

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Lost Ox OHV Management Program

EA NV-040-05-014



Bureau of Land Management

Ely Field Office

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I. Introduction

This document identifies issues, analyzes alternatives and impacts for construction and management of an Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trail system on public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Ely Field Office. It describes the issues, outlines alternatives, discloses the effects of implementation and will be used as the basis for decision. OHV refers only to all-terrain vehicles less than 50 inches in width.

A. Background for the Purpose and Need

According to a survey done by Nevada Division of State Parks there are approximately 425,435 off-highway vehicles in Nevada (State of Nevada, Division of State Parks, 2005) and this number is expected to grow. Based upon registration figures, Utah is expecting a 27% increase in OHV ownership (Hayes, 2005) this same level of growth could be expected for Nevada. OHV enthusiasts are discovering White Pine County for its abundance of public land and scenic qualities.

There are few designated trails or transportation systems. Based upon casual observations at popular camping areas, hundreds of OHV users are traveling to the area to recreate, especially during holiday weekends and are primarily recreating on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service (Ivins T., Christensen, C., 2005). An official survey has not been performed to determine more precise figures of OHV recreation use.

B. Purpose and Need

The purpose is to meet the needs of current and projected future OHV trail use by establishing a comprehensive, managed, maintained, and monitored OHV trail system. There is an immediate need for managed OHV trails in this region. Existing routes located within the planning area provide motorized access to portions of the planning area but do not provide quality recreation trail opportunities. Effectively managing OHV use includes providing sustainable OHV trails to meet current use. "The lack of adequate trail mileage for OHV recreation is one of the most serious problems facing public land managers" (Wernex, 1994). It is anticipated that by developing an OHV trail system with adequate mileage, signing, user education, and peer enforcement that un-managed OHV use can be limited. This project should relieve pressure from existing OHV use outside of the project area in places with more sensitive resources.

The Bureau of Land Management, Ely Field Office proposes to construct, manage, and maintain an OHV trail system in the Egan Mountain Range in White Pine County, Nevada. Construction would take place in 2006 -2008 with management and maintenance of the trail system ongoing thereafter. This developed trail system would focus recreational OHV use on designated roads and trails and may help to eliminate the proliferation of unauthorized roads and trails. This project is following guidance from BLM's National Priorities for Recreation (2003), BLM's National Management Strategy for Motorized OHV use on Public Lands (2001), Ely Office Recreation Plan (2002),

White Pine County Trail Plan (2004), Nevada Resource Advisory Council's OHV Administration Guidelines for Nevada Public Lands (2003).

C. Relationship to Planning

Applicable Land Use Plans:

Egan RMP and EIS, Ely District

February 3, 1987

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable Land Use Plan listed above. The Egan Resource Management Plan states "the remainder of the ...area is designated as 'open' to [off-road vehicle] use" (page 39, paragraph 8.2 (2)).

Follows Resource Advisory Council's "OHV Administration Guidelines for Nevada Public Lands" which provides guidance for On the Ground Management, Planning, and Education Guidelines (see Appendix B).

It is also in conformance with the Ely Field Office Recreation Plan adopted in March of 2003 that identifies the need to "properly manage an OHV program", including the development of OHV-use areas including trailheads and public access points.

The proposed action is consistent with the White Pine County Public Land Use Plan which under the heading Recreation, states "dispersed recreational opportunities on public lands shall be encouraged and provided. Opportunities for unstructured recreation such as...off road vehicles in White Pine County on public lands should continue to be made available" (page 7, Recreation-Policies, 1.).

The proposed action is consistent with the White Pine County Trails plan adopted by White Pine County and the BLM in March of 2004. In the White Pine County trails objectives, Regional Trails including OHV trail systems were identified for needed future developments.

D. Issues

The following issues of primary concern were raised during public and internal scoping. Livestock grazing, cultural resources, noxious weed control, wildlife habitat, riparian areas, private property, air quality, and recreation.

II. Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives

Introduction

A purpose of this document is to formulate a range of alternatives which respond to the Purpose and Need and Issues identified in Chapter I.

The BLM recreation staff in coordination with local current and future OHV uses and organizations developed alternatives based upon GIS resource data, input received

through scoping meetings, BLM resource specialists, research on OHV user preferences, and recommendations made by an OHV trail consultant.

The scoping process involved input from BLM resource specialists, Nevada Department of Wildlife personnel, grazing permittees, local OHV current and future OHV uses, a local trails organization, and interested members of the public. A consultant specializing in motorized trails and OHV Management was also consulted to review the project and make recommendations on trail system design and keys to implementing a successful OHV program. This report can be found in Appendix C.

A broad range of alternatives with a number of possibilities are presented below.

A. Proposed Action

The proposed action is to develop the Lost Ox OHV Trail System in the Egan Range on public land. The proposed action includes the designation of OHV trails, two trailheads and two adjacent practice riding loops. The trail system would have approximately 186.5 miles of trails designated for OHV use consisting of existing routes and new trail construction. The proposed action would provide a wide variety of substantially different loop opportunities consisting of a variety of lengths and difficulties. The proposed action would designate approximately 62.5 miles of existing routes and build approximately 124 miles of new trails. The trails would be constructed with a small trail dozer that is approximately 50" wide. Existing roads incorporated as part of the trail system would be signed as Shared Use Roads and would be open for both OHV and full size vehicles. Other roads within the project area that are not part of the designated OHV trail system would remain open to all size vehicle uses unless determined otherwise through future transportation planning.

OHV compatible cattleguards or fence crossings would be installed at all fence crossings. Information would be provided informing users of the presence of cattle and proper multiple use etiquette when appropriate. Existing routes that are currently impacting riparian areas and springs would be re-routed to reduce impacts to wildlife, grazing, water quality, and sensitive vegetation. Re-routed sections may be open to full size vehicles if determined to be appropriate. Existing routes crossing private property would be re-routed in order to minimize impacts and conflicts. Improvements to existing roads could also be performed where determined necessary based upon monitoring.

Cultural resource interpretation opportunities would be provided where appropriate. All trails new or existing within Lost Ox Trails system would follow the requirements set for in the State Protocol Agreement between the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office and BLM Nevada. All cultural resources (except those defined as categorically not eligible in the Protocol Appendix E) would be avoided using the guidelines set forth in the Protocol Appendix F.L.

New trails would be constructed to a 50" wide standard using established trail design methods and standards, as developed by the US Forest Service and the American Motorcycle Association. Following "Three steps to ecologically sensitive road/trail planning" new trail construction would be located to avoid riparian and spring areas (Forman, Sperling et al., 2003). Construction would be performed during periods of soil moisture in order to mitigate impacts to air quality. These trails would be designed to be flowing, highly sustainable, and self-draining where possible, minimizing erosion and maintenance. Trail structures such as trail hardening, crib walls, bridges, and puncheon would be installed where necessary to minimize impacts to resources. Implementation of the new construction or signing of existing routes would not occur until State Historic Preservation Office concurrence had been received. New trail construction would not take place between May 1st and July 15th unless a survey of the project area is done to determine no migratory bird breeding or nesting is occurring in the area for the conservation of migratory birds.

Development would also include two trailhead areas and adjacent practice loops (see trailhead map). Roads traveling to the staging areas would be improved to accommodate larger vehicles and more frequent vehicle use. Noxious weed populations have been identified within the project area. A clean vehicle strategy is a part of this proposed action that would mandate all vehicles be washed and cleaned prior to using trails in the Lost Ox trail system.

All designated routes associated with the trail system would be marked using fiberglass markers with appropriate information. Trailhead areas would be designed to provide easy access in for passenger vehicles pulling trailers and easy access out to the trail system and would also incorporate practice loop areas. Maps of the trail system would be provided as well as information regarding responsible land use. Major emphasis would be placed on user ethics, with Right Rider, Tread Lightly, or other programs being employed. An enforcement plan would be a part of the OHV management plan for the area. This plan would include BLM law enforcement needs as well as a peer enforcement patrol program.

No cross country travel would be permitted within the planning area. Pursuant to authority in 43 CFR 8341.2 the BLM will prepare an emergency OHV restriction to the planning area prior to opening. This restriction would limit motorized travel within the area to designated routes. The Lost Ox trail system would then be incorporated into the Ely Field Office transportation plan. Unauthorized routes within the planning area would be monitored for and immediately rehabilitated when discovered. Rehabilitation would be conducted utilizing one or several mechanisms such as signing, gating, berms, obliteration, or camouflaging. Each unauthorized route would be evaluated to insure the most appropriate rehabilitation methods are employed.

No trail construction would be started until the Lost OX Trail Management Plan is complete. This would have a complete list of Standard Operating Procedures for all management activities.

Maintenance

The trail system would require annual maintenance. Natural and human caused damage to trails may occur. Trails would be maintained using the standards described in this Environmental Assessment. A management plan would be developed that would direct the management of the trail system. This plan would outline trail management objectives including maintenance protocol, enforcement issues, user education, signing, mapping, and monitoring.

Monitoring

A monitoring plan would be developed with any of the action alternatives. This would be approved by the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition Science Committee. The monitoring would be contracted to gather baseline data prior to opening the trail system and to conduct subsequent annual monitoring. The monitoring plan would monitor for use levels, unauthorized routes, noxious and invasive weeds infestations, wildlife, and maintenance needs. The development of the trail system would be phased in based upon use levels and monitoring. Should monitoring reveal that impacts are occurring at unacceptable levels adaptive management would be implemented. The following are potential adaptive management strategies that could be implemented:

- Seasonal closures of trails to reduce impacts
- Re-route of trail to avoid impacts
- Closure of trail to avoid impacts
- Installation of barriers or signage to reduce impacts
- Establish program to limit use

B. No Action

This alternative represents no change to current management direction. The Egan Resource Management Plan acknowledges OHV use as a suitable use of BLM lands with site specific restrictions established to protect resource values (Bureau of Land Management, 1987). This alternative would keep OHV use in the area as “open” allowing cross-country travel and would remain open to casual OHV use.

Currently there is a local grassroots effort within the planning area to establish a transportation plan identifying roads and trails open to OHV use. This process is anticipated to go into effect in the year 2008. The existing road network would continue to provide limited OHV recreation opportunities. There would be no specific effort to control the quantity and location of new trails. Designated parking, camping, sanitary or other facilities would not be provided.

C. Minimum Trail Development

This alternative represents a modified version of the proposed action that presents the least amount of new trail construction.

