

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Robinson Mine Plan Amendment: The Ely District, Bristlecone Field Office is seeking public review and comment on a proposal to expand the Robinson Mine located on private and public lands about seven miles west of Ely, Nev. The 30-day public comment period concludes **Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2016.** *(See page 6 for more information)*

Proposed Competitive Public Land Sale: The Ely District, Caliente Field Office is proposing to offer through a competitive sale three parcels of public land totaling 165.92 acres located adjacent to Hiko and Alamo, Nev. The BLM will accept written comments on the proposal during a 45-day public comment period that ends **Monday, Dec. 5, 2016.** *(See page 4 for more information)*

Christmas tree-cutting Permits on Sale: The Ely District is selling Christmas tree-cutting permits and has extended a program to give **free Christmas tree permits to fourth graders.** *(See page 9 for more information)*

December 2016 Oil & Gas Lease Sale: The BLM is postponing the oil and gas lease sale scheduled Dec. 13, 2016, for parcels located on the Ely District. The Ely District Office received 41 nominated parcels for the December sale. *(See page 7 for more information)*

Ely District Reorganization: The Ely District has consolidated the Egan and Schell Field Offices into one office named the Bristlecone Field Office. The district now consists of the Bristlecone and Caliente Field Offices, and Basin and Range National Monument. The district has also realigned field office boundaries along county lines. The Bristlecone Field Office will be the point of contact for all matters pertaining to BLM-administered lands in White Pine County and the portion of Nye County within the district. The Caliente Field Office will be the point of contact for all public lands-related matters in Lincoln County. Basin and Range National Monument boundaries will remain the same. All offices in Ely and Caliente remain open.

## BASIN AND RANGE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Resource Management Plan: The Ely District is reviewing comments received during public input. The 51-day public scoping period concluded July 21, 2016. The BLM is scheduled to release a draft RMP for public review and comment in summer 2017. For more information or to be placed on the mailing list, contact Alicia Styles, Monument Manager, at (775) 726-8100 or [blm\\_nv\\_basin\\_range@blm.gov](mailto:blm_nv_basin_range@blm.gov).

Conservation Easement: The 30-day public comment period on a preliminary environmental assessment (EA) analyzing a proposed conservation easement to allow the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Triple Aught Foundation to grant BLM specific rights on approximately 1,300 acres of private land in and around Michael Heizer's *City* in Garden Valley concluded August 8. The preliminary EA is available online at <http://bit.ly/29tpKkt>.

The purpose of the easement is to protect the easement area, in particular *City*, from uses inconsistent with the area's conservation values; assure that the open area will remain in a combination of its agricultural, scenic, and open space condition, and prevent uses that would diminish, impair or interfere with conservation values; permit continuation of agricultural operations in and on the open area, subject to terms of the easement; and allow for public access to *City* in a manner that protects *City* and the conservation values of the property.

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Update

### **ELY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Nevada and Northeastern California Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment (ARMPA) in September 2015 amended the Ely District Resource Management Plan (RMP) signed in 2008. Changes to the Ely RMP from the ARMPA, as well as two other amendments, have been incorporated into the RMP. The Ely District has electronic and hard copy versions of the up-to-date, amended RMP available for the public.

### **WATERSHED ANALYSIS**

The Ely District continues developing and implementing watershed-level planning to identify high priority habitat improvement projects for Greater Sage-Grouse and other wildlife species, hazardous fuels reduction projects, and other actions needed to improve public land health. The district has completed the watershed analysis process for 27 of 61 priority watersheds. Implementation plans have been completed for nine watersheds. The district is currently conducting watershed planning for South Spring and Hamblin Valleys, Long Valley / Ruby Marshes and Butte Valley.

### **ENERGY**

#### Natural Gas-fired Energy Development -

Toquop Energy Project: The BLM has issued a Notice to Proceed to Toquop Energy, Inc., for a natural gas-fired power plant. Construction can start once the proponent satisfies conditions outlined in the Notice.

