Letter B1

November 22, 2005

Bureau of Land Management
Attention Gene Drais
Ely Field Office
HC 33 Box 33500
Ely, Nevada 89301

Dear Mr. Drais:

B1-1 In regards to the Resource Management Plan, I have concerns pertaining to the special recreation permit 2.5.15.2. Of the four alternatives proposed, I'm in favor of a revised version of Alternative E. I would like the wording to read as follows: "For the first three years following plan implementation, outfitter and guide permits for hunting would be limited to parties who have had a permit for the past 3 years. This permit would then remain with the outfitter until it is not renewed or until it is forfeited. The present number of outfitters who have had a permit for the past 3 years would serve as the cap. For any open permit that occurs, non-permitted outfitters would then be placed into a draw procedure to fill the position. Permits would limit the number of sub-guides that could operate. Any one outfitter would be eligible to obtain only one permit at a time."

B1-2 I am currently a small local outfitter who holds a permit. I definitely feel that we need to put a cap on the number of outfitters. Most importantly, however, I feel that it would be unfair to place the permits on a competitive bid process. It would make it very difficult for a small local business to compete against the huge nation-wide outfitters who currently guide or may desire to guide in the area.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Brad Lloyd
7L Outfitters

Responses to Letter B1

B1-1 In response to this and similar comments, the text in Section 2.4.15.2 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised regarding the issuance of outfitter and guide permits. Monitoring of outfitter and guide use would still occur for three years; however, outfitter and guide permits would not be limited during that three year study. Should the study show resource impacts, including user conflicts as a result of outfitter and guide actions, the Ely Field Office may address those problems by issuing outfitter and guide permits with special stipulations and conditions. No allocation system, including a competitive bid process, is included in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS.

B1-2 Please refer to Response to Comment B1-1.

Letter B2

BEST IN THE DESERT
RACING ASSOCIATION
Promoters of "VEGAS TO RENO" – "The Longest Off-Road Race In The United States"

Life Is An Adventure
Come live your adventure with
BEST IN THE DESERT

NOV 2005

November 25, 2005

Re: Public Comments on Ely BLM EIS RMP

To Whom It May Concern:

B2-1 On behalf of Best In The Desert Racing Association, I have enclosed two (2) maps with yellow highlighting in the N Pahroc Range up to the Schell Creek Range. Best In The Desert is proposing that the yellow area remain open to Non-Competitive SRP's only. In 1990 and 1991 this particular area was permitted for two consecutive race events promoted by Best In The Desert. Taking a more conservative approach in this area will help maintain OHV access but yet provide a low impact effect.

I appreciate your consideration to the very important matter.

Sincerely,

Casey Folks, Director
Best In The Desert

3475 Boulder Highway • Las Vegas, Nevada 89121 • (702) 457-5775 • Fax: (702) 641-2431 • www.bitd.com

Responses to Letter B2

B2-1 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.4.15.2 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify special recreation permits for non-competitive off-highway vehicle events. Those events would be permitted on a case-by-case basis outside of desert tortoise ACECs.

Letter B3

BEST IN THE DESERT RACING ASSOCIATION

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Promoters of "VEGAS TO RENO" – *"The Longest Off-Road Race In The United States"*

NOV

November 25, 2005

Re: Public Comments on Ely BLM EIS RMP

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Best In The Desert Racing Association we would like to offer our comments on the new RMP within the Ely Bureau of Land Management Field Office. Best In The Desert Racing Association represents over 4,000 individuals on the mailing list, we reach a great deal of off-road enthusiasts.

B3-1 Regarding the Ely RMP, Best In The Desert's position and choice would be Alternative A. We recognize that Alternative A would better suit the OHV community. Further more, Alternative A follows the philosophy of other Nevada BLM field offices. That philosophy is not net land loss to OHV opportunities. All other alternatives show net land loss in upwards to two-thirds of current available land for OHV use. Best In The Desert also has the opinion that with the population growth in the Las Vegas area available land for OHV opportunities in the Ely District will become more viable in the future.

I appreciate the opportunity to write an opinion on this very important decision.

Sincerely,

Casey Folks, Director
Best In The Desert

3475 Boulder Highway • Las Vegas, Nevada 89121 • (702) 457-5775 • Fax: (702) 641-2431 • www.bitd.com

Responses to Letter B3

B3-1 The Ely Field Office recognizes that off-highway vehicle use is an acceptable use of public land wherever it is compatible with resource management objectives. Areas are designated as "open" for cross country vehicle use where there are no compelling resource protection needs, user conflicts, or public safety issues. No areas managed by the Ely Field Office were determined to meet those criteria. The Ely Field Office is designating a majority of the planning area as "limited" in the Proposed RMP. The "limited" designation would still provide for off-highway vehicle opportunities, including potential new off-highway vehicle trails, while managing for public safety and resource protection needs. The only areas designated as "closed" to off-highway vehicle travel correspond to currently designated wilderness and wilderness study areas. Please note that the Nevada BLM has no policy regarding "no net land loss to off-highway vehicle opportunities".

Letter B4

Carter Cattle Co.
P. O. Box 27
Lund, Nevada
89317

Bureau of Land Management
Gene Drais,
RMP Project Manager,
HC 33 Box 33500
Ely, Nevada 89301-9408

NOV

RE:1 Comments on Draft RMP/EIS Ely District

To Gene Drais,

B4-1 I do realize the need to make changes to facilitate the Great Basin initiative of improving and restoring range lands but I do have some very real concerns which I shall list below.

B4-2 1. It is almost impossible to comment on the entire plan because of the multiple alternatives. What is most disturbing is that many of the alternatives do not even allow for 'Public' use. Grazing on these lands is historic. The very idea that such a profoundly useful, sustainable and productive activity be removed from 'Public' lands would be outrageous! Thus, those alternatives are absolutely not acceptable to us.

B4-3 2. We are very much in favor of performance based grazing, or grazing that is based upon the livestock operator's past, present and future willingness to commit to the extra effort required to practice performance-based grazing. This should include the capability to mange the livestock, haul water, monitor the resources and to make necessary adjustments needed to change any negative results and to sustain the recourses. Livestock management would require flexibility in numbers, use and timing, depending on information acquired from monitoring. Such practices are imperative in achieving the desired ecological conditions.

B4-4 3. We would like very much to be able to continue to practice Holistic Management with the team approach. We have been trying to manage holistically since 1993. We have been successful in maintaining a healthy resource and to remain in the cattle business. Our allotments continue to improve, even with the strain of a six-year drought.

B4-5 4. We object strongly to the act of creating special-use-only areas which can ultimately exclude and impede management of the land and resources. These would include those areas such as wilderness areas, ACEC's, ect.

B4-6 5. Eloquent and lengthy-written documents can easily be used as a detriment to proper management of natural resources. Such monstrosities can often cater to special interests groups which have a very narrow, one sided view of the real picture. Mother

Responses to Letter B4

B4-1 Comment noted.

B4-2 A range of alternatives was presented and analyzed in the Draft RMP and EIS and Proposed RMP and Final EIS. Each alternative had a different management emphasis, based on comments received during scoping and the needs/desires of various public land users. While not all management actions would be acceptable to all users, the alternatives do contain a range of approaches for analysis purposes.

B4-3 Reference to Performance Based Grazing has been removed as a Parameter or a management action in the Proposed RMP. Flexibility associated with livestock grazing is allowed in the current grazing regulations at 43 CFR Part 4100 and is specifically addressed under allotment management plans.

B4-4 Holistic management is a grazing management practice that can be authorized and could be associated with allotment management plans, as cited in the current grazing regulations at 43 CFR 4120.1. The management direction contained in the Proposed RMP does not preclude the use of Holistic management for grazing.

B4-5 The Federal Land Policy and Management Act, Section 202 (c) (3) mandates that the BLM give priority to the designation and protection of areas of critical environmental concern in the development of land use plans. The Ely Field Office is proposing to designate 17 new areas of critical environmental concern to protect and prevent irreparable damage to the significant values present in those 17 areas. The BLM does not designate Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas as a part of the land use planning process.

B4-6 The goals that you express are the same that the Ely Field Office holds for the Proposed RMP.

Letter B4 Continued

B4-6 Nature has her own way of sustaining herself. We must simply work with her to keep nature healthy. It is done by carefully watching and managing those activities that have been present on the land since the beginning of time. We cannot simply make decisions to fit others whims or selfish desires, for we may find that we might have to spend the rest of our lives just trying to get back to what we now have and need to appreciate - a healthy, viable and sustainable, multiuse resource.

B4-7 6. Livestock operations have been on these public lands years before they were called 'Public Lands". It would only make sense that livestock operators should be allowed to have more of an influence or say in the management of the land. What we find however, with the formulation of such documents as this resource plan, is that such valuable, productive, long standing, proud, nation building institutions like that of ranching and the running of livestock, are almost eradicated for less productive and actually more resource-threatening institutions. It should be mentioned here that in this day and age, when there are such frightening threats from other nations that would bring this country to its knees, that we would allow in such documents the process of decreasing the nation's ability to produce a very vital food source.

B4-8 7. Speaking in a legal sense, grazing rights in this country have been purchased or handed down from generation to generation from those who have paid their dues and earned their right to be on these lands. We strongly oppose anything in this said document that would diminish, hinder, obstruct, weaken or eliminate those given rights, without the due process of law.

B4-9 8. We are concerned about the quality of information in this document. We refer to a chart in the document that shows that the population of White Pine County is decreasing over the next 10-15 years. However, there are other entities in the county, such as the local power company, that has like wise produced a projection which shows an increase of population in this county. There are direct conflicts here. It is frightening that something like this one-sided document can have so much control and impact on an area and its people when its information is apparently tainted or at least unqualified.

B4-10 9. We are totally, against the further purchase of Nevada lands by the Bureau of Land Management or any other government agencies. Private ownership of land is what has made this country greater than any country on earth. Private ownership of land is directly connected with the sustaining of our national freedoms.

B4-11 10. We do not prefer land sales for large American developers but we consider those most favorable sales to be those land sales for small business expansion, primarily those which are agricultural and ranched based entities.

B4-12 11. We see no problem with the designation of addition forage for livestock. This would be most helpful to our operation as we have experienced a 70% reduction in AUM's since the 1960's. Actually, we have previously received from the BLM a promise that any such increased forage would be returned to us.

Responses to Letter B4

B4-7 Management actions as presented for the Proposed RMP include and address lands available and not available for livestock grazing. Management actions recognize the current amount of existing forage available for livestock grazing. Coordination and consultation associated with the evaluation of livestock grazing use will continue with the affected permittee and interested publics as required under current regulation and BLM policy.

B4-8 The Proposed RMP recognizes livestock grazing as a privilege and as a multiple use on the public lands. Comments and input to site-specific actions or plans for grazing management will be provided for through the coordination and consultation process.

B4-9 The population projections presented in Table 4.23-1 were prepared by the State of Nevada Demographer and generally reflect continuation of long-term demographic trends, absent any major new developments. Reference to those projections was appropriate given that insufficient information was available regarding the timing, level of development, likelihood, and other characteristics about other new projects to develop an independent set of long-term population projections. More current projections are now available, and Table 4.23-1 has been modified. However, the new projections do not alter the fundamental conclusions associated with the RMP alternatives.

B4-10 Please refer to Section 2.4.12.3 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for a discussion of land acquisition.

B4-11 Please refer to Section 2.4.12.2 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for a discussion of land disposal. A certain amount of land disposal within the Ely RMP decision area has been mandated by Acts of Congress. Refer to Chapter 1 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for a discussion of these legislative mandates.

B4-12 Please refer to Section 2.4.16 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for a discussion of allocation of additional forage, which varies by alternative. Allocation will be based on a multiple use decision process.

Letter B4 Continued

B4-13 12. It is interesting to see how agencies and other groups will bend over backwards to deter a useful tool such as livestock grazing and do it in the name of protection for the public lands and roads. This desire for protection fades quickly when the fun of a motor-cross race is presented. It is very hard to maintain mountain roads to keep the dust down and to keep them travelable. We are warned time after time to be careful with these public dirt roads. We object to the use of main, highly traveled roads to be used as a race track. Such activities beat the roads terribly! It is costly and difficult to maintain such roads after a race. We do not object to the races, we do object to races upon main, vital roads which support the maintenance of livestock grazing and hunting.

B4-14 We hope that our comments will be seriously taken into consideration because such documents and decisions can affect so many in either a positive or seriously, negative way. We take a great deal of pride in the way in which we conduct our operation on the public lands. The sustainability of the resources is our main concern and we face this concern on a daily basis. We look to the federal agencies to listen to those of us who depend on public lands for our quality of life, especially those of us who care so deeply and work so hard to maintain them as lands of multiple-use for all.

Thank You,

Steven Carter
Carter Cattle Co.

cc: Gene Drais Email and hardcopy enroute

Responses to Letter B4

B4-13 Thank you for expressing your concern. Special Recreation Permits for off-highway vehicle events are issued following site-specific environmental analysis and may contain special stipulations, such as a requirement to notify other permittees or a requirement to rehabilitate damaged roads in a timely manner.

B4-14 All comments on the Draft RMP and EIS have been taken seriously. The Ely Field Office appreciates your concern with the public lands. While statements of opinion (including agreement or opposition) do not require specific responses or text revisions under the NEPA regulations, they have been considered by the Ely Field Office and Nevada State Office and documented in the administrative record associated with the Ely RMP.

Letter B5

Dear Sirs:

I have only had 30 days from the public hearings to just barely look at the mass of papers and the CD that I received at the Mesquite, NV Public hearing. The extremely poor turn out at the hearings (about 10 people at the one in Mesquite) is a testament to the poor outreach that is attained with publication in the Federal Register. Although published in the Register July, 29, the Newsletter from the Ely Field Office notifying the public of Meeting is dated October, 2005 and your closure for comments is today Nov. 28, 2005. I know that this is your procedure, but it is our public lands and the first real outreach was the public meetings only 1 (one month) ago (Mesquite, NV on October 19, 2005). You state that there is a 120 day public comment period, but many people never knew that you had an RMP Draft until you announced public hearings. The BLM should extend the comment period to 120 days from the public comments so that people have adequate opportunity to have knowledgeable comment on something as important as your proported shift to an eco-system type of management with 18 new Areas of Environmental Concern that can be withdrawn from any use (de-facto Wilderness) with a stroke of the Congressional pen. Alternatives to managing lands with Fire and its extremely high atmospheric pollution and animal mortalities should be considered. Better biological approaches to range and forest land management should include grazing with sheep and or goats as well as cattle. This type of management increases biodiversity. The fire tool invariably decreases biodiversity. The BLM proposed approachs and preferred alternative should be assessed thoroughly by the public and by Congressional representatives that may be concerned with and involved in tackling economic issues presented by the present energy crisis. The constrictive management of the public lands is not only becoming dangerous to our country in an economic sense, it is also destructive to our lands in an environmental sense. The BLM's proposed alternative does not seem balanced and needs careful review from people outside of the Bureaucratic "preserve a job" loop. Considering the late public meetings, more time for comment is needed.

B5-1

B5-2

B5-3

B5-4

I am a self employed Professional Geologist, and NO, I have not had time to peruse the massive draft documentation like your team of experts have. I will make sensible, direct, and hopefully relative comments to the plan if given time to study the issue. I have over 30 years experience in the Industrial Minerals field and have input on RMP's and Plans since working on the California Desert Plan from 1976 through the 1980's.

For all of the above reasons and many more, I am copying this letter to several honorable public officials and some friends who may be concerned.

I will continue to review the data and will input, but I respectfully request that my comments be considered due to the unreasonable time constraints put upon such an important document that covers over 11 million public land acres.

B5-5

Sincerely,

Frederic C. Johnson

Responses to Letter B5

B5-1 In addition to the Federal Register notice and the Newsletter that was sent to approximately 3,000 recipients on the mailing list, press releases were sent to local media outlets and advertisements were placed in local newspapers to inform the public for all the public meetings on the Draft RMP and EIS.

B5-2 The required comment period on a Draft RMP and EIS is 90 days. BLM elected to set a 120-day comment period for the Ely Draft RMP and EIS and did not formally extend this period. Although the BLM did not elect to extend the official comment period for this document, comments received after the end of the comment period were considered as late as practicable within the overall document revision and publication process. Comments that were received after the close of the comment period have been accepted and considered in the preparation of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS. Please note that ACECs are not withdrawn from multiple use and that ACECs are not designated by Congress.

B5-3 In the development of projects, several techniques and alternatives are analyzed to determine which one will achieve the goals and objectives of the project. These include, but are not limited to, fire, mechanical treatment, and biological treatment (e.g. grazing). Please refer to Appendix H, which outlines examples of tools and techniques that could be used. When fire is determined to be the appropriate tool needed to achieve the projects objectives, a Smoke Variance permit is obtained from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection to ensure that smoke levels are appropriate. In the long term, the use of fire as a tool is expected to increase biological diversity.

B5-4 Please refer to Section 4.36 in the Draft RMP and EIS and Proposed RMP and Final EIS for a discussion of adverse energy impact from the management direction contained in the Proposed RMP. Also see Section 4.23 for a discussion of the overall economic impacts associated with the alternatives analyzed in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS. The management actions presented in the Proposed RMP are balanced and benefit a wide range of users of the Ely RMP decision area.

B5-5 Your comments on the Draft RMP and EIS have been considered.

Letter B5 Continued

Fred Johnson
Industrial Mineral Developments, Inc.
President/ Geologist
Field Office: 435-635-2026
Office: 1000 Garces Street
Las Vegas, NV

Letter B6

LS Power Development, LLC
400 Chesterfield Center, Suite 110
St. Louis, MO 63017
(636) 532-2200 • Fax (636) 532-2250

November 28, 2005

VIA EMAIL (elyrmp@blm.gov) AND US MAIL

Mr. Gene Drais, Project Manager
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Ely Field Office
HC 33 Box 33500
Ely, Nevada 89301

RE: Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement ("Draft RMP/EIS")

Dear Mr. Drais:

As you are aware, LS Power Development, LLC ("LS Power"), through its affiliates, is developing a number of energy projects in the Ely BLM District which include:

- A 500 kV transmission line and associated facilities commonly known as the Southwest Intertie Project ("SWIP");
- An up to 1,600 MW coal-fired electric generation facility and associated facilities commonly known as the White Pine Energy Station ("WPES"); and
- In partnership with Nevada Wind, LLC, wind generation facilities and associated facilities located in the Egan Range ("Egan Wind Project").

Upon review of the Draft RMP/EIS, LS Power is pleased to submit the following comments:

Section 2.5.12.5 Parameters – Corridors:

B6-1 **Item #1:** Item 3 under *Management Common to All Alternatives* on page 2.5-124 states that "A corridor 2,640 feet wide extending northerly from the north end of the Aeroject designated corridor following the centerline of the approved Southwest Intertie Power Project right-of-away alignment would be maintained."

Comment #1: As a point of clarification the SWIP right-of-away alignment was modified pursuant to the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act ("LCCRDA") such that SWIP alignment from the north end of the Aerojet property has been relocated to the new designated corridor on the west side

Responses to Letter B6

B6-1 The modified SWIP corridor to which this comment refers was shown on the maps in the Draft RMP and EIS and is also shown on the maps in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS.

Letter B6 Continued

B6-1 of Highway 93 and west of private property for a distance of approximately seven miles and then transitions back to the original SWIP alignment. Given the scale of the maps and the text in Draft RMP/EIS it is unclear if this change to the alignment is reflected in the Draft RMP/EIS.

B6-2 **Item #2:** Under Alternative B, on page 2.5-125, it is stated that "All linear rights-of way for electrical transmission lines greater than 69 kilovolts, all mainline fiber optics facilities, and all pipelines greater than 10 inches in diameter would (emphasis added) be located within designated corridors."

Comment #2: While it is understood the Alternative B is not the agency preferred alternative, if selected we believe that the language should include "….would *be encouraged* to be located within the designated corridors." The basis for this comment is that in many circumstances the origination and termination of such infrastructure facilities will be outside the designated corridors and requiring these facilities to be located entirely within the designated corridors would be too restrictive and impractical. As a real example, the WPES will have transmission line(s) greater than 69 kV that will be approximately 2.5 miles in length outside the designated corridor if the proponent's preferred site is selected or 6 miles in length if the alternative site is selected. While the lines from the WPES will utilize the designated corridors to the greatest extent practical the site location for the WPES is not directly adjacent to designated corridor due to other infrastructure requirements and environmental considerations. Similar issues could arise for other energy and infrastructure projects in the Ely District.

B6-3 **Item #3:** Alternative D on page 2.5-125 states "No additional corridors would be designated. All rights-of-way would be located within designated corridors."

Comment #3: LS Power does not support Alternative D approach to rights-of-way management. This is far too restrictive as it appears to prohibit any type or size of right-of-way to be located outside a designated corridor. This could effectively prohibit or unreasonably limit economic growth in the Ely District. Also see comments made in Comment #2.

B6-4 **Item #4:** Pipelines greater than 10" in diameter are encouraged to be in designated corridors.

Comment #4: LS Power proposes that (i) the size of pipeline be increased to be greater than 20" in diameter, (ii) intra-basin underground water pipelines be excluded from the designated corridor limitation or (iii) the RMP acknowledges that the water system for the WPES will not be within the designated corridors. The purpose of a clarification or exemption is to acknowledge that it is not practical for the water system for the WPES to be located in one of the designated corridors given that the points of diversions are spread over a large distance in Steptoe

Responses to Letter B6

B6-2 Thank you for expressing your concerns. Alternative B is included so that a range of alternatives could be analyzed. Your expressed concern is specifically addressed in the Proposed RMP in Section 2.4.12.5, where use of designated corridors is not a requirement.

B6-3 Thank you for expressing your concerns. Alternative D is included so that a range of alternatives could be analyzed. The Ely Field Office has not selected Alternative D for incorporation into the Proposed RMP.

B6-4 Pipelines greater than 10 inches in diameter are not required to be located within the designated corridors. Section 2.7.12.5 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS states that water pipelines are encouraged to be within designated corridors. Alignments outside of the corridors could be authorized through the right-of-way process.

Letter B6 Continued

B6-4 Valley. Any attempt to locate all WPES water pipelines over 10" in diameter in a designated corridor would result in increased environmental impacts and an unreasonable increase in costs. Alternatively, the RMP should designate corridors for such facilities.

B6-5 **Item #5:** Add designated corridors to the selected alternative to account for transmission lines from the WPES to the SWIP Corridor. Refer to Section 2.5.12.5 and Maps 2.4-22 and 2.4-23.

Comment #5: As stated in Comment #2, transmission line(s) greater than 69 kilovolts will need to be constructed from the WPES site location to the designated SWIP corridor. Depending on the alternative selected, the length of these lines from the SWIP corridor would be approximately 2.5 miles or 6 miles. LS Power requests that these potential line segments be expressly accommodated in the RMP/EIS, either by corridor designation or other means.

B6-6 **Item #6:** Location of SWIP corridor on Map 2.4-22 and Map 2.4-23.

Comment #6: LS Power is actively developing the SWIP transmission line. As such we have performed reviews of the SWIP right-of-way grant and other documentation and have prepared a centerline of the SWIP corridor based on the review of this information and the changes enacted through LCCRDA. It appears that the maps included in the Draft RMP/EIS are using GIS information from the early 1990's for the SWIP corridor which do not match precisely with the information we have gathered. While the discrepancies for the most part are minor, we would be happy to provide GIS data for the corridor based on our review of the available information. In addition, we suggest that the RMP/EIS recognize in advance the possibility of minor deviations from the corridor maps due to updated GIS information, field adjustments etc., that may occur during permitting and construction of the SWIP transmission line, to avoid the potential need to amend the RMP to reflect such minor changes should they occur.

Section 2.5.11 Visual Resources:

B6-7 **Item #7:** Alternatives B, C, D, and E designate the land area on top of the Egan Range to be managed as a Class II Objective (see Maps 2.4-5, 2.4-6 and 2.4-7). Portions of this area are also designated as Potential Wind Development Areas (see Maps 2.4-24 and 2.4-25).

Comment #7a: LS Power requests that BLM evaluate whether a Class II Objective can be met while maintaining the potential for wind development in this area. If not LS Power requests that an appropriate Visual Resources class be assigned to maintain compatibility with the potential wind development.

Responses to Letter B6

B6-5 Rights-of-way for electrical transmission lines greater than 69 kilovolts are encouraged to be located within designated corridors. WPES lines would be authorized through the right-of-way process. They would not be required to be within designated corridors.

B6-6 In response to your comments, Map 2.4.12-5 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS have been revised to more accurately present the SWIP corridor. Alignments outside of the designated corridor could be authorized through the right-of-way process.

B6-7 The section of the Egan Range that your letter refers to was designated as Visual Resource Management Class II, because it lies within the view shed of the Pony Express National Historic Trail. And while the Proposed RMP identifies areas with high wind energy resources, it does not designate potential wind development areas. The Visual Resource Management Class II objective is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. It may be difficult for a wind energy project to meet these objectives, and a higher level of mitigation may be required by the Ely Field Manager. However, these decisions would be project-specific and are not made at the land use planning level.

Letter B6 Continued

B6-8 **Comment #7b:** In support of Comment #7a, LS Power believes that a number of locations in the Egan Range have a high potential for wind development based on wind speeds, terrain, access and ability to minimize impacts to environmental resources in this area. Further, the Egan Range location is in close proximity to the SWIP designated corridor and the WPES preferred site which should help to minimize infrastructure impacts by utilizing common infrastructure facilities (to the extent practicable) and utilizing designated corridors to the maximum extent possible.

B6-9 **Comment #7c:** Maintaining the ability and promoting wind development is consistent with the President's Executive Order 13212, "Actions to Expedite Energy-Related Projects" issued May 2001, establishing policy that federal agencies should take appropriate actions to expedite projects to increase the production, transmission, or conservation of energy.

B6-10 **Item #8:** Alternatives B, C, and E appear to designate the land area for the preferred and alternative WPES site as primarily Class III with the northern portion of the preferred site potentially being Class II (see Maps 2.4-5, and 2.4-6). Alternative D designates entire area as Class II (see Map 2.4-7).

Comment #8a: LS Power does not support Alternative D for Visual Resources.

B6-11 **Comment #8b:** LS Power requests that BLM confirm that the classifications selected would be compatible with the proposed WPES, including analyzing if the Class II area overlaps with any portion of the preferred power plant site and make appropriate changes to these classifications, if necessary. LS Power intends to minimize visual impacts to the extent practical, however, the WPES will include structures of notable heights.

B6-12 **Comment #8c:** In support of Comment #8b, LS Power believes the sites being evaluated for the WPES are the best locations for the facility and will result in the least environmental impact on a cumulative basis when evaluating all resources. Further, the completion of energy projects on federal lands, such as the WPES, is consistent with the President's Executive Order 13212.

Section 2.5.15.1 Special Recreation Management Areas:

B6-13 **Item #9:** Table 2.5-11 on page 2.5-137 identifies a Special Recreation Management Area ("SRMA") as "Telegraph". This area is shown on Maps 2.4-33 & 2.4-35 as "Telegraph Peak". This area's primary values for recreation are stated to include non-motorized recreation, equestrian, hiking and mountain biking. Portions of the Telegraph SRMA are also identified for potential wind development areas.

Responses to Letter B6

B6-8 The Proposed RMP does not designate areas for wind and solar energy development, and the text and map titles in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS have been changed to clarify this. Changes in technology may change the potential for renewable energy development and which areas are suitable. All applications will be subject to NEPA analysis and the Wind Energy Development Program Policies and Best Management Practices published in conjunction with the Record of Decision for BLM's Final Wind Energy Development Programmatic EIS (Appendix F, Section 3 of the Ely Proposed RMP and Final EIS).

B6-9 Thank you for your comment. The Proposed RMP is consistent with the Executive Order, and the Ely Field Office recognized the value of developing wind energy.

B6-10 A range of alternatives was presented and analyzed in the Draft RMP and EIS and Proposed RMP and Final EIS. Each alternative had a different management emphasis, based on comments received during scoping and the needs/desires of various public land users. While not all management actions would be acceptable to all users, the alternatives do contain a range of approaches for analysis purposes.

B6-11 The LS Power preferred power plant site lies within a proposed Visual Resource Management Class III area. The Class III objective is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Actions may attract the attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. It may be difficult for a power plant to meet these objectives, and a higher level of mitigation may be required by the Authorized Officer. However, these decisions would be project-specific and are not made at the land use planning level.

B6-12 Thank you for your comment.

B6-13 In response to this and similar comments, the text in Section 2.4.15.1 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised regarding special recreation management areas. The Telegraph special recreation management area proposal is not being carried forward in the Proposed RMP.

Letter B6 Continued

B6-13 **Comment #9:** The Final Programmatic EIS on Wind Energy Development (June 2005) acknowledges that recreation and wind energy development can co-exist, with both positive and negative impacts to recreation. BLM should note that, as stated in the various portions of Comment #7 above, there is a high potential for wind energy development in the Egan Range. LS Power believes that the impacts to recreation will be minor due to the small land area required by wind development as compared to the large area proposed to be designated as the Telegraph SRMA, and due to the fact that impacts from the wind development can also be positive (e.g. improved access to the Telegraph Area). LS Power requests that if the Telegraph area is designated as an SRMA, the RMP/EIS expressly acknowledges that that designation is not inconsistent with and does not preclude wind energy development.

Section 4.28 Cumulative Impacts:

B6-14 **Item #10:** Page 4.28-1 discusses assumptions for the White Pine Energy Station.

Comment #10: The assumptions for the new surface disturbance associated with the White Pine Energy Station, while on the right order of magnitude, appear to be understated. To connect all of the 22 wells anticipated for the WPES water system, it would require approximately 55 miles of right-of-way having a permanent width of 30 feet and a temporary construction disturbance of an additional 30 foot versus the stated assumption of 12 miles at 75 feet in width. The requested right-of-way for the transmission line is approximately 34 miles long and 200 feet in width versus the stated assumption of 20 miles at 160 feet in width. There is the potential for additional disturbance due to the need for permanent access roads, electric distribution lines to wells, construction staging areas and construction access, which should also be recognized.