This alternative would provide approximately 75 miles of trail opportunities, 57.5 miles of existing routes and 17.5 miles of new routes would be constructed. One staging area with practice loops would be constructed (see Appendix A). Roads traveling to the staging areas would be improved to accommodate larger vehicles and more frequent vehicle use.

All existing routes within the project area would remain open to full sized vehicles and OHVs. Newly constructed trails would be open to OHVs as defined earlier in this document except where re-routes of existing routes are identified. These would be open to full size vehicles as well as OHVs.

This alternative provides four longer distance loop opportunities, and one shorter loop opportunity.

The same level of management, maintenance, and monitoring would occur as identified in the proposed action. No cross country travel would be permitted within the planning area. Pursuant to authority in 43 CFR 8341.2 the BLM will prepare an emergency OHV restriction to the planning area prior to opening. This restriction would limit motorized travel within the area to designated routes.

See appendix A for maps of the Action Alternatives.

D. Maximum Trail Development

This alternative would provide a 231 mile trail system within the project area including approximately 70 miles of existing routes and construct approximately 161 miles of new trails. Two staging areas with practice loops would be established. Roads traveling to the staging areas would be improved to accommodate larger vehicles and more frequent vehicle use.

All existing routes within the project area would remain open to full sized vehicles and OHVs. Newly constructed trails would be open to OHV size vehicles as defined earlier in this document except where re-routes of existing routes are identified. These would be open to full size vehicles as well as OHVs.

The same level of management, maintenance, and monitoring would occur as identified in the proposed action.

This alternative would provide a wide variety of substantially different loop opportunities consisting of a variety of lengths and difficulties. The additional mileage available in this alternative allows for greater flexibility in adaptive management of the trail system.

No cross country travel would be permitted within the planning area. Pursuant to authority in 43 CFR 8341.2 the BLM will prepare an emergency OHV restriction to the planning area prior to opening. This restriction would limit motorized travel within the area to designated routes.

See Appendix A for maps of the Action Alternatives.

E. Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

Several alternative locations and options for trail systems were considered but dismissed from further development.

- Alternatives which considered expanding trail development north of the proposed project area onto land managed by the US Forest Service were dismissed. This was based upon current management direction regarding OHV use and a number of anticipated issues and constraints including: private land ownership, municipal watershed, inventoried roadless areas, and user conflicts.
- Expanded trail development south of the proposed project area into the South Schell Creek Mountain Range. Trail development and new trail construction was considered in the area known as Horse and Cattle Camp. This area is considered crucial winter habitat for elk and is a popular area for hunting and was eliminated due to potential impacts and user conflicts.
- Expanded trail development to include OHV access to Comins Lake. Trail users would be able to travel to the reservoir to participate in fishing and other lake activities on designated trails. This was eliminated from further consideration due to comments received regarding perceived user conflicts and safety concerns with crossing CaveValley Road.

III. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

Assumptions being made in regards to the environmental consequences of the project on each resource include the highest period of use would occur from late May to early October which coincides with suitable weather and the melting of snow to access the trail system. This also coincides with peak tourism season for this area. Within this period of use there are three holiday weekends including Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day. It is assumed that these would be the times of highest use with the other weekends receiving low to medium use. During the week besides days associated with the holiday weekends use is expected to be low. During the use season it is expected that the majority of use will occur on the project between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. It is assumed that the remainder of the year outside of this defined use period, use would remain at its current levels which are low to moderate.

Based on the review of existing baseline data and on the ground surveys conducted during the preparation process, BLM specialists have identified the following issues for further analysis:

- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Migratory Birds
- Native American Religious Concerns
- Noxious weeds and invasive, non-native species
- Wildlife
- Special Status Species
- Water Quality
- Wetlands/Riparian
- Visual Resource Management
- Soils
- Recreation
- Range
- Vegetation

The following elements of the human environment are not present or would not be affected by the Proposed Action; therefore, no impacts to these elements are likely and they are not discussed further in this EA: areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC), environmental justice, floodplains, hazardous or solid waste, land use authorizations, paleontological resources, minerals, prime or unique farmlands, woodland resources, wild horses and burros, wilderness, or wild and scenic rivers.

Air Quality

Affected Environment

Air quality within the project area is considered good due to the remoteness of the area and lack of major pollution sources. Periodic degradation of air quality occurs due to winds blowing dust from nearby areas and occasional regional air pollution. Only two air quality monitoring sites are located within relatively close proximity to the project area. One is located in McGill, Nevada which is approximately 20 miles from the project area, but has not been in service since 1998. Prior to its discontinued use, the McGill monitoring station exceeded the 24 hour inhalable particulate matter threshold (PM10) on only one occasion in August of 1996. This event was later determined to be associated with a high wind event and was disqualified. The other monitoring site is located in Baker, Nevada, approximately 60 miles from the project site. This monitoring station has not monitored for PM10 since 1997 but is considered one of the least polluted areas of the state. This site, while monitoring particulate matter, never exceeded the 24-hour PM10 threshold (State of Nevada, 2004).

Environmental Consequences

B. No Action Alternative

OHV use would remain in the area but to a lesser extent than if an action alternative were implemented. Fugitive dust levels and gaseous emissions would increase slightly as OHV use increased but would not impact the overall air quality of the area.

Effects Common to All Action Alternatives –

During construction there would be a localized increase in dust levels associated with soil disturbance. Increases in dust levels associated with construction would return to normal levels once construction is completed. An increase in dust and particulate matter would be expected with an increase in off-highway vehicle use on and directly adjacent to the trails. The largest increase in dust levels and particulate matter would occur near trailheads and along popular trails due to higher levels of use resulting in an increase in soil disturbance. Any increase in particulate matter associated with the proposed project would not impact the overall air quality of the area.

C. Minimum Trail Development

As with all of the alternatives there would be an increase in dust and particulate matter during the construction phase but to a lesser extent than if Alternative B or D were implemented due to less miles of new trail construction proposed. This alternative would result in higher levels of dust and particulate matter during periods of recreation use than the other action alternatives. This is due to having less trail options which would focus use on a fewer number of trails resulting in a higher frequency of soil disturbance.

D. Proposed Action and Maximum Trail Development

With more miles of new trail construction proposed through these alternatives the increase in dust and particulate matter associated with the construction phase would occur for a longer period of time than minimum trail development alternative. Since both of these alternatives propose a variety of trails and loop opportunities OHV use would be distributed on a number of different trails resulting in a lower frequency of soil disturbances on any given trail.

Cultural

Affected Environment

The project lies within close proximity to the Ward Mining District, a historic area of mining, exploration, and human occupation. It is anticipated that many sites exist within the project area that would be associated with this historic mining district. Several surveys have been done within proximity to the project area which identified sites associated with the Ward Mining District as well as sites associated with aboriginal peoples. A Class III Cultural Resource Survey has been completed for portions of the project area (see report 8111 (NV-040) 2006-1607). This inventory report documents

prehistoric and historic cultural resources located during cultural inventory. These resources would be avoided by trail redesign.

Environmental Consequences

B. No Action Alternative

OHV use would continue in the area at lesser levels than if an action alternative were implemented. Cultural inventories that would be conducted under an action alternative would not be conducted under the No Action Alternative. No further cultural inventories would be conducted in the area.

Effects Common to All Action Alternatives –

A Class III Cultural Resource Survey has been conducted for a portion of the alternatives. Additional cultural surveys would take place prior to construction. There would be no known impacts to cultural resources should any of the action alternatives be implemented based on completed surveys and mitigation identified in the proposed action. All of the alternatives would provide exceptional interpretive opportunities in the project area, reducing the overall impacts to this resource by increasing public awareness.

C. Minimum Trail Development

There would be no known impacts to cultural resources should this alternative be implemented based upon completed surveys and mitigation measures.

D. Proposed Action and Maximum Trail Development

There would be no known impacts to cultural resources should either of these alternatives be implemented based upon completed surveys and mitigation measures common to all of the action alternatives. A Class III Cultural Resource Survey has been conducted for portions of these alternatives. There would be a need for additional cultural surveys prior to implementing portions of these alternatives. By completing these cultural resource inventories and avoiding cultural resources in trail design, this project will have ‘no effect’ to historic properties. All cultural resources (except those defined as categorically not eligible in the Protocol Appendix E) would be avoided using the guidelines set forth in the Protocol Appendix F.L.

Invasive, Non-Native Species

Affected Environment

Several infestations of noxious or invasive weed species have been inventoried and are known to occur within and adjacent to the project area. The majority of these identified infestations occur along existing roads. The most common species found within and adjacent to the project area is Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) an invasive plant species.

White top/Hoary Cress (*Cardaria draba*) is a noxious weed that is classified in Category C of the state's noxious weed list meaning it is "currently established and generally widespread in many counties of the state" and "abatement is at the discretion of the state quarantine officer". Other Category C species located within one mile of the project area include Saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) and Black Henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*). One infestation of Russian Knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*), a Category B noxious weed species, has been inventoried within one mile of the project area. Category B weeds are "established in scattered populations in some counties of the state; actively excluded where possible, actively eradicated from nursery stock dealer premises" and "control is required by the state in areas where populations are not well established or previously unknown to occur" (Nevada Department of Agriculture, 2005).

Environmental Consequences

B. No Action Alternative

The spread of noxious weed species would continue to occur within this area but to a lesser extent than if an action alternative were implemented. Through this alternative there would not be an increase in the level of monitoring and control measures of noxious and invasive weed species within the project area as would be seen through mitigation measures with an action. No user education regarding the spread of noxious and invasive weed species to OHV users would occur.

Effects Common to All Action Alternatives –

A weed risk assessment rated the project as moderate and is included in Appendix D. This indicates that "possible adverse effects on sites and possible expansion of infestation within the project area" is expected to occur" and that "preventative management measures for the proposed project to reduce the risk of introduction or spread of noxious weeds into the area" is required. An increase in off-highway vehicles traveling through known infestations as well as an increase in ground disturbances associated with new trail construction would increase the likelihood of invasive weed encroachment.

Wildlife

Affected Environment

Wildlife found in the vicinity of the project area is typical of that found in the pinyon/juniper woodland communities. According to the GIS database, the majority of the project area occurs within summer habitat for mule deer with a small portion of the project occurring within spring/winter habitat. Mule deer move between various zones from the forest edges at higher elevations to the desert floor, depending on the season. Generally, they summer at higher elevations and winter at lower elevations, following the snow line. Mule deer occupy almost all types of habitat within their range. Mule deer are most active in mornings and evenings while conserving energy and water during the day

(Nevada Department of Wildlife, 2005). The Nevada Department of Wildlife reports the 2005 population estimate for mule deer in hunting unit 221 is slightly higher than in 2004 but remains below the 10 year average. According to the GIS database, the proposed action also occurs within an area identified as yearlong habitat for rocky mountain elk. Elk, like deer, migrate between the seasons depending upon snow levels and rely on water, forage, and thermal cover for their habitat. During late spring and early summer, cows and cow/calf pairs forage on created wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*) located along the valley bottom in the southern Steptoe Valley. These individuals are thought to move between foraging habitat in the mornings to areas in the surrounding Egan and Schell Creek Ranges for water and cover during the day.

Two Coopers Hawk nesting areas are known to occur within the project area. This medium sized raptor is a woodland species and is somewhat migratory (The Hawk Conservancy Trust, 2005). In Nevada, this species is often found in association with riparian aspen, cottonwood, and montane conifer stands during the nesting season. Although know to occur in pinyon-juniper woodlands, use of this vegetation community by Cooper's Hawk is likely limited. Sharp-shinned Hawk are also known to occur in the project area during the breeding season. Similar to Cooper's Hawk, this species is typically associated with riparian thickets and mixed deciduous-conifer woodlands. The project area appears to offer little in the way of cliff nesting habitat, although the site may still be used as foraging habitat for cliff nesting raptors such as Golden Eagles and Prairie Falcons breeding in surrounding areas. No data are available to assess occurrence of nocturnal raptors (i.e., Owls)

Migratory game birds found throughout the state of Nevada include species from the Families Anatidae (wild ducks, geese, brants, and swans), Columbidae (wild doves and pigeons), Gruidae (little brown cranes), Rallidae (rails, coots, and gallinules), and Scolopacidae (woodcocks and snipes). These species depend on aquatic habitats and/or wetlands (Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 2004). Many of these species are known to travel through White Pine County during migration seasons. The project area encompasses several springs and a few perennial streams that could be potential migratory game bird habitat.

Migratory and non-migratory landbirds (i.e., typical songbirds) occurring in the project area are likely representational of species commonly associated with pinyon/juniper and sagebrush vegetation communities in Nevada. This is supported by limited site-specific occurrence data, although no data are available to assess relative abundance of breeding landbirds. The density of breeding birds in pinyon/juniper woodlands is classically low, however, the ecology of many of these species are poorly known aside from the basic understanding of their primary habitat associations.

Environmental Consequences

B. No Action Alternative

There would be no temporary displacement of individual animals during a construction phase. OHV use would continue in the area at lesser levels than if an action alternative were implemented. This would present no additional adverse impacts to migratory bird species due to construction.

OHV use would continue in the area at current levels and would increase over time as recreation in the general area increases. The increase in OHV use would be less than if an action alternative were implemented. Direct impacts would occur to mule deer and elk would continue to occur, although to a lesser degree. Degradation of crucial Elk summer habitat and crucial deer winter habitat associated with OHV recreation use is occurring in other areas, specifically in adjacent areas such as the Schell Creek Mountains and Duckcreek basin. This use would continue and potentially increase as OHV use increases in these areas.

Effects Common to All Action Alternatives –

Wildlife would be affected by all of the Action Alternatives. This would vary dependent upon level of new trail construction, numbers of users, and season of use. Mitigation described in the proposed action would limit impacts. This includes impacts during the construction phase as well as subsequent recreation use.

Studies have shown that human disturbances including recreational trails impact bird species. One study found that near recreational trails species composition was altered, birds were less likely to nest near trails, and nest predation was greater near trails (Miller, 1997). An increased level in disturbances associated with OHV use could result in a direct loss of habitat and an alteration of species composition in the area immediately adjacent to the trail segments. These birds would relocate to nearby areas where there are fewer disturbances from OHV use.

The project would introduce a slight increase in human disturbances of a similar nature to what is already occurring within the raptor nesting areas.

No impacts are expected to migratory birds because of mitigation identified in this EA.

Studies measuring responses of deer to OHV use generally concluded that responses were minimal and that no correlation between OHV activity levels and animal activity levels occur (Devol, 1999). For instance, a study on deer in the Rock Creek OHV area in the Eldorado National Forest “concluded that there was no evidence that deer were affected by the levels of OHV use, and the result was consistent with other studies that evaluated the response of deer to higher levels of vehicle disturbance” and “found no evidence that deer changed their habitat utilization because of traffic levels”(Jones and Stokes Associates, Inc., 1991). However, another study showed that “deer avoided OHV riding areas during peak use but returned to their established home ranges after traffic levels subsided” (Kutilek and Ferris, 1989) which indicates that at least some additional energy expenditure occurred in association with OHV use. According to “Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind”, predictable human action reduces the level of stress on wildlife by

allowing them to adapt to those actions (Hellmund Associates, 1998). Of course, habituation is dependent upon benign human activity (i.e., no hunting pressure).

Road densities have been determined to affect large animals (such as elk) and their population levels. Havlick (2002) suggests that one to two miles of road per square mile density is the level when large animal habitat effectiveness and animal population drops. Other research suggests that road densities of 1 mile per square mile can reduce habitat effectiveness by 25 percent and when exposed to trail and road traffic elk abandoned larger areas with superior forage and shifted to over-grazed small forest patches where OHVs and trails were absent (Lyon 1983, Hudson and Morgantini 1991). Research conducted at the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range in northeastern Oregon suggests that elk flight from human disturbance was highly dependent on distance to disturbance and that the probability of elk flight continued beyond 1,500 meters from OHV riders (Wisdom et al. 2004).

The Maximum Trail Development Alternative has 1.3 miles of trail per square mile if all trails were constructed. The average road width is 8' minimum and the trail width of this project is maximum 5' which results in 37% less disturbance than minor road construction. The trail densities for this project would likely affect large animal use of the habitat, albeit on an unknown scale.

Indirect impacts of the project would be related to the removal of habitat, forage, and vegetative cover associated with the construction of new trails and trailheads along with area of avoidance associated with emitted noise from OHVs. The level of vegetation removal is directly correlated to the number of miles of new trail construction for each of the action alternatives. The removal of vegetation and potential habitat would result in an initial period of adjustment. A study performed by the US Forest Service found that noise associated with off-highway vehicle use was audible for distances up to ½ mile but “no direct physiological effect on animals in the area could be expected from the motorcycle sounds” (United States Department of Agriculture, 1993). Due to the openness of the pinyon/juniper woodlands in the project area, however, OHVs would likely be audible at or possibly beyond ½ mile distance.

All new trail construction would avoid sensitive riparian areas and springs which would reduce potential impacts to wildlife species (see proposed action).

C. Minimum Trail Development

Since this alternative proposes less miles of new trail construction the temporary displacement of migratory birds during the construction phase would be less than if either of the other action alternatives were implemented.

There would not be additional impacts associated with this alternative to raptor species. There is no trail construction proposed within known raptor nesting areas.

D. Proposed Action and Maximum Trail Development

This would decrease the potential for disturbances to both deer and elk along with habitat degradation in association with off trail travel. These actions would be more capable of handling large numbers of users, in turn, reducing dispersed OHV recreation and current impacts to wildlife in other popular OHV areas.

Both of these alternatives propose trail construction within known raptor nesting areas. The exact location of nests in relation to proposed trails is unknown. Impacts could include temporary displacement of individual animals.

These alternatives could attract OHV use from other areas that currently see high levels of OHV activity, potentially reducing impacts to migratory bird habitat in nearby areas.

Special Status Species including Federally Designated Threatened, Endangered, Proposed and Candidate Species, State Protected Species; and BLM Sensitive Species

Affected Environment

The Nevada Natural Heritage Program database and the Nevada Breeding Bird Atlas were queried for the presence of special status species and species of concern for the region. This list identified six species that have special status known to occur within the project area. These include the long legged myotis (*Myotis volans*), the Pennell beardtongue (*Penstemon leiophyllus*), the pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*), the greater sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), the northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentiles*), and the pinyon jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*). Although no data are available, given primary vegetation communities occurring in the project area several additional BLM Sensitive bird species are also potentially found in the area including juniper titmouse (*Baeolophus griseus*), gray vireo (*Vireo vicinior*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), vesper sparrow (*Poocetes gramineus*), and prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*).

The pygmy rabbit occurs throughout much of the Great Basin and is primarily associated with areas of tall dense sagebrush and friable soils suitable for establishing a burrow system. Habitat may exist in small portions of the project area.

Greater sage grouse utilize mountainous areas as both winter and brood rearing areas. This type of habitat exists within the project area. 11 leks are known to occur within two miles of the project area, five of which are active. Three of the leks occur within ½ of a mile of the proposed access road. Although much of the range is heavily timbered and likely offers limited suitable habitat for greater sage-grouse.

The long-legged myotis is one of western America's most widely distributed bat species. This species is especially dependent on wooded habitats usually at elevations of 4,000 to 9,000 feet. Radio-tracking studies have identified maternity roosts beneath bark, but

these roosts can also be found in rock crevices, cliffs, and buildings. Roosting habitat within the project area include a cliff-faced canyon with a moderately used road located within it. Long-legged myotis forage over ponds, streams, water tanks, and in forest clearings (BCI Bat Species 2004). Foraging habitat is present within the project area.

Pennell Beardtongue is a plant species that is known to occur at high elevations on rocky calcareous slopes. The one known location of this special status species was last documented in 1978 and was located near the ridge of the Egan Range. Habitat is present within the project area.

Northern goshawk are known to occur along the extreme northern portion of the project area near Old Quake Mine. In Nevada, this species is strongly associated with aspen woodlands and riparian aspen stringers. Typically this species is considered sensitive to human disturbance, although appropriate trail location and construction timing may limit any direct impacts. However, alterations to available prey base (i.e., birds) may result from project implementation.

No other species in Nevada is more strongly associated with pinyon/juniper woodlands than is the pinyon jay. Considered to have a mutualistic relationship with these forests, this species forages primarily on, and is the principle disseminator of, singleleaf pinyon pine seeds. Pinyon jays nest colonially and are considered to exhibit strong nest-site fidelity, however, in general little is known about their nesting ecology within the state. Additionally, juniper titmouse and gray vireo are also strongly associated with pinyon/juniper forests. Although specific habitat characteristics are not well delineated, both species are thought to prefer late successional pinyon/juniper habitats. Typically gray vireo is found in drier conditions while juniper titmouse is often found at the interface between pinyon/juniper and riparian vegetation communities.

