



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Egan Field 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:
3600 (NVL0100)
N-87338

Dear Interested Party:

David Gibson is proposing to expand an existing gravel pit that is currently authorized for 5 acres of ground disturbance. The gravel pit is located approximately 10 miles South of Lund, White Pine County (see map attachment). Operations would consist of normal gravel pit equipment including screens, conveyors, loaders, dozers, and trucks. This expansion would increase the authorized ground disturbance to 15 acres

Legal Location: T. 10 N., R. 62 E. Section 19 NW Quarter

The BLM has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential effects from this ground disturbing activity. This EA can be found at http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office/blm_programs/planning/eydo_nepa_documentation.html and hard copies are available at the BLM Ely District Office. Public comments are always greatly appreciated and are an important step in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Comments on the proposed action and environmental analysis should be sent to the Egan Field Office, attn: Miles Kreidler at the above address, by FAX at (775) 289-1910, or by e-mail at Miles_Kreidler@blm.gov.

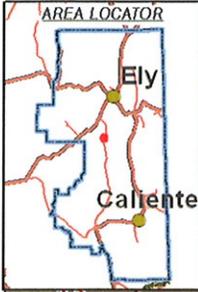
Also please note, before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment –including your personal identifying information –may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Please submit any comments by June 22, 2011. Thank you for your interest in Public Lands.

Sincerely,

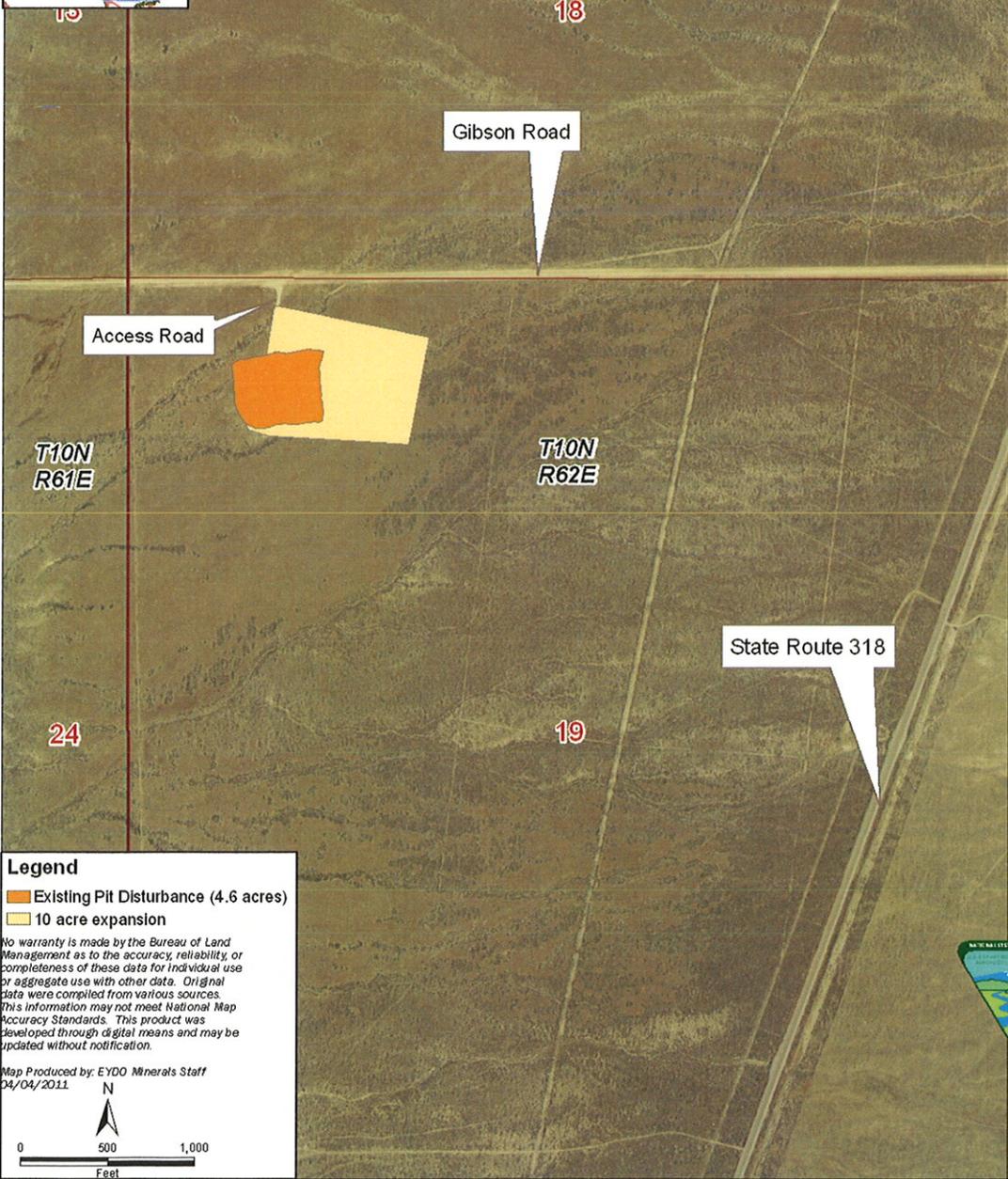
Gary W. Medlyn
Field Manager
Egan Field Office

Attachment: map



GIBSON ROAD GRAVEL PIT (NVN 087338)

BLM



Ely District Office



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

Preliminary Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-NV-L010-2011-0019-EA
May, 2011

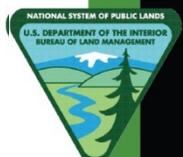
GIBSON ROAD GRAVEL PIT EXPANSION
NVN – 087338

White River Valley
White Pine County, Nevada

Applicant:
David Gibson
P.O. Box 203
Lund, NV 89317

Ely District Office
Ely, Nevada
Phone: (775) 289-1800
Fax: (775) 289-1910

Preliminary EA (04/20/11)



Gibson Road Gravel Pit Expansion

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to analyze David Gibson's proposal relative to the expansion of his existing gravel operation. The proposal is located in White River Valley of White Pine County, Nevada in Township 10N, Range 63E sec. 19 (see Figure 1, Appendix A).