B6-15 **Item #11:** Table 4.28-1, pages 4.28-5 and 4.28-6, states assumptions for the White Pine Energy Station.

Comment #11: See comment #10. The maximum water usage is limited by White Pine County permits of 25,000 acre-feet/year versus the stated assumption of 26,000 acre-feet/year.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. Combined, the LS Power projects proposed in Nevada represent a capital investment of approximately $3.0 billion dollars, would result in the creation of hundreds of construction jobs over five years and would create approximately 150 full-time, permanent jobs. In addition, these projects will become vital resources to the electric grid in Nevada and the Western US.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or data needs.

Responses to Letter B6

B6-14 In response to your comment, the text in Section 4.28.1.1 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify the amount of surface disturbance associated with the White Pine Energy Station. The basic impact conclusions presented in the Draft RMP and EIS have not changed.

B6-15 In response to your comment, data for water usage for the White Pine Energy Station on Table 4.28-1 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been updated. The basic impact conclusions presented in the Draft RMP and EIS have not changed.

Letter B6 Continued

Sincerely,

Eric W. Crawford
Director, Project Development

cc: White Pine County Commission

Letter B7

MEMBER

OFF-ROAD BUSINESS ASSOCIATION, Inc.

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November 28, 2005

RE: Draft Resource Management Plan

To Whom it May Concern

I am writing today on the behalf of the Off-Road Business Association (ORBA) in regards to the Draft Resource Management Plan for the Ely Field office. ORBA is a national, non-profit trade association representing all aspects of the Off-Highway Vehicle industry, including vehicle manufacturers, aftermarket manufacturers and distributors and local retail dealers. Our interests are to preserve and enhance motorized recreation opportunities and access while simultaneously protecting our valuable natural and cultural resources.

B7-1 After reviewing the Draft RMP, we feel that overall you have done an excellent job, and we are generally supportive of the Preferred Alternative E. We do have some specific concerns though related specifically to how vehicle travel is restricted in Limited areas. We strongly recommend that rather than restricting travel to DESIGNATED routes, travel should generally be restricted to EXISTING routes. It has been our experience that when agencies mandate vehicle use on designated routes, they are setting themselves up for a huge allocation of resources to do the through analysis required to designate a route. We have watched many offices spend a decade or more and still not be able to complete the process. This exposes the agency to litigation and almost always the agency loses these lawsuits. We have watched other offices short cut the process to get the job done quickly, at the expense of the recreating public, as this usually results in significant, if not massive, loss of opportunities.

B7-2 The alternative of restricting travel to existing roads, trails and washes is much more achievable and would not result in a massive loss of currently open routes. Of course, the BLM always has the ability to close any routes that have documented significant adverse impacts attributable to vehicle travel and where there are no feasible mitigation measures. We strongly feel that the very limited resources available to the BLM in Nevada are better spent in addressing problem areas rather than spending vast amounts of money to analyze all routes. Areas with specific resource concerns are already identified, and currently mandated monitoring processes should have already identified any routes with specific concerns.

B7-3 While it is our understanding that the Ely Field Office has inventoried many of the existing routes, it is also our understanding that this inventory was done with either 4 wheel ATV's or full size vehicles. There are also many, many single track routes in the Ely District that are not passable on an ATV. These single track routes are highly desirable to the motorcycle and mountain bike communities, and we feel they must be

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Responses to Letter B7

B7-1 The Ely Field Office recognizes the massive undertaking necessary to designate routes in such a large planning area. Please refer to Section 2.4.14.1 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for clarification of comprehensive travel management planning.

B7-2 Please refer to Response to Comment B7-1.

B7-3 In addition to four-wheel all-terrain vehicles and four-wheel-drive trucks, the Ely Field Office has also utilized motorcycles in accomplishing the inventory of existing routes and ways. During site-specific transportation planning, the Ely Field Office will hold public scoping meetings to address completeness of the route inventory and public issues, concerns, and access needs, such as single-track route management.

Letter B7 Continued

B7-3 analyzed and designated unless there are compelling reasons to support not designating them. Any resource concerns that can be mitigated should be mitigated whenever feasible. We understand that there are many single track routes especially in areas that have historic motorcycle race routes. These areas include, but are not limited to, the area south of Mail Summit, the area west of Caliente towards Chief Mountain, the area around Alamo, the area between Panaca and Caliente, the area between Robinson Summit and Squaw Peak, and the area in the vicinity of Jakes Wash.

The management strategy of restricting vehicle use to existing roads and trails is not new or untested. As a good example, a few years ago the BLM and US Forest Service prepared a join Environmental Impact Statement for the states of Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota (Tri State EIS) that restricted travel to existing roads and trails. The public information materials for the implementation of this EIS included photo and descriptive narratives of what an existing route looked like and how the vehicle type should not be any larger than the existing route, such as restricting full size vehicle to two track roads, ATV's to ATV width and wider routes, and motorcycles to single track width and wider routes. Some have raised the concern that allowing use on existing routes allows new routes to be created. Our response to that concern is that besides already existing inventories, aerial photo data is available to document what exists today and determine if a route is newly created.

B7-4 We also strongly urge the BLM to use the Tri State EIS model for restricting vehicle use to routes no wider than the vehicle. As an example, ATV's should not be allowed to convert single track trails into ATV's and full size vehicle should not be allowed to convert ATV trails into full-size vehicle routes.

B7-5 We do have a concern about cross country vehicle travel for hunting purposes. It has been our experience that the explosion of the use of ATV's for hunting has created the biggest problem regarding creation of new routes, at least outside of urban interface areas where route proliferation can be a localized issue. If vehicle use is restricted to existing or designated routes, we feel that this should also include any hunting uses, including game retrieval. One new track often encourages more tracks and can result in the creation of a new route.

B7-6 We do feel that restricting use to Designated routes may be appropriate in heavily used areas and urban interface areas. Limiting use of the Designated route strategy to specific local areas is much more manageable and feasible than using the strategy district-wide.

B7-7 Regarding Special Recreation Permits, and specifically permits for competitive events, we feel that these types of events should be somewhat restricted in where they are allowed. These competitive events do have a higher impact on routes than causal use and even non-competitive events. However, these competitive events should not be restricted to just small areas either, and they should have areas available to them that would allow rotation/rest cycles to allow the routes to heal themselves with time.

Responses to Letter B7

B7-4 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.4.14.1 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to ensure that route designations may incorporate vehicle width limitations to prevent expansion of single-track and ATV-width trails.

B7-5 The Proposed RMP and Final EIS (Section 2.4.14.1) retains a management action to allow cross country travel for retrieval of downed big game. The Ely Field Office considers the use of motorized vehicles off of designated roads and trails specifically for retrieving downed game (as opposed to general hunting access or activities) to be an allowable one-time use that would only occur during hunting season.

B7-6 Please refer to Response to Comment B7-1.

B7-7 The Proposed RMP includes four geographic areas where motorcycle special recreation permit events have historically been held. These areas would allow for continuing opportunities for motorized special recreation permit events and race course rest and rotation to occur.

Letter B7 Continued

B7-8 In closing, our remarks are intended to be in the direction of making the RMP feasible and implementable. We are VERY concerned that the Designated route strategy used on a broad scale would set the Ely Field Office up to fail as well as possibly causing the loss of significant amounts of currently used routes of travel. We want the RMP to succeed in meeting your legal mandates as well as preserve our existing opportunities. Demand for motorized recreation opportunities on public land is growing everyday, while those opportunities are being diminished on much of our public lands across the west, particularly the closer you get to population centers. Much of the lost opportunities has been the result of litigation, and often that litigation was successful because the agency plan made commitments that could not be delivered with available resources.

Thank You for the opportunity to comment. Please include ORBA on your mailing list for the Final RMP EIS and Record of Decision, as well as any other planning processes dealing with access and motorized recreation.

Respectfully,

Bill Dart,
Director of Land Use
Off_Road Business Association
Western States Office
7703 West Buckskin Road
Pocatello, Idaho 83201

Responses to Letter B7

B7-8 Please refer to Response to Comment B7-1.

Letter B8

B8a

ENGINEERING • SURVEYING • RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

RESOURCE CONCEPTS, INC.

November 22, 2005

NOV 2005 RECEIVED Bureau of Land Management Ely, Nevada

Mr. Gene Drais, Project Manager
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Ely Field Office
HC 33 Box 33500
Ely, Nevada 89301

Dear Mr. Drais:

Resource Concepts, Inc. (RCI) is submitting the enclosed comments regarding the DRAFT Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Ely District on behalf of the N-4 State Grazing Board. It is our hope that the Ely BLM EIS preparation team will consider these comments when revising the RMP/EIS for final publication.

The N-4 State Grazing Board has interest in the RMP/EIS and the subsequent results of the Record of Decision on public land livestock grazing programs and procedures for the Ely BLM District. The following is a list of comments regarding the DRAFT RMP/EIS for the Ely District. Page numbers are included with each comment for ease of reference to specific points in the document. In general, Resource Concepts Inc. supports the preferred alternative and we commend the BLM Ely Field Office for planning and proceeding with a document that allows for the long-term stability of vegetation communities throughout the Ely District. B8-1

Comments:

B8-2 (1) Pg. 2.2-2 Alternative D excludes the permitted discretionary uses that are central to the multiple use and sustained yield principles referred to on page 1.5-3 that the RMP/EIS will adhere to. Therefore, Alternative D should not have been included in the analysis as an alternative. None of the livestock grazing actions specific to Alternative D should be incorporated in the final decision. Additionally as stated in the Carico Lake Allotment Rangeland Health Assessment EA NV-062-EA05-61 "…FLPMA and the Taylor Grazing Act recognize grazing as a valid use of the public lands and require BLM to manage livestock grazing in the context of multiple use."

B8-3 (2) Pg 2.5-3 The goal for managing water resources on BLM-administered lands in the Ely District does not state the level or standard which the BLM will use to determine if the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of waters within the district are being maintained. The Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (NDEP) is the regulatory authority for Nevada water quality, and only the State Environmental Commission has authority to establish water quality standards.

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Responses to Letter B8

B8-1 Thank you for your comment.

B8-2 Thank you for expressing your concerns. As stated in Section 2.8.1 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS, "Some components of Alternative D could be implemented through the discretionary authority of the Ely Field Manager or the Nevada State Director, while others would require action by the Secretary of the Interior or new legislation by Congress. Thus, the alternative has been included to be responsive to scoping comments and to allow the analysis of a range of management actions in the EIS." Further, Question 2b of the Council on Environmental Quality's "Forty Questions" states that "An alternative that is outside the legal jurisdiction of the lead agency must still be analyzed in the EIS if it is reasonable"

B8-3 Please refer to Section 2.4.3 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for a list of water resources management actions that specifically address water quality considerations. The Memorandum of Understanding between Nevada Department of Environmental Protection and BLM is mentioned in Management Action WR-1. Further mention of this MOU is made in the water resources sections of Chapters 3 and 4, clarifying the relationship between BLM water quality considerations and state and federal regulatory authorities. BLM monitoring activities for water resources are described in Section 2.4.23.

Letter B8 Continued

B8-3 NDEP also determines the association between water quality and quantity affecting the regulatory status of each stream. Water quality standards enacted through the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) should be the basis for determining maintenance of chemical and physical integrity associated with water quality.

B8-4 (3) Pg 2.5-9 The first paragraph of the parameter description for pinyon-juniper woodlands indicates that the Ely District would use the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) key to classify pinyon-juniper sites from rangeland ecological sites. Then in the second paragraph, an acreage is provided for pinyon-juniper woodlands in the District. It is assumed that inventories and classification have not yet occurred within the District according to the NRCS 2003 publication referred to in this section. Section 3 of the RMP states that the acreages for each vegetation type are projected using three watersheds. Due to the scaling up of the information to the entire district, there should be a statement added reflecting that a portion of the total acreage is likely to be classified as rangeland instead of woodland throughout the watershed assessment process. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on defining pinyon–juniper woodlands in this section, as it will help the reader understand the percentages explained in Table 2.5-1. It should be made clear that rangeland ecological sites with minor components of pinyon or in most cases juniper (often 5 to 10% cover of juniper allowed) ***are not*** pinyon-juniper woodlands. In some cases areas with very high cover (>25%) of pinyon-juniper are classified as rangeland within the Ely District.

B8-5 As a side note, the 2003 NRCS publication referred to in this section of the document is listed in the references as the MLRA 28B Nevada Ecological Site Descriptions. See the USDA-NRCS 1997a reference below for an actual key to dividing pinyon-juniper woodlands from rangeland ecological sites.

B8-6 (4) Pg 2.5-19 Alternatives B and C briefly cover protection of aspen regeneration from grazing. Alternative C mentions protecting aspen by limiting grazing to periods outside the grazing season. Alternative B only mentions protection methods with no examples given. For both alternatives, protection from grazing should by limited to areas where site potential allows for regeneration to occur, and should be considered on a site-by-site basis. Fencing, water development, or other allotment improvements may be necessary for protection from grazing. AUM reductions and allotment closures should not be utilized as protection measures unless other measures have been tried unsuccessfully, and it is clearly a problem with overstocking. Also, limiting grazing to periods outside the growing season (Alternative C) may completely eliminate grazing in more alpine areas where the growing season begins once the snow melts, and ends when the snow flies again. During winters with heavy snow packs, grazing would be completely eliminated. This elimination of grazing may not be necessary for protecting or managing for aspen regeneration. Site by site (not District wide) analysis of grazing prescriptions and any protection measures should occur and be written into the individual allotment management plans. In addition, the overall economic impacts to the local economy and ranching viability must be considered.

Responses to Letter B8

B8-4 The vegetation sections in Chapter 2 are separate and distinct in reference to each vegetation type. The pinyon /juniper type refers to true woodlands as described by NRCS Order III soil surveys and associated Ecological Site Descriptions, 2003 Edition, and can be identified on a watershed or site-specific basis. In referring to the NRCS Order III inventories in each vegetation section, reference was made to the latest Ecological Site Descriptions. To further update the vegetation section, LANDFIRE biophysical setting models were referenced to the desired range of conditions. Refer to revised Chapter 2 vegetation sections. The text in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to emphasize that the acreages presented in the various vegetation tables are based on extrapolation from a few watersheds rather than on inventory data from the entire planning area. During the watershed analysis process, rangeland sites occupied by pinyons and/or junipers will be distinguished from pinyon/juniper woodland sites.

B8-5 The reference citation to NRCS 2003 is correct for the determinations made by the Ely Field Office with regard to identification of woodland sites. The key for dividing woodland from rangeland ecological sites was updated in 2003.

B8-6 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.4.5.3 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify that the protection methods for encouraging aspen regeneration would be applied on a site-specific basis. Please note that given the extremely limited distribution of aspen in the decision area (about 7,000 acres total), any changes in grazing management to encourage aspen regeneration would have a very limited effect on livestock grazing operations and economics.

Letter B8 Continued

B8-7 (5) Pg 2.5-28 Alternative B describes using changing season of use or type of livestock as passive management actions for treating the salt desert shrub vegetation type. It should be noted that in some circumstances (certain phases or states) changes in livestock grazing will not and are not appropriate management choices for causing a transition from the shrub state to the herbaceous state (i.e. elimination of cattle grazing will not cause a transition to the herbaceous state when there is no seed source, or insignificant seed source present from perennial grass species).

B8-8 (6) Pg 2.5-31 Similar comment to (3). There are no footnotes describing how acreage estimates were obtained for any of the vegetation types, nor the states present for each one. Add footnotes referring to section 3 assumptions or explain how the data was derived and source as it is presented.

B8-9 (7) Pg 2.5-33 Under the description of the Shrub State in Table 2.5-6, the verbiage describes the "herbaceous perennial understory [as] lost or has become weak….". Consider changing verbiage about a weak understory to rather reflect a reduction in perennial understory vigor and decreased capacity to produce seed.

B8-10 (8) Pg 2.5-35 In the second paragraph of the description under Alternative B the document states that 45% of the sagebrush acreage in the District would be "maintained to achieve the desired range of conditions identified for Alternative B." This maintenance would occur on the untreated areas (areas not mechanically treated or prescribed burned), however no description of how maintenance would occur is included in this section. Does maintenance consist of following status quo management or will maintenance consist of other management techniques to reduce the likelihood of a site currently in the herbaceous state (17% of the sagebrush type) from crossing a threshold into the shrub state? This comment pertains to all of the vegetation communities described in Section 2.5.

B8-11 (9) Pg 2.5-38 In the sections of each vegetation community one of the factors listed as an indicator that a community is no longer resistant and resilient to disturbance is the presence of noxious weeds or "highly competitive unknown invasive weed." If the weed is unknown, how is it known that it is invasive, or how to adequately treat the invasion? It is suggested that the word unknown be stricken.

B8-12 (10) Pg. 2.5-45 In the preferred alternative, management actions are to be focused on uses and activities that allow for protection, maintenance, and restoration of riparian habitat. Does protection of riparian habitat affect current livestock grazing management plans? Discuss appropriate management actions in greater detail in this section. Alternative A discusses constructing, maintaining, or improving exclosures. Would this also occur in Alternative B? If so, additional offsite waters sources may need to be developed for livestock grazing. In fact, providing additional offsite water sources can increase grazing distribution and reduce grazing use in riparian areas (Clawson 1993, Howery et al. 1996, and Sheffield et al. 1997). Proper livestock grazing use can be an effective

Responses to Letter B8

B8-7 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.4.5.4 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to emphasize that changes in livestock management would be used where sufficient native understory species exist to provide an effective seed source.

B8-8 Please refer to Section 4.1.4.1 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for an explanation of how the acreage estimates for vegetation types and treatment areas were derived.

B8-9 In response to your comment, the text in Table 2.5-6 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised.

B8-10 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.4.5.1 has been revised to discuss the application of tools described in Appendix H for achieving the maintenance of the desired range of conditions. Integrated treatment actions are further described for each parameter.

B8-11 In response to your comment, the text in Sections 2.4.5, 2.4.21 and 2.4.23 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify the discussion of invasive species.

B8-12 As you have indicated in your comment, a wide variety of management options exist for promoting vegetation health, structure, and diversity in the riparian communities. Selection of such approaches is appropriate on a site-specific basis as watershed analyses are conducted and treatment plans are implemented. The management actions in Section 2.4.5.9 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS (for the Proposed RMP and by extension to Alternative B) have been worded to provide the necessary latitude for selecting treatment methods appropriate to the individual riparian situation.

Letter B8 Continued

B8-12 management strategy in riparian areas. It is suggested that livestock grazing not be excluded from riparian areas including those areas not yet meeting proper functioning condition. Rather, altering the grazing system, changing season of use, and changing duration in the pasture should be considered as management alternatives for riparian area grazing. The description of Alternatives B and E are too general and do not adequately address the actions, management, and treatments. If the point of this alternative is to be extremely general so that each riparian system can be treated on a site-by-site basis, then this type of management style should be described. Adaptive management of resource uses should also be incorporated into the decision making process with regard to actions and treatments.

B8-13 (11) Pg. 2.5-49 There is concern that very often Resource Management Plan actions are not adequately monitored nor are the monitoring results adequately reported to the public. It is recommended that an in-depth monitoring plan be developed for these purposes, including the use of an open science team review approach. Quantitative baseline information should be collected before treatment and should include photo monitoring of landscapes and individual plots. Installation and utilization of small exclosures (generally between 0.5 and 5 acres) are recommended as monitoring tools and aids for determining not only changes from upland restoration treatments (with and without grazing), but also for determining stream potential in riparian areas to support desired plant communities and channel bank conditions.

B8-14 (12) Section 2.5.5 This section provides a great deal of detail about each vegetation community and the number of acres estimated for treatment in the next 20 to 50 years. In fact, under the preferred alternative 6,230,270 acres are proposed for treatment. Over the last 13 years the Ely District has treated 164,966 acres. At current rates of treatment (approx 12,689 acres/year) and funding, it would take approximately 490 years to complete the proposed projects. The District would have to increase the rate of treatment to 124,605 acres/year to implement treatments in the next 50 years. It is very likely in some years funding and staff time will limit the District from treating the minimum acreage each year. The DEIS is missing criteria for prioritizing which vegetation types and which of the 61 watersheds will be treated first. A description of how treatments will be prioritized over the short and long terms should be included.

B8-15 (13) Pg. 2.5-52 There is a statement in Alternative E about using Rangeland Health Standards Assessments to determine if livestock grazing is a causal factor for nonattainment of objectives. Completion of the Rangeland Health Standard Assessments worksheets does not in itself allow for determination of livestock grazing as a causal factor for nonattainment of objectives. Also, stratified random sampling of major vegetation types (Ely BLM watershed analysis procedure) does not provide an adequate measure of the most typical areas where grazing use is managed and consistently similar across the landscape. Key areas are areas of one ecological site with similar topography and landscape features that represent a larger area in an allotment from which impacts of

Responses to Letter B8

B8-13 In response to your comment and similar comments, the discussion of adaptive management and monitoring incorporating these aspects has been revised and expanded in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS (see Section 1.7.1 and 2.4.23). A detailed monitoring plan will be developed subsequent to issuance of the Record of Decision. The details you suggest would be more appropriate within that document.

B8-14 The Ely RMP makes the assumption that funding would be available for implementation of the plan. Funding could come through the BLM's budget or from other partners. Criteria for emphasizing treatment is provided in Section 2.4.5.1 Parameter - General Vegetation Management. "Treatments would be emphasized in areas that have the best potential to respond and return to the desired range of conditions". Priorities within individual vegetative types are identified in sections 2.4.5.2 through 2.4.5.10. Criteria for prioritizing watershed analyses are identified in Section 2.4.19, Watershed Management.

B8-15 The information sources presented in this comment are indeed the appropriate kinds and sources of information for assessing livestock grazing relative to the achievement of the standards for rangeland health. These would be reviewed and assessed during the evaluation process.

Letter B8 Continued

B8-15 grazing should be monitored. For additional info on key areas refer to the NRCS Pasture and Range Handbook. Key area monitoring, paired with watershed assessments, quantitative data from monitoring and inventories, qualitative information, professional knowledge, and information provided by State agencies, public land users and others (BLM Manual H4180-1) are the appropriate monitoring locations for assessing the impacts of livestock grazing on attainment of Rangeland Health Standards.

B8-16 (14) Pg. 2.5-58 Alternative B indicates that through watershed analysis livestock grazing will be assessed to determine if the action is a causal factor for nonattainment of standards. What standards have been developed and approved in the Ely District for meeting migratory bird habitat needs? If they haven't been developed, who will develop them? The Alternative mentions the BLM Nevada Migratory Bird Best Management Practices. Will these be the standards?

B8-17 Secondly, why is livestock grazing listed as the only parameter that will be assessed as a potential causal factor? There are several other activities that may be causal factors in not meeting habitat needs, including ORV disturbances, right-of-way and road construction, weed invasions, human-caused fires, wildfires, and other activities that may fragment habitat. Cumulative affects of all habitat impacts should be assessed for all potential causative factors.

B8-18 (15) Pg. 2.5-62 Alternative E states that "big game species habitats would be managed to meet the public demand for increased game species distribution, density, and increased recreational opportunity, beyond what natural habitats and water sources would support." The way the statement is written it seems impossible to sustainably support game species numbers at this increased level. It should be stated that under the preferred alternative, big game species habitats will be altered according to the vegetation management section. Alteration of the habitats will potentially allow for sustainable increases in big game species distribution and density.

B8-19 (16) Pg. 2.5-62 Similar to comment #13. What standards are approved for crucial mule deer, pronghorn, and bighorn sheep habitats? If none are yet approved, who is responsible for determining crucial habitat standards? Why is livestock grazing the only resource use listed as a potential causal factor for nonattainment of standards? Please list all other potential causal factors for not meeting standards, and how they will be evaluated.

B8-20 (17) Pg. 2.5-63 Alternative E refers the reader to Alternative B for a description of how wildfire emergency stabilization projects would indirectly restore high and low elevation bighorn sheep habitat, however no description exists in Alternative B. Please describe further.

B8-21 (18) Pg. 2.5-64 When monitoring fish and game and conducting watershed assessments, conflicts between livestock, wild horses, and wildlife are to be resolved during the watershed assessments and grazing permit renewals. Revisions to AMLs may

Responses to Letter B8

B8-16 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.6.6.4 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to note management actions are the same for Alternative B as the Proposed Plan (see 2.4.6.4).

B8-17 The BLM is required by regulation (Title 43 § 4180) to conduct local-level assessments for ascertaining rangeland health standards. These assessments determine if areas are meeting the Resource Advisory Council standards, and determine specifically whether livestock grazing is a significant factor in failing to achieve the standards. BLM has worked with the Resource Advisory Councils to expand these rangeland health standards so that there are public land health standards relevant to all ecosystems, not just rangelands, and that they apply to all actions, not just livestock grazing. In response to your comment, the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been modified to more clearly present the 4180 rangeland health standards assessments as they relate to wildlife.

B8-18 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.5.6.6 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify the discussion of big game habitat management for increased game species distribution and densities.

B8-19 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.4.6 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify grazing standards for big game species.

B8-20 Emergency stabilization and rehabilitation would establish vegetation to meet ecological site guides. Refer to text in Section 3.6.2 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS.

B8-21 In response to your comment, the wording in this portion of Section 2.4.23 (wildlife) of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify that conflict resolution would involve potential adjustments to wildlife habitat management and AML as well as livestock permits.

Letter B8 Continued

B8-21 also be necessary. Also, these conflicts should be resolved using a consensus type approach working closely with the permittee, wildlife groups, and other stakeholders.

B8-22 (19) Pg. 2.5-66 #12 – Caution should be exercised in implementation of the guidelines in Connelly et al. 2000, especially the grass and forb heights included in Appendix M Tables M-1 and M-4. The scientific literature summarized in (Connelly et al. 2000) indicates that sagebrush canopy cover and composition, as well as the cover and diversity of perennial herbaceous species in the understory are significantly important to sage grouse nesting success (NDOW 2002). Furthermore, in a recent review of the 13 studies that were cited in the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) guidelines (Connelly et al. 2000) for sage grouse habitat, there were no statistically significant relationships found between nest success and grass height alone. There was, in fact, a slight negative correlation that should not be over interpreted. Results from simple linear and multiple regressions performed on grass height and nest success suggest that grass height as a single parameter is a poor indicator and should not be used individually or exclusively to assess or monitor sage grouse habitat quality (Schultz 2004).

B8-23 The Sage Grouse BMPs in Appendix K state that changes in livestock management (including the possibility of permanent exclusion) shall occur at the start of the next grazing season where grazing results in a level of forage uses determined detrimental to habitat quality. Using Connelly et al. guidelines as standards may be spatially or temporally inappropriate. Ecological site potentials vary considerably in eastern Nevada sagebrush communities, and it must be considered that understory (excluding seed stalks) height characteristics of seven-inches or more may not be possible or practicable in all ecological sites or habitat areas. Broad application of understory height objectives is not recommended across all sites and areas where sagebrush once grew (NDOW 2002). Due to the findings of Schultz 2004, it is recommended that the height parameters in Tables M-1 and M-4 ***not*** be used to determine whether or not forage use (utilization levels) has detrimentally affected habitat quality.

B8-24 (20) Pg. 2.5-71 Approximately 9.8 miles of vegetation along lower Meadow Valley Wash burned during the Meadow Valley Fire in 2005. The affected area occurs in the Henrie Complex Allotment. Approximately 52 percent (or 89,000 acres) of the allotment burned in 2005 between the Meadow Valley and the Duzack fires. A considerable amount of the burned acreage occurred in desert tortoise habitat. Removing livestock grazing as a vegetation management tool in desert tortoise habitat limits the ability of land managers to quickly break up the continuity or reduce fuel loads in years of excessive or high production of annual grasses (e.g. cheatgrass, red brome) and weeds (e.g. mustards). Failing to remove fuel loads creates conditions susceptible to large-scale fires and removal of the native vegetation species. Instead of exclusion of all grazing, change management of affected allotments to allow for annually assessed Temporary Non-Renewable Resource (TNR) grazing permits.

Responses to Letter B8

B8-22 In response to your comment, the text in item 12 of Section 2.4.7.6 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify that the management of greater sage-grouse habitat will be in accordance with current guidelines and that such guidelines are subject to periodic revision based on additional scientific information. The Ely Field Office will continue to manage sage-grouse habitat based on the latest BLM policy and scientific evidence.

B8-23 Please refer to Response to Comment B8-22. Also, please refer to Appendix F in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS where a similar text revision has been made.

B8-24 As outlined for the Proposed RMP in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS, the Ely Field Office proposes to implement short-term closures or restrictions for the 598,071 acres recovering from wildfires within the Mojave Desert. In the short-term, Mojave grazing allotments or portions of allotments affected by the South Desert Complex Fires will remain closed and/or operating under the management strategies established through the South Desert Complex Emergency Stabilization Plan. These closures and restrictions would remain in place until short-term Emergency Stabilization objectives were achieved.

Letter B8 Continued

B8-25 (21) Pg. 2.5 –71 Alternative E- Grazing should not be excluded from southwestern willow flycatcher potential habitat that is classified as either type A or C. Type A is very limited in distribution and is most affected by lack of surface water. Type C habitat does not have the canopy or interior vegetation density necessary for suitable habitat and may not have the land capability or potential to meet suitable habitat criterion even if all threats/stressors are removed and restoration is attempted (Bio-West 2005). Fencing to exclude grazing from occupied suitable habitat or potential habitat stressed by grazing should also be paired with development of offsite water sources. Failure to do so may in some cases limit livestock grazing distribution throughout affected allotments.

B8-26 (22) Pg. 2.5-72 Alternatives B and E. See comment #20.

