are expected to be processed for renewals in FY 2013.

Filming Permits for the Ghost Town of Rhyolite are on-going, especially during the spring season.

**Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park Expansion** - Nevada State Department of Lands (NSDL) has submitted a Recreation and Public Purposes Act application for renewal of the Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park Expansion. A site visit with NSDL personnel and Tonopah BLM staff is expected to be conducted in March, 2013. It is anticipated that the renewal process will be completed before the third quarter of FY 2013.

### 2012 Accomplishments:

**Desert Land Entries (DLE)** - Final proof for two DLEs located in Smoky Valley, north of Carvers will be completed in the first quarter of FY 2013. The entrants are Lawrence and Karen Beck, who are completing documentation for the final proof hearing.

**Esmeralda County Direct Land Sale** - The water supply for the town of Goldfield no longer complied with the new EPA standards for arsenic. A right-of-way (ROW) had been previously authorized for their water storage tanks, two wells, and a booster pumping station. Due to both the ROW expiring within the year and the current water supply being in non-compliance with EPA standards, Esmeralda County requested a direct land sale of five acres for the water treatment facility.

## Tonopah Field Office

(cont.)

## Lands and Realty

**Tonopah Public Utilities Arsenic Remediation Project** - As set forth by the EPA in the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments, the revised federal standard for arsenic in drinking water must be less than or equal to 10 parts per billion (ppb). The municipal water supply in the Town of Tonopah currently exceeds that standard. State and federal law requires all water systems to come into compliance with the 10 ppb standard. The Nevada State Environmental Commission (NSEC) has mandated that the water system be compliant by January 23, 2015. Right-of-Way Grant N-90168 was issued in December, 2011 to Tonopah Public Utilities (TPU) giving authorization to construct, operate, and maintain a water supply system on public lands administered by the BLM and permitting TPU to construct two new well sites, a gravel access road, re-equipping / rehabilitating four existing well sites, and developing a new underground water transmission pipeline, a gravel access road, and an overhead three-phase power line and all the related appurtenances. An access road would be constructed within the ROW for operation and maintenance of the proposed new well sites and power lines.

An EA was completed and a Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was approved in the first quarter FY 2012. Construction of the project began in October 2012 and

is expected to be completed by the end of FY 2013.

**Communication Site Management Plans** - In May and November 2012, nine communication sites were visited by BLM Tonopah staff, the Washington Office Program Manager for communication sites, and a communication site contractor. Those sites visited were: Mt. Brock, Booker Mountain, Montezuma, Tokop-Gold Mountain, Sawtooth, Palmetto, a Highway 95 Corridor, Coaldale Junction, and Warm Springs.

Each site was inspected to determine the types of communications equipment required to serve various populations. This criteria establishes the category of use thereby determining the fee schedule to assess lease fees and also assist in developing Communication Site Management Plans.

BLM lands staff across the nation, and most recently in Nevada, have been leading the effort to develop these Communication Site Management Plans. After inspecting and auditing these various Communication sites and developing the Communication Site Management Plans, the communication site contractor has reported to the Communication Site Billing Office, which has helped to identify thousands of dollars in unpaid and unreported rental income generating a multi-million dollar savings to the American tax payer.

Updated Communication Site Management Plans for these sites are being prepared. Approval of the updated plans is expected in third quarter of FY 2013.

## Forestry

### 2013 Priorities:

400 vegetative sale permits/ contracts; and  
800 tons of biomass to be sold.

### 2012 Accomplishments:

25 acres of forest/woodland vegetation inventoried;

482 vegetative sale permits/ contracts prepared;

1,061 tons of biomass sold;

200 acres of forest/woodland vegetation restored through sales of forest/woodland products; and

100 acres of forest/woodland vegetation treatments were evaluated for effectiveness.

**2013 Priorities:**

**Drought Monitoring and Permittee Communication** - Drought monitoring will continue in order to identify drought impacted areas and adjust management where needed. Dialog with permittees will continue to coordinate monitoring efforts and negotiate drought response actions when needed.

**Argenta Allotment Rangeland Health Evaluation** - The Rangeland Health Evaluation and EA are scheduled to be completed and issued to the public for review in FY 2013.

**Battle Mountain Complex Permit Renewal Decision** - Grazing permits for the affected permittees on the North Buffalo and Copper Canyon Allotments will be issued in FY 2013.

**US Forest Service Enterprise Rangeland Health Assessment Crew** - Crews are scheduled to conduct monitoring and data collection on allotments in both the Tonopah and Mount Lewis Field Offices

**2012 Accomplishments:**

**Battle Mountain Complex Permit Renewal Proposed Decision** - Permit renewal for Copper Canyon and North Buffalo Allotments remains in progress for Dan & Eddyann Filippini (Badger and Chiara Ranches), Ellison Ranching Co., and Doby George, LLC. Some modifications to the Proposed Decision were brought forward. The changes have been

**Drought Monitoring and Response** - 21 Allotments were monitored for a total of 3,138,512 acres. Meetings were held with 27 permittees and voluntary agreements were reached to implement a variety of drought response actions resulting in 30,000 plus AUMs of voluntary nonuse.

Allotment	Plots	Acres Assessed
Santa Fe/ Ferguson	17	25,580.69
Roberts Mountain	5	10,929.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>36,571.18</b>

made and the Decision is drafted for signature.

**Landscape Health Assessment Crew** - Monitoring was conducted in the Sante Fe/Ferguson and Roberts Mountain Allotments in FY 2013.

**2013 Priorities:**

**Range Monitoring** - TFO will monitor 10 priority allotments in FY 2013. Additional allotments may also be monitored pending time limitations and staffing. Priorities have been established based on permit renewal dates for permittees, resource conditions, drought response, categorization of Sage-grouse habitat, or some combination of these.

**Water Quality** - TFO will continue to assess functioning condition and water quality of sources of available water for wildlife, cattle, wild horses and burros.

**Watershed Analysis and Ecological Site Inventory** - Ecological site inventories are conducted to evaluate an allotment's ecological status. Watershed analysis and ecological status are precursor documents in the preparation of rangeland health assessments and evaluations. These documents are critical because they are used to determine whether changes in grazing management are warranted during the permit renewal process.

TFO plans to complete the watershed assessment of a 657,520 acre allotment in FY 2013 and perform 20,000 acres of Ecological Site Inventory.

**Weed Monitoring** - TFO will continue to routinely monitor for weed establishment and infestations, and will continue to treat, or facilitate treatment, of noxious weed areas.

**2012 Accomplishments:**

**Range Monitoring** - Monitoring on 18 allotments was completed in FY 2012 in cooperation with the Great Basin Institute staff. Monitoring data included cover, gap, line-intercept, trend, photo plots and density. This data will be analyzed and monitoring reports will be developed to support rangeland health assessments and evaluation documents.

**Weed Monitoring** - Monitoring of weed infestations was conducted to determine whether established infestations were spreading, receding or remaining static. The results of weed monitoring will be used to prioritize areas for future treatment. This effort resulted in the monitoring of 47,725 acres on upland range and 62 acres in riparian areas. In addition, 196 acres were treated during FY 2013.

**Watershed Analysis and Ecological Site Inventory** - During the course of FY 2012, the analysis of the 10,315 acre White Sage allotment was completed.

# Drought Response

## Battle Mountain District

During 2012 much of northern Nevada experienced record drought conditions in which very little forage production occurred and water availability was limited resulting in water sources drying up.

In anticipation of these conditions, the Battle Mountain District (BMD) sent a letter to all permittees in February notifying them of the drought and asking them to work with us on developing and taking appropriate drought response actions before their scheduled livestock turnout. We received very little response. Most permittees applied and paid for most if not all of their permitted AUMs for the 2012 grazing season. Additionally, BMD notified county commissioners, RACs and stakeholders of the drought situation and BMDs strategy for addressing drought.

In response to the drought, the BMD prepared a district drought management plan and analyzed it in an EA. The FONSI was signed in June 2012. The plan consists of a broad suite of drought response actions but emphasizes livestock reductions, rest, water hauling, and wild horse and burro (WHB) emergency gathers. The main purpose of the drought plan/EA was to position BLM to authorize appropriate response actions in a timely manner to prevent resource damage. The alternative is to go through a lengthy time consuming site specific planning process for each individual documented situation while authorized uses are causing resource damage or WHBs suffer on the range.