The remainder of Sensitive bird Species potentially occurring in the projects area are most closely associated with sagebrush habitats and the sagebrush-pinyon/juniper ecotone. These vegetation communities are used for both nesting and foraging habitat.

Environmental Consequences

B. No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative OHV use would continue in the area at a lesser extent than if an action alternative were implemented. OHV management would not occur in this area with no monitoring occurring. There would be no additional impacts to this resource.

Effects Common to All Action Alternatives –

No listed proposed or candidate species are known to occur in the project area. Pygmy rabbit, a special status species has the potential to occur within the project area. Indirect

impacts would include an increase in vehicular and OHV traffic potentially increasing disturbance levels.

The proposed action would increase the level of use within the project area potentially increasing disturbances to greater sage grouse. There would be disturbances associated with trail and trailhead construction. Similarly, the remainder of sensitive bird species occurring in the area would likely experience some disturbance from trail construction and use.

No direct, indirect, or residual impacts would occur to Pennell Beardtongue populations through this project.

D. Proposed Action and Maximum Trail Development

Both of these alternatives propose a second trailhead and utilization of an existing road near a known population of the long legged myotis. This would potentially result in the species relocating to avoid disturbances.

Riparian Zones

Affected Environment

Riparian areas are indicated by surface water sources, and in this region surface water comes primarily in the form of springs and streams. Several springs are located within the project area. Livestock, wildlife, hunting, and off-highway vehicles are the primary uses occurring in this area that currently affect riparian zones. Several of the existing roads in the area travel to and through springs and riparian areas. These roads see moderate levels of use associated with recreation, hunting, and grazing permittees although no official surveys have been conducted in this area.

Environmental Consequences

B. No Action Alternative

Under the no action alternative impacts to riparian areas would continue and would increase over time as dispersed recreation in the area gains popularity. None of the proposed re-routes or improvements would occur and users would continue traveling through riparian areas further impacting the resource. There would be no OHV user education regarding user etiquette. Users would continue to go uneducated regarding the potential impacts of OHV use to riparian areas.

Effects Common to All Action Alternatives –

The use of off-highway vehicles directly within riparian areas is found to negatively affect these areas. This is due to trampling of vegetation, increasing the likelihood of

erosion, siltation, and the prevention of bank stabilization (Texas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, 2002).

An OHV trail system would indirectly reduce impacts to riparian areas by potentially reducing OHV use in other areas where impacts to this resource may be occurring.

Existing routes that are currently impacting riparian areas and springs would be re-routed to reduce impacts to wildlife, grazing, water quality, and riparian vegetation. New trail construction would be located to avoid riparian and spring areas.

Visual Resources

Affected Environment

The proposed project area is located within a remote portion of White Pine County which, though unclassified, meets the criteria for a Class III Visual Resource Management (VRM) Zone. The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Environmental Consequences

B. No Action Alternative

Unmanaged OHV use would continue in the area at current levels, which may result in user created trails having some impacts to the visual resources of the area but would fall within the VRM designation.

Effects Common to All Action Alternatives –

All of the action alternatives would stay within the visual resource management criteria for the area based upon mitigation measures and site design. Although the area affected by the project is unclassified and meets the criteria for a Class III Visual Designation.

Soils

Affected Environment

The project area is typical of the Basin and Range Province which exhibits sharp contrasts in physiographic characteristics. The project occurs primarily on the upper part of fan piedmonts, hills, and on mountains. Soils found on the fan piedmonts range from nearly level to moderately steep and shallow to moderately deep. They are moderately coarse textured to very gravelly and moderately fine textured in the surface and

moderately coarse textured to very gravelly and fine textured in the subsoils. These soils are well drained and are not subject to flooding. Soils found on the hills and mountains are typically comprised of limestone and dolomite with pockets of volcanic tuft and tertiary sedimentary rocks spread throughout the project area. These soils are strongly sloping to very steep and are very shallow to very deep. They are very gravelly or extremely stony and moderately coarse textured in the surface layer and very cobbly and fine textured in the subsoil and generally underlain with bedrock. These soils are well drained and are not subject to flooding.

Environmental Consequences

B. No Action Alternative

OHV use would continue in this area at a lesser extent than if an action alternative were implemented. Soil displacement and erosion would occur at the current levels or slightly increase as use increases over time. With no trail systems available for the user some route proliferation would likely occur resulting in some increase in soil displacement. Maintenance or improvements to existing routes would occur less frequently or not at all depending on the route and the severity of the maintenance need.

Effects Common to All Action Alternatives –

Implementation of any of the action alternatives would result in an increased disturbance to soils in relation to new trail construction and is directly proportional to the number of miles of new trail construction proposed (see graph 3-1 on the following page). Disturbances to soils would result in potential for increased erosion and compaction.

New trails would be designed to be flowing, highly sustainable, and self-draining where possible, minimizing erosion and maintenance.

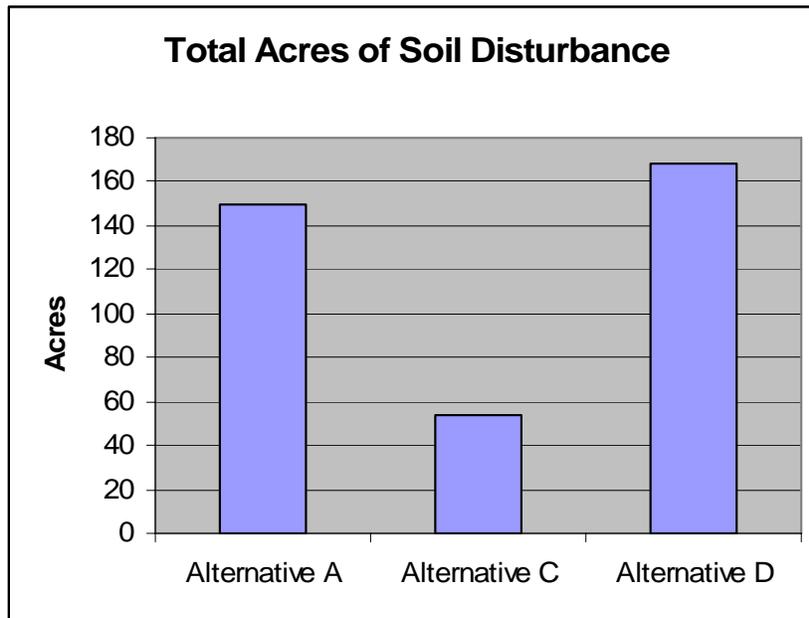
C. Minimum Trail Development

The focused nature of this alternative would concentrate the majority of the OHV use onto a limited number of trails. This would lead to increased pulverization of soils due to a higher frequency of disturbance, increased dust production, and difficult maintenance.

D. Proposed Action and Maximum Trail Development

OHV use would be dispersed throughout the trail system resulting in fewer disturbances to soils on any given route.

Graph 3-1



Acres of soil disturbance is based upon the number of new miles of trails proposed per alternative and the number of trailheads approximated at 45 acres in size each.

Recreation

Affected Environment

Recreation in the area includes hunting, wildlife viewing, dispersed camping, cultural tours, and off-highway vehicle use. The majority of these activities are done in combination with an off-highway vehicle due to the large expanse of land and the remoteness of the area. A low level of dispersed hiking occurs in the area. The project is in close proximity to Ward Charcoal Oven State Park where hiking and cultural and interpretive tours are popular. This area also offers picnicking and developed camping. The State Park has a trail for off-highway vehicles that connects with public lands creating an increase in this type of use within the project area. The project area is in close proximity to Ward Mining District and Ward Cemetery two historic sites that see some level of cultural tours and recreation visitors. No formal surveys have been completed regarding recreation use within the project area although the state park probably has visitor estimates within their designated areas.

Environmental Consequences

B. No Action Alternative

Off-highway-vehicle recreation use may increase through individual discovery of the area and word of mouth.

Effects Common to All Action Alternatives –

People that prefer non-motorized activities such as hiking and horseback riding would more than likely not recreate in this area. Portions of the trail system would be suitable for mountain biking and result in an increased level of use of this form of recreation.

C. Minimum Trail Development

The concentrated nature of this alternative would result in a lower quality recreation experience due to an increased number of encounters, lower trail quality due to increased maintenance needs, and less options for large groups with various levels of skill. These larger loops would not provide suitable opportunities for non-motorized uses.

D. Proposed Action and Maximum Trail Development

Both of these alternatives would provide an adequate level of trail opportunities that should meet the needs of the targeted current and future OHV use. The variety, number, lengths, and difficulty levels would result in fewer encounters per outing, higher trail quality, and a higher level of user satisfaction. This would also increase the number of potential trail opportunities for mountain biking recreation by providing more low distance trail opportunities that would be more suitable for this type of recreation.

Range

Affected Environment

Livestock has historically grazed throughout the project area. There are five grazing allotments that the project area would affect that currently allow grazing use. These allotments include: Lake Area, White Rock, Little White Rock, Chimney Rock, and Cattle Camp/Cave Valley. All of these allotments are currently active with livestock being found throughout the project area during the summer months.

Environmental Consequences

B. No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative the project area would continue to see OHV use but to a lesser extent than if an action alternative were implemented. Under this alternative

cattleguards would not be installed in association with the project and user education regarding ranching on public lands would not be implemented or disseminated to the public. Conflicts between grazing permittees and OHV users would continue.

Effects Common to All Action Alternatives –

Implementation of any of the action alternatives would result in a decrease in the amount of available forage based upon the number of miles of new trail construction proposed. The replacement of gates with OHV cattleguards or full size cattleguards would remove the possibility of gates being left open. Increasing levels of OHV use would result in some user conflicts and possible changes in grazing patterns.

C. Minimum Trail Development

The focused nature of this alternative and lower level of new trail construction would result in a higher number of encounters between OHV users and grazing permittees resulting in a higher potential for conflicts. This would also lead to a greater degradation of existing routes utilized by grazing permittees for day-to-day operations again resulting in a higher potential for conflicts.

D. Proposed Action and Maximum Trail Development

This would result in less use on existing routes reducing the number of encounters, reducing the potential for conflicts.