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 (per 40 CFR 1508.27) could result from the analyzed actions.

This document is tiered to, and incorporates by reference, the *Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement* (RMP/EIS) released in November 2007. Should a determination be made that implementation of the proposed or alternative actions would not result in "significant environmental impacts" or "significant environmental impacts beyond those already disclosed in the existing NEPA document", a FONSI will be prepared to document that determination.

1.1 Background:

The proponent currently operates a gravel pit within a five acre portion of the proposed project area that was authorized under a categorical exclusion in 2006. The project location is shown on Figure 1 in Appendix A. Projected demand requires an expansion up to 15 acres of total disturbance. Currently there are 4.6 acres of disturbance and an addition of 10.4 acres would fulfill the 15-acre demand (Figure 2 in Appendix A). Up to 200,000 cubic yards of gravel would be removed from the pit area. Present operating methods would continue: excavating, screening, and stockpiling gravel using dozers, front end loaders, screens, conveyors, and trucks.

1.2 Purpose of the Proposed Action

The BLM's purpose in considering approval of the application for the proposed gravel pit expansion is to provide legitimate use of the public lands to the proponent. Legitimate uses are those that are authorized under the Federal Land Management Policy Act (FLPMA) of 1976 or other Public Land Acts and prevent undue and unnecessary degradation.

The proponent's objective is to continue to supply gravel products for customers in this portion of White River Valley and also provide gravel for construction needs for the ON Line Transmission Line Project.

The justification for the project is that no other gravel sources other than NDOT pits are currently authorized for gravel sales in this portion of White River Valley.

1.3 Need for the Proposed Action:

The BLM needs to consider approval of the application for the gravel pit expansion to respond to its mandate under FLPMA to manage the public lands for multiple uses.

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) (P.92):

Goal: Allow development of mineral materials in a manner that will prevent unnecessary or undue degradation, meet public demand, and minimize adverse impacts to other resource values.

Objective: To provide for the responsible development of mineral resources to meet local, regional, and national needs, while providing for the protection of other resources and uses.

The proposed action is also in conformance with the following program-specific management decisions (p. 102):

MIN-17: Open to mineral materials – Allow disposal of mineral materials on approximately 9.9 million acres of federal mineral estate, subject to best management practices.

MIN-18: Space mineral material sites appropriately to accommodate public and private needs while preserving environmental qualities.

In addition, review of management decisions for other resources and concerns that would possibly be impacted by the project was conducted, and it was determined that approval of the proposed action is in conformance with the Ely RMP.

1.5 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or other Plans:

The proposed action is consistent with the White Pine County Public Lands Policy Plan (2007, p. 23).

Policy 7-1: Encourage the careful development and production of White Pine County's mineral resources while recognizing the need to conserve other environmental resources.

1.6 Scoping and Public Involvement:

BLM resource specialists scoped the proposed action internally on February 28, 2011. Resource concerns identified were Vegetation, Visual Resource Management, and Soils. Concerns have been addressed in Chapters 3 and 4 below. A public scoping period began on March 25, 2011, and ended on April 8, 2011. Western Watersheds Project commented on the proposed action. Responses to comments can be found in the administrative record and are incorporated into the sections below.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING PROPOSED ACTION

2.1 Introduction:

The previous chapter presented the purpose and need for the proposed project, as well as the relevant issues, i.e., those elements that could be affected by the implementation of the proposed project. No alternatives are needed to address unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. The potential environmental impacts or consequences resulting from the implementation of the proposed action are analyzed in Chapters 3 and 4 for each of the identified issues.

2.2 Proposed Action:

Introduction:

Operations at the Gibson Road Gravel Pit are approaching the five-acre surface disturbance threshold authorized under the current contract, N 87338, dated Nov 12, 2010. A Categorical Exclusion, CX number NV-040-06-011, was approved for the initial operation on February 21, 2006. Production from the existing operation, through December, 2010, has been approximately 14,000 cubic yards with a total disturbance of 4.6 acres. The expansion to 15 acres would provide for the total needed production of as much as 200,000 cubic yards of pit run gravel: 150,000 cubic yards for the ON Line Transmission project and 50,000 cubic yards for local use.

The Best Management Practices shown in Appendix B would be followed, as applicable, as part of the proposed action.

Location:

The gravel pit is located ten miles south of Lund, White Pine Co., NV, and one mile west of SR 318. Township: 10 North, Range: 62 East, section 19 NW

Operation:

Operations would remain the same as those for the current operation and use the same access road. Gravel would be excavated and stockpiled using dozers and front-end loaders, then screened and conveyed to sized stockpiles. Stockpiles would be maintained at a minimal height and contoured to mimic the characteristic landscape, to minimize visibility. Stockpiled material would be loaded onto highway-legal trucks to be hauled to various project sites in the White River Valley area.

Operations would be subject to an Air Pollution Control Permit issued by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection. Water for dust control would be obtained from a private source at Gibson Ranch.

Disturbance:

The final pit, existing plus proposed, would measure approximately 1000' L x 500' W x 12' D (see figure 2 in Appendix A). The 500' long existing access road would be widened to approximately 30 feet and re-sloped. Topsoil would be stockpiled around the pit approximately 30 feet wide.

Acres of Disturbance:

Existing Pit	4.6
Existing Access Road	0.3
Proposed Pit Expansion	7.0
Proposed Access Rd Expansion	0.1
Topsoil stockpiles	1.6
Reserve Capacity	1.4
Total Disturbance	15.0

Weed Prevention:

The operator would be instructed to follow the standard weed prevention measures. The operator would wash his equipment, and that of any third party trucks and equipment, prior to entering the project area. Weed prevention measures are included in the Weed Risk Assessment (Appendix C).

Reclamation:

Interim Reclamation:

As pit expansion begins, all available topsoil, approximately 12 inches deep at the current pit, would be stockpiled along the north and south sides of the new pit perimeter and seeded with an interim seed mixture authorized by the BLM Egan Field Office. Mined out pit walls would be sloped to a 3:1 grade, covered with a portion of the stockpiled topsoil, and seeded with the same seed mixture.

Final Reclamation:

All supplies, equipment, and trash would be removed. Any remaining stockpiles would be flattened. The remaining un-reclaimed pit walls would be re-graded to 3:1. All disturbed areas would then be re-covered with the remaining stockpiled topsoil. All disturbed ground within the project area, including those previously seeded with the interim seed mixture would be scarified and seeded with a final seed mix authorized by the BLM Egan Field Office.

Monitoring:

The reclaimed area would be monitored for re-vegetative success as defined in the BMPs and noxious weeds for a minimum of 2-3 grow seasons. The proponent would be responsible for the revegetation success and noxious weed control.

2.3 No Action Alternative:

The No Action alternative would deny the proposed application. Under the No Action, present operations would continue under the present permit. Excavation activities would continue to the five acre surface disturbance limit and as deep as 20 feet in the deepest part.

2.4 Alternatives Considered, but Eliminated from Further Analysis

A deeper pit was considered as an alternative to reduce surface disturbance, but was eliminated. A larger disturbed area is preferred over a deeper gravel pit alternative because a deeper pit would require taller, steeper, and more hazardous pit walls. The deeper pit would not produce enough gravel for the need for the action.

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

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter presents the existing environment (i.e., the physical, biological, social, and economic values and resources) of the impact area, the issues analyzed, the impacts to the analyzed resources, and proposed mitigation that could be applied that would reduce those impacts.

Potential impacts to the following resources concerns were evaluated in accordance with criteria listed above to determine if detailed analysis was required. 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 District BLM in particular. The location of Wilderness and important wildlife resources are shown on the attached resource map (Figure 3 in Appendix A).

The following table documents the issues evaluation or rationale for dismissal from analysis:

Resource/Concern	Issue? (Y/N)	Rationale for Dismissal from Analysis or Issue(s) Requiring Detailed Analysis
Air Quality*	N	Dust suppression measures designed to minimize dust production are a part of the proposed action. An Air Pollution Control Permit issued by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection would be obtained by the proponent. No further analysis required.
Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)*	N	Resource not present in project area.
Cultural Resources*	N	A Section 106 Class III cultural inventory was completed on March 16, 2011. An isolated find was located and is considered categorically not eligible to the National Register. Therefore, there will be a No Adverse Effect. No further analysis required.
Forest Health*	N	Resource not present in project area.
Rangeland Health*	N	The project area occurs in Wyoming sagebrush shrub lands. The design features of the proposed

		action, including reseeding disturbed areas and controlling weeds, would result in no impacts to rangeland health. No further analysis required.
Migratory Birds*	N	If surface disturbance occurs between April 15 th and July 15 th , then a nesting bird survey would be conducted within one week before disturbance to locate nests. Nests will be avoided by a buffer of from 100 to 200 feet, depending on the species, until the nestlings have fledged. No further analysis required.
Native American Religious and other Concerns*	N	The BLM sent out Native American Tribes consultation letters on March 23, 2011. No concerns were identified.
FWS Listed or proposed for listing Threatened or Endangered Species or critical habitat*	N	Resource not known to be present in project area.
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid*	N	Solid and hazardous wastes and hazardous materials would be handled according to state and federal regulations and the Best Management Practices (Appendix B).
Water Quality, Surface/Ground*	N	The nearest surface water is White River, 5 miles west. There will be no water well drilling or discharge to ground water. Equipment would be cleaned off site, before entering the project area. No further analysis required.
Environmental Justice*	N	Project area is in a remote portion of White Pine County, approximately 10 miles from the nearest community of Lund. No minority or low-income groups would be disproportionately affected by health or environmental effects by the proposed action. No further analysis required.
Floodplains*	N	Project analysis area is not included on White Pine County flood maps. Resource not present in the analysis area.
Prime and unique farmlands*	N	No unique farmlands exist in the State of Nevada. No prime farmlands occur in the project analysis area.
Wetlands/Riparian Zones*	N	Resource not present in the analysis area.
Non-native Invasive and Noxious Species*	N	No noxious weeds have been identified within the project area. A Weed Risk Assessment determined a moderate risk rating. The design features of the proposed action including weed prevention and treatment of any newly established noxious weeds would minimize the impacts of the project. No further analysis required.

Special Status animal Species, other than those listed or proposed by the FWS as Threatened or Endangered.	N	Resource is not present in the project area. Based on the absence of quality pygmy rabbit (<i>Brachylagus idahoensis</i>) habitat and pygmy rabbit sign, the proposed action is unlikely to affect pygmy rabbits and their habitat, or contribute to the listing of this species as Threatened or Endangered. The nearest sage grouse (<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>) lek is approximately 4 miles from the project area. No further analysis required.
Special Status plant Species, other than those listed or proposed by the FWS as Threatened or Endangered.	N	A pre-application survey was completed for <i>Crypthantha Welshii</i> and none were found. There are no known locations of any other Special Status plant Species in the area. No further analysis required.
Wilderness/WSA*	N	The nearest Wilderness is the South Egan Wilderness, approximately 2 miles east of the project area. No further analysis required.
Wild Horses	N	The project is not within a HMA. The potential affects to stray horses would be minimal. All BMPs in Appendix B would be followed. No additional analysis is necessary
Fish and Wildlife	N	The project is not within a sensitive or crucial area for fish and wildlife. Deer and antelope occasionally graze in the area. A number of species of predators, small mammals, reptiles and birds are also to be found within the project area. Mitigation in the proposed action will minimize affects on wildlife. No further analysis required.
Soils Resources	Y	Analyzed further in EA.
Visual Resources Management	Y	Analyzed further in EA.
Lands and Realty	N	A power line, a fiber optic line, and county road right of way border the project area. There would be no modifications to these land use authorizations through the proposed action, therefore no impacts would occur. No further analysis required.
Recreation	N	Recreation within the area is dispersed and low. The proposed project would not involve access restrictions to the general area, which would allow recreational activities to continue in the area. Recreational pursuits would be prohibited within the 15-acre area during the operational life of the pit. No further analysis required.
Paleontological Resources	N	Currently there are no identified paleontological

		resources identified within the Area of Project Affects.
Human Health and Safety*	N	Operations will have negligible effects on safety to the public by following the Best Management Practices and existing regulations. No further analysis required.
Water Resources (Water Rights)	N	No surface water resources occur in the analysis area. No permitted or pending water rights from surface or groundwater sources occur in the analysis area. No further analysis required.
Mineral Resources	N	Only common gravel occurs in or near the project area. Oil and Gas lease NVN-075078 covers the project area, but no lease activities have been proposed. Operations would remove as much as 200,000 cubic yards of gravel within a region of virtually unlimited supply.
Vegetative Resources	Y	Analyzed further in EA.

*Nevada Supplemental Authority

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

4.1 General Setting

The project area is located in White River Valley between the South Egan Range, on the east and the White Pine Range, on the West (Figure 1 in Appendix A). The South Egan Wilderness covers much of the South Egan Range east of SR 318, a major north-south highway. The nearest population center is the community of Lund, approximately 10 miles north of the project area. The project lies 40 miles south of Ely and 200 miles north of Las Vegas.

At an elevation of approximately 5,500 feet, annual precipitation averages approximately 8"-12" per year. Vegetation consists of a Wyoming sagebrush community which supports deer, elk, antelope, and other wildlife. Local agriculture and grazing activities are widespread throughout the Valley.

The existing gravel operation of the project area is located on the eastern edge of the wildcat oil well location of County Line Unit #1. This well was drilled, plugged, and abandoned by Standard Oil Co. of California in 1957.

4.2 Visual Resources Management

4.2.1 Affected Environment

The proposed expansion area, immediately adjacent to the existing approved gravel pit, is located within VRM Class III lands.

The Class III VRM objective 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 landscape. Changes caused by management activities may be evident and begin to attract attention, but these changes should remain subordinate to the existing landscape.

Visual resources are identified through the Visual Resource Management (VRM) inventory. This inventory consists of a scenic quality evaluation, sensitivity level analysis and a delineation of distance zones. Based on these factors, BLM-administered lands are placed into four visual resource inventory classes: VRM Class I, II, III, and IV. Class I and II are the most valued, Class III represents a moderate value and Class IV is of the least value. VRM classes serve two purposes: (1) as an inventory tool that portrays the relative value of visual resources in the area, and (2) as a management tool that provides and objective for managing visual resources.

4.2.2 Environmental Effects

The existing gravel pit already attracts attention to the casual observer travelling on Hwy. 6, and is evident. The proposed expansion would increase the visual contrasts within the area by increasing the size of the gravel pit. The removal of desert vegetation and exposure of the lighter soils would create a moderate to strong visual contrast with the surrounding vegetation, plus creating a demarcation between the two. Continued disturbance to the flat valley bottom would create a moderate visual contrast with the surrounding landscape forms.

Upon completion of reclamation activities, visual resources would be improved greatly. Reclamation would be designed to restore the characteristic line and color elements. Areas where reclamation is not complete or successful would continue to contrast with visual resources in the area.

4.2.3 No action alternative

Current disturbance would continue to create a moderate visual contrast with the surrounding landscape forms. Upon completion of reclamation of the current pit, visual resources would be improved greatly.

4.3 Vegetative Resources

4.3.1 Affected Environment

Vegetation at the site is comprised of Wyoming sagebrush, (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *wyomingensis*), Budsage (*Artemisia spinescens*), Shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), Indian Ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), and Bottlebrush Squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*). Halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*) and Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) are scattered within the project area as well.

4.3.2 Environmental Effects

Fifteen acres of vegetation would be removed as the gravel pit moves within the project area. As the pit area moves, areas of previous disturbance would be reclaimed. It is

expected that grasses and forbs would re-establish first followed by shrubs. Invasive species such as Halogeton and Cheatgrass could slow or inhibit native plants re-establishment in the reclaimed areas.

The mitigation measures of the proposed action are sufficient to minimize impacts to vegetation. There would be a loss of 15 acres of vegetation. Upon completion of reclamation, vegetation would be re-established, and over several years, gradually blend into the existing surrounding vegetation. Impacts to vegetation would be minimal.

4.3.3 No action alternative

Five acres of vegetation would be disturbed and reclaimed under the existing authorization. No vegetation would be disturbed beyond the currently permitted gravel pit.

4.4 Soil Resources

4.4.1 Affected Environment

Approximately 12” of topsoil overlay the valley alluvium in the vicinity of the project area. The undisturbed soil supports a Wyoming sagebrush vegetative community as discussed in section 4.3. The surface slopes to the west at a three percent grade. In the project area, intermittent washes and rivulets are less than a few inches deep. There are no major drainages that cross the project area.

4.4.2 Environmental Effects

A total of 15 acres of this topsoil would be stripped and stockpiled during operations, then replaced and reseeded during reclamation activities. Handling of topsoil disrupts its physical and organic characteristics which would degrade its productivity. Stockpiles are subject to wind and rain erosion, which over several years would reduce the amount available for reclamation.

The mitigation measures of the proposed action would minimize impacts to soils. Segregation of topsoil and interim seeding of the stockpiles would help preserve organic viability of the topsoil. Interim revegetation would lessen the susceptibility to erosion. Interim reclamation of the mined out areas would allow early replacement of portions of topsoil in these areas.

4.4.3 No action alternative

Five acres of topsoil would be disturbed and reclaimed under the existing authorization. No topsoil would be disturbed beyond the currently permitted gravel pit.

5.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

5.1 Introduction

As required under NEPA and the regulations implementing NEPA, this section analyzes potential cumulative impacts from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future

actions combined with the Proposed Action within the area analyzed for impacts in Chapter 4 specific to the resources for which cumulative impacts may be anticipated. A cumulative impact is defined as “the impact which results from the incremental impact of the action, decision, or project when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time” (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.7).

5.2 Past Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

Impacts to visual and vegetative resources from the proposed action have been analyzed in Section 4. Other Past Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions may also affect visual and vegetative resources. The area of cumulative effects is the northern portion of White River Valley, from Sunnyside to Preston: Townships 7 North to 12 North, Ranges 60 East to 62 East; an area of 648 square miles.

Past, present, and future actions consist of mineral material operations, wildcat oil well drilling, agriculture, grazing, and fire. In addition, the On Line Transmission Line construction has been recently authorized. All of the authorized surface disturbing activities are subject to best management practices and reclamation procedures as part of the permit approval.

Mineral material operations, as shown in the following table, consist of two Community Pits for gravel in the Preston-Lund area, four State mineral materials rights of way (MM ROW) for highway construction and maintenance, and one gravel sales permit. Six additional pits have been closed.

Authorized Mineral Material Sites between Preston and Sunnyside

Type	Operator	Acres	T	R	sec	Location
Community Pit	BLM	40	12N	62E	17	Preston
MM ROW	NDOT	120	12N	62E	17	Preston
Community Pit	BLM	5	12N	62E	34	Lund
MM ROW	NDOT	40	11N	62E	16	SR 318
MM ROW	NDOT	40	10N	62E	08	SR 318
Negotiated Sale	David Gibson	5	10N	62E	19	County Road
MM ROW	NDOT	61	07N	62E	21	SR 318
Total Acres		311				

Twenty six wildcat oil wells have been drilled within the area of cumulative effects since 1958. Typical surface disturbance for a well plus its access road is approximately five acres, or 130 acres cumulative surface disturbance. As additional intermittent drilling is expected to continue at a rate of approximately one well per year, five acres of new permitted disturbance would occur annually.

5.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis of Vegetative, Soil, and Visual Resources

The *Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement*, has analyzed the cumulative effects for Vegetation - section 4.28.5, Soils - section 4.28.4, and Visual Resources - section 4.28.11. The analysis for Vegetation has determined that “The primary past actions that have affected vegetation are historic mining activities and other human-caused surface disturbances, wildland fires and fire suppression, and historic grazing practices. Surface disturbances have affected only a small percentage of the total area within the planning area. Past grazing practices (including use by livestock and wild horses) and fire suppression, however, have been major contributors to current deteriorated vegetation conditions throughout the planning area.” Similar conclusions have been reached for the effects from soils and visual resources. Best management and reclamation procedures for surface disturbing activities would minimize impacts to these resources.

The 15 acres of disturbance of the proposed action would have a negligible cumulative effect, both short-term and long-term, to visual resources.

The impacts of the proposed expansion of the existing gravel pit from five to 15 acres is minor compared to the 311 acres of mineral material disturbance plus the 130 acres of oil well disturbance. Compared to the entire area of cumulative effects, subject to grazing practices and fire suppression, the impacts would be minimal.

The On Line Project transmission line would obtain most of its gravel for the portion of its needs in the area of cumulative effects from the proposed pit expansion. Cumulative impacts for this project have been analyzed in the “Final Environmental Impact Statement for the ON Line Project in section 5.7, Vegetation, Including Noxious and Non-native, Invasive Weeds and Special Status Plants, and section 5.5, Soils.

The 15 acres of disturbance of the proposed action would have a negligible cumulative effect, both short-term and long-term, to vegetative, and soil, and visual resources. No further analysis of cumulative impacts is needed for this proposed action.

6.0 PUBLIC AND TRIBAL CONSULTATION

6.1 Tribes Consulted

Tribal consultation letters were sent to the following contact at each Native American Tribe on March 23, 2011. No concerns were expressed during the 30 day comment period after that date.

Virginia Sanchez; *Duckwater Shoshone Tribe*
 Sim Malotte; *South Fork Band Council*
 Lucille Campa; *Las Vegas Paiute Tribe*
 Michael Price; *Battle Mountain Band Council*
 James Birchum; *Yomba Shoshone Tribe*
 Bryon Cassadore; *Te-Moak Tribes of the Western Shoshone Indians of Nevada*
 Gerald Temoak; *Elko Band Council*
 Paula Salazar; *Wells Band Council*

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Rupert Steele; *Confederate Tribes of the Goshute Indian Reservation*
 Alvin S. Marques; *Ely Shoshone Tribe*
 William Anderson; *Moapa Band of Paiutes*

6.2 Summary of Public Participation

A public comment period will be held once all BLM specialists have reviewed and completed the preliminary EA.

6.3 List of Preparers

6.3.1 BLM Preparers:

Miles Kreidler	Project Lead, Plan Review, Minerals Specialist
Gina Jones	NEPA Coordination
Lisa Gilbert	Cultural Resources
Mindy Seal	Noxious and Invasive, Non-native Weed Species, Vegetation
Erin Rajala	Recreation, VRM, ACEC/Special Designation
Elvis Wall	Native American Religious Concerns
Marian Lichtler	Wildlife, Special Status Species, Migratory Birds
Mark D' Aversa	Air, Soils, Riparian/Wetlands, Water Quality
Dave Jacobson	Wilderness
Stephanie Trujillo	Lands and Realty
Melanie Peterson	Hazardous Materials
Dave Davis	Geology, Minerals Program Lead
Ruth Thompson	Wild Horse and Burros
Scott Standfill	Rangeland Health

6.3.2 Non-BLM Preparers

Bill Wilson Geo, LLC	Consulting Geologist	EA Preparation
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7.0 REFERENCES, GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

7.1 References Cited

Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan, August 2008

Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume I & II, November 2007

7.2 Acronyms

BLM-Bureau of Land Management
CFR-Code of Federal Regulations
DR-Decision Record
EA-Environmental Assessment
EIS-Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA-Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FONSI-Finding of No Significant Impact
IM-Instructional Memorandum

Preliminary EA (04/20/11)

NEPA-National Environmental Policy Act
RFFS-Reasonably Foreseeable Future Action
RMP-Resource Management Plan

APPENDIX A: MAPS

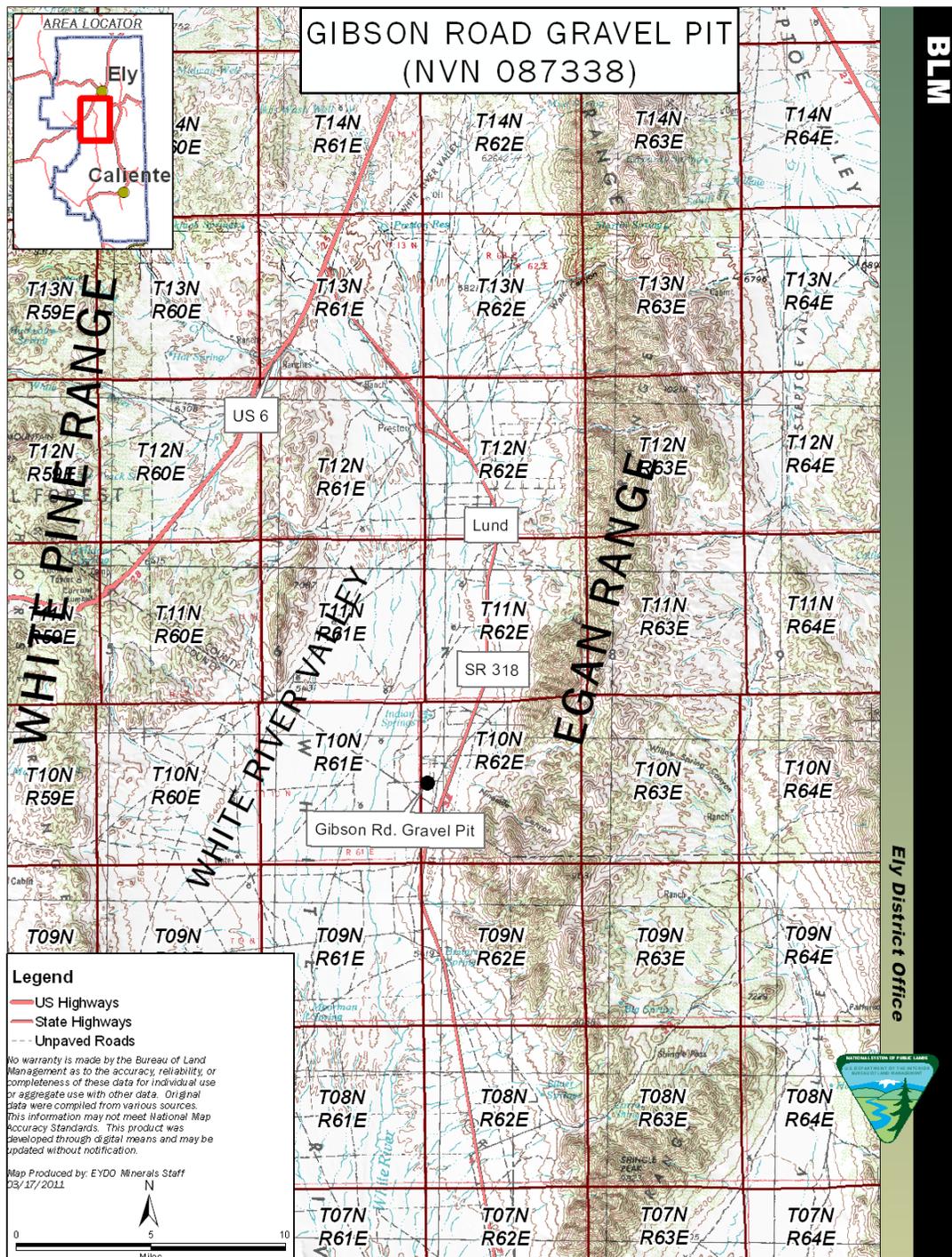


Figure 1: Proposed Pit Location

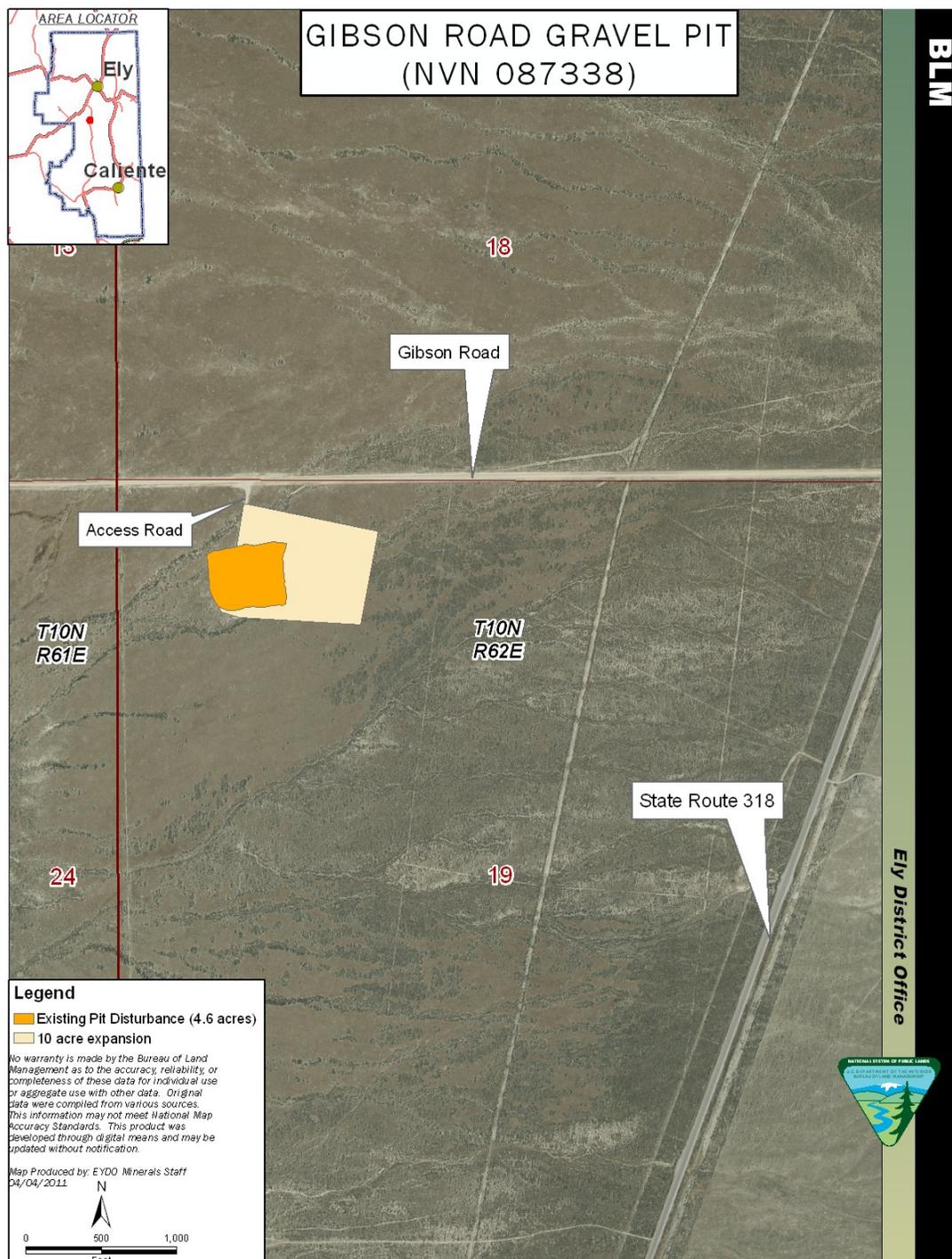


Figure 2: Proposed Pit Expansion

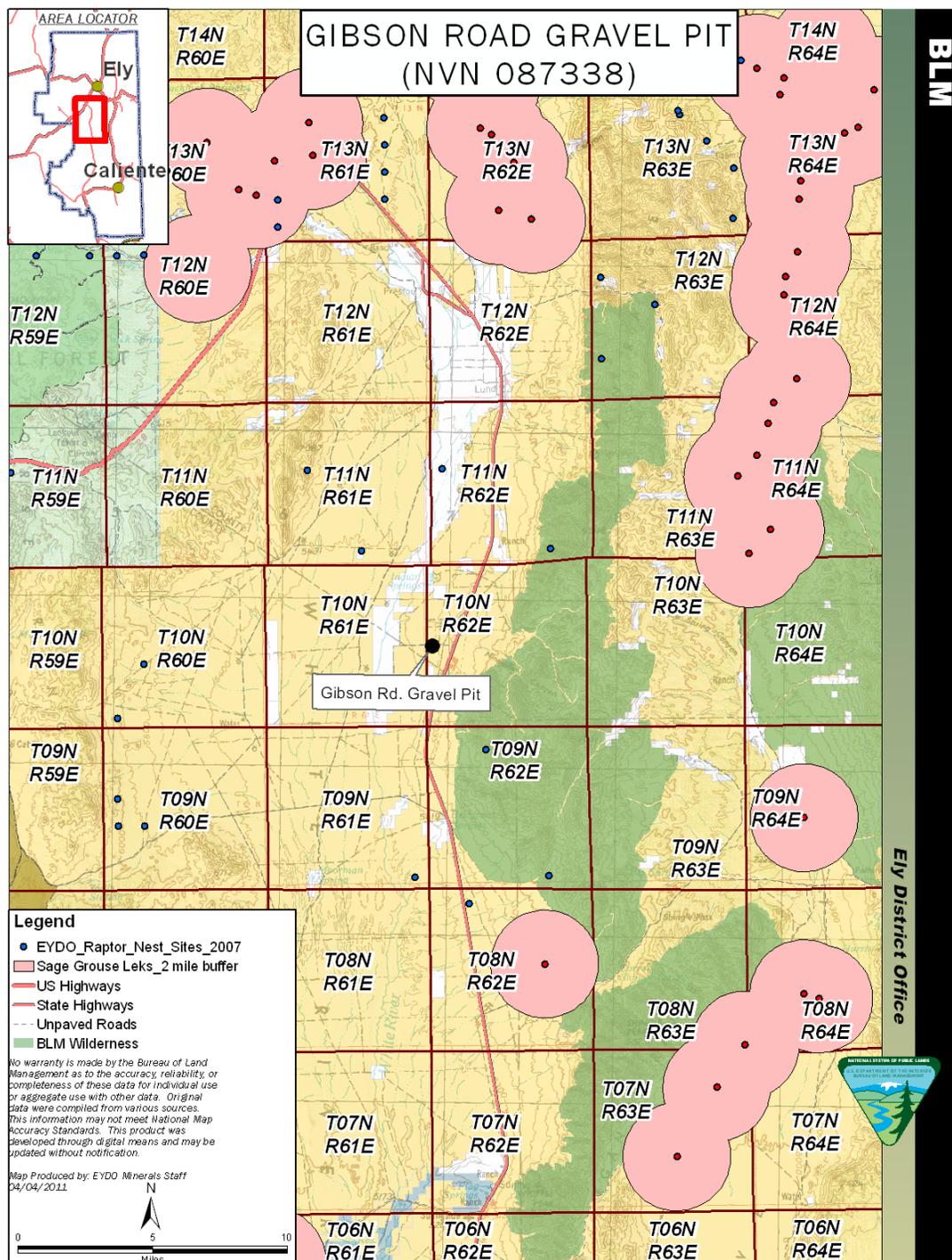


Figure 3: Resource Concerns

APPENDIX B: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

For Mineral Material Extraction in the Ely District

General and Administrative

1. Any change or amendment to your minerals operation must be brought to the attention of the Ely Field Office Manager or an authorized officer prior to implementation of the change on the ground.
2. All survey monuments, claim markers, witness corners, reference monuments, bearing trees, etc., must be protected against destruction, obliteration or damage. When operations are concluded, the operator will remove all survey markers, stakes, flagging, etc., for which the operator has no further need.
3. Removal or alteration of existing improvements (fences, cattle guards, etc.) is not allowed without prior approval of the Authorized Officer. Existing improvements will be maintained in a serviceable and safe condition. Upon completion of operations, any authorized facility alterations will be restored to the specifications of the authorized officer.
4. All trash, garbage, debris, and foreign matter must be removed and properly disposed. Site must be maintained and left in a clean and safe condition. Burning will not be allowed at the site.

Cultural Resources

5. Cultural resource inventories will be conducted on all proposed areas of potential surface disturbing impacts, including appropriate buffer zones, prior to authorization of the mineral operations. Inventories will be completed by BLM or BLM-approved cultural resource permit holders.
6. All decisions issued by the Ely Field Office will have a Needs Assessment completed in accordance with the Nevada BLM and SHPO Protocol.
7. Documentation (photos, drawings, etc.) will be collected on all sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. This will allow tracking of human and natural caused deterioration.
8. If cultural resources (historic or archaeological materials) are discovered during construction, the operator is to immediately stop work protect such materials, and contact the Authorized Officer. Within five working days, the Authorized Officer will inform the operator as to:

- a. The appropriate treatment measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not feasible);
 - b. A timeframe for the Authorized Officer to complete an expedited review and necessary consultation;
 - c. The operator's responsibility for treatment costs; and
 - d. Technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of the treatment. Upon verification from the Authorized Officer that the required treatment has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.
9. All identified cultural resources will be avoided by project related activities per the Nevada BLM standards for cultural resources. If avoidance is not feasible, mineral activities must cease until mitigating measures or treatments are developed and implