



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Ely District Office
HC33 Box 33500 (702 N. Industrial Way)
Ely, Nevada 89301-9408

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office.html

In Reply Refer To:

4100 (NVL01000)

DECISION RECORD

Sierra College Natural History

Museum

Richard Hilton

Department of Geology

5000 Rocklin Road

Rocklin, CA. 95677

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Decision Record

DOI-BLM-NV-L0100-2010-0019-EA

I have reviewed the application, the Environmental Assessment, and have made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Sierra College's proposal for the Paleontology Field School. Based on that review and the record as a whole, I approve the Sierra College's proposal with design features as described in EA (DOI-BLM-NV-L0100-2010-0019). This decision will become effective at the end of the 30-day appeal period described below.

RATIONALE:

- 1) The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan signed in August of 2008. Section 1.4 of the Environmental Assessment documents the conformance review.
- 2) The Proposed Action is consistent with all other federal, state, local, and tribal policies and plans to the maximum extent possible.
- 3) The selected action meets the purpose and need as described in the EA. The BLM's need for the Sierra College Paleontology school project is to respond to the request for permit under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. The BLM's purpose is to manage resources in accordance with the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP 2008).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

Nevada Department of Wildlife

Tribal Coordination Letters were sent out June 10, 2010 for this project notifying the tribes of a 30-day comment period. No comments were received.

APPEALS:

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (Board), U. S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Office of Hearings and Appeals, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error. If an appeal is taken, a notice of appeal must be filed at the Bureau of Land Management at the above address within 30 days of either of receipt of the decision if served a copy of the document, or otherwise within 30 days of the date of the decision. If sent by United States Postal Service, the notice of appeal must be sent to the following address:

Bureau of Land Management
Ely District Office
HC 33 Box 33500
Ely, NV 89301.

The appeal may include a statement of reasons at the time the notice of appeal is filed, or the statement of reasons may be filed within 30 days of filing this appeal. At the same time the original documents are filed with this office, copies of the notice of appeal, statement of reasons, and all supporting documentation also must be sent to each party named in this decision and to the U. S. DOI Solicitor at the following address:

Regional Solicitor, Pacific Southwest Region
U.S. Department of the Interior
2800 Cottage Way, Room E-2753
Sacramento, CA 95825-1890

If a statement of reasons is filed separately from the notice of appeal, it also must be sent to the following location within 30 days after the notice of appeal was filed:

Interior Board of Land Appeals
Office of Hearings and Appeals
4015 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22203

This Decision will remain in effect during the appeal unless a petition for stay is filed. If the appellant wishes to file a petition pursuant to regulations at 43 CFR 4.21 for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that the appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany the notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. If the appellant requests a stay, the appellant has the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Standards for Obtaining a Stay

Except as otherwise provided by law or by other pertinent regulation, a Petition for a Stay of a Decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

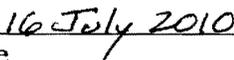
- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

Approved by:



Michael J. Herder
Field Manager
Egan Field Office



Date

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Introduction:

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment (EA) DOI-BLM-NV-L010-2010-0019- EA, for the **Sierra College Paleontology Field School** dated April 2010, taking into consideration the project design specifications. Based on the analysis in the Environmental Assessment, I have determined that the quality of the human environment will not be significantly impacted as a result of the decision. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

I have also considered the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA. The finding is based on the following.

Context:

This document identifies and discloses the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed Paleontological Field School for two separate locations as conducted by Sierra College Department of Geology in a remote location of Eastern Nevada.

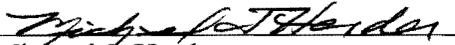
Intensity:

- 1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse:
The EA has analyzed and disclosed both beneficial and adverse impacts of the Proposed Action. These impacts combined do not amount to any significant impacts.
- 2) The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety:
For all of the resources considered in the EA, impacts are anticipated to be negligible or the resource is not present in the proposed project area. The effects of the proposed action to paleontological resources are beneficial under the Ely District Resource Management Plan.
- 3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historical or cultural resources, parks lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas:
There are two locations for this action: 1-near McClure Springs, Nye County and 2-near Pogue's Station, White Pine County. The project does not contain any park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