Vegetation

Affected Environment

According to the vegetation gap analysis, derived from satellite imagery and based on the National Vegetation Classification System, the majority of the proposed action falls under the pinyon-juniper woodland classification which is typical for the mid elevation benches of the mountain ranges in the area. The other vegetation classification most affected by the proposed action is montane sagebrush steppe, which most often occurs at higher elevations. Other less common vegetation communities affected by the proposed action include mountain mahogany woodland and shrubland, aspen-mixed conifer forest and woodland complex, subalpine limber-bristlecone pine woodland, montane riparian woodland and shrubland, mesic mixed conifer forest and woodland, big sagebrush shrubland, and xeric mixed sagebrush shrubland.

Environmental Consequences

B. No Action Alternative

OHV use would continue in this area at a lesser extent than with the implementation of any of the action alternatives. Unmanaged use including route proliferation would continue in this area.

Effects Common to All Action Alternatives –

Native shrubs, grasses, and smaller trees would be removed in all action alternatives in direct proportion to the amount of ground disturbance from trail and staging area construction and any road improvements. The disturbance of vegetation in relation to trail and trailhead construction would alter the composition of plant species in these areas.

IV. Cumulative Impacts

According to the BLM handbook *Guidelines for Accessing and Documenting Cumulative Impacts* (1994), the analysis can be focused on those issues and resource values identified during scoping that are of major importance. The issue and resource value of major importance or public concern, which would be analyzed for cumulative impacts to wildlife, wetland/riparian zones, soils, range, recreation, and invasive non-native species.

Cumulative impacts result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts could result from individually minor, but collectively significant actions, taking place over a period of time (Council on Environmental Quality, *Regulations for Implementation of NEPA*, 1508.7).

The cumulative effects study area is the Egan Range and surrounding valleys. A general discussion of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions follows:

Past Actions

This area has been managed for OHV use under an open designation – “open” designations are used for intensive OHV use where there are no compelling resource protection needs, user conflicts, or public safety issues to warrant limiting cross-country travel. Recreation, livestock grazing operations, minerals exploration and extraction have led to the creation of motorized vehicle routes. The growth in population and growth in the use of OHVs for a variety of needs has resulted in the improved motorized access within the planning area.

Livestock grazing, wildlife use, recreation, construction and maintenance of roads, timber harvest, hunting, and mineral exploration have all led to the introduction and spread of noxious and invasive weed species into the project area.

Present Actions

Both the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service are in the process of initiating transportation planning where OHV use would be limited. A “limited” designation is used in order to meet specific resource management objectives.

Recreation for a variety of activities within the study area is growing. This can most likely be attributed to the exponential growth of other areas of Nevada, particularly Clark County as well as ads placed by Nevada Commission on Tourism targeting outdoor recreation in rural Nevada. This has led to an increase in impacts associated with higher levels of recreation use, particularly OHVs. Increased recreation use has led to user conflicts with ranching operations including the harassment of livestock, cutting of fences, and gates being left open.

Livestock grazing, wildlife use, recreation, maintenance of roads, woodcutting, and recreation all contribute to the spread of weed species throughout the study area. A tri-county weed district has been established that is responsible for the mapping and treatment of these plant species and has assisted in reducing the level of new infestations.

Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

OHV use and other recreation would continue in the area and levels of use would increase for all types of recreation. This increase of use may result in additional OHV trail construction and designation. White Pine County is working towards diversifying the local economy and has targeted outdoor recreation as a means of doing this. Local groups are also working towards developing trail related recreation opportunities for different current and future OHV uses within the study area. Through a public lands bill in White Pine County there is a proposal for the Silver State OHV trail which would result in an increase in OHV recreation within the study area. Residential development is expected to continue with more lands being available for development in the future, increasing the level of recreation use and potentially the level of user conflicts. The White Pine County Coordinated Resource Management steering committee is working with a technical review team in the regional area for transportation planning effort. The Ely Field Office is a member of that technical review team and this trail system would be incorporated into that transportation plan.

V. Proposed Mitigation and Monitoring

Mitigation and monitoring measures incorporated into the proposed action are sufficient, based on the analysis of environmental consequences no additional mitigation is proposed.

VI. Consultation, Coordination, and List of Preparers

A. Consultation and Coordination

An initial scoping letter was sent to affected stakeholders including, the grazing permittees within the project area, a property owner within the project area, and the Great Basin Trails Alliance email list.

The following groups and agencies were consulted and/or coordinated with prior to this project being proposed:

- Great Basin Trails Alliance
- White Pine County Commissioners
- Dunes and Trails ATV Club
- Diversified Interagency Recreation Team
- Nevada Division of State Parks
- Nevada Department of Wildlife
- US Forest Service
- Native American Coordination Meeting – February 23, 2005

B. List of Preparers

The following persons participated directly in the preparation of this document:

- Kalem Lenard, Project Coordinator, Co-Author
- Jack Tribble, Recreation, Wilderness, Author
- Mark Henderson, District Archaeology
- Nate Thomas, Archaeology
- Carolyn Sherve-Bybee, Environmental Coordination
- Lori Leshner, Archaeologist Technician
- Steve Abele, Biologist
- Chris Meyer, Supervisory Range Specialist
- Ryan Pitts, Noxious Weed Management
- Elvis Wall, Native American Coordinator

C. Public Involvement

Public involvement in this planning process dates back to 2000 when the Diversified Interagency Recreation Team (D.I.R.T.), comprised of recreation specialists from federal and state agencies along with local partners, began meeting to discuss recreation management in White Pine County through an interagency approach. From these meetings the idea of OHV management based out of the Ward Charcoal Ovens State Park was discussed.

In September 2003 the White Pine County Trails Committee (now the Great Basin Trails Alliance) first began meeting to discuss the development of a trail plan for White Pine County and trail system development. This group met every month with meeting notices published in the Ely Times. Recreation Planners from the Bureau of Land Management were in attendance for most of these meetings along with representatives from other

federal, state, and local agencies. At these meetings the need for OHV management was identified as a priority and areas were discussed for this type of development.

At the urging of this group and other concerned citizens the Bureau of Land Management began to further identify potential areas through the use of a Geographic Information System (GIS) and resource data. From this analysis combined with on the ground reconnaissance, a preliminary project area was identified along with a potential trail system.

A public scoping meeting was held at the BLM on March 30th, 2005 to assist BLM staff in identifying issues and developing alternatives for this project. Letters notifying individuals regarding the meeting and the proposed action were sent to grazing permittees and property owners in the project area. Notice of the meeting was posted in the Ely Times on 3/25/05 and was also posted on their website. The local radio station aired notice of the meeting as a news item on March 28, 29, and 30th at 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, and noon. Notice of the meeting was also sent via email to persons identified as interested in trail issues in White Pine County through the Great Basin Trails Alliance on March 23rd, 2005. Staff from the Nevada Department of Wildlife, Nevada Division of State Parks, Nevada Division of Forestry, and the US Forest Service were included in the list of persons contacted via email. Two White Pine County commissioners were also included on this email list. At the meeting comment forms were handed out. These same comment forms were sent out to an email correspondence database comprised of various people who have expressed interest in trail projects in the area.

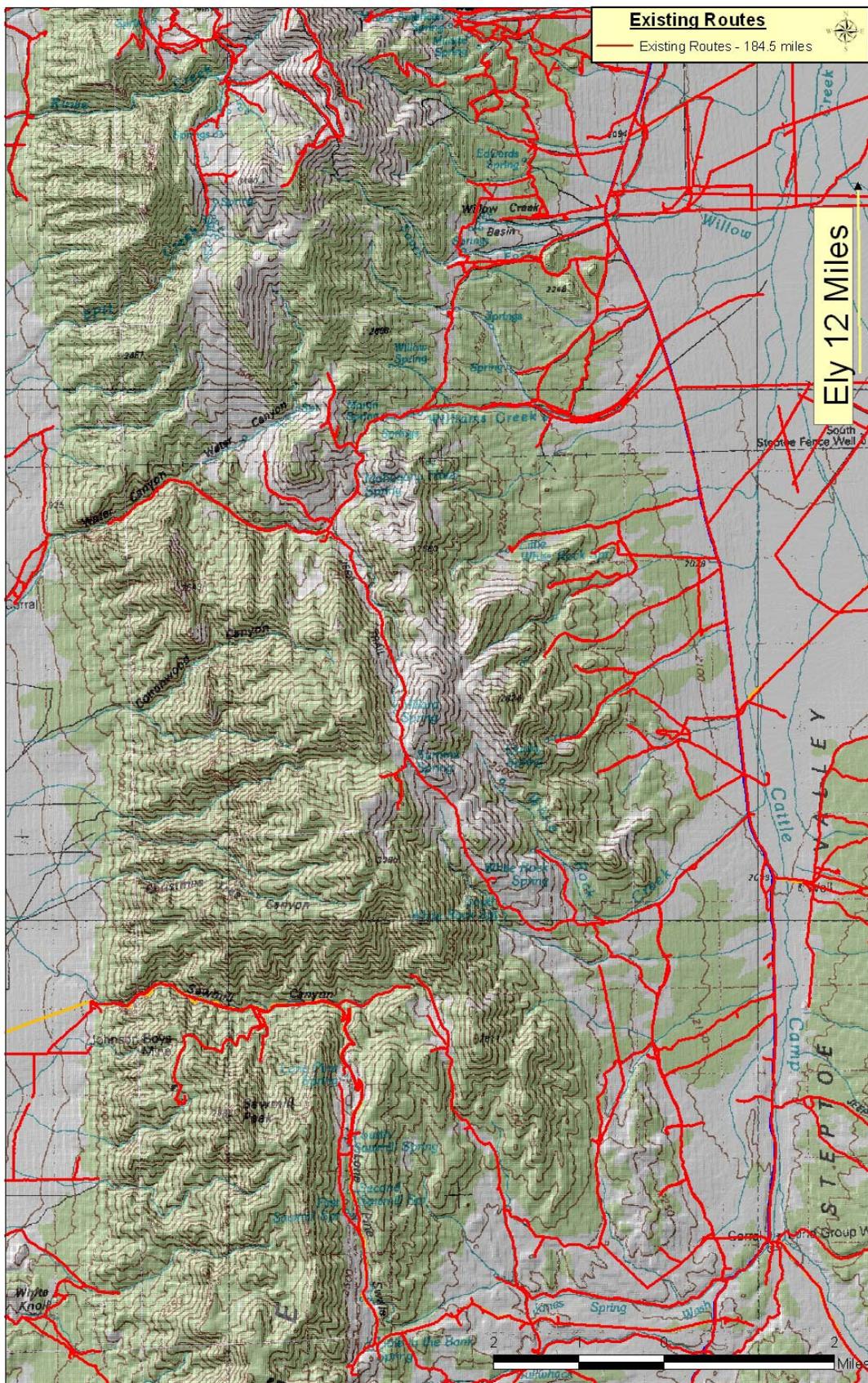
During the course of the planning process, the project was given additional media exposure via a newspaper article in the Ely Times, radio interviews with trail advocates, and articles published in a local quarterly magazine publication. In order to continue public involvement in the planning process an extensive email correspondence database was developed and utilized to disseminate information regarding the project and receive additional input.

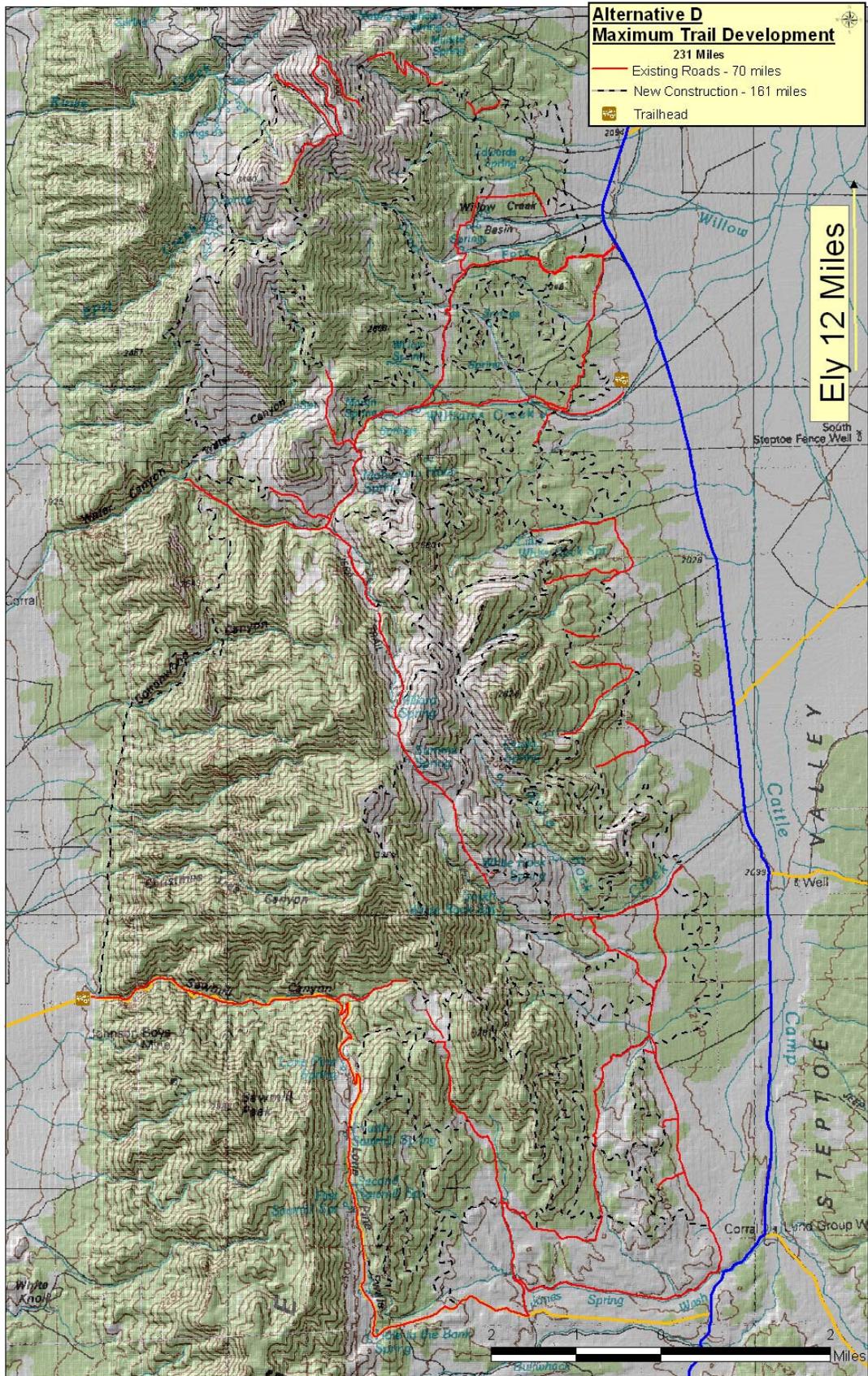
All correspondence relative to this planning process is part of the public record and available for review at the Ely Field Office.

Information gathered as a result of the above mentioned contacts and correspondence was utilized by BLM recreation staff to identify issues and formulate alternatives.

APPENDIX A Maps

These maps are intended to provide representational information only. Detailed maps are available for public review at the Bureau of Land Management, Ely Field Office.





OHV ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES FOR NEVADA PUBLIC LANDS

PREAMBLE

The Nevada Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC), the Sierra Front Northwestern Great Basin RAC and the Mojave-Southern Great Basin RAC, as chartered by the Department of the Interior, have developed Guidelines for the administration of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use on public lands within the State of Nevada. These guidelines are intended to promote cooperation among user groups, to share resources, and to minimize conflicts in accordance with the Nevada Standards for Rangeland Health. While recognizing the legitimacy and necessity of OHV use on public lands, it has become necessary to define guidelines for management of OHVs to insure the protection of land health and the availability of the public lands for all multiple users. These guidelines are to assist land managers in administrative and planning decisions. Administrators can use the guidelines for managing for land health and making decisions with regard to restricting, or not restricting OHV activity. Additionally, administrators can use the educational guidelines as tools to provide training for land managers and to inform the public on OHV use issues and ethics. Planners should use these guidelines in developing timely plans for resources and recreation use, while addressing the increasing demand for OHV use.

ON-THE-GROUND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Encourage OHV use on existing or designated roads and trails, except in closed areas, prior to land use plans being updated and road and trail inventories completed.
- Locate and manage OHV use to conserve soil functionality, vegetative cover, and watershed health. Manage OHV use to minimize the impact on the land, while maintaining OHV access.
- Manage OHV use by type, season, intensity, distribution, and/or duration to minimize the impact on plant and animal habitats. If seasonal closures become appropriate to minimize adverse OHV impact(s) on public lands resources, managers will strive to preserve public access by designating alternative routes.
- Manage OHV activities to conserve watershed and water quality.
- Monitor the impact(s) of OHV activities on all public land, water, air and other resources and uses.
- Maintain an inventory of existing road and trail systems.

- Manage OHV use to preserve cultural, historical, archeological, and paleontological resources.
- Engineer, locate, and relocate roads and trails to accommodate OHV activities while minimizing resource impacts.
- Encourage cooperation in law enforcement among all agencies.
- OHV use pursuant to a permitted activity shall be governed by the terms of the permit.

PLANNING GUIDELINES

- In land use plans or plan amendments, designate areas as open, limited, or closed to OHV use.
- Address OHV management including land use and/or route designations, monitoring and adaptive management strategies, such as applying the Limits of Acceptable Change process, when developing new land use plans or amending existing land use plans. Work closely with local, state, tribal, and other affected parties and other resource users in OHV planning.
- Establish and maintain an inventory of existing routes and trails as part of the land use planning process.
- Provide for other resources and uses in OHV planning. This includes livestock grazing, other recreational uses, archeological sites, wildlife, horses and burros, and mineral extractions and coordinate with other users of public lands.
- Conduct an assessment of current and future OHV demand, and plan for and balance the demand for this use with other multiple uses/users when developing all land use plans.
- Include in land use plans, social/economic effects of OHV use, including special recreation events.
- Integrate concepts of habitat connectivity into OHV planning to minimize habitat fragmentation.
- For addressing/resolving local site-specific OHV issues/concerns, use collaborative planning groups consisting of local representative(s), affected/interested group(s) and agency(s).
- Clearly identify route and area designations.

- Where land health permits develop sustainable OHV use areas to meet current and future demands, especially for urban interface.

EDUCATION GUIDELINES

- Cooperatively develop/improve public outreach programs to promote trail etiquette, environmental ethics, and responsible-use stewardship ethic.
- Promote/expand/disseminate materials from programs such as (but not limited to) “Tread Lightly!” and “Leave No Trace”.
- Provide OHV management education and training for managers, staff, partners and volunteers. Training should focus on state of the art practices and be tailored to meet local needs. Encourage communication between agencies, managers, staff, partners and volunteers to share expertise and effective techniques.
- Encourage the private sector, as well as the public sector, to conduct responsible marketing of activities on public lands while avoiding the promotion of products, behaviors and services that are inconsistent with existing regulations and land use plans.
- Develop communication and environmental education plan(s). Assess all situations where OHV use may require public information and education. Develop materials and programs appropriate to each situation.
- Utilize high use areas and special events to maximize the dissemination of responsible use education materials and concepts to the public.

Glossary

Note: The following terminology is for use with this document.

Access: The physical ability to have legal ingress to and egress from public lands via public roads or on routes having public easements.

Adaptive Management: A process for continually improving management policies and practices by learning from outcomes of operation programs and new scientific information.

Archeology: The reconstruction of past cultures through their material remains and the study of how cultures change over time.

Connectivity: A network of habitat patches linked by areas or corridors of like habitat; it affects how organisms can move through the landscape.

Cultural Resources: The physical remains of human activity (such as artifacts, ruins, burial mounds, petroglyphs) having scientific, prehistoric, or social values.

Designation: The approval of a resource management plan, plan revision, or plan amendment constitutes formal designation of off-highway vehicle use areas.

Designated Roads and Trails: Specific roads and trails identified by the agencies where some type of motorized vehicle use is appropriate and allowed either seasonally or year long.

Erosion: Detachment or movement of soil or rock fragments by water, wind, ice, or gravity. Accelerated erosion is much more rapid than normal, natural, or geologic erosion, and results primarily from the influence of activities of people, animals, or natural catastrophes.

Fragmentation: Process of reducing the size and connectivity of vegetated stands and/or habitat that comprise a rangeland or forest; a measure of connectivity in vegetative and/or habitat conditions across a landscape.

Guidelines: Management tools, methods, and techniques designed to provide activities, experiences, and benefits for the public while maintaining or achieving healthy public lands as defined by the standards. The guidelines contained in this document are directed toward maintaining or achieving public land health.

Habitat: The sum total of environmental conditions of a specific place occupied by a wildlife species.

Indicator: Quantitative measure of an ecosystem element which is used to describe the condition of an ecosystem; changes in indicators over relatively short periods of time are used to measure affects of management.

Land Use Plan: A resource management plan, developed under the provisions of 43 CFR part 1600, or a management framework plan. These plans are developed through public participation in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq) and establish management direction for resource uses of public lands. A set of decisions establish management direction for land within an administrative area, as prescribed under planning provisions of FLPMA, an assimilation of land use plan level decisions developed through the planning process outlined in 43 CFR 1600, regardless of the scale at which the decisions were developed.

Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC): A planning and management framework that requires managers to define desired physical and social conditions and to undertake actions to maintain or achieve these conditions. The focus is shifted from “how much use is too much” to “what are the desired environmental and social conditions desired in an area.” The process is used to determine what physical and social indicators and standards could be used to monitor the change taking place in various recreational settings. It is also used to identify specific management actions targeted at preventing unacceptable social and resource impacts from occurring.

Mechanized Vehicle: Any non-motorized vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on land. An example of a mechanized vehicle is a mountain bike.

Monitoring: An ongoing process of collecting information to evaluate if objectives and anticipated or assumed results of a management plan are being realized, or if implementation is proceeding as planned.

Natural Resources: These include topography (consider slope and drainage patterns), soil, water courses and/or waterbodies, geological formations, vegetation (consider rare, threatened, or endangered species), and fish and wildlife (consider rare, threatened, or endangered species).

Off-Highway Vehicle (Off-Road Vehicle): Any motorized vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain, excluding: (1) any non-amphibious registered motorboat; (2) any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes; (3) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the authorized officer, or otherwise officially approved; (4) vehicles in official use; and (5) any combat or combat support vehicle when used in times of national defense emergencies.

Off-Road Designations:

1. Open area means an area where all types of vehicle use is permitted at all times, anywhere in the area subject to the operating regulations and vehicle standards set

forth in subpart 8341 and 8342 .

2. Limited area means an area restricted at certain times, in certain areas, and/or to certain vehicular use. These restrictions may be of any type, but can generally be accommodated within the following type of categories; number of vehicles, types of vehicles, time of season of vehicles use, permitted or licensed use only, use on existing roads and trails, use on designated roads and trails, and other restrictions.
3. Closed area means an area where off-road vehicle use is prohibited. Use of off-road vehicles in closed areas may be allowed for certain reasons; however, such use shall be made only with the approval of the authorized officer.

Paleontology: The study of fossils; what fossils tell use about the ecologies of the past, about evolution, and about our place, as humans, in the world. Informs us about interrelationship between the biological and geological components of ecosystems over time.

Permit: Authorization in writing by the authorized officer or other person authorized by the United States Government, and is a contract between the permittee and the United States.

Properly Functioning Condition (Riparian): Riparian-wetland areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation, landform, or large woody debris is present to dissipate stream energy associated with high waterflows, thereby reducing erosion and improving water quality; filter sediment, capture bedload, and aid floodplain development; improve floodwater retention and groundwater recharge; develop root masses that stabilize streambanks against cutting action; develop diverse ponding and channel characteristics to provide the habitat and the water depth, duration, and temperature necessary for fish production, waterfowl breeding, and other uses; and support greater biodiversity. The functioning condition of riparian-wetland areas is influenced by geomorphic features, soil, water, and vegetation.

Properly Functioning Condition (Uplands): Uplands are functioning properly when the existing vegetation and ground cover maintain soil conditions capable of sustaining natural biotic communities. The functioning condition of uplands is influenced by land form, soil, water, and vegetation.

Public lands: All lands under the custody and control of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, except Indian lands

Resource Advisory Council (RAC): A citizen-based group of 10 to 15 members chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act and appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to forward advice on public land planning and management issues to the BLM. Council membership reflects a balance of various interests concerned with the management of the public lands and users of the public lands.

Resource Management Plan (RMP): A BLM multiple use planning document, prepared in accordance with Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, that

1. establishes resource conditions goals and objectives to be attained
2. allocates resources and identifies allowable uses
3. identifies land area for limited, restrictive, or exclusive uses, and
4. provides guidance for implementation of the decisions made in the plan.

Riparian Area: An area of land directly influenced by permanent water. It has visible vegetation or physical characteristics reflective of permanent water influence. Lake shores and streambanks are typical areas. Excluded are such sites as ephemeral streams or washes that do not exhibit the presence of vegetation dependent on free water in the soil.

Road: Travel route that has been improved and maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular and continuous use.

Soil Functionality: The maintaining of soil structure and texture characteristics, such as aeration, temperature, moisture, nutrition and the organisms that live in the soil.

Special Recreation Permit: Authorizations which allow for recreational uses of the public lands and related waters. They are issued as a means to control visitor use, protect recreational and natural resources, provide for the health and safety of visitors, and as a mechanism to accommodate commercial recreational use of public lands.

Standard: A description of conditions needed to sustain public land health.

Sustainability: The ability to maintain diversity, productivity, resilience to stress, health, renewability, and yields of desired values, resource uses, products, or services over time in an ecosystem while maintaining its integrity.

Trail: A linear travel corridor for use by many types of activities. In areas other than wilderness study areas, any kind of trail (usually single-tracked) found during an inventory. Jeep trails are extremely rough 2-track roads.

Trend: The direction of change over time, either toward or away from desired management objectives.

Uplands: Land at a higher elevation than the alluvial plain or low stream terrace; all lands outside the riparian-wetland and aquatic zones.

Urban Interface: An area where urban encroachment into adjacent wildland areas is increasing the complexity and magnitude of problems related to all aspects of natural resource management and protection, including increase fire risks, unauthorized use, and littering.

Watershed: The land that drains into a stream. An area of land that contributes runoff to one specific delivery point; large watershed may be composed of several smaller “sub sheds,” each of which contributes runoff to different locations that ultimately combine at a common delivery point.

APPENDIX C - OHV Specialist Report



20923 SE King Hezekiah Way
Bend, Oregon 97702
Phone/FAX 541-382-8319
Date: September 9, 2005

To: Jack Tribble
Bureau of Land Management
Ely Field Office
702 N. Industrial Way
Ely, NV 89301

Re: Proposed Lost Ox OHV Trail System

Dear Jack:

Kalem Lenard invited me here on September 6-8 to review the status of the proposed trail system. I commend his wisdom and foresight in doing that. We spent two days and 100 miles on quads looking at the area and discussing issues, concerns, and opportunities. The country has spectacular beauty and can provide an outstanding OHV recreation opportunity. The area is just awesome, and if it is done right, the project will be very successful. I also commend you and the BLM for being proactive and visionary in the management of OHVs. We came here on Labor Day weekend and stayed in the KOA. I felt like we were at the trailhead of a major OHV trail system because the park was full and most of the rigs had bikes and quads. Where are all of these people riding them? The use is here and it will grow rapidly which will eventually, if not already, lead to resource impacts and user conflicts. I definitely see a need here for a designated, managed trail system. Listed below are my observations:

Trail system size. At 75 miles, the number of miles of proposed trail is inadequate for the type and potential volume of use. This is a destination trail system with riders coming from Las Vegas and Salt Lake City, so we're talking about people camping here for a weekend or longer. So if the average stay is three days and the average ride is 50 miles per day, then we would need a minimum of 150 miles. I would be much more comfortable with 200-250 miles or more to insure that we accommodate future growth in use. We will fail if we don't provide adequate mileage to accommodate the use. A larger trail system also provides us with more management flexibility- we can close a trail or several trails if we have a fire, a washout, or resource issue and still have a viable trail system to accommodate the use.

Trail system design. The proposed design does not offer enough loops. The key to successful OHV management is dispersing the use and the more loops we have, the more

dispersal we have. This is a dispersed recreation activity just like hiking or horseback riding. People want to enjoy a natural experience with their group, but not encounter a whole bunch of other groups. By dispersing the use, we provide a high-quality recreation experience, reduce impacts to the trail, and increase safety.

Trail design. Kalem is young and inexperienced in OHV design which is why I commend him for seeking assistance. The trails to date have been located in compliance with IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association) guidelines, but this is not a mountain bike trail system. We need miles and we need grades that will offer variety and challenge. Drainage is critical, but grades can be bumped up to 20% with pitches of 25- 30% depending on length and soils. I believe Kalem has been incorporating switchbacks and these are not successful in OHV design. They can be expensive to construct, expensive to maintain, they're difficult to negotiate, and most riders don't like them. Climbing turns are the preferred method of changing direction and gaining elevation.

Trail location. Point A to Point B trail location is also not successful nor preferred by the riders. Motorized trails can be and should be located differently than non-motorized trails. With a motor, we enjoy it if we go up, then down, then back up again. This adds to the variety and experience of the trail. We also don't care how long it takes us to get to Point B because what we're looking for is time in the saddle. Another key to successful OHV management is providing that time in the saddle. It may only be ½ mile from Point A to Point B, but we will have a better trail system if we have a mile of trail getting there. It's hard to locate a trail, especially in this rocky country, if you don't know what a Sweco can build. I recommend that Kalem take a field trip to gain experience in trailheads, trail location, trail design, and construction. As a minimum, I think it would be good for him to review some of the flaglines on the proposed Shoshone system.

Roads. As proposed, the trail system utilizes more miles of road than miles of trail and generally, this is not where we should be. Some roads make good trails, but many do not. Roads tend to increase speed which decreases the all-important saddle time and also decreases the recreation experience. In most places where I consult, managers push to utilize as much existing infrastructure as possible and I definitely understand the rationale behind this. However, our goal is to successfully manage OHVs and provide a high-quality experience. Having more trail miles than road miles will help us attain that goal.

Project timeline. Kalem has other projects to work on and other demands on his time. High-quality trail location takes time and my concern is that he doesn't have a large enough time block to devote to this project. I may be wrong here, but that's my impression.

Project cost. I don't believe in inhibiting our design, location, or length due to cost. We need to provide a high-quality trail system to provide for and manage the use, so I believe this objective and the trail experience outweigh the cost. With a Sweco dozer, cost really doesn't become an issue until we get into solid rock, retaining walls, bridges, and switchbacks. My experience has been that getting dollars for construction is easy, it's the maintenance dollars that are hard to get. Let's focus more on quality and less on cost.

The eastern Lost Ox Trailhead. After reviewing the proposed trailhead location, I recommend moving the site slightly to the south where there are trees to provide some shade and wind protection. The new site is adjacent to the Williams Creek Road and I have provided a conceptual design that incorporates day use and a considerable volume of camp use as well as a Learner's Loop and Kiddie Loop. Since this is a destination trail system, most riders will be camping so we need to provide places for groups to "circle the wagons."

The southern trailhead. We discussed at great length and reviewed the site for a southern trailhead. The intent is to provide an access point for Las Vegas visitors, but that site is a long way on gravel road and really not that far from the Lost Ox trailhead. There is better paved access on the Lund side and I recommend developing a trailhead off the Sawmill Canyon road. There are some size issues that need to be looked at and an electric fence that would be nice to move. It would be ideal if we could tie into Lund to provide gas, food, and lodging. This would benefit the trail system and provide an economic benefit to Lund. Sawmill Canyon is spectacular and provides an instant "Wow" factor to the trail system. It will be difficult, but extremely beneficial if we can get a loop to the north along the foothills and up Cottonwood or Waters Canyon to provide a loop out of this trailhead.

Fuel. With the size and remoteness of this trail system, fuel could be an issue. A tie to Lund and Ely would be ideal. Could the KOA, the Trading Post, or the State Park be brought in as partners to provide fuel? The Trading Post would also be a good destination for a buffalo burger lunch.

Charcoal Ovens State Park. I see the State Park as being an integral part of the trail system and we need to work with them to incorporate them as an active partner. They seem to be inviting OHV use with their campground, day use area, ATV trail, and yurt and they are adjacent to our trailhead and a high density of trail loops. Their cooperation would be an added benefit to the trail system. Currently, their campground and day use areas are inadequately designed for RVs and vehicles with trailers, but I think they can be fixed quite easily. For the most part, they did a good job with their ATV trail. It's fun to ride, it meanders, and it flows with the landscape except for the switchbacks which, apparently, are already scheduled for relocation. The yurt idea is wonderful and we may want to look at providing more of these to accommodate ATV touring which is a growing activity. If possible, we need to provide a trail loop back to the State Park day use area and that is reflected on the map overlay.

Comins Lake. Water is always an attraction and destination for any trail system. It would be beneficial to have a designated access to the lake so riders could have lunch by the water. It sounds like there are plans to raise the dam and expand the lake which will make it even more attractive. If they ever develop camping at the lake, then I think it will be critical to have designated OHV access since people will camp there to fish as well as ride.

Deer protection area. It's my understanding that the preferred route for a trail was dropped to avoid an issue for a deer protection area during hunting season. This is really scenic country and we really need another loop, so I recommend building both trails and putting a closure on the one during hunting season. Why inflict a long-term penalty on the trail experience for a short-term problem?

Construction. Finally, let's talk about construction. The agency wants a high-quality trail system and I have used that term repeatedly in this report. We can do a great job of system design and location, yet still not achieve our goal if we have sub-standard construction. The Sweco is an awesome piece of machinery which can increase the flow and the fun factor of the trail system if used properly, but it takes a lot of finesse. The key is having a qualified, experienced operator. There are a lot of operators, but few with finesse and that "seat of the pants" skill to make the machine do what your eye wants it to do. I have had too much experience trying to build trails to my standard with a poor operator- you never get the quality you want and the riders suffer. It will be a challenge, but a necessity, to find a good operator. The best operators are those who are also riders. I would prefer to take a rider and train him to be an operator, than take a non-rider, old-school road crew type cat skinner and teach him how to build a trail.

I would like to thank you and Kalem for making this trip possible. I have enjoyed it and I'm willing to help more in the future. My primary concern is the size of the trail system and I think we need to explore every opportunity to provide more loops and miles. We definitely have the potential here for a first-class trail system that will attract riders from throughout the West. This is the Silver State and you can certainly have a gem of trail system. I believe there is a lot of work yet to do- a lot of coordination and a lot of field work- but we need to do it to get where we want to go. Again, I'll be happy to help in any way. Good luck.

Sincerely,
Dick Dufourd
OHV Trail Consultant
RecConnect, LLC

APPENDIX D – Noxious Weed Assessment

Lost Ox OHV Management Program

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR NOXIOUS WEEDS

On November 9th, 2005 a Noxious Weed Risk Assessment was completed for a OHV Management Program and trail development project located primarily in the Egan Range located south of Ely, White Pine County Nevada.

The project involves approximately 81,000 acres portions of which have been inventoried.

Factor 1 – The likelihood of noxious weed species spreading to the project area

For this project, the factor rates as Moderate (6) at the present time. According to the weed GIS dataset for this area, Whitetop, Bull Thistle, Black Henbane, and Spotted Knapweed occur along existing roads within the project area. Cheatgrass occurs throughout the area.

Factor 1 Rating Description

None (0)	Noxious weed species not located within or adjacent to the project area. Project activity is not likely to resulting in the establishment of noxious weed species in the project area.
Low (1-3)	Noxious weed species present in area <u>adjacent to but not within the project area. Project activities can be implemented and prevent the spread of noxious weeds into the project area.</u>
Moderate (4-7)	Noxious weed species <u>located immediately adjacent to or within the project area. Project activities are likely to result in some areas becoming infested with noxious weed species even when preventative management actions are followed.</u> Control measures are essential to prevent the spread of noxious weeds within the project area.
High (8-10)	Heavy infestations of noxious weeds are located within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Project activities, even with preventative management actions, are likely to result in the establishment and spread of noxious weeds on disturbed sites throughout much of the project area.

Factor 2 – Assesses the consequences of noxious weed establishment in the project area

For this project, the factor rates as moderate (6). Due to increased ground disturbance as a result of trail and trailhead construction along with the increase in OHV use, the likelihood of invasive weed encroachment would increase. Management practices would be followed in order to prevent the spread of noxious species in the Project Area.

Mitigation:

User education would include information regarding the identification of noxious weed species known to occur in the greater area as well as the ecological impacts regarding invasive weed species. A monitoring program would allow for early detection of new infestations. Monitoring results would instigate adaptive management which could include, but is not limited to, any or all of the following: intensive eradication efforts following best management practices, wash stations at trailheads during high use weekends, modification of user education, or the closure or re-routes of trails.

Factor 2 Rating Descriptions

Low (1-3)	No cumulative effects expected.
Moderate (4-7)	Possible adverse effects on sites and possible expansion of infestation within the project area. Cumulative effects on native plant communities are likely, but limited.
High (8-10)	Obvious adverse effects within the project area and probable expansion of noxious weed infestations to areas outside the project area. Adverse cumulative effects on native plant communities are probable.

- **Risk Rating:** The Risk Rating is obtained by multiplying Factor 1 by Factor 2.

For this project, the Risk Rating is moderate: Factor 1 – 6 and Factor 2 – 6. Risk rating $6*6=36$.

Mitigation as described above is expected to control noxious weed populations.

Risk Rating Descriptions

None (0) Proceed as planned.

Low (1-10) Proceed as planned. Initiate control treatment on noxious weed populations that get established in the area.

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Decision Record

Decision: I have reviewed Environmental Assessment (EA) NV-040-05-014, dated February, 2006. I have determined the proposed action is in conformance with the approved Egan Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Rationale:

The proposed project would meet all of the above regulations and policies. The proposed action will implement a sustainable off highway vehicle trail system.

Finding of No Significant Impact for Lost Ox OHV Management Project

Finding of No Significant Impact: I have reviewed Environmental Assessment (EA) NV-040-05-014, dated February, 2006. After consideration of the environmental impacts as described in the EA, and incorporated herein, I have determined that the proposed actions with the standard operating procedures as described in the EA will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required to be prepared. This finding and conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA. I have determined the proposed action is in conformance with the approved Egan RMP.

Rationale:

The issues for this decision were driven by public scoping comments and the need for OHV management.

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable Land Use Plan listed above. The Egan Resource Management Plan states "the remainder of the ...area is designated as 'open' to [off-road vehicle] use" (page 39, paragraph 8.2 (2)).

Follows Resource Advisory Council's "OHV Administration Guidelines for Nevada Public Lands" which provides guidance for On the Ground Management, Planning, and Education Guidelines.

It is also in conformance with the Ely Field Office Recreation Plan adopted in March of 2003 that identifies the need to "properly manage an OHV program", including the development of OHV-use areas including trailheads and public access points.

The proposed action is consistent with the White Pine County Public Land Use Plan which under the heading Recreation, states "dispersed recreational opportunities on public lands shall be encouraged and provided. Opportunities for unstructured recreation

such as...off road vehicles in White Pine County on public lands should continue to be made available” (page 7, Recreation-Policies, 1.).

The proposed action is consistent with the White Pine County Trails plan adopted by White Pine County and the BLM in March of 2004. In the White Pine County trails objectives, Regional Trails including OHV trail systems were identified for needed future developments.

Intensity:

- 1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.
The environmental assessment has considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of the OHV management project. The project will result in enhancements for OHV recreation. There will be beneficial effects in the manner of an overall decrease in dispersed un-managed OHV use and an increase in OHV education focused on sustainable trail use and etiquette. Trails will be constructed to minimize erosion problems, maintenance, and to promote sustainability.
- 2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.
Implementation components of the proposed action will not result in potentially substantial or adverse impacts to public health and safety.
- 3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The OHV management project was developed to have the least amount of impact on the natural environment as possible through sustainable design and re-routing trails to avoid sensitive riparian areas, cultural resources, and critical wildlife habitat.

- 4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.
No- the effects on the quality of human environment are not expected to be likely.
The effect of creating OHV trails in an area where OHV use is high is known to decrease un-managed, dispersed OHV recreation. Creating an OHV area may create conflict between motorized and non-motorized recreationists.
- 5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
There are no effects of the proposed action identified in the EA which are

considered uncertain or involve unknown risks. All proposed trail construction will be done according to the BLM approved (USDA Forest Service/American Motorcycle Association) methods and standards.

- 6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The proposed action does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

- 7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

No significant cumulative impacts have been identified in the EA.

- 8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sited, highways, Structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

No districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places were identified in the project area and EA. The proposed action will not cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.

- 9) The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The EA has identified that no significant or adverse impacts would result to these species from implementing the proposed action.

- 10) Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or Requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

The proposed action will not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Jeffrey A. Weeks
Assistant Field Manager
Non Renewable Resources

Date