#### Solar Energy Development -

Dry Lake Valley North Solar Energy Zone: The BLM in March 2016 issued the Final Regional Mitigation Strategy for the 25,069-acre Dry Lake Valley North Solar Energy Zone (SEZ) located in Lincoln County, Nev. The Dry Lake Valley North SEZ is the largest of the five SEZs in Nevada and, when fully built, could produce up to 4,000 MW of renewable energy. It is located about 15 miles west of Pioche and 15 miles northwest of Caliente. The SEZ is framed by the North Pahroc Range to the west, and the West Range, Bristol Range, Highland Range, Ely Springs Range, Black Canyon Range, and Burnt Springs Range to the east. The strategy is available on the [Dry Lake Valley North Project Website](http://on.doi.gov/1frnwSM) at <http://on.doi.gov/1frnwSM>.

#### Electrical Transmission Development -

TransWest Express Project: The BLM has released the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the TransWest Express Transmission Project. The Record of Decision is scheduled for release in late November 2016. The 730-mile transmission line project would extend from Wyoming, through Colorado and Utah, to southern Nevada through the southeast corner of Lincoln County and deliver up to 3,000 megawatts of electric power to major load centers, including Las Vegas and San Diego, Calif., by tapping in to wind energy resources in southern Wyoming. The BLM Wyoming State Office is the lead office for the project.

TransCanyon Cross-Tie Project: TransCanyon, LLC, has submitted to the BLM a preliminary application for a 500kV transmission line to be constructed between the Robinson Summit (500 kV) substation and the Mona/Clover (345kV) substation located near Mona, Utah. A pre-application meeting was held in September.

## **FIRE MANAGEMENT**

### Fuels Reduction/Habitat Restoration –

Ward Mountain Restoration Project: The BLM in winter 2016 will issue a Decision Record based on analysis in the final environmental assessment. The Forest Service has already issued a final Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact. The BLM, Forest Service and Ely Shoshone Tribe are partnering on the project that would use manual and mechanical treatment methods and prescribed fire to restore vegetative health and improve wildlife habitat, as well as reduce the catastrophic wildfire risk on Ward Mountain. The proposed 100,000-acre project area consists of 53,731 acres of the public lands, 39,264 acres of Forest Service lands, and 2,507 acres of Tribal lands.

Overland Pass Habitat Improvement Project: The BLM in October finished manually thinning pinion-juniper on about 6,000 acres along the southern flank of the Ruby Mountains in Elko and White Pine counties. Chaining will begin south of Overland Pass Road in winter 2016. Over a 10-year period, about 18,500 acres of a 45,200-acre project area will be treated using manual and mechanical methods and prescribed fire. The wildlife habitat improvement project that will benefit Greater Sage-grouse, mule deer, pronghorn antelope and more is collaboration between the BLM, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, and Nevada Department of Wildlife.

Kern Mountain Landscape Restoration Project: The BLM in 2016-2017 will burn slash piles remaining from pinion-juniper thinning treatments completed in 2015. The finished project will restore watershed health, reduce catastrophic wildfire risk, and improve wildlife habitat, including that of Greater Sage-grouse.

Bristlecone and Johnson Basins Restoration Project: The BLM in winter 2016 will release for public review and comment a preliminary environmental assessment for a project that would reduce catastrophic wildfire risk and improve Greater Sage-grouse habitat in the Bristlecone and Johnson basins, five miles west of Cherry Creek. The project would treat up to 65-percent of a 35,000-acre project area. Proposed treatments include manual and mechanical pinion-juniper tree-thinning, treating invasive plant species, e.g., cheatgrass; and prescribed fire use.

Duck Creek Basin Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project: The BLM in fall 2017 will release for public review and comment a preliminary environmental assessment for a project that would improve Greater Sage-grouse habitat and create fuels breaks in urban interface areas of Duck Creek Basin. The proposed project would complement the already-completed work on neighboring Forest Service and private lands.