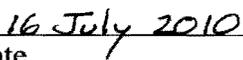
- 4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial:*
Presently there is no known controversy on the effects of the project on the quality of the human environment. Tribal coordination was conducted via mailing dated June 10, 2010. Two letters were received that stated there were no issues or concerns regarding the proposed action.
- 5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks:*
There are no known effects of the proposed action identified in the EA which are considered uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
- 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. The paleontological specific proposed action does not establish any sort of precedent.
- 7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant impacts:*
No significant impacts will occur due to the proposed action.
- 8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources:*
No sites eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places are located in the proposed project site. For all of the resources considered in the EA, impacts are anticipated to be negligible or the resource is not present in the proposed project area.
- 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 proposed action would not adversely affect endangered or threatened species or their habitat. No endangered or threatened species were identified, so no significant impacts are expected.
- 10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment:*
This action is consistent with federal, state, local, and tribal laws and other requirements for the protection of the environment. All agencies were properly notified of the proposed action and given appropriate comment time to respond.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have determined that the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.



Michael J. Herder
Field Manager
Egan Field Office



Date

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

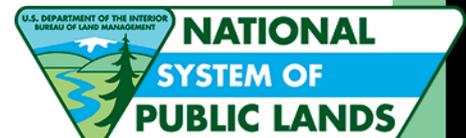
Preliminary Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-NV-L010-2010-0019-EA
April 2010

Sierra College Paleontology Field School

Location: White Pine County and Nye County, Nevada

Sierra College Natural History Museum

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Ely District Office
Phone: (775) 289-1800
Fax: (775) 289-1910



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to analyze Sierra College Museum of Natural History's proposal relative to their field school to be conducted summer of 2010. The EA is a site-specific analysis of potential impacts that could result with the implementation of a proposed action or alternatives to the proposed action. The EA assists the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in project planning and ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and in making a determination as to whether any "significant" impacts could result from the analyzed actions. "Significance" is determined by the consideration of context and intensity of the impacts. If there is a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), the context and intensity criteria are listed with rationale for the determination in the FONSI document.

1.1 Background:

Sierra College Natural History Museum proposes to conduct a field school/excavation for the removal of dinosaur bones and fossilized fish remains. There are two components to this field school which would include excavation at two separate locations. Location 1: T.12 N, R.55E, Sec 9 SW/NE/NE and Location 2: T.15N, R55E, Sec. 17 SW/SW/NE. The project would occur between July 25, 2010 and July 31, 2010.

1.2 Purpose and Need for Action

Sierra College contacted the Ely District to conduct an excavation as a follow up from the 2009 field season. The BLM's need for the Sierra College Paleontology school project is to respond to the request for permit under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. The BLM's purpose is to manage resources in accordance with the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP 2008). The RMP identified management actions for Paleontology as PAL-1, "Allocate and manage all vertebrate sites for Scientific Use," Dinosaur remains within Nevada are rare and this is an opportunity to expand paleontological knowledge within the Ely District. Sierra College Natural History Museum "supports an active paleontology teaching and research program." The BLM will decide whether or not to grant the permit and if so under what terms and conditions.

1.3 Relationship to Planning

1. Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

2. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

3. Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009, Paleontological Resources Preservation (OPLA-PRP) P.L. 111-11, Title VI, Subtitle D, Sections 6301-6312, 123 Stat. 1172, 16 U.S.C. Paleontological resources are protected by Omnibus Public Lands Act, Paleontological Resources Preservation (OPLA-PRP) and all locality information is confidential. Sierra College will obtain the proper excavation and collection permits from the BLM-Nevada State Office, Archeologist.

1.4 Conformance with BLM Land Use Plan(s):

The proposed action is in conformance with the Goals and Objectives of the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (Ely RMP, BLM 2008).

Goal: “Identify and manage at-risk paleontological resources (scientific value); preserve and protect vertebrate fossils through best science methods; and promote public and scientific use of invertebrate and paleobotanical fossils (p. 62).”

In addition management action: PAL-1 management action states “allocate and manage all vertebrate sites for Scientific Use” (pg. 62).

1.5 Scoping and Public Involvement and Issues

Internal scoping was conducted On February 16, 2010 by the Egan Field Office interdisciplinary team to analyze the potential effects of the proposed action. No preliminary issues/concerns were identified because of the minimal ground disturbance associated with the proposed action. Tribal Coordination Letters were sent out June 10, 2010 for this project notifying the tribes of a 30-day comment period.

2.0 ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

2.1 Alternative A - Proposed Action:

Sierra College Natural History Museum proposes to conduct a field school/excavation for the removal of dinosaur bones and fossilized fish remains. The project would occur between July 25, 2010 and July 31, 2010. Approximately eight student participants would camp in a designated location for the six-day school. In addition a portable toilet will be available at the campsite. Also the field school would follow the Best Management Practices (BMP) associated with health and safety as listed in Appendix I.

There are two localities (See map: Figure 1. Location of Proposed Project Areas, White Pine and Nye Counties, Nevada) that will be a part of this action:

Location 1 (McClure Spring) involves the excavation and removal of potential dinosaur remains. Up to twenty square meters will be excavated using hand tools (ie. digging knives, awls, dental tools, brushes and screens). Fossil remains will be documented and removed for further study. All materials utilized during the excavation such as plaster casting will be removed. Soil removed during the excavation process will be stored on tarps and the excavated portions will be backfilled with the stored soil.

Location 2 (Pogue’s Station) involves the removal of a fossilized fish (approximately 1 meter in length) from a rock outcrop. The bedding of rock where the fish lies will need to be broken and that will be accomplished by utilizing a field power saw. The rock fragments containing the fish will be removed using a cargo net for transport from the slope to the vehicle. The vehicle for transporting is located approximately 1/8th mile from the fossil site. After fossil removal, the area will be camouflaged with other adjacent rocks to give a more aesthetic view.

Invasive, Non-Native Species and Noxious Weeds

A Weed Risk Assessment was completed for this project on June 24, 2010. The Best Management Practices listed in the Weed Risk Assessment would be followed when the proposed project occurs to reduce the spread of weeds.

2.2 Alternative B - No Action:

This alternative will be the result of not approving the excavation permit for Sierra College, Department of Earth Science field school.

2.3 Alternatives considered but Eliminated From Detailed Analysis

No other alternatives are needed to address unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.1 Introduction: McClure Spring Location

Location 1: This portion of the project is in Nye County and is contained within Great Basin Xeric Mixed Sagebrush Shrubland. “This ecological system occurs in the Great Basin on dry flats and plains, alluvial fans, rolling hills, rocky hillslopes, saddles and ridges at elevations between 1000 and 2600 m. Sites are dry, often exposed to desiccating winds, with typically shallow, rocky, non-saline soils. Shrublands are dominated by black sagebrush (*Artemisia nova*) (mid and low elevations), little sagebrush (*Artemisia arbuscula ssp. longicaulis*, or *Artemisia arbuscula ssp. longiloba* (higher elevation)) and may be codominated by Wyoming Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata ssp. Wyomingensis*) or yellow rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*). Other shrubs that may be present include shadescale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), *Ephedria* (*Ephedra* spp.), rabbitbrush (*Ericameria* spp.), spiny hopsage (*Grayia spinosa*), Shockley's desert-thorn (*Lycium Shockleyi*), budsage (*Picrothamnus desertorum*), greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), and horsebrush (*Tetradymia* spp.) The herbaceous layer is likely sparse and composed of perennial bunch grasses, such as Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), desert needlegrass (*Achnatherum speciosum*), *Thurber's needlegrass* (*Achnatherum thurberianum*), *squirreltail* (*Elymus elymoides*), or Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*) (<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>).

Location 2: This portion of the project is in White Pine County and is also contained within Great Basin Xeric Mixed Sagebrush Shrubland.

Both locations fall within the Duckwater grazing allotment and the Northern Railroad Valley hydrographic basin.

3.2 Resources/Concerns Considered for Analysis

Proposed Action

The following items have been evaluated for the potential for significant impacts to occur, directly, indirectly, or cumulatively, due to implementation of the proposed action. Consideration of some of these items is to ensure compliance with laws, statutes or Executive Orders that impose certain requirements upon all Federal actions. Other items are relevant to the management of public lands in general and to the Ely BLM in particular.

Resource/ Concern	Issue(s) Analyzed? (Y/N)	Rationale for Dismissal from Detailed Analysis or Issue(s) Requiring Detailed Analysis
Air Resources		
Air Quality*	N	There would be temporary increased dust during excavation but this action will not exceed air quality standards.
Water Resources		
Water Quality, Drinking/Ground*	N	No developed drinking water sources occur within either proposed project area. McClure Spring occurs within one mile of the proposed excavation but will not be impacted.
Soil Resources		
Farmlands, Prime and Unique*	N	No Prime and/or Unique Farm Lands occur in the proposed project area.
Vegetation Resources		
Vegetation	N	Desert sagebrush shrub plant communities are located at both sites. The proposed action would remove up to 20 m ² of vegetation at the McClure Spring site. No vegetation would be removed at the Pogue Station site. There would also be minimal crushing of vegetation by students walking around the sites and camp. Because of the small size and minimal disturbance, native plant communities would be expected to recover and the direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be minimal.
Rangeland Standards and Guidelines*	N	Rangeland Standards and health would not be affected. Minimal levels of ground disturbance activities and the design feature of the proposed action including backfill would not result in disruption of any particular vegetative community.
Wetlands/Riparian Zones*	N	Resource concern not present in proposed project area.
Fish and Wildlife		
Fish and Wildlife	N	Some wildlife species may be present in the Proposed Action area, and may be disturbed by the presence of people, however due to the small area involved and the short duration of the project, the effects on wildlife are expected to be negligible.
Migratory Birds*	N	A raptor nest location is within ¼ mile of the proposed

		project (location 2) but will not be affected because this project will be conducted from July 25, 2010 to July 30, 2010 which is outside of the nesting season for both raptors and other migratory birds.
Special Status Species		
FWS Listed (or proposed for listing) Threatened or Endangered Species or critical habitat	N	No listed or proposed species or designated critical habitat are known from the project area.
Special Status Animal Species, other than those listed or proposed by the FWS as Threatened or Endangered.	N	Resource is not known to be present in the project area.
Special Status Plant Species	N	Resource is not known to be present in the project area.
Wild Horses	N	Both of the Paleontological localities are within the Pancake Herd Management Area. Wild horses would not be affected by the proposed action.
Cultural Resources		
Cultural Resources*	N	Monitoring will be conducted during excavation. All cultural resources will be avoided and therefore there will be no adverse effect to historic properties.
ACEC's designated for Cultural Resources*	N	Resource is not present in the project area.
Heritage Special Designations (Historic Trails, Archaeological Districts and Areas)	N	Resource is not present in the project area.
Paleontological Resources		
Paleontological Resources	N	This proposed project is consistent with the Goals and Objectives of the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (Ely RMP, BLM 2008).
Visual Resources		
Visual Resources	N	<u>Location 1</u> , of the proposed action falls within VRM Class IV and would be consistent with the objective of this class. The

		<p>level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of the viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.</p> <p><u>Location 2</u>, of the proposed action falls within VRM Class III and would also be consistent with the objective of this class. 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.</p>
Lands and Realty/Renewable Energy		
Land Uses	N	There would no modifications to land use authorizations through the proposed action therefore no impacts would occur.
Recreation		
Recreation Uses	N	The project area does not fall within any identified recreational area.
Livestock Grazing		
Grazing Uses/Forage	N	This project falls entirely within the Duckwater grazing allotment. Dispersed cattle grazing is expected to be occurring near the Pogues Station portion of the proposed action, but not near the McClure Spring portion. The project proponents will be informed of expected cattle grazing. There are no effects to Grazing Uses/Forage as a result of the action.
Forest/Woodland Products		
Forest/Woodland Products	N	The project would not affect forest resources because the proposed action would not pose any modifications to this resource.
Geology and Mineral Extraction		
Mineral Resources	N	There would be no modifications to mineral resources through the proposed action therefore no direct or cumulative impacts would occur to minerals.
Watershed		
Soils/Watershed	N	Soils within the excavation area will be stored on tarps and then returned to the disturbance. The project area falls entirely within the Duckwater watershed.
Floodplains*	N	Resource is not present in project area.
Noxious and Invasive Weeds		
Non-Native Invasive and Noxious Species *	N	Located within one mile of the project area are Russian knapweed, whitetop/hoary cress and salt cedar. Due to the minimal amount of disturbance and the design features of the

		proposed action to prevent the introduction and spread of weeds , the direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be minimal.
Special Designations		
Area of Critical Environmental Concern	N	Resource is not present in project area
Wilderness/ WSA*	N	Resource is not present in project area.
Other Concerns		
Human Health and Safety*	N	A Risk Assessment will be completed for this project.
Native American Religious and other Concerns*	N	There no identified tribal traditional religious or cultural sites of importance within the project area. There no identified Indian Fiduciary Trust Assets in the Ely District Office boundaries.
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid*	N	The proposed action would not result in the creation of hazardous wastes or solid.
Public Safety	N	Resource concern is not present.
Environmental Justice*	N	Resource concern is not present. No minority or low-income groups would be disproportionately affected by health or environmental effects.

*Nevada Supplemental Authority

3.3 Environmental Effects

Proposed Action

For all of the resources considered, direct and indirect effects are not anticipated from the proposed action, or the resource is not known or suspected in the proposed project area. Therefore, a more thorough detailed analysis of environmental effects is not warranted.

3.4 No Action

Paleontological studies in the Great Basin would be affected due to the lack of scientific research that would be contributed from this proposed project.

4.0 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

4.1 Past Activities

A Paleontological Field School was conducted in 2009 and involved only surface collection. Both locations are near two-track roads and likely have experienced hunting and OHV use in the general area.

4.2 Present Actions

All allotments are currently being grazed by livestock with sheep trailing through. Hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, and other activities occur on all allotments year round. OHV use may occur on the roads and two-tracks within the project area.

4.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

Livestock grazing is anticipated to continue within the allotments. Dispersed recreational use is anticipated to occur throughout the year.

4.4 Conclusion

No major issues were identified during scoping and no direct or indirect impacts to resources were identified, therefore no cumulative impacts are anticipated and a more detailed analysis is not warranted.

5.0 TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED

5.1 Summary of Public Participation

Nevada Department of Wildlife

Tribal Coordination Letters were sent out June 10, 2010 for this project notifying the tribes of a 30-day comment period.

Tribal Coordination:

Duckwater Shoshone Tribe

Ely Shoshone Tribe

Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Indian Reservation

Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah

Indian Peaks Band

Shivwits Band of Paiutes

Cedar City Band of Paiutes

Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians

Las Vegas Paiute Tribe

Battle Mountain Band Council

Te-Moak Tribe of the Western Shoshone Indians of Nevada

Wells Band Council

South Fork Band Council

Elko Band Council

Kaibab Band of Paiutes Indians

Moapa Band of Paiutes

Yomba Shoshone Tribe

5.2 List of Preparers

BLM:

Mindy Seal

Mark Lowrie

Mark D'Aversa

Ruth Thompson

Marian Lichtler

Dave Davis

Elvis Wall

Vegetation; Noxious and Invasive Non-native Weeds,

Rangeland Resources

Wetlands and Riparian

Wild Horses and Burros

Wildlife, Migratory Birds, Special Status Animals and Plants

Minerals

Tribal Coordination

Gina Jones
Scott Foss
Dave Jacobsen
Erin Rajala
Lisa Gilbert

Environmental Coordinator/LUP
Regional Paleontologist, BLM
Wilderness
Recreation Planner
Project Lead, Archeologist Technician

Appendix I

- Sierra College must notify the BLM authorized Officer of any hazardous or solid waste discoveries within the Ely BLM District. Sierra College is also required to notify the BLM Authorized Officer of any hazardous or solid wastes spills while under permit within the Ely BLM District.
- Sierra College is responsible for clean-up and assumes liability for any and all releases of hazardous substances. Proponent will immediately notify the BLM Authorized Officer and the National Response Center at 687-9485 or 888-331-6337 (NDEP) on all spills/releases in which the reportable quantity for the particular compound is exceeded-40CFR part 302.
- Location sites shall be maintained in a sanitary condition at all times; litter shall be disposed of promptly at an authorized solid waste disposed site. Failure to remove litter may result in assessment of damages by the Authorized Officer, BLM. "Litter" means all discarded matter including but not limited to trash, garbage, refuse, ashes and equipment. Site must be maintained and left in a clean and safe condition.

Sierra College Paleontology

BLM

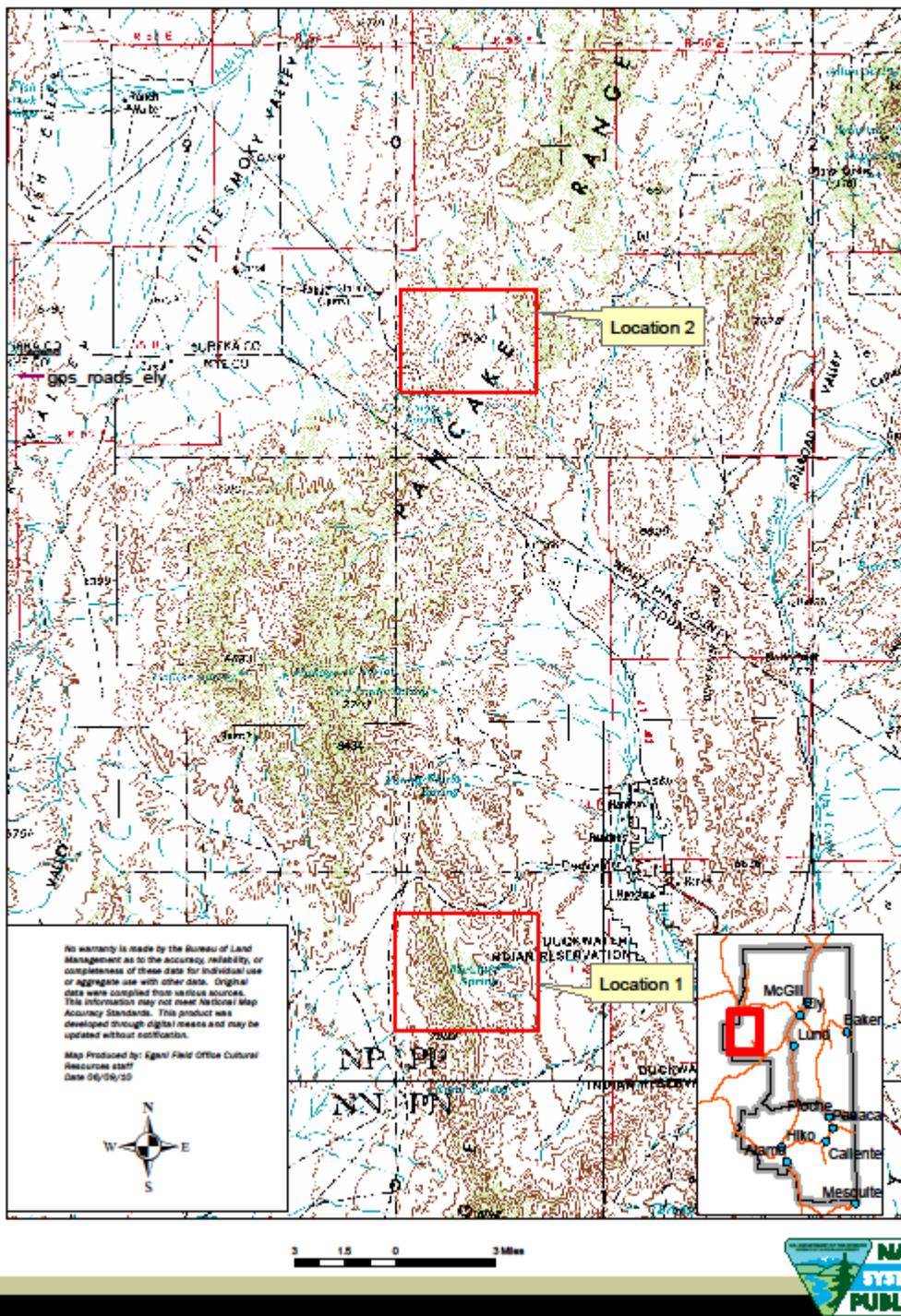


Figure 1. Location of Proposed Project Areas, White Pine and Nye Counties, Nevada.

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR NOXIOUS & INVASIVE WEEDS

Sierra College Paleontology Field School

On June 24, 2010 a Noxious & Invasive Weed Risk Assessment was completed. Sierra College Natural History Museum proposes to conduct a field school/excavation for the removal of dinosaur bones and fossilized fish remains. There are two components to this field school which would include excavation at two separate locations. The project would occur between July 25, 2010 and July 31, 2010. Approximately eight student participants would camp in a designated location for the six-day school. In addition a portable toilet will be available at the campsite.

There are two localities that will be a part of this action:

Location 1 (McClure Spring) involves the excavation and removal of potential dinosaur remains. Up to twenty square meters will be excavated using hand tools (ie. digging knives, awls, dental tools, brushes and screens). Soil removed during the excavation process will be stored on tarps and the excavated portions will be backfilled with the stored soil.

Location 2 (Pogue's Station) involves the removal of a fossilized fish (approximately 1 meter in length) from a rock outcrop. The bedding of rock where the fish lies will need to be broken and that will be accomplished by utilizing a field power saw. After fossil removal, the area will be camouflaged with other adjacent rocks to give a more aesthetic view.

No weed inventories were made in conjunction with this project. Instead, the Ely District weed inventory data was consulted.

<i>Acrotilon repens</i>	Russian knapweed
<i>Lepidium draba</i>	Hoary cress
<i>Tamarix spp.</i>	Salt cedar

The following species are found along roads or drainages leading to the project area:

<i>Acrotilon repens</i>	Russian knapweed
<i>Lepidium draba</i>	Hoary cress
<i>Lepidium latifolium</i>	Tall whitetop
<i>Tamarix spp.</i>	Salt cedar

The project area was last inventoried for noxious and invasive weeds in 2005. While not officially documented the following non-native invasive weeds probably occur in or around the area: cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), bur buttercup ([*Ceratocephala testiculata*](#)), field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*), horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), and Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*).

Factor 1 assesses the likelihood of noxious/invasive weed species spreading to the project area.

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

For this project, the factor rates as Low (2) at the present time. There are noxious weeds present at both sites. The disturbance at each site is less than 20 square meters. The use of hand tools and maintaining the soil will help prevent new infestations.

Factor 2 assesses the consequences of noxious/invasive weed establishment in the project area.

Low to Nonexistent (1-3)	None. No cumulative effects expected.
Moderate (4-7)	Possible adverse effects on site 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/invasive weed infestations to areas outside the project area. Adverse cumulative effects on native plant communities are probable.

This project rates as Low (2) at the present time. Weeds already exist at each site and are commonly found within the watershed. No cumulative effects are anticipated from the project.

The Risk Rating is obtained by multiplying Factor 1 by Factor 2.

None (0)	Proceed as planned.
Low (1-10)	Proceed as planned. Initiate control treatment on noxious/invasive weed populations that get established in the area.
Moderate (11-49)	Develop preventative management measures for the proposed project to reduce the risk of introduction of spread of noxious/invasive weeds into the area. Preventative management measures should include modifying the project to include seeding the area to occupy disturbed sites with desirable species. Monitor the area for at least 3 consecutive years and provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.
High (50-100)	Project must be modified to reduce risk level through preventative management measures, including seeding with desirable species to occupy disturbed site and controlling existing infestations of noxious/invasive weeds prior to project activity. Project must provide at least 5 consecutive years of monitoring. Projects must also provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.

For this project, the Risk Rating is Low (4). This indicates that the project can proceed as planned. The following measures are Best Management Practices to follow as part of the design features of the project.

- Prior to entering public lands, the contractor, operator, or permit holder will provide information and training regarding noxious weed management and identification to all

personnel who will be affiliated with the implementation and maintenance phases of the project. The importance of preventing the spread of weeds to uninfested areas and importance of controlling existing populations of weeds will be explained.

- To eliminate the transport of vehicle-borne weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes all vehicles and heavy equipment used for the completion, maintenance, inspection, or monitoring of ground disturbing activities; or for authorized off-road driving will be free of soil and debris capable of transporting weed propagules. All such vehicles and equipment will be cleaned with power or high pressure equipment prior to entering or leaving the work site or project area. Cleaning efforts will concentrate on tracks, feet and tires, and on the undercarriage. Special emphasis will be applied to axels, frames, cross members, motor mounts, on and underneath steps, running boards, and front bumper/brush guard assemblies. Vehicle cabs will be swept out and refuse will be disposed of in waste receptacles. Cleaning sites will be recorded using global positioning systems or other mutually acceptable equipment and provided to the District Office Weed Coordinator or designated contact person.
- Removal and disturbance of vegetation would be kept to a minimum through construction site management (e.g. using previously disturbed areas and existing easements, limiting equipment/materials storage and staging area sites, etc.)

Reviewed by: /s/Mindy Seal

Mindy Seal
Natural Resource Specialist

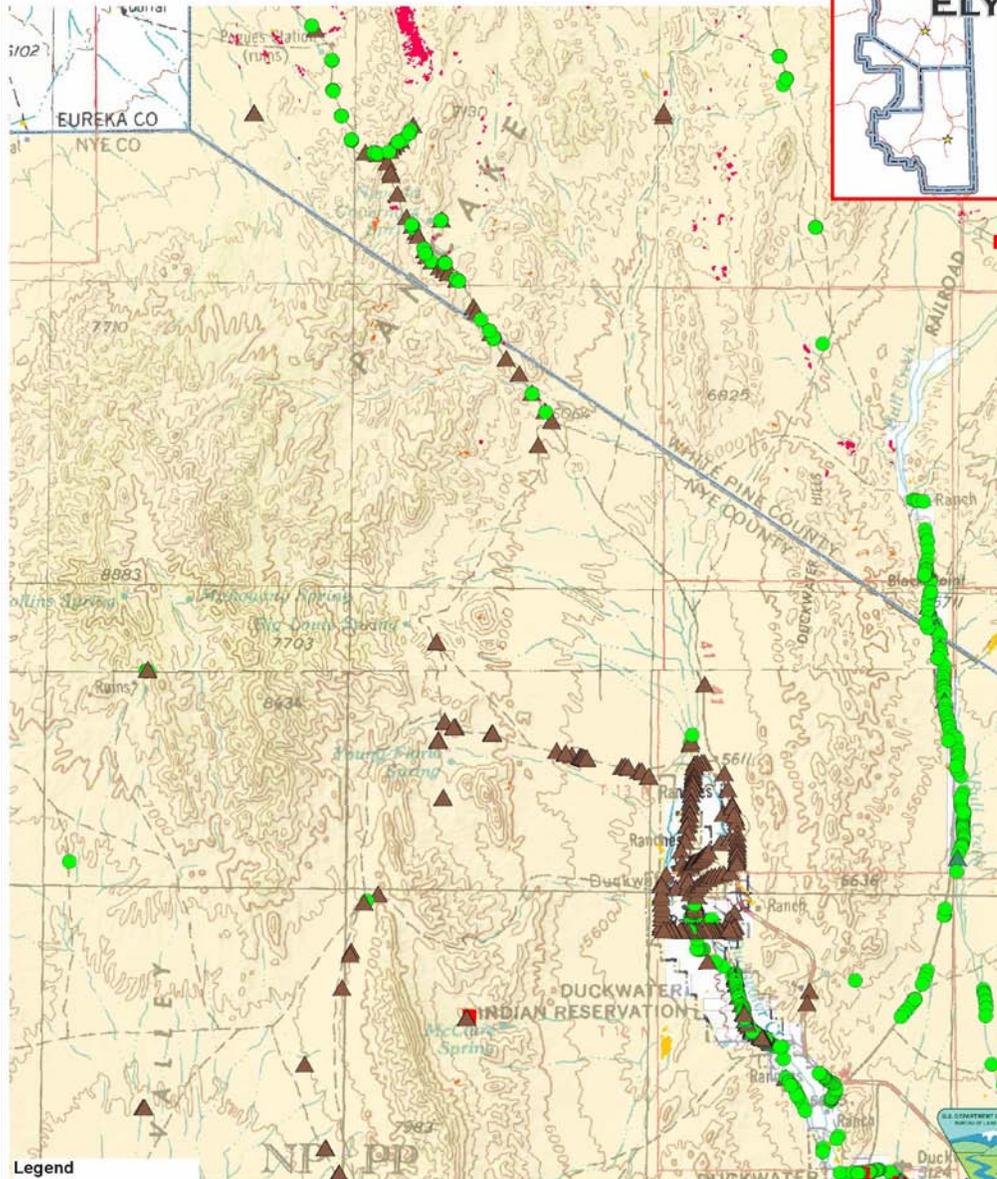
06/24/2010

Date

SIERRA COLLEGE PALEONTOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL

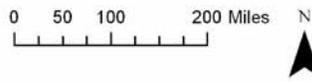


BLM



Legend

- NAME**
- ★ BLM Office
 - NDOT_Highways
 - EYDO Counties
 - EYDO Boundary



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

Map Produced by: EYDO Weed Staff
6/24/2010

Ely District Office