BMD made drought monitoring a priority during 2012. Priority areas were 1) Herd Management Areas (HMAs), 2) Priority Greater Sage Grouse Habitat, and 3) Riparian and Wetlands outside of Greater Sage Grouse Priority Habitat. Monitoring documented little to no current year's forage production even at higher, more productive elevations. Water hauling, where reasonable, occurred. As a result of the drought, wetland and riparian areas received concentrated use by livestock and WHB's which resulted in excessive and unacceptable impacts. To address such issues the BMD engaged permittees and negotiated a variety of drought response actions to include temporary water hauls, shifting season of use and removal from the range where monitoring indicated that resource damage had occurred.

Meetings with BMD affected permittees to discuss drought management plans for 2013 on an allotment by allotment basis have been completed. Management for the 2013 grazing season is focused on providing drought stressed native plant communities with at least growing season rest next year, and possibly longer if drought conditions persist as forecasted. BMD staff has developed voluntary agreements with all 27 affected permittees, resulting in 30,000 + AUMs of voluntary nonuse. According to the U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook, during the up-

coming three months, a much drier pattern is expected across the southern third of the Nation (from central California to the eastern Gulf Coast). This prediction limits the prospects for further drought improvements during the latter end of the wet season in California, Nevada, and western Arizona, and in fact increases the probabilities for drought development and deterioration in the tri-State area.

Drought monitoring will continue in 2013 to ensure appropriate management occurs during the on-going drought.



MLFO Allotment



MLFO Allotment

# Wild Horse and Burro Program

## Mount Lewis Field Office

### 2013 Priorities

**Diamond Complex Wild Horse Gather** - In cooperation with the Ely and Elko Districts, the wild horse gather of the Diamond Complex north of Eureka started on January 18 with the removal of horses beginning on the Ely and Elko Districts and ending with the removal on the MLFO. An adoption of yearlings is scheduled for February 2, 2013.

**Director's Challenge: New Pass/Ravenswood** - This project would involve collecting data to complete a Rangeland Health Evaluation within the New Pass/Ravenswood HMA, compilation of the data into a Data Summary and making recommendations to changes in wild horse management within the HMA including adjustment of the AML.

**Drought Monitoring** - There is a likelihood that drought effects will continue to be seen across the District in 2013. Management concerns include threats to forage and water sources used by wild horses and burros (WHBs), cattle, and other grazers due to drought

and overutilization. The District will continue to closely monitor the availability of water sources for WHBs in HMAs throughout the District.

### 2012 Accomplishments:

**Monitoring** - Throughout the FY 2012 field season monitoring of water and forage resources and WHB body condition was completed for most HMA's administered by the MLFO due to severe drought conditions.

**Wild Horse and Burro Inventory** - In 2012, the MLFO completed flights of the Callaghan, Bald Mountain, Rocky Hills and New Pass/Ravenswood HMAs to document fertility control effectiveness and population growth rates. Additionally, over-flights were completed for the Roberts Mountains, Fish Creek and Diamond HMA's to document resource and wild horse conditions relating to drought and the Frazier Fire.

**Director's Challenge-Water Inventory and Forage Assessment** - This was a District wide project involving up to 12 HMAs in the Mount Lewis and 16 HMAs in the Tonopah Field Offices.

The Management concerns of the BMD included threats to forage and water sources used by WHBs, cattle, and other grazers due to drought and overutilization. With the use of Great Basin Institute (GBI) crew members, the objective was to inventory available water sources for WHBs in HMAs throughout the District. However, as the drought conditions of 2012 grew, the GBIs began to also look at drought indicators that effect forage availability. The objectives were met with inventory and monitoring protocols designed specifically for these studies. At natural water sources, range improvements, and established Key Management Areas (KMAs), drought monitoring summaries, as well as general upland observations, were recorded. WHB observation forms were used to document any sightings. Over the course of the field season the GBIs visited 196 sites:

- 101 natural springs sites
- 95 established KMAs
- 28 Range Improvements



Fish Lake HMA Inventory Flight 8/27/2012

## 2013 Priorities:

**Monitoring** - TFO will continue to monitor HMAs to document resource conditions, WHB body conditions, and animal distribution. It is TFO's goal to monitor all HMA's within the field area and focus on those with the greatest resource issues.

**Inventory** - In FY 2013, TFO will conduct aerial inventories of at least eight HMAs. Additional HMAs may be inventoried depending on staffing and budget limitations.

**Wild Horse and Burro Gathers** - There will be no WHB gathers in the TFO field area in FY 2013.

## 2012 Accomplishments:

**Drought Monitoring** - TFO is monitoring for drought and its effect on WHBs. All TFO field-going personnel have been tasked with drought monitoring duties that include vegetation monitoring (utilization, cover), spring/water source monitoring, body condition monitoring, as well as documenting any potential drought related issues with wildlife and livestock. Areas of highest concern as of August 2012 include the Sand Springs West HMA, Saulsbury HMA, Pilot Peak HMA, Gold Mountain HMA and Fish Lake Valley HMA. Recent rains have eased the potential threat to WHBs and there should be sufficient forage to sustain the animals through the winter. No emergency gathers or other management actions are anticipated at this time.



Stone Cabin Complex Gather - 2012

## Wildlife, Special Status Species and Riparian/Wetland Management

### 2013 Priorities:

**Greater Sage Grouse** - Continue to support non-renewable projects in identifying areas of important greater sage grouse habitat (PPH and PGH) and work with the State Office and proponents in finding mitigation measures to enhance habitat.

#### **Greater Sage Grouse Projects within PPH/PGH: -**

Placement of flight deterrent markers on fence lines;

Construction of protection enclosures in high value greater sage grouse habitat; and

Work with NDOW and USGS to place 22 telemetry collars on sage greater to better understand movement patterns and for project support.

### 2012 Accomplishments

**Enhancement Project** - This Project occurs within the Simpson Park, Dry Creek and Grass Valley Allotments and includes the use of UNR Bootstraps crews to hand thin pinyon and juniper trees on up to 1,250 acres to enhance greater sage grouse habitat.

**Battle Mountains Riparian Enclosure Project** - Within Wildhorse Basin and the North Fork of Trout Creek, the UNR Bootstraps crew, in coordination and cooperation with local mining interests, constructed two 20 acre enclosures to enhance greater sage grouse brood-rearing habitat.

**Sage Grouse Habitat Monitoring** - In 2012, the MLFO conducted surveys of springs and meadows throughout important greater sage grouse habitat (PPH and PGH) in the Battle Mountain, Diamond Mountain, Fish Creek (Eureka County), Roberts, Simpson Park and Toiyabe Mountain ranges and adjacent valleys. Additionally, BMD partnered with the Great Basin Bird Observatory to survey along the Shoshone Off Highway Vehicle trail prior to the completion of Phase I of the trail and in on-going efforts for the life of the project. This monitoring information will be used to 1) identify critical sage grouse riparian habitat and 2) guide future management.

**Sage Grouse Habitat Improvement Projects** - MLFO has been working cooperatively with Ormat, NDOW, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and other agencies to develop habitat improvement projects within the sage grouse Toiyabe Population Management Unit (PMU). The goal of these projects will be to increase sage grouse productivity within the management unit through the improvement of nesting and brood-rearing habitat.

**Special Status Species, Threatened and Endangered Animals and Plants** - Biologists assessed the condition of LCT habitat with NDOW biologists after the 2012 Frazier Fire impacted important habitat in the Roberts Mountains. This assessment was used to develop long-term rehabilitation and management actions.

MLFO biologists participated in winter raptor surveys with NDOW, night jar surveys with the Center for Conservation Biology, and annual monitoring of LCT habitat conditions with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as required by the terms and conditions of the Biological Opinion for the Livestock Grazing System for the JD Allotment, Eureka County, NV (August, 2004).



2012 UNR Bootstraps crew constructing riparian enclosures

**Three-Bars Restoration Project -**

In 2009, the BMD began work to develop a landscape scale restoration project in the 3-Bars/Roberts Mountain area north-west of Eureka. This area contains high value resources for sage grouse, LCT, mule deer and other wildlife species. This area boasts largely intact native or perennial plant communities and is at high risk of catastrophic wildfire due largely to pinion and juniper encroachment. The BMD, MLFO initiated an EIS level planning process that analyzes numerous restoration and fuels treatments within a 750,000 acre footprint. Cooperating agencies with BLM on this project include NDOW and Eureka County.

The preliminary draft EIS is scheduled to be completed by mid-2013 with an anticipated decision being issued sometime in 2014. Upon the signing of the ROD, the BLM will seek out and formalize partnerships to leverage funding and support for multi-year implementation of this important project.

**Tonopah Field Office**

**2013 Priorities:**

The TFO renewable staff will continue to monitor wildlife habitat conditions in conjunction with rangeland monitoring. Further, TFO staff will continue to assist with population surveys with cooperating agencies including, but not limited to, surveys for Sagegrouse, Amargosa toad, Toiyabe spotted frog, and raptors.

TFO will perform Section 7 consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a demand basis to protect Threatened or Endangered Species within the area. Typically, this will be one to three consultations per fiscal year. Protective measures and mitigation will also be continued for those special status species that do not require consultation under the Endangered Species Act.

Funding will be pursued to complete the Beatty Spring Rehabilitation Project in FY 2013.

**2012 Accomplishments:**

**Study of Riparian Vegetation Recovery** - In an effort to evaluate the response of riparian vegetation to the exclusion of livestock, personnel from the TFO established a series of small enclosures in the Point-The-Rock riparian area.

This evaluation is the initial phase of a larger study designed to assess the most cost-effective means of restoring this riparian habitat.

**Beatty Spring Rehabilitation Project** - All NEPA and project planning documents have been completed for the rehabilitation of Bryan, Trespass, Upper and Middle Indian, and Burro Springs near Beatty, NV. The project is currently awaiting funding sources.

**TFO Receives Award for Armargosa Toad Conservation** - TFO was recognized at an awards ceremony held at Red Rock by the US FWS and NDOW for BLM's role in working to restore and maintain Armargosa Toad habitat that led to the USFWS decision not to list the toad as threatened or endangered. In addition, staff from Senator's Reid and Heller and Congressman Heck's offices presented Certificates of Commendation.

**Desert Tortoise Consultation** - TFO completed Section 7 consultation for the 2012 Vegas to Reno Race. No tortoises were identified along the route which crosses tortoise habitat.

2013 Priorities:

**Shoshone Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trail, and Host Site Construction** - Trail construction to complete the first phase is expected to resume in the spring. Roughly 30 miles have been completed to date, and another 12 miles is remaining to complete the first phase of this three phase project. In order to welcome visitors and monitor trail usage, a host site will be constructed at the trailhead during 2013. The host site will consist of a concrete trailer pad with structure, water, septic, and electricity.

**Hickison Petroglyph Recreation Area: Architecture and Engineering** - This outstanding display of Native American petroglyphs is located on U.S. Highway 50, approximately 20 miles east of Austin. The site consists of an interpretive trail, campground, and hiking and equestrian trail. The



Petroglyph at Hickison Recreation Site

campground was constructed in the early 1960's and has served many visitors over the decades. In the upcoming fiscal year, the BLM will be working with a contractor to develop architecture and engineering (i.e. design) documents for a subsequent upgrade. Site specific drawings and specifications will be developed over a 12-18 month period. This is an exciting project that will update the BMD's only developed recreation site along U.S. Highway 50.

2012 Accomplishments:

**Shoshone OHV Trail System** - Trail signage has been initiated, and trail construction is scheduled to resume in the Spring of 2013 to complete Phase 1. Use pattern mapping will be conducted following the completion of Phase 1 to determine the need for Phases 2 and 3.

**Copper Basin Trail - Student Conservation Association (SCA) Trail Crew** - The BLM partnered this

summer with the SCA to maintain approximately 13 miles of trail at the Copper Basin Mountain Bike Trail, which is located three miles south of Battle Mountain. The team consisted of six crew members



Copper Basin Trail

and two crew leaders from throughout the country. While the sections maintained are the least used, they provide the most dramatic vistas of the surrounding basin and range topography. In the next phase of this project, the BLM will be improving signage to inform and direct users to the recently maintained sections. Several benches will also be placed at scenic vistas along the trail for the public to enjoy.

**2013 Priorities:**

**Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory (LWC)** - As an element of the RMP revision effort, the TFO will verify and evaluate citizen recommendations for LWC designations within the TFO area.

**Visitor Satisfaction Survey (Rhyolite)** - Rhyolite has been chosen by the Nevada State Office as one of two sites in the state where the visitor satisfaction survey will be administered. The results of the survey will be used as a scoping tool to guide future management of the site.

**Assistance Agreement (Rhyolite)** - Another FY 2013 priority for Rhyolite is a continuation of the development of an assistance agreement with the Southern Nevada Conservancy to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of management at the site.

**Tough Mudder, LLC, Endurance Event** - Tough Mudder, LLC has notified the TFO of their intent to submit a Special Recreation Use permit for another endurance event to be held in mid-April near Beatty. As proposed, the event would be conducted along a similar route and with a similar number of participants as the FY 2012 event.

**Wilderness Study Area Incursion EA** - The TFO will be developing an EA for rehabilitating disturbances and removing unwanted incursions in Wilderness Study Areas within the Battle Mountain District.

**Crescent Sand Dunes Recreation Area** - The TFO will be completing the basic development of the Crescent Dunes Recreation Area by placing interpretive signage, picnic tables, and a visitor registration box. This work is a continuation of the effort begun during FY 2012 National Public Lands Day.

**Best in the Desert 2013 "Vegas to Reno OHV Race"** - The TFO will be the lead office for processing the SRP. As in past years, the event would be held in August on the existing route through portions of public land administered by the Carson City and Battle Mountain Districts.

**2012 Accomplishments:**

**Best in the Desert 2012 "Vegas to Reno OHV Race"** - The event was held in August with the Stillwater Field Office; Carson City District acting as the lead for the race. The NEPA analysis and Special Recreation Permit (SRP) issuance process was completed in the fourth quarter of FY 2012. The event ran smoothly with BLM personnel monitoring the start and pit areas throughout the course for compliance with SRP stipulations.

**Zero One Odysseys Adventure Tours** - The applicant proposes to provide guided tours on existing highways, county roads and existing BLM roads using street legal OHV touring vehicles. The tours, which highlight the unique histor-

ical and natural resources of the region, would typically be three to five days. The NEPA process and SRP issuance was completed in the fourth quarter of FY 2012.

**Tough Mudder, LLC, Endurance Event** - Tough Mudder, LLC was issued an SRP for an obstacle course event north of Beatty, NV, to be held October 6 and 7, 2012. Of the 11 miles comprising the course, 4.7 miles are situated on BLM-administered public land with the remainder, including obstacles and staging areas, located on private lands. The event is designed to test the participants overall strength, stamina, mental grit, and camaraderie. The associated EA, which analyzed the possible participation of up to 8,000 individuals, was available for public review and comment in the fourth quarter of FY 2012.

**National Public Lands Day (NPLD)** - The TFO took the lead in organizing the District's NPLD event this year. The event was held on September 29<sup>th</sup> and was designed to bring the public and BLM together in the active management of the Crescent Sand Dunes Recreation Area, located 14 miles north of Tonopah. Volunteers joined BLM personnel in a general clean-up of the camping and staging areas, as well as installation of entrance portal signs, a visitor registration box and an interpretive sign panel.

## Tonopah Field Office

(cont.)

### 2012 Accomplishments:

**Rhyolite Historic Townsite** - TFO, in association with the Southern Nevada Conservancy, is in the process of developing an Assistance Agreement to enhance the management of the Rhyolite Historic Townsite. Current discussions involve new and innovative interpretive concepts, volunteer recruitment and training, and funding options to support future developments at the site. A Statement of Programmatic Involvement, the first step in developing an agreement, will be completed in the first quarter of FY 2013.



Rhyolite Mercantile

# Hazardous Fuels Program

## Battle Mountain District

### Wildland Urban Interface

#### 2013 Priorities:

Complete implementation on the following Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) projects -

50 acres of prescribed fire treatment on the Manhattan project;

25 additional acres of mechanical treatment on the Eureka project;

32 additional acres of chemical treatment on the lone project;

82 acres of chemical treatment on the Manhattan project; and

800 acres of mechanical treatment on the Austin project.

Already, the BMD has completed the following WUI projects -

30 acres of prescribed fire treatment on the Eureka project;

150 acres of mechanical treatment on the Eureka project;

40 acres of mechanical treatment on the Lida project in conjunction with the Timbisha Tribe; and

25 acres of chemical treatment on the lone project.

#### 2012 Accomplishments:

The BMD completed the following WUI projects -

2,073 acres of mechanical treatment on the N.W. Diamond Valley project;

1,279 acres of mechanical treatment on the S. Diamond Valley project;

1,900 acres of mechanical treatment on the Austin project;

657 acres of chemical treatment on the Crescent Valley project;

30 acres of mechanical treatment on the Eureka WUI project;

20 acres of mechanical treatment on the Manhattan WUI project; and

monitoring of 2,000 acres of WUI fuels projects.

### Non-Wildland Urban Interface

#### 2013 Priorities:

Complete implementation on the following Non-Wildland Urban Interface projects -

200 acres of prescribed fire treatment on the Railroad Valley project.

#### 2012 Accomplishments:

Completed the following Non-WUI projects -

186 acres of pinyon-juniper thinning to protect mountain mahogany from the impacts of prescribed and/or wild fires on the Seven Mile project near Eureka but in Nye County (Mojave Southern RAC) and

706 acres of chemical treatment for cheatgrass on the Seven Mile project near Eureka but in Nye County (Mojave Southern RAC); and monitoring of 2,000 acres of Non-WUI fuels projects.



BLM fire personnel burning slash piles

# Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision

## 2013 Priorities:

Finalize Ethnographic Report/  
Class 1 Cultural Overview  
(December 7, 2012)

Complete Resource Allocation  
Mapping/Finalize Alternative Ma-  
trix (December 12, 2012)

State Office Review of Alterna-  
tives (January 2013)

Review/Complete Chapters 1  
and 3 of RMP (January- February  
2013)

Analyze Alternative Impacts  
(impact kickoff meeting, EMPSi  
analysis) (Spring 2013)

Complete Preliminary Draft RMP/  
EIS end of September 2013

## 2012 Accomplishments:

Draft Cooperating Agency MOUs  
were sent out to counties July 14,  
2011. MOUs have been signed  
with Esmeralda, Eureka, Lander,  
and Nye counties as well as Nel-  
lis Air Force Base.

We are still working with some of  
the interested tribes on MOUs  
and with the Fallon Naval Sta-  
tion.

Socioeconomic, Wild and Scenic  
Rivers, Visual Resource Invento-  
ry, and Mineral Potential reports  
were completed and available on  
the BMD website.

A cooperating agency meeting  
was held March 28, 2012 and a  
RAC sub-group/cooperating  
agency conference call was held  
June 7, 2012 (notes were distrib-  
uted June 22, 2012).

A BLM internal Area of Critical  
Environmental Concern (ACEC)  
meeting was held May 25, 2012  
to finalize proposed bounda-  
ries. The final ACEC report was  
completed in November of 2012  
and is available on the BMD web-  
site.

BLM internal RMP alternative de-  
velopment meetings were held  
June 12 - 13, 2012 (recreation,  
special designations, etc.) and  
June 19 -21, 2012 (vegetation,

livestock grazing, fish and wild-  
life, weeds). Additional meetings  
were held during July and August,  
alternative development was  
identified, and a draft is to be  
completed by January 30, 2013.

A cooperating agency/RAC sub-  
group meeting and/or confer-  
ence call will be scheduled after  
the draft alternatives are devel-  
oped.

The Revised Draft Ethnographic  
summary report was submitted  
May 15, 2012 and was re-  
viewed.