Combs Creek: The multi-year pinion-juniper tree-thinning project calls for treating between 4,500 to 7,000 acres of the public lands in south Butte Valley, about 20 miles northwest of Ely, to improve Greater Sage-Grouse habitat. The BLM, Great Basin Institute and Nevada Conservation Corps have so far hand-thinned or masticated about 1,450 acres. Acreage masticated to date has been seeded with assistance from the Nevada Department of Wildlife, which is providing Heritage Fund Program dollars for the project through the White Pine County Wildlife Advisory Board.

Patterson Pass Sage Grouse Habitat Improvement Project: Greater Sage-Grouse population monitoring, which began in March in 2016 with the collaring and tagging of hens with GPS units, continues with the collection of data that will be compared with pre-treatment data to determine

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the project's effectiveness. Collaborating on the project are Utah State University, Nevada Department of Wildlife, and BLM Color Country (Utah) and Ely districts.

Shingle Creek Aspen Restoration Project: Weather permitting, the BLM in winter 2016-2017 will burn slash piles of white fir. Removing the conifers promotes aspen regeneration and health. The project area is in the Snake Range near Great Basin National Park, about 40 miles southeast of Ely.

North Antelope Habitat Restoration Project: The BLM in fiscal year 2017 will masticate pinion-juniper on about 300 acres of the 12,000-acre project area. The habitat improvement project at the north end of the Antelope Range, 70 miles northeast of Ely, is approximately 85-percent complete.

Cold Springs Project: The contractor for the pinion-juniper tree-thinning project has removed thinned trees from the project area. The BLM in winter 2016-2017 will finish burning the remaining slash piles. The finished project provides a hazardous fuels break, as well as a demonstration area exhibiting various tree-thinning densities.

South Steptoe Valley Watershed Restoration Project: The BLM is hand thinning pinion-juniper on the west side of South Steptoe Valley near Comins Lake and Horse Camp Wash area. A contractor is scheduled in January 2017 to begin masticating pinion-juniper on approximately 400 acres of the project area.

Lake Valley Restoration Project: The BLM has nearly finished chaining and hand-thinning pinion-juniper in Lake Valley as prescribed for in the Cave and Lake Valley Watershed Restoration Plan. The treatments will benefit potential Greater Sage-Grouse habitat.

Bald Mountain Restoration Project: The BLM has awarded contracts to begin treatments in the Bald Mountain Treatment Unit of the Newark and Huntington Watershed Restoration Plan. The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act-funded project will treat approximately 1,600 acres of the public lands to benefit wildlife, as well as restore about 25 acres of aspen.

Newark and Huntington Watershed Restoration Project: The sage-grouse habitat improvement project is in the planning phase with BLM mapping treatment areas in the southern portion of Newark Valley. Plans call for hand-thinning pinion-juniper on about 3,000 acres of the public lands near the southern part of the Pancake Range in fall/winter 2016 with additional mastication treatments scheduled in 2017.

### **LANDS & REALTY**

Proposed Competitive Public Land Sale: The Ely District, Caliente Field Office is proposing to offer through a competitive sale three parcels of public land totaling 165.92 acres located adjacent to Hiko and Alamo, Nev. The BLM will accept written comments on the proposal during a 45-day public comment period that ends **Monday, Dec. 5, 2016**.

The sale would be by sealed-bid and oral public auction and would be held at the Caliente Railroad Depot, 100 Depot Avenue, Caliente, Nevada 89008. Bidding on the sale parcels would begin at appraised Fair Market Value. The sale would be conducted in accordance with the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 (LCCRDA), complies with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, and is in conformance with the 2008 Ely Resource Management Plan. Five-percent of the proceeds from the proposed land sale would

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go to the Nevada State General Education Fund, ten-percent to Lincoln County, and 85-percent would be deposited into a special account to be used for archaeological resources, natural resource protection, recreation and wilderness planning, and other opportunities in Lincoln County.

Written comments concerning the sale may be submitted to the BLM Ely District Office, 702 N. Industrial Way, Ely, NV 89301, Attn: Susan Grande. Maps delineating the sale parcels are available at the BLM Caliente Field Office and online at <http://on.doi.gov/11GnDYC>. *Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.* For more information, contact Realty Specialist Susan Grande at (775) 289-1809 or [sgrande@blm.gov](mailto:sgrande@blm.gov).

Other Land Sales in progress: The Ely District, Caliente Field Office is processing four rounds of land sales in accordance with LCCRDA. Lands to be sold are located near Alamo, Caliente, Panaca, Pioche, Rachel and Mt. Wilson. The Bristlecone Field Office is processing a Round 2 sale near Ely/ McGill in accordance with the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation and Development Act.

Land Conveyances: The Ely District is processing conveyances for a Nevada Division of Lands expansion of state parks in Lincoln County, including Kershaw-Ryan, Beaver Dam, and Cathedral Gorge. In White Pine County, the district is processing conveyances to expand Ward Charcoal Kilns State Park and Steptoe Wildlife Management Area, as well as the White Pine Industrial Park.

Rights-of-Ways in progress:

- Panaca Pit easement
- Beehive Telco upgrade of eight miles of buried cable
- Lincoln Co. Tel. System – renew buried phone line (Pioche to Cathedral Gorge State Park)
- Charlie Brown – Communication site assignment to T-Mobile
- ANTC – Communication site assignment to SBA
- SNWA – renew Evapotranspiration sites
- New Cingular Wireless PCS – reissue communication site leases at Highland and Alamo

Desert Land Entries (DLE): The Ely District is closing out old DLEs. The Ely District is processing DLEs for 1) Kathy Smith (working with the Nevada Department of Wildlife on sage grouse and preparing the environmental assessment), and 2) Nelson Carter (State of Nevada water rights application and coordination with NDOW re sage grouse).

Miscellaneous:

- Finalizing legal descriptions in LR2000 for wilderness areas designated in the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation and Development Act and Lincoln County Conservation Recreation and Development Act
- Completing a Communication Site Plan for Kimberly Mountain
- Working on a Conservation Easement for “City” (*see page 1*)

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### MINERALS

#### Active Mining Plans –

**Robinson Mine Plan Amendment:** The Ely District, Bristlecone Field Office is seeking public review and comment on a proposal to expand the Robinson Mine located on private and public lands about seven miles west of Ely, Nev. The 30-day public comment period concludes **Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2016.**

Robinson Nevada Mining Company (RNMC) is proposing to expand the existing Ruth Pit and Jupiter Waste Rock Dump, increase total yard and inter-facility disturbance, raise the embankment height of the Giroux Wash tailings storage facility (TSF), relocate and create new growth media stockpiles, expand the TSF borrow areas, re-route a portion of County Road 1146/44A, re-route the Ruth Pit dewatering pipeline and Ruth East Powerline, re-locate the Ruth Overlook Weather Station, and incorporate newly acquired claims into the project boundary. The preliminary environmental assessment is available for public review at <http://bit.ly/2frSdw6>.

Interested individuals should address all written comments to the BLM Ely District Office, 702 N. Industrial Way, Ely, Nevada 89301 Attn: Robinson Mine Expansion or fax them to (775) 289-1910, Attn: Robinson Mine Expansion. *Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.* For more information, contact Project Manager Duane Bays at (775) 289-1893 or [dbays@blm.gov](mailto:dbays@blm.gov).

**Bald Mountain Mine:** The BLM Ely District, Bristlecone Field Manager on August 17 issued the Record of Decision for Barrick Gold U.S., Inc.'s Bald Mountain Mine (BMM) project. The decision allows the mining operator to expand existing gold mine facilities and construct and operate new facilities at Barrick's BMM North and South Operations Area projects. Construction and operation of the project will result in approximately 3,097 acres of authorized disturbance, 3,093 acres of which are on public land administered by the BLM and 4 acres are on private lands. The project is located in the Bald Mountain Mining District in White Pine County, Nevada, approximately 65 miles northwest of Ely and 40 miles northeast of Eureka.

The Field Manager's decision was to select the Western Redbird Modification Alternative along with the applicant committed environmental protection measures included in the Plan and the mitigation measures specified in Chapter 3 and Appendix A of the Final EIS, as the BLM's Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative is the alternative that best fulfills the agency's statutory mission and responsibilities, considering economic, environmental, technical, and other factors. The BLM has determined that implementation of this decision with the identified monitoring and mitigation measures will not cause unnecessary or undue degradation of the public lands. The Final EIS and the Record of Decision are available on the NEPA register at <http://on.doi.gov/14R9rZ8>. Additional information is available at <http://on.doi.gov/14vXckC>.

**Gold Rock Mine Project:** The BLM expects to make the Gold Rock Mine Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) available to the public in late 2016 or early 2017. The proposed project would be located in western White Pine County, in the same geographic area as the reclaimed and closed Easy Junior Mine. The project area consists of a total of 18,745 acres of BLM-administered lands with the majority of the mine facilities located within a fenced mine

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area totaling 8,757 acres. A total of 3,946 acres of disturbance would be authorized. The majority of the area would be reclaimed. The action alternatives were developed to help reduce project-related impacts to greater sage-grouse and mule deer. The projected mining period is 10 years, with associated construction, closure, reclamation and post-closure monitoring periods extending the project life to approximately 48 years. GRP Inc. estimates that the project would create between 150-250 jobs.

Pan Mine: GRP Minerals has assumed ownership of the Pan Mine, formerly owned by now bankrupt Midway Gold. A new reclamation bond has been obligated and the operator is conducting exploratory drilling.

### Notices and Exploration –

Operations are underway the Helen A mine in Bristlecone Canyon. The BLM has cited the operator for noncompliance for violating his terms of occupancy. The operator's claim remains active, but the equipment cannot remain overnight at the site.

DHI Minerals is authorized to conduct Notice-level operations near Green Springs.

Summit Mining has two authorized operations, Cherry Creek Central and Cherry Creek East, both near Cherry Creek.

SR Minerals is conducting operations in Mining Canyon on the east slope of the Diamond Range near Legacy Bay State Mine.

McKewen Mining is expected soon to begin work on a new authorized Notice west of Cherry Creek. They have requested bond release and closure for their Limousine Butte project, which will require inspection for reclamation work on 111 drill holes and associated roads.

The Ely District, Bristlecone Field Office is preparing for public comment an environmental assessment for the Gunman exploration Plan of Operations. The Cypress Development-proposed project would be located on the eastern slope of the Diamond Range.

### Mineral Materials –

The Caliente Field Office is coordinating with the Nevada Department of Transportation to obtain rights-of-way for a community gravel pit to serve Panaca, Nev., and the surrounding area. The previously-used pit is located on public lands identified for disposal in the Ely Resource Management Plan. Lands identified for disposal are withdrawn from mineral entry in accordance with the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004.

### Oil & Gas –

December 2016 Oil & Gas Lease Sale: The BLM is postponing the oil and gas lease sale scheduled December 13, 2016 for parcels located on the Ely District. The Ely District Office received 41 nominated parcels for the December sale. Based on the District's recommendation, all nominated parcels will be deferred until formal Section 7 Endangered Species Act consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) on the Programmatic Biological Opinion has been completed. The Ely District Office's 2008 Resource Management Plan did not consider potential adverse effects on listed fish found in 11 hydrologic basins in the District from oil and gas leasing

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and subsequent operations such as hydraulic fracturing. The District will initiate a Biological Assessment in fall 2016. The formal consultation with the FWS will begin in January 2017. Therefore, the December 13, 2016 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale is postponed until December 12, 2017. The 2015 lease sale for the Ely District generated \$6,676.08.

Oil & Gas Exploration/Development: Western Oil Exploration has requested reinstatement of one oil and gas lease and extension of another in Newark Valley west of Ely. When the leases are authorized, the operator will submit three new applications for Permit to Drill.

Bright Sky Energy and Minerals has submitted a Sundry Notice to perform hydraulic fracturing on the previously drilled Federal 1-35 exploration well in the White River Valley. The proposal requires consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The operator is discussing drilling an additional well from the same well pad, which would require a second APD.

The BLM has approved an APD for a Bestoso Oil & Gas well in White River Valley. Work is expected to begin in late summer 2016.

The BLM is reviewing a draft environmental assessment for Envy Energy's APD for the Black Point East #1 well in Railroad Valley.

The BLM is preparing an environmental assessment for Nevada Wildcat's APD for the Robber's Roost well in Butte Valley.

### **NOXIOUS/INVASIVE WEED MANAGEMENT**

The BLM in 2016 identified Yellow starthistle near Telegraph Canyon. Yellow starthistle is a Nevada Category-A noxious weed that has proven detrimental to agriculture in neighboring states. Containment and eradication is a top district weeds program priority.

### **RANGELAND MANAGEMENT**

Rangeland Monitoring/Term Permit Renewals: The Ely District has identified priority allotments to be monitored in 2016 (listed below). The district is conducting monitoring in coordination with livestock permittees and in accordance with the Sage grouse Habitat Assessment Framework and the Nevada and Northeastern California Greater Sage-grouse Approved RMP Amendment. Monitoring priorities include sage grouse priority habitat management areas, wild horse herd management areas and riparian areas.

Operators and grazing allotments being monitored are, 1) Hank Vogler: North Steptoe, North Steptoe Trail, 2) Vogler, Henry C.: Chin Creek (cattle), Becky Creek, Lovell Peak, Whiteman Creek, Second Creek, 3) Need More Sheep Company: Chin Creek (sheep), Indian George, Becky Springs, Sampson Creek, Tippet Pass, 4) Southern Nevada Water Authority: Bassett Creek, Tippet Pass (Glenco Pasture), Cold Spring, Willard Creek, McCoy Creek, Meadow Creek, Majors South Spring Valley, Murphy Wash, Shingle Creek, Wilson Creek Allotment (Muleshoe Use Area and Atlanta Use Area), 5) Moriah Ranches: Sacramento Pass, Stephens Creek, 6) Cave Valley Ranch L.L.C.: Cave Valley Ranch allotment, 7) Westates Land and Livestock: Geyser Ranch, Wilson Creek Allotment Use Areas: Muleshoe, Pony Seedings, Fairview, Atlanta, 8) Collis, Chris and Karen: Connors Summit, Willow Springs. In 2017, the District will begin the rangeland health evaluation and complete the standards determination document for each of the listed allotments. To learn more, go to <http://bit.ly/1hXbukz>.

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### RECREATION & TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Ash Springs Recreation Site: The Caliente Field Office expects in spring 2017 to release for public comment a draft environmental assessment for a plan to manage the Ash Springs Recreation Site, located alongside U.S. Highway 93 about 100 miles north of Las Vegas. The plan would provide management direction for the BLM-administered portion of Ash Springs, addressing visitor usage and public safety, endangered and sensitive species habitat, water quality, and compliance with existing local, state and federal laws. The site is temporarily closed to the public. The closure announcement was published in the *Federal Register* in April 2016.

Lincoln County Partners Multi-Purpose Non-Motorized Trail System: The Caliente Field Manager in June 2016 issued a Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Lincoln County Partners Multi-Purpose Non-Motorized Trail System. The trails system will enhance access to public lands by constructing new multi-purpose hiking and mountain biking trails on public lands around Caliente, Nev. Development of new trails and trailheads will not reduce access to or conflict with current recreational opportunities in the area.

Ely District Cave Management Plan: The Ely District Manager in April 2016 signed the Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Final Ely District Cave and Karst Plan & Environmental Assessment. The Plan provides guidance for cave and karst management and provides for recreation within caves across the Ely District, while ensuring protection of resources. The Plan establishes direction for long-term management, planning, and oversight of the District's cave resources (e.g., cultural, biological, hydrological, or geological). It also identifies specific management actions for recreational use, scientific research, and management of cave resources.

Christmas tree-cutting Permits on Sale: The Ely District is selling Christmas tree-cutting permits and has extended a program to give free Christmas tree permits to fourth graders. Permits are \$3 per tree plus a \$1 road maintenance fee, for a total of \$4 per tree. There is a limit of 10 per purchaser. Permits may be purchased in-person, by telephone or through the mail.

For the second year in a row, free Christmas tree permits are available to Nevada fourth graders as part of the U.S. Department of Interior's "Every Kid in a Park" program. BLM Nevada State Director John Ruhs authorized the free Christmas tree program for fourth graders to continue in Nevada this year. As part of the Every Kid in a Park initiative, every fourth grader is eligible to receive a pass that allows free access to federal lands and waters across the country for a full year. The BLM will make available a free Christmas tree permit to every interested fourth grader with a valid 4th Grade Pass or paper voucher, which can be obtained on the website at [www.everykidinapark.gov](http://www.everykidinapark.gov).

For more information or to purchase a permit, call the BLM Ely District Office at (775) 289-1800 or BLM Caliente Field Office at (775) 726-8100.

### WILD HORSES

Pancake Emergency Water Trap Gather: The Ely District has concluded the gather. The BLM removed 297 excess wild horses from the Big Sand Spring Valley portion (western half) of the Pancake Herd Management Area (HMA), located about 30 miles west of Ely or 80 miles northeast of Tonopah, Nev. The BLM removed the horses due to ongoing drought conditions. Without emergency action, the condition of the horses was expected to deteriorate and potentially

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result in the death of some of the horses within a few weeks. Hay and water were used to gather the horses. Wild horses removed from the Pancake HMA were transported to the Indian Lakes off-range corrals, in Fallon, Nev., to be prepared for the BLM's adoption program. Appropriate Management Level (AML) for the Pancake HMA is 240-493 wild horses. The current population is estimated at 1,800 wild horses. Gather reports are posted on the BLM Ely District website at <http://on.doi.gov/11GnDYC>

### WILDERNESS

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics: The BLM is performing project by project inventory updates for Lands with Wilderness Character.

### WILDLIFE

Rose Guano Cave Bat Banding: The BLM this fall assisted the Nevada Department of Wildlife and researchers in trapping and banding Brazilian free-tailed bats (also called Mexican free-tailed bats; *Tadarida brasiliensis*). The migrating bats seasonally use Rose Guano Cave for roosting and raising bat pups. Approximately 40,000 bats were slated to receive band identification while researchers concurrently captured sex, reproductive status, age, health and parasite status of each banded bat.

### SPECIAL LEGISLATION

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA): The public comment period for Round 16 concluded in July 2016. Through SNPLMA, local governmental entities may seek funds for parks, trails, and natural areas in portions of Carson City and Clark, Lincoln, and White Pine counties. Federal agencies may seek funds for capital improvements, conservation initiatives, and restoration projects in eastern Nevada. Federal, State, and other agencies may seek funding for hazardous fuels reduction in the Lake Tahoe Basin, the Carson Range, and the Spring Mountain Range. Federal agencies may also seek funding for acquisition of environmentally sensitive land statewide.

Lincoln County Archaeological Initiative (LCAI): Proposals funded through Round 9 will be announced in October 2016. Proposals under the initiative focus on the inventory, evaluation, protection and management of unique archaeological resources in Lincoln County. For more information, contact Program Manager Carol Bass at (775) 289-1803 or [cbass@blm.gov](mailto:cbass@blm.gov).

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*This report was last updated on Nov. 1, 2016. Contact Chris Hanefeld, BLM Ely District public affairs specialist, at (775) 289-1842 or [chanefel@blm.gov](mailto:chanefel@blm.gov) for more information on these and other projects/programs in the District.*