B8-27 (23) Pg. 2.5-81 Alternative B should also manage horses in a similar fashion to Alternative A, such that the "population range would ensure that a thriving natural ecological balance is obtained…."

B8-28 (24) Pg. 2.5-140 No mention of what other resource uses would continue or be excluded following the establishment of four special recreation permit areas totaling 1.36 million acres. Please describe the compatibility of these special recreation permit areas with other resource uses. Secondly, ORV use can significantly damage soil resources, especially when concentrated. Are soil surveys completed for all of the proposed areas? If not, adequate knowledge of soil capability to withstand such a use is not available. Where soil survey information is not available, no special recreation permit areas should be designated. Where soil survey data is available, designated routes should avoid highly erodible soils or soils that will rapidly erode once the surface soils have been lost. No increase in PM_{10} or decrease in air quality is listed as a potential cumulative impact from concentrated ORV recreation.

B8-29 (25) Pg. 2.5-141 Appendix C describes the phases of the watershed analysis process, however it does not list or describe which vegetation, structural, or functional attributes will be monitored during the process. Management common to all alternatives includes adjusting stocking rates based on watershed analysis. The NRCS Pasture and Rangeland Handbook provides a method for adjusting current stocking rates, involving studies of trend, plant community health, and utilization of key species. Appendix C does not indicate the type of measurements and quantitative (or qualitative) data that will be collected during the watershed analysis. The watershed analysis process should include monitoring of all of the recommended attributes before adjustments of stocking rates are made. More information on the watershed analysis process needs to be included in Appendix C. An appropriate stocking rate is fine tuned in cooperation with the BLM and permittee by adaptive management through the year and from year to year (USDA-NRCS 1997b).

Responses to Letter B8

B8-25 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.4.7.3 and 4.7 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been expanded to address interactions between livestock grazing and the southwestern willow flycatcher.

B8-26 Please refer to Response to Comment B8-24 for a discussion of changes in livestock grazing management in lower Meadow Valley Wash as a result of the fires in 2005.

B8-27 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.5.8.2 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify that a similar thriving natural ecological balance would be achieved in Alternative B.

B8-28 In response to your comment, the analysis for several resource programs in Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been expanded to discuss the impacts of special recreation permit areas. Soils survey data is more detailed than necessary to prepare a largely programmatic RMP/EIS for the Ely planning area. Dust generated from off-road racing events is very localized and temporary and does not contribute to regional air quality degradation.

B8-29 Appendix A in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS discusses the process found in BLM Handbook H-4180-1 Rangeland Health Standards. The commenter is directed to that handbook for the detail requested in this comment. The watershed analysis process is not used to adjust stocking rates. The Pasture and Rangeland Handbook provides a method for adjusting stocking rates.

Letter B8 Continued

B8-30 (26) Pg. 2.5-142 The Haypress allotment should not be identified for potential disposal if there is little to no indication that the horse preserve will be managed to maintain the health and functionality of both the upland and any riparian vegetation and soils on the preserve. A public process should be endorsed to develop a management plan with monitoring objectives that ensures ecological sustainability prior to disposal.

B8-31 (27) Pg. 2.5-142 In Alternative E, it is stated that there would only be closure of 3,300 acres within new ACECs, however several of the proposed ACECs would also limit livestock management. Please include the number of acres and allotments which grazing would become limited. Secondly, refer to comment #20. Removing livestock grazing as a management tool (or severely limiting the use) may perpetuate conditions with higher than normal fine fuel loads and subsequently result in larger and more frequent wildfires, especially for allotments in the Mojave Desert.

B8-32 Secondly, limiting or reducing livestock grazing in the proposed ACECs could have not only short-term but also long-term effects on the economic stability of affected ranches. Long-term limitations may fiscally limit the viability of ranching operations in the area. This issue was not addressed in Alternative E of the Environmental Consequences section.

B8-33 (28) Pg. 2.5-144 Performance-based grazing authorizations proposed in Alternative E are an excellent way to promote proper, if not exemplary, livestock grazing management. Flexibility to use pastures at appropriate times during the plant growth cycles between seasons and between years should promote accelerated ability to meet reasonable resource objectives and improve overall rangeland health.

B8-34 (29) Pg. 2.5-147 Allowing grazing permits to be relinquished and converted to forage reserves has the potential to drastically change the economic and social structure of the counties in the District. As land and water purveyors with no agricultural interests (e.g. Southern Nevada Water Authority) buy base property in the counties, more permits are likely to be relinquished. By not allowing application for these permits to other ranchers, the number of livestock producers within the District will continue to decrease. As fewer and fewer producers operate in the area, key infrastructure and economic opportunities will likely be lost, impacting the industry throughout the area. No economic impacts associated with implementing this policy have been analyzed in section 4.23 Economic Conditions - Environmental Consequences of the DRAFT RMP/EIS.

B8-35 It is easy to appreciate the need to provide additional forage opportunities for those permittees that are displaced for any reason, however each permittee has and continues to manage their own allotments with areas of reserve in the event of drought or other circumstances. This is especially true for permittees using rotation grazing systems. In instances where fire or planned restoration treatments affect allotments on such scales that the active use for that allotment would be significantly reduced, then alternative forage sources outside the

Responses to Letter B8

B8-30 Aliquot parts of the Haypress Allotment have been identified in the Proposed RMP for potential disposal but not specifically for a wild horse preserve. Any disposal would be in accordance with the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act, would be a public process, and would be analyzed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

B8-31 Please refer to Section 2.4.16.1 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for a change in acres associated with new ACECs. Livestock grazing is proposed to be closed in the 40-acre Snake Creek Indian Burial Cave ACEC. Refer to Table 2.4-26 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for identification of additional ACECs where grazing is limited. As discussed in Section 2.5.16 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS, grazing would also be excluded on a temporary basis for areas in the Mojave Desert that are recovering from the South Desert Complex Fires of 2005.

B8-32 In response to your comment, the text for the Proposed RMP and Alternatives B in Section 4.16 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify the impact of these potential closures on the economic viability of numerous ranching operations. The basic impact conclusions presented in the Draft RMP and EIS have not changed.

B8-33 Thank you for your comment.

B8-34 In response to your comment, the text in Section 4.23 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been expanded to clarify the effects of relinquishing grazing permits. Whether grazing permits are relinquished and converted to forage reserves or opened to application from other ranchers would not appear to have dramatically different implications for the economic and social structure of communities in the Ely RMP planning area. In either case, the available forage produced on the affected allotments would likely be used by other ranching operations and the number of continuing ranching operations would logically be similar in either case. In fact, the availability of a forage reserve may help sustain the income of operations temporarily displaced for any reason. Moreover, the major causal factor between local ranching operations and the economic and social structure of local communities would appear to be the retention or selling off of base properties, the value of which is largely independent of current or future livestock operations, not the management of relinquished permits.

B8-35 The Proposed RMP specifies management policies and actions and provides programmatic and implementable direction for management of the public lands. The desert tortoise ACECs have been closed to livestock grazing in response to the fires that occurred in 2005. Temporary nonrenewable is an action that is regulatory and can be considered, and if appropriate approved, on an annual basis. In the event that grazing permits are relinquished, managing the areas as forage reserves would be considered. This would be reviewed through the scoping process. Both of these actions would be considered in consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service to promote the recovery of the desert tortoise.

Letter B8 Continued

B8-35 allotment should be considered. One alternative could be to issue temporary nonrenewable permits for ACECs or other areas of nonuse during seasons of use that do not conflict with critical times for special status (e.g. livestock grazing could occur in desert tortoise ACECs while tortoises are in hibernation). Currently this option is not included in any of the alternatives in the DRAFT RMP/EIS. A second alternative would be to change relinquished allotments or other areas of nonuse to forage reserves or reserve common allotments.

B8-36 Using the Four C's concepts to grazing administration, forage reserves could be managed as Reserve Common Allotments (RCA). It is recommended that if RCAs are formed from relinquished permits, only the first two types of RCA formation should be utilized:

1) **Permittee Association Voluntary RCA** – RCAs voluntarily established by associations of permittees in areas specified in land use plans as suitable for RCA use.
2) **Individual Permittee Voluntary RCA –** RCAs voluntarily established by individual permittees in areas specified in land use plans as suitable for RCA use.
3) **BLM Administered RCA** – RCAs established from vacant allotments and/or donated or exchanged lands, and administered by the BLM for the same purposes as permittee association and individual permittee voluntary RCAs (BLM 2003).

B8-37 In the event that the Tamberlaine allotment permit, or any other allotment permits are relinquished, it is preferable that the permits remain available by application process to other ranchers according to current regulations (Alternative A). In the event that other ranchers do not apply for relinquished permits, then it is recommended the permits be held as forage reserves by grazing associations or individuals. It is least preferable that the BLM administer allotments as forage reserves, as this type of management should come from the grassroots level, not as a top-down approach for successful implementation.

B8-38 If forage reserves are created, it is imperative that annual or biennial grazing continues to occur on these allotments to prevent herbaceous species such as crested wheatgrass from becoming decadent. Annual or biennial grazing would also reduce the continuity and height of fine fuel loads frequently enough to prevent excessive fuel load build up which could increase susceptibility for large, high-intensity wildfires. Other planning concerns include development of a management plan for forage reserve allotments, which addresses objectives for how these forage reserve allotments will be managed, maintained, and monitored. The plan should also address who will get to use the allotment(s) and how priorities will be determined.

B8-39 Research use (and grazing nonuse) as proposed in Alternatives C and E are not a valid use for grazing permits under the current CFR's. Designated research sites not compatible with livestock grazing should be addressed in the RMP

Responses to Letter B8

B8-36 The types of reserve common allotment formation categories presented in this comment would all be considered when allotments are relinquished.

B8-37 In the event that an allotment grazing permit is relinquished, the actions presented in this comment would be considered.

B8-38 In the event that forage reserves are created, the actions, practices, and recommendations presented in this comment would be considered. Grazing plans would be developed addressing all aspects of grazing management on forage reserves.

B8-39 Research on allotments for which a grazing permit has been relinquished is not included as part of the Proposed RMP. Research Natural Area is not a designation that is allowed under the new BLM Land Use Planning Handbook. If grazing permits are relinquished, authorized uses, which could include research, would be considered. Any uses would be consistent with the regulations and policies in force at that time.

Letter B8 Continued

B8-39 planning process as a change in land use to Research Natural Areas and included for analysis in section 2.522.5.

B8-40 The DRAFT RMP/EIS allows for any permits and specifically the Tamberlaine allotment to be relinquished and converted from grazing use to use as forage reserves. Additional planning issues should be considered in designating areas of the district for these changes in land use, including but not limited to economic viability of certain ranching communities/centers, proximity to towns and cities, and ease of transport of cattle from one allotment to another.

B8-41 As an example of the complex issues associated with forage reserves, the Tamberlaine allotment is located adjacent to the Ward Mountain (Blue Diamond) community, approximately six miles south of Ely. Removal of annual (or at least biennial) livestock grazing on this allotment could result in increased fuel loads and more intense fires. The allotment boundary falls within 0.5 miles of the Ward Mountain (Blue Diamond) development and management on this allotment could affect fire suppression efforts within the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Wildfires could spread more rapidly and at higher intensities into the Ward Mountain WUI. If any additional allotments were converted to forage reserves near other WUI areas, the same affects could be realized. Because of this concern, if allotments were to be managed as forage reserves they should either be grazed using TNR permits annual or biennially or be prohibited on allotments within one to two miles of WUI areas in the District.

B8-42 (30) Pg. 2.5-180 The description of Watershed Management - Management to maintain resiliency includes the management option of modifying livestock grazing or completely eliminating grazing on existing resilient vegetation communities. All of the options in this section should only be implemented when rangeland health standards are not being met currently. If the plant community only requires maintenance of resilient qualities, and livestock grazing was part of the system that reached a desired level of resiliency, then why should livestock grazing be modified or excluded for the purpose of maintaining resiliency? If the communities are currently functioning in a resistant and resilient manner to disturbance, then why change the current management (if the system is not broke, why fix it)? Also, point-in-time studies such as the watershed assessment method should not be used to determine changes in livestock grazing management. Rather they should only be used to determine areas where additional monitoring should occur, before management changes/adjustments are made.

B8-43 (31) Pg. 2.5-185 Alternative E proposes to only allocate additional forage to livestock grazing through restoration treatments after all rangeland health standards have been met on a watershed scale. In most cases, more than one allotment and more than one permittee manage grazing within one watershed. Alternative E also calls for granting performance-based grazing on case-by-case basis. This section greatly reduces the incentive for one performance-based permittee to manage his resources to meet all rangeland health standards. This is because a

Responses to Letter B8

B8-40 Current grazing management policy addresses authorized uses (including forage reserves) that could be included or considered if grazing permits are relinquished. If the grazing permit for any allotment were to be relinquished, the planning issues presented in this comment would be considered. In the Proposed RMP, the Tamberlaine Allotment has not been specifically identified for a forage reserve.

B8-41 In the Proposed RMP, the Tamberlaine Allotment has not been specifically identified for a forage reserve. In the event that forage reserves are created, the issues raised in this comment would be considered.

B8-42 A variety of factors besides grazing (e.g., fire and drought) may adversely affect vegetation communities and push them toward transitions into undesired states. In such situations where rangeland health is at risk, adjustments in various resource uses such as grazing may be required for the maintenance of resilience. As indicated in the comment, if conditions are stable, health standards are being met, and vegetation communities are resilient, such adjustments in grazing management would not be appropriate or required.

B8-43 Reference to Performance Based Grazing has been removed as a Parameter or a management action in the Proposed RMP. Flexibility associated with livestock grazing is allowed in the current grazing regulations at 43 CFR Part 4100 and is specifically addressed under allotment management plans.

Letter B8 Continued

B8-43 neighboring permittee may not be able to reach standards in the same time frame. Each grazing system is different, and different issues could be present on each allotment in a watershed that will cause each allotment to meet standards at different times. If all standards are met on one allotment (but not the others) in a watershed, the allotment meeting standards should be eligible for additional forage allocations.

B8-44 (32) Pg. 2.5-194 Alternative E calls for the designation of 18 additional ACECs totaling 138,900 acres. Livestock grazing is to remain closed on 212,500 acres (existing ACECs), 3,300 acres are proposed for closure to grazing (new ACECs), and livestock grazing will be limited through changes to grazing permits on approximately 62,440 acres (new ACECs). In reviewing the description of the proposed Condor Canyon ACEC, no explanation or rationale is provided regarding livestock grazing being a threat to the Big Spring spinedace. Why are any additional grazing restrictions being proposed? Similar comments apply for Mount Irish and Shooting Gallery, as no evidence of threat from grazing is given or reasons for limiting or restricting livestock grazing on these two proposed ACECs, totaling more than 46,900 acres. Also, no description of the economic impacts of these proposed limitations of grazing are analyzed in section 4 – Environmental consequences. Refer to comment #20 regarding fuels management.

B8-45 (33) Pg. 2.5-266 Alternative E for Wilderness Study Areas proposes to emphasize other multiple uses within WSAs but also restrict management on all other areas with wilderness characteristics. This alternative doesn't list the types of management restrictions that would be put in place, nor does it list the estimated acreage within the District that has wilderness characteristics (other than WSA and designated wilderness). Managing to protect wilderness characteristics could limit the degree and extent of restoration treatments proposed in this document. Further analysis would be necessary to determine the potential impacts of this alternative, and as such it should not be included in the FEIS as the preferred alternative.

B8-46 (34) Pg. 3.5-4 Table 3.5-2 lists the source for the table as BLM unpublished data. These data need to have a better citation when listing unpublished data as the primary source of information. Are the data created from remote sensing technologies? If so, what is the date of the satellite imagery used for the classification? If not, how were these estimates made?

B8-47 (35) Pg. 3.5-5 Similar comment to #3 and #34. More information is needed regarding how these categories and estimated percentages were derived. Section 4.1.4 explains that the characteristics of three watersheds were extrapolated to the entire District using GAP data, however this still fails to explain how the watershed analysis was completed and what types of data were used and collected.

Responses to Letter B8

B8-44 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.4.22 and Table 2.4-29 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify grazing restrictions relative to various ACECs.

B8-45 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.4.22.4 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify the discussion of lands with wilderness characteristics. No lands with wilderness characteristics outside of currently designated wilderness and wilderness study areas have been identified in the Proposed RMP.

B8-46 In response to your comment, Table 3.5-2 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised. The table footnote has been revised to indicated that the acreage estimates contained in the table were derived from extrapolation of Ecological Status Inventory and Southwest ReGAP data. Please also refer to Section 4.1.4.1 for additional discussion of the data extrapolation.

B8-47 In response to your comment, Section 4.1.4.1 has been revised to clarify that extrapolations within the Great Basin were made from data available for approximately 1.1 million acres in three watersheds, but not through the use of GAP data. Watershed analysis is not complete at this time.

Letter B8 Continued

B8-48 (36) Pg. 4.1-9 This section explains how the characteristics of three watersheds were extrapolated to the entire district, excluding the Mojave Desert areas. How was data derived for the Mojave Desert areas?

B8-49 (37) Pg. 4.16-5 Both Alternatives B and E indicate that changes to stocking levels and grazing management could occur "to meet objectives within pastures where riparian objectives or water quality standards are not being achieved." Changes to grazing management in riparian areas should only occur where livestock grazing is determined to be a causal factor in the failure to meet objectives.

B8-50 (38) Pg. 4.16.6 It is commendable the Ely District realizes the importance additional management actions, including rangeland projects (e.g. water developments, fencing, etc.), have on progress toward meeting rangeland health and riparian PFC objectives. Changes in season of use, time, duration, and fencing often require rangeland improvements to make them feasible management tools. Water hauls for protection of fishery habitat is not as desirable as permanent developments of offsite water troughs fed by creeks or springs. Increasing labor significantly through water hauls will reduce the capability of livestock producers to focus on improved cattle distribution through herding or other methods.

B8-51 (39) Pg. 4.16-8 Recreation- There is not enough information on how the proposed 2,680,000 acres of special recreation management areas might be managed for the BLM to assess the potential affects on livestock grazing. This portion of Alternatives B and E needs to be developed in more detail. It is not adequate to say "while management of these areas ***may not*** preclude grazing...". Instead, the RMP needs to explain how these areas are to be managed to adequately describe and receive comments on impacts of this action.

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Responses to Letter B8

B8-48 Within the Mojave Desert, vegetation characteristics were extrapolated from SW ReGAP vegetation data as described in Section 2.5.5.7. This has also been clarified with text revision of Section 4.1.4.1 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS.

B8-49 In response to your comment, the wording in Section 4.16 related to livestock grazing changes to meet water quality standards in Alternatives B and C has been revised to include the phrase "and livestock grazing is a causal factor."

B8-50 Comment noted. These issues occur at the implementation level and would be addressed at the watershed analysis and allotment planning stage rather than as a component of the Proposed RMP.

B8-51 Please refer to the revised text in Section 4.16 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for clarification of the impacts to livestock grazing from designation of the additional special recreation management areas.v

Letter B8 Continued

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In summary, Resource Concepts, Inc. appreciates the opportunity to review the Ely RMP/EIS and provide comments on behalf of the N-4 State Grazing Board. We are available to discuss any of the concerns or comments outlined in this correspondence.

Sincerely,

John L. McLain
CRMC/CPESC

JLM:tlb:sta

Letter B9

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October 27, 2005

Gene Kolkman, Field Manager
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Ely Field Office
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Ely, Nevada 89301

Dear Mr. Kolkman:

SUBJECT: LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION, RECREATION AND DEVELOPMENT ACT UTILITY CORRIDORS

The Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) appreciates the opportunity to work with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the identification of utility corridors authorized under the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 (LCCRDA). As you are aware, SNWA has been developing the alignments for pipelines, power lines, and associated facilities of the Clark, Lincoln, and White Pine Counties Groundwater Development Project (Case File No. N-78803), and is attempting to locate these facilities within the LCCRDA utility corridor as feasible.

B9-1 However, as we plotted the initial, general delineation of the utility corridor alignment developed by BLM on maps of greater resolution, some conflicts with existing lands and deviations from existing roads were noted. BLM's initial delineation was only of the alignment of the corridor and did not depict the 2,640-foot width of the corridor. In addition, SNWA's proposed pipeline deviates slightly from BLM's initial corridor delineation for engineering and constructability reasons. These adjustments keep the pipeline at lower elevations, minimizing changes in the hydraulic grade and avoiding the need for additional pumping stations.

B9-2 Therefore, SNWA is proposing minor adjustments in BLM's initial delineation of the utility corridor, as shown on the enclosed maps. These maps display BLM's initial alignment, the proposed corridor location, and SNWA's proposed pipeline and power line alignments on maps of 1:24,000 scale. For your reference, we have also depicted the Southwest Intertie Project alignment on these maps, as provided to us by BLM. We have also enclosed a disk with the GIS shapefile of this proposed corridor.

File No. ISWRP050 WBS 090G 24 E1

Responses to Letter B9

B9-1 The SWIP corridor has been expanded to 0.75 miles wide to connect with portions of the corridor designated in the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act. This will allow Southern Nevada Water Authority to adjust the location of the proposed pipeline. Any other deviations could be authorized as part of the right-of-way process.

B9-2 Please refer to Response to Comment B9-1 for a discussion of corridors.

Letter B9 Continued

We would appreciate your input on these alignments, as we continue to develop our project proposal. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Luptowitz at (702) 862-3789 or myself at (702) 862-3775.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Albright, P.E.
Director, SNWA Resources

KAA:LL:cec

Enclosures

c: Dan Netcher, Groundwater Development Project Coordinator, BLM
Bruce Flinn, Groundwater Development Project Manager, BLM
Lisa Luptowitz, Environmental Planner, SNWA

File No. ISWRP050 WBS 090G 24 E1

Letter B10

Southern Nevada
Water Authority

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
1900 E. Flamingo Road
Las Vegas, NV 89153

Main 702/862-3400
Fax 702/862-3470

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B10-1

snwa.com

November 16, 2005

Gene Drais, Project Manager
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Ely Field Office
HC33 Box 33500
Ely, Nevada 89301

NOV

Dear Mr. Drais:

SUBJECT: DRAFT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE ELY DISTRICT

The Southern Nevada Water Authority (Authority) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) for the Ely District. The Authority is a political subdivision of the State of Nevada, created in 1991 under Nevada State law pursuant to a Cooperative Agreement among its seven member agencies. The Authority's member agencies, which are water and wastewater agencies in southern Nevada, include: Big Bend Water District, City of Boulder City, City of Henderson, City of Las Vegas, City of North Las Vegas, Clark County Water Reclamation District, and Las Vegas Valley Water District. The Authority's mission is to manage the water resources of southern Nevada and develop solutions that will ensure adequate future water supplies for the Las Vegas Valley.

I. Introduction

As stated in the document, the purpose of the RMP/EIS is to provide "direction and guidance for management of approximately 11.4 million acres of public land located in Lincoln, Nye, and White Pine counties in eastern Nevada that is administered by the U. S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Ely Field Office". The RMP/EIS will "provide direction for management of renewable and nonrenewable resources found within the Ely District" and will "guide decision-making for future site-specific actions". The preferred alternative (Alternative E) supports implementation of the Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project while still providing for resource uses, therefore, the Authority supports adoption of the preferred alternative with the changes described in this letter.

The Authority has applied to the BLM for rights-of-way to develop and convey groundwater within the Ely District, as part of its Clark, Lincoln, and White Pine Counties Groundwater Development Project. The BLM is currently preparing an

Responses to Letter B10

B10-1 Thank you for your comment.

Letter B10 Continued

EIS for this project. The Ely District RMP/EIS and the final decision made by the BLM will be directly relevant to the Authority's groundwater project.

II. Utility Corridors

The Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 (LCCRDA) became law on November 30, 2004 (Public Law 108-424). As part of the LCCRDA, Congress directed the BLM, through the Secretary of the Interior, to establish a 2,640-foot wide utility corridor in Lincoln County and Clark County, Nevada as generally depicted on a map included in the congressional record. Although the BLM does not have discretion on the designation of the utility corridors, the BLM does have discretion on final alignment and location of the utility corridor. On October 27, 2005, the Authority submitted to the BLM a recommended detailed delineation of the utility corridor alignment, which corresponds with the location of the Authority's proposed groundwater project, which was the objective of the LCCRDA utility corridor. A copy of that submittal, including maps and a disk containing the GIS shapefiles, is enclosed. The Authority requests that the BLM consider and adopt this detailed alignment delineation of the utility corridor in the RMP/EIS. B10-2

Furthermore, although the RMP/EIS describes and depicts the LCCRDA utility corridors, it does not appear to actually designate them. The Authority believes the RMP/EIS should be revised to make it clear that the BLM is establishing the LCCRDA-mandated utility corridor, following the alignment identified in the Authority's October 27, 2005, submittal, and should address the environmental impacts of such establishment in the supporting National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. B10-3

The Authority recommends selection of the Alternative C proposed Spring Valley Utility Corridor alignment, identified in the RMP/EIS, at a width of 0.5 mile. This alignment follows the existing Highway 893, and is compatible with the Authority's proposed groundwater project alignment. B10-4

The Authority also recommends the establishment of a utility corridor into Snake Valley consistent with Authority's current proposed action to develop and convey groundwater within the Ely District. Establishing alignments within the RMP/EIS consistent with the Authority's right-of-way applications will help avoid amendments to the RMP/EIS in the future. B10-5

III. Water Resources

Groundwater

The perennial yield and committed resources data used in Section 3.3 are over 30 and 13 years old, respectively. The cited reference for perennial yield given in Table 3.3-1 (Nevada Division of Water Resources 2003) is Appendix A-2 of the Nevada State Water Plan. Appendix A-2 does not provide perennial yield information. The perennial yield numbers given in the table correspond to Scott et al. (1971) and, therefore, are at least 30 to 40 years old. Page 3.3-1 cites B10-6

Responses to Letter B10

B10-2 The SWIP corridor has been expanded to 0.75 miles wide to connect with portions of the corridor designated in the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act. This will allow Southern Nevada Water Authority to adjust the location of the proposed pipeline. Any other deviations could be authorized as part of the right-of-way process.

B10-3 The Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act designated this corridor. The Ely Field Office is including the corridor in the Proposed RMP. The impacts of facility construction within the corridor will be analyzed on a project-specific basis.

B10-4 The text in Section 2.4.12.5 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify the discussion of corridors.

B10-5 The Ely Field Office is required to designate corridors through the land use planning process. The Draft RMP and EIS did not analyze a corridor in Snake Valley in any of the alternatives. The Proposed RMP states that water pipelines are encouraged to be located within designated corridors. Water pipelines outside of the designated corridors could be authorized through the right-of-way process and would not require a land use plan amendment.

B10-6 In response to your comment, the text in Section 3.3.1 and the footnote to Table 3.3-1, have been modified to address groundwater data.

Letter B10 Continued

B10-6 Nevada Division of Water Planning 1992 as the source for the committed resources data. Therefore, that data is at least 13 years old. The accurate age of the data needs to be cited in the text and noted on tables along with an explanation of whether the totals include or exclude supplemental duties to help clarify what the totals actually represent. A list of references that contain more recent hydrological data is enclosed.

B10-7 Table 3.3-1 is subdivided by county. This leads to redundancies, because hydrographic areas cross county lines. Nevada Division of Water Resources (NDWR) does not identify hydrographic areas by county, and therefore, they should not be represented in this manner in the table. In addition, NDWR uses the term "hydrographic areas" not "basins", and that should be corrected in the second column of this table.

B10-8 Perennial yield and committed resources, described in the third paragraph on page 3.3-1 and Table 3.3-1, are two separate issues that do not directly correlate, and should be discussed separately. Perennial yield is the amount of usable water in a groundwater aquifer and is determined by a variety of factors, including artificial recharge, natural discharge, and natural recharge. Committed resources are the total volume of permitted, certificated and vested groundwater rights which are recognized by the State Engineer and can be withdrawn in a groundwater basin in any given year. By combining the discussion of these distinctly separate topics into one paragraph, it confuses a hydrological process with a regulatory one.

B10-9 The perennial yield information listed in Table 3.3-1 exclusively uses Scott et al. (1971), which summarizes water availability in the shallow aquifers of the Ely District based on various U.S. Geological Survey Nevada Reconnaissance Reports or Nevada Water Resources Bulletins from the 1960s and 1970s. Numerous studies have been made since then that also focus on perennial yield or recharge estimates for hydrographic areas in the Ely District. These reports include Nichols (2000) and various reports by the Authority and the Las Vegas Valley Water District. These reports often provide perennial yield values or recharge estimates that differ from the values provided by Scott et al. (1971).

B10-10 The perennial yield values in Table 3.3-1 should be listed as a range that incorporates both older and newer sources of data.

B10-11 Listing the perennial yield values as ranges avoids misleading the reader to believe they are absolute values. For example, in Snake Valley, the perennial yield value cited in Table 3.3-1 originates from the report titled "Water for Nevada – Report 3" from the State of Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. In that report, perennial yield for Snake Valley is listed as > 25,000 afy not 25,000 afy. The report also cites Reconnaissance Report No. 34 as the source of the data for Snake Valley. Reconnaissance Report No. 34, however, states that the perennial yield of Snake Valley is approximately 80,000 afy for both Utah and Nevada portions of Snake Valley. The RMP/EIS defines perennial yield as "generally about equal to the estimated net annual recharge". Reconnaissance Report No. 34 states that of the estimated 105,000 afy of total recharge to Snake Valley about 65,000 afy originates from precipitation in Nevada. Based on the three reports discussed above, the perennial yield of Snake Valley could

Responses to Letter B10

B10-7 Comment noted. No changes were made to the Proposed RMP and Final EIS with regard to the county organization of the table. County residents and governments are part of the public audience, and the existing table organization enhances readability and orientation to a locale for the purposes of this particular EIS. There is no intended implication that hydrographic boundaries follow county lines. NDWR mixes its use of terms for hydrographic areas in published maps, tables, and other documents; usage has been modified to be consistent in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS text and tables.

B10-8 Please refer to Response to Comment B10-6.

B10-9 In response to your comment, changes have been made in the text to address the central issue behind this comment. Additional discussion and table entries are not being made, since to do so would involve substantially more text without contributing to the purpose of this RMP and EIS. Other studies and NEPA documents, involving numerous agencies and organizations, will address these issues in a manner appropriate to their scope and the roles and responsibilities of the cooperating participants, including the BLM. Also refer to Response to Comment B10-6.

B10-10 Please refer to Response to Comment B10-9.

B10-11 Please refer to the Response to Comment B10-9.

Letter B10 Continued

B10-11 vary from >25,000 to 105,000 afy. Table 3.3-1 should be modified to more accurately show the range of perennial yield projected to be available from each hydrographic area.

B10-12 The committed resources listed in Table 3.3-1 represent the total volume of permitted, certificated, and vested groundwater rights recognized by the NDWR in each hydrographic area in 1992. As a result, the committed resources are 13 years out-of-date and could vary substantially from the reported value. A footnote should be added to identify this issue. The NDWR source for this information actually specifies the month and year that the data apply to. In addition, the table needs to be footnoted stating whether these totals include or exclude supplemental duties, to help clarify what the total actually represents. It might also help for clarification to state that the 'Committed Resources' are actually 'Committed Groundwater Resources'.

Surface Water

B10-13 The second paragraph on page 3.3-5 states that Lower Meadow Valley Wash and the White River are tributaries to the Virgin River. Historically, the Lower Meadow Valley Wash and the White River were tributaries to the Virgin River. Today, the Lower Meadow Valley Wash and White River flow into the Muddy River and then into the Colorado River by way of Lake Mead. Please correct the language on page 3.3-5.

B10-14 The last paragraph on page 3.3-5 describes trends towards transfers of water from agricultural areas to municipal uses in Nevada. It should be noted that transfers of water from agricultural areas to municipal uses are not unique to Nevada and is occurring throughout the western part of the country.

B10-15 Table 3.3-2 is not an exhaustive list of streams within specific hydrographic areas. For example, Kalamazoo Creek in hydrographic area 184 could be classified as a Class A Water. In addition, some of the assignments seem debatable. For instance, Duck Creek in hydrographic area 179 and Hendry's Creek in hydrographic area 195 have numerous diversions on them that imply they have been affected by industrial or agricultural activities. A better explanation of the data sources used and conclusions made for this table is needed.

B10-16 As noted above, the NDWR usage is "hydrographic area" not "hydrographic basin". It is suggested that the title of the third column be changed to this usage.

Trends

B10-17 The discussion in the first paragraph on page 3.3-8 focuses on Authority projects, but neglects to mention the many other groundwater development projects proposed in the Ely District, including those by White Pine County, Lincoln County, and other private parties. The exclusive focus on Las Vegas is misleading. The discussion needs to be expanded to include other water use trends in the Ely District area. In addition, the description of the Authority's Virgin and Muddy Rivers surface water project is misplaced, in that it is solely a surface water project and

Responses to Letter B10

B10-12 Please refer to the Responses to Comment B10-6 and B10-9.

B10-13 In response to your comment, the text in Section 3.3.1 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been corrected to clarify the discussion of these tributaries to the Muddy River.

B10-14 In response to your comment, the text in Section 3.3.2 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been expanded to clarify the discussion of water transfers to municipalities.

B10-15 In response to your comment, the footnote to Table 3.3-2 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been expanded to more clearly present the state water classification process.

B10-16 In response to your comment, the text in Table 3.3-2 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been modified to correct the column heading.

B10-17 In response to your comment, the text in Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 has been modified to largely address your comment. However, the discussion centers on regional water resources and related projects within hydrologic proximity to the planning area, so the discussion of the proposed Virgin and Muddy Rivers surface water project has been retained.

Letter B10 Continued

B10-17 shouldn't be described under groundwater trends. Furthermore, it is not located within the Ely District, so its inclusion in the Ely RMP/EIS is confusing.

B10-18 As described above, the discussion on page 3.3-8 on over-committed basins and estimated perennial yields is only applicable to the year in which the data was obtained. Most of the data cited in this plan is from the 1970s for perennial yield data and from the early 1990s for the committed resources. The discussion needs to state that the data are dated and may not clearly represent current conditions.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Holly Cheong at (702) 862-3755.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Albright, P.E.
Director, SNWA Resources

KAA:JM:ZM:HC:cec

Enclosures

c: Michael Brennan, Attorney-at-Law, Holland & Hart, w/o enclosures
Kay Brothers, Deputy General Manager, SNWA Engineering & Operations, w/o enclosures
Richard Capp, Facility Planning Manager, Parsons, w/o enclosures
John Entsminger, Deputy General Counsel, SNWA, w/o enclosures
John Evans, Senior Electrical Engineer, SNWA, w/o enclosures
Lloyd Gronning, Concept Planning Manager, Parsons, w/o enclosures
Jennifer Hill, Attorney-at-Law, w/o enclosures
Gordon Holmes, Design Manager – Energy Services, Parsons, w/o enclosures
Marcus Jensen, P.E., Director, SNWA Engineering, w/o enclosures
Jeff Johnson, Senior Hydrologist, SNWA Water Resources, w/o enclosures
Lisa Luptowitz, Environmental Planner II, SNWA Water Resources, w/o enclosures
Lou McNairy, Environmental Manager, Parsons, w/o enclosures
Derek Sloop, Hydrologist II, SNWA Water Resources, w/o enclosures

Responses to Letter B10

B10-18 Please refer to Response to Comment B10-6.

Letter B10 Continued

References for Table 3.3-1

Brothers, K., Katzer, T. L., Johnson, M., Tracy, J. V. 1996. Hydrology and Steady State Ground Water Model of Dry Lake and Delamar Valleys, Lincoln County, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, Cooperative Water Project, Series Report No. 16

Brothers, K., Buqo, T. S., Bernholtz, A., Tracy, J. V. 1994. Hydrology and Steady State Ground-Water Model of Spring Valley Lincoln and White Pine Counties, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, Cooperative Water Project, Series Report No. 13, 69 p.

Brothers, K., Buqo, T. S., Tracy, J. V., Kaufmann, R. F., Stock, M., Bentley, C., Zdon, A., Kepper, J. 1993. Hydrology and Steady State Ground-Water Model of Cave Valley, Lincoln & White Pine Counties, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, Cooperative Water Project, Series Report No. 11, 48 p.

Brothers, K., Buqo, T. S., Tracy, J. V. 1993. Hydrology & Steady State Groundwater Model of Coal & Garden Valleys, Lincoln & Nye Counties, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, Cooperative Water Project, Series Report No. 8, 52 p.

Brothers, K., Buqo, T. S., Tracy, J. V. 1993. Hydrology & Steady State Groundwater Model of Snake Valley, East Central NV & West Central UT: Las Vegas Valley Water District, Cooperative Water Project, Series Report No. 9

Buqo, T. S., Drici, O., Goings, D. B. 1992. Hydrology and Steady State Groundwater Model of Coyote Spring Valley, Clark and Lincoln Counties, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, Cooperative Water Project, Series Report No. 3, 83 p.

Buqo, T. S., Drici, O., Goings, D. B. 1992. Hydrology and Steady State Ground-Water Model of Three Lakes Valley South, Clark county, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, Cooperative Water Project, Series Report No. 4, 80 p.

Cole, E., Cernoch, B., Bruce, L., Rumbaugh III, J. O. 1992. Hydrology & Steady State Groundwater Model of Three Lakes Valley North, Clark & Lincoln Counties, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, Cooperative Water Project, Series Report No. 5, 45 p.

Cole, E., Cernoch, B., Bruce, L., Rumbaugh III, J. O. 1992. Hydrology and Steady State Ground-Water Model of Tikaboo Valleys North and South, Clark and Lincoln Counties, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, Cooperative Water Project, Series Report No. 6, 50 p.

Drici, O., Garey, C., Buqo, T. S. 1993. Hydrology & Steady State Groundwater Model of Pahroc Valley, Lincoln & Nye Counties, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, Cooperative Water Project, Series Report No. 10, 62 p.

Katzer, T., and Donovan, D.J., 2003, Surface-Water Resources and Basin Water Budget for Spring Valley, White Pine and Lincoln Counties, Nevada, Report for the Las Vegas Valley Water District, 70 p.

Nichols, W.D., 2000, Regional Ground-Water Evapotranspiration and Ground-Water Budgets, Great Basin, Nevada: U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 1628, 82 p.

Woodward-Clyde, Dames & Moore, Las Vegas Valley Water District, 1994. Environmental Report Covering Selected Hydrographic Basins in Clark, Lincoln, Nye and White Pines Counties, Nevada: Las Vegas Valley Water District, Cooperative Water Project, Series Report No. 14, 199 p.

Letter B11

Tillie's Inc.
Edward E Wright
PO Box 240
Pioche, NV 89043

BLM Ely Field Office
Attn: Gene Drais
HC-33 Box 33500
702N. Industrail Way
Ely, NV 89301-9408

NOV 2005

November 25, 2005

Mr. Gene Drais

COMMENTS ON: RECREATION PLAN

B11-1 1. For BLM to monitor or upgrade recreation in any area is hard for me to believe. Out by Eagle Valley, you have one recreation area that I know for more than ten years while I was a Commissioner in Lincoln County, there was not much up-keep or upgrade ever done at that site.

B11-2 2. Any control of the Outfitter and Sub-Guide business should be out of your control. You receive a fee from them on a yearly basis. As for impact to the public lands, I see less from them than the regular hunter. This is their business and they take care of the area in which they hunt. I believe that the only reason you are looking into changing this, is for the monies. Please leave that control with the State of Nevada and NDOW.

B11-3 3. Any competitive bid will cause problems - First with small businesses and outfitters, then with the local economy and the businesses that are supported by this industry. Go ahead and enhance recreation, but don't cut anybody out of the business. Create new businesses who will control and manage the tourism and recreation experiences.

COMMENTS ON: MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

B11-4 1. Development or construction of recreation trails and routes are acknowledged as a future need and would be considered in site-specific planning: **YES, but work with local areas of government, county and city to also create new businesses for local entrepreneurs.**

B11-5 2. Outfitter guide permits would not be limited until resource condition warranted setting limitation. **I would hope never.**

B11-6 3. Appropriate protection of cave resources in the planning area would be established. **Turn over to the mining industry to control and educate people or a group.**

Responses to Letter B11

B11-1 Comment noted. While statements of opinion (including agreement or opposition) do not require specific responses or text revisions under the NEPA regulations, they have been considered by the Ely Field Office and Nevada State Office and documented in the administrative record associated with the Ely RMP.

B11-2 In response to this and similar comments, the management action in Section 2.4.15.2 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS regarding outfitter and guide permits has been revised.

B11-3 Please refer to Response to Comment B11-2.

B11-4 Thank you for your comment. The Ely Field Office will continue to work with local governments.

B11-5 Please refer to Response to Comment B11-2.

B11-6 Caves within the Ely RMP decision area are managed as required by federal law and according to the management direction contained in the Ely Cave Management Plan.

Letter B11 Continued

B11-7 4. A comprehensive climbing management plan to promote responsible and ethical climbing practices would be developed. The Ely Field Office staff would work with appropriate entities to protect all resources and preserve access for climbing and bouldering opportunities.: **Turn over to responsible climb clubs or businesses.**

B11-8 5. Specific recreation activities would be managed in accordance with the goals and emphasis for recreation management areas. **What specific recreational activities would be managed???**

B11-9 6. Most of the planning area would be managed for dispersed, backcountry, unregulated, and undeveloped use. **Concerns me for the area of back country and unregulated and undeveloped use. Need a listing of your management approaches.**

B11-10 Alternative A - is the one you should stay with.

B11-11 Alternative B - there is that competitive bid again. Keep this out please.

B11-12 Alternative C - No limitations on outfitters and guide permits for hunting is where it should be. To large for the motorcycle and truck events - that will be a real impact to the public lands - review the races now held.

B11-13 Alternative D - This will not work for any small business or industry.

B11-14 Alternative E - Stay away from this monitoring of recreation. Should be a time period of 5-10 years with the data collected for feed back to the public and industry users. Any surveillance at developed recreation sites greatly concerns me, it takes away our freedom..

B11-15 Most small businesses in rural Nevada, like us, have invested great amounts of monies to stay alive and to cater to those who come for any reason to our area. Four months out of each year is the hardest part of maintaining business.

B11-16 All hunting in Nevada is great for the locals, but needs to be controlled again by the State of Nevada - NDOW.

B11-17 Any changes to the racing industry helps but needs to be watched for they have a greater impact than the sportsman.

B11-18 Watch any changes to control roads or access to the public lands RS2077

Edward E Wright

Edward E Wright
On behalf of: Tillie's Inc, Wright's Country Cabins, TKO Outfitters

Responses to Letter B11

B11-7 Thank you for your comment. The Ely Field Office will continue to work with climbing clubs and other interested parties.

B11-8 Please refer to Sections 2.4.15.1, 2.5.15.1, 2.6.15.1, 2.7.15.1, and 2.8.15.1 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for discussions of management actions by alternative for each proposed Special Recreation Management Area.

B11-9 Please refer to Section 2.4.15 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for a discussion of management actions for recreation.

B11-10 Comment noted.

B11-11 Please refer to Response to Comment B11-2.

B11-12 Please refer to Response to Comment B11-2. The special recreation permit areas are being designated for motorcycle events only. Those areas presented in the Proposed RMP are based on existing courses that have been analyzed and raced on in the past.

B11-13 Thank you for expressing your concerns. While statements of opinion (including agreement or opposition) do not require specific responses or text revisions under the NEPA regulations, they have been considered by the Ely Field Office and Nevada State Office and documented in the administrative record associated with the Ely RMP.

B11-14 Thank you for expressing your concerns. While statements of opinion (including agreement or opposition) do not require specific responses or text revisions under the NEPA regulations, they have been considered by the Ely Field Office and Nevada State Office and documented in the administrative record associated with the Ely RMP. The monitoring of recreation use is consistent with BLM policy.

B11-15 Thank you for your comment. The general topic of local business economics and community sustainability has been considered in Section 4.23 of the Draft and Proposed RMP. The Ely Field Office will continue to consider local concerns when project-specific plans are prepared.

B11-16 Hunting in the Ely RMP planning area will continue to be managed by the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

B11-17 Race permitting and monitoring of impacts will be important to the Ely Field Office. While statements of opinion (including agreement or opposition) do not require specific responses or text revisions under the NEPA regulations, they have been considered by the Ely Field Office and Nevada State Office and documented in the administrative record associated with the Ely RMP.

Responses to Letter B11

B11-18 The Ely Field Office assumes the comment addresses Revised Statute (RS) 2477. As was discussed in Section 1.6.2.3 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS, RS 2477 issues are beyond the scope of the Ely RMP.

Letter B12

Ely Draft RMP/EIS
Comment Form

Informed decisions are better decisions: BLM believes that extensive public involvement will serve to improve communication, develop enhanced understanding of different perspectives, and identify solutions to issues and problems. We look forward to hearing from you!

Where to provide comments: You can hand this form in at The Ely BLM Field Office (702 N. Industrial Way) or mail it in using the address on reverse

Tips on providing effective comments: The BLM land use planning process is based on agency policy, science, and social value. Specific comments that deal with important management methods and decisions are extremely helpful to the BLM. Overly general statements of support or opposition are less effective. Also remember that this RMP will deal with broad management decisions, not site-specific actions.

Name Thomas Brunson County White Pine

Title Outfitter Affiliation Timberline Outfitters Guide Service

Mailing Address PO Box 667

City McGill State NV Zip 89318

Date 09/05/05 Meeting Location (if applicable)

☐ Please check box if you do not want your name released when comments are made public.

COMMENT (use back side if you need additional space or attach additional sheets)

B12-1 I have read all Info provided and I am strongly In favor of Altenative C to me it sounds the fairest of all options. I think that if you put it out to competitive bid you will kill the little guy

Return comments during the open house or mail postmarked by:
November 28, 2005
To Return Via Mail:
Fold in thirds so that BLM address (on reverse) is showing, add postage, tape bottom of fold, and mail.

Responses to Letter B12

B12-1 In response to this and similar comments, the management action in Section 2.4.15.2 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS regarding outfitter and guide permits has been revised.

Letter B13

TRAC-ON
TRAIL RIDE ADVENTURE CIRCUIT OF NEVADA

NOV 2005

November 25, 2005

Subject: Public Comments on Ely BLM EIS RMP.

On behalf of Eugene Entertainment Inc. and its Non-Competitive Trail Ride Series TRAC-ON, (Trail Ride Adventure Circuit Of Nevada) we are commenting on the new RMP within the BLM Ely field office. At the end of TRAC-ON's second year 2005 we represent over 300 individual persons on its mailing list. TRAC-ON's mailing list grows 25-50 individual persons per ride. By the end of 2006 TRAC-ON estimates 450 people on its mailing list.

B13-1 Regarding the Ely RMP TRAC-ON's position and choice would be Alternative A. We recognize that Alternative A would better suit the OHV community. Further more Alternative A follows the philosophy of other Nevada BLM field offices. That philosophy is no net land loss to OHV opportunities. All other alternatives show net land losses in upwards of two-thirds of current available land for OHV use. TRAC-ON also has the opinion that with the population growth in the Las Vegas area, available land for OHV opportunities in the Ely District will become more viable in the future.

B13-2 In closing I would also like to mention that OHV Education should be implemented to further assist in the Management of the Ely District. I am always available for suggestions on education. Thank You for taking the time to read these comments.

Sincerely,
Daryl Folks
President, E.E.I
Owner, TRAC-ON

SPORTSMAN 3475 Boulder Highway • Las Vegas, Nevada 89121 • Phone: (702) 641-6401 • Fax: (702) 431-6001

Responses to Letter B13

B13-1 The Ely Field Office recognizes that off-highway vehicle use is an acceptable use of public land wherever it is compatible with resource management objectives. Areas are designated as "open" for cross country vehicle use where there are no compelling resource protection needs, user conflicts, or public safety issues. No areas managed by the Ely Field Office were determined to meet those criteria. The Ely Field Office is designating a majority of the planning area as "limited" in the Proposed RMP. The "limited" designation would still provide for off-highway vehicle opportunities, including potential new off-highway vehicle trails, while managing for public safety and resource protection needs. The only areas designated as "closed" to off-highway vehicle travel correspond to currently designated wilderness and wilderness study areas. Please note that the Nevada BLM has no policy regarding "no net land loss to OHV opportunities".

B13-2 The Ely Field Office currently presents several off-highway vehicle education safety and responsible use courses in the White Pine County and Lincoln County school districts. This program is expanding in Lincoln County under a grant including provisions for off-highway vehicle education.

Letter B14

TRAC-ON
TRAIL RIDE ADVENTURE CIRCUIT OF NEVADA

November 25, 2005

Subject: Public Comments on Ely BLM EIS RMP.

B14-1 On behalf of Eugene Entertainment Inc. and TRAC-ON, I have enclosed two maps with yellow highlighting in the N. Pahroc Range up to the Schell Creek Range. TRAC-ON is proposing that the yellow area remain open to Non-Competitive SRP's only. In 1990 and 1991 this particular area was permitted for two consecutive race events put on by the BITD. TRAC-ON has an application currently in process to re-approve this area for a Non-Competitive trail ride in June of 2006. In order for the area to be re-approved a new EA will need to be performed which will be time consuming and costly. Taking a more conservative approach in this area will help maintain OHV access but yet provide a low impact affect.

For the new RMP I hope that the Ely District will take serious consideration to TRAC-ON's proposal of this area. Thank You for taking the time to read these comments and letting TRAC-ON express its opinion.

Sincerely,

Daryl Folks
President, EEI
Owner, TRAC-ON

NOV 2005

SPORTSMAN
3475 Boulder Highway • Las Vegas, Nevada 89121 • Phone: (702) 641-6401 • Fax: (702) 431-6001
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Responses to Letter B14

B14-1 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.4.15.2 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify special recreation permits for non-competitive off-highway vehicle events. Those events would be permitted on a case-by-case basis outside of desert tortoise ACECs.

Letter B15

Dear Mr. Drais;

John Uhalde & Company has attempted to review the Draft RMP/EIS for BLM's Ely district and offers the following comments:

--Note that any topic not addressed here is not necessarily agreed with nor endorsed in any way by John Uhalde & Co., but most likely was not commented on due to the extremely confusing and cumbersome way this document was put together.

B15-1 --The comment period needs to be extended. BLM had over 2 years to put this project together, with the hiring of a contractor. The public had just days, how do you think it rationally possible for people not employed to specifically comment on this, to do so in that time frame?

B15-2 --The EXTREME difference in the document itself and the errata sheet lends grave concerns regarding the potential outcome of this RMP revision for multiple-use of the Ely District. This issue needs to be re-addressed on a case by case basis, so there is NO confusion regarding the intention and direction of the BLM on any of the errata sheet issues. Also, ALL discrepancies with the original documentation given to the contractor needs to be made available to the public before ANY final decision is made.

B15-3 --2.5.3 Water resources: Introduction; While BLM would like to have "the right to be involved in the subsequent state permitting process's"
following an application for a change in an existing water right or an application for a new permit, it merely has the opportunity to comment on the application on the same level as any person.

B15-4 --The manner in which BLM has dealt with its proposed changes in grazing is totally inadequate. Any proposal to re-allocate adjudicated AUMs will be a question of taxable property, as recognizes by the IRS.

B15-5 --4.1.4.4 Bighorn Sheep and Domestic Sheep Interactions : Your cavalier treatment of closing domestic sheep allotments to accommodate Bighorn at some time in the future is completely unacceptable. Your information presented is, by your own account "incomplete Information" , using "unknown" effects and "conjecture". From this you conclude "the preponderance of evidence indicates negative interaction" between the two species. How completely absurd is that? The preponderance of incomplete, unknown conjecture is just incomplete unknown conjecture.

B15-6 Your stated
conclusion: "THE COST TO IDENTIFY AND CHARACTERIZE DISEASE VECTORS WITHIN BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATIONS ON THE ELY DISTRICT DURING THE RMP/EIS PREPARATION WOULD BE EXORBITANT" If BLM can't do or find the proper research to reach a conclusion that is neither incomplete and unknown or conjecture then the conclusion is just that: incomplete, inconclusive, conjectural and stated as "unknown".

B15-7 --BLM has not addressed any issues of Elk summer and winter forage that "pioneering" elk, as lack of responsible elk management is preferred to be called,which will happen and is indeed happening now, on the east side of the Grant and Quinn ranges.

Responses to Letter B15

B15-1 The required comment period on a Draft RMP and EIS is 90 days. BLM elected to set a 120-day comment period for the Ely Draft RMP and EIS and did not formally extend this period. Although the BLM did not elect to extend the official comment period for this document, comments received after the end of the comment period were considered as late as practicable within the overall document revision and publication process. Comments that were received after the close of the comment period have been accepted and considered in the preparation of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS.

B15-2 Modifications identified in the Errata Sheet have been tracked through the Proposed RMP and Final EIS. Consistency concerns were raised by a number of commenters. Chapters 2 and 4 in particular have been revised to correct inconsistencies among resource programs.

B15-3 In response to your comment, the text in Section 2.4.3 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been modified to clarify the BLM's involvement in water permitting.

B15-4 Livestock grazing use will continue to be monitored and evaluated and coordination and consultation with the affected permittees, other agencies, and public interests would continue as allowed under regulation. Changes in allocated AUMs could affect ranch values, but such implementation-level impacts to taxable property are outside the scope of the RMP.

B15-5 Thank you for your comment. The text in Section 4.1.4.4 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised to clarify the discussion of bighorn sheep and domestic sheep and goat interactions. The basic impact conclusions presented in the Draft RMP and EIS have not changed.

B15-6 Please refer to Response to Comment B15-5.

B15-7 In response to this and similar comments, the text in Chapters 2 and 4 related to elk management has been revised to clarify that habitat management for this species (under the Proposed RMP and Alternatives B and C) would conform to the county elk management plans.

Letter B15 Continued

B15-8 --The addressing of the proposed rail spur for the D.O.E.'s Yucca Mountain Project is completely inadequate. This major project , which bi-sects our southern allotments, has been given little or no analysis of the potential impacts that would occur if this is built. It is essential the BLM address the impacts to Air Quality; water; Soil; vegetation;noxious weeds; fish and wildlife; wild horses;soils; visual; cultural; lands and reality;; grazing; special designations and economic impacts among others.

B15-9 --Map 2.4.-38 It would appear from this map that the private property in the Gleason creek watershed would be come a "Motorcycle Special Recreation Permit Area" . BLM, of any agency, should be aware of the years of conservation and repair work that we have done in the Gleason creek area, as it was done in conjunction with BLM. While it is unknown to John Uhalde and Company what BLM recreation plans are, any special use permit in this area needs to be done with a great deal of consultation and coordination with private property owners.

B15-10 --Your Impacts of Interrelated projects is inaccurate as well as incomplete. A glaring example is the statement that DOE's rail line withdrawal has no effect on Surface Disturbance other than the 200 foot wide right of way. The current 10 to 20 fold increase of truck and ATV traffic doing just EIS work has disturbed the surface of all roads and trails and then some in this areas.

B15-11 These comments reflect a grave concern with the Draft RMP/EIS for the Ely District in its entirety. It appears that there are many proposals and policies being put forth in this document that are attempting to reverse many years of cooperative work between Private Property owners and the BLM.

B15-12 Many parts of the document are in need of revision to seemingly match the original documentation which was given to the contractor and a new comment period needs to be issued after the corrections have been made. This is to important of a document to be left in this unprofessional and questionable manner.

Sincerely;
John Uhalde & Company
P.O. Box 151088
Ely, Nevada 89315

Responses to Letter B15

B15-8 Thank you for your comment. The subject of this comment is beyond the scope of the Ely RMP. Analysis of the impacts of the construction and operation of the Yucca Mountain rail spur will be conducted by the Department of Energy and presented in an EIS prepared by that agency.

B15-9 Thank you for your comment. Ely Field Office management actions of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS would apply only to public lands and not private lands. In response to your comment, Maps 2.4-42, 2.4-43 and 2.4-44 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS have been modified to more clearly present that non-BLM administered land is not part of the Motorcycle Special Recreation Permit Areas. Permitting for motorcycle events will continue to involve potentially affected private property owners.

B15-10 Please refer to Response to Comment B15-8 for a discussion of impacts of the Yucca Mountain rail spur. Also see Table 4.28-2 in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS for a listing of those resource programs that could affected by the rail spur project.

B15-11 The Ely Field Office intends to continue operating in a cooperative manner with all agencies, organizations, and individuals that have an interest in the management of the public lands in the Ely RMP planning area.

B15-12 The Ely Field Office is uncertain what "original documentation" the comment is referring to. The purpose of the Draft RMP and EIS was to solicit comments so that the Proposed RMP and Final EIS could be corrected, clarified, or expanded as appropriate. Comments that were received on the Draft have been incorporated into the Proposed RMP and Final EIS as reflected in the responses to comments contained in this Appendix. A new comment period is not needed.

Letter B16

This letter is written in regard to the Ely District BLM resource management plan EIS draft, chapters 1,2,3. July 2005.

My name is Shawn Lytle. I own and operate White Rock Outfitters in Eagle Valley Nv. I have been a resident of Lincoln Co. a hunter, sportsman and rancher for 34 years. It was brought to my attention that I missed the open meeting where I could have voiced my comments regarding the proposed alternatives in the resource management plan/EIS that affect my business.

I have read the proposed alternatives and I understand that the BLM is leaning toward alternative E.

B16-1 First of all, I don't completely agree with any of the alternatives. I as an outfitter have nothing in common with off highway vehicle recreation. I don't understand why the outfitters are being lumped in with that group of people.

B16-2 I am very much against the idea of an open bid process. I already pay the BLM for a land use permit that allows me to guide and operate my business on public land even though I don't impact the land any more than an average hunter does. An open bid process would force me to compete with outfitters who have far deeper pockets than I do. It would force me, and other outfitters like me, out of business.

B16-3 I think the idea of limiting the number of outfitters has merit, however, I think consideration should be given to the outfitters who have aquired land use permits and maintained them. I also think that outfitters that live in the geographical areas where they hunt should be given preference over non-resident outfitters.

B16-4 Another alternative may be to give the existing permitees special consideration and instead of open bid, a draw process with no fee or bid involved. I also think that in the event an outfitter recieves a permit to hunt in an area, he retains that permit for as long as he wants it. The permit may also be renewed every three years with the option to give up the permit.

B16-5 These are just a few ideas that might be considered and all would be better than any bid process. I hope that our local BLM District cares more about the local citizens that use their public land than an increase in revenue.

In closing, I would ask that you consider my thoughts on this matter, as they are the thoughts of many of my peers.

Sincerely, Shawn Lytle
White Rock Outfitters

(775) 962-5667
962-1115 cell

NOV

Responses to Letter B16

B16-1 In response to this and similar comments, the management action in Section 2.4.15.2 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS regarding outfitter and guide permits has been revised.

B16-2 In response to this and similar comments, the text in Section 2.4.15.2 of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS has been revised regarding the issuance of outfitter and guide permits. Monitoring of outfitter and guide use would still occur for three years; however, outfitter and guide permits would not be limited during that three year study. Should the study show resource impacts, including user conflicts as a result of outfitter and guide actions, the Ely Field Office may address those problems by issuing outfitter and guide permits with special stipulations and conditions. No allocation system, including a competitive bid process, is included in the Proposed RMP and Final EIS.

B16-3 Please refer to Response to Comment B16-2.

B16-4 Please refer to Response to Comment B16-2.

B16-5 Please refer to Response to Comment B16-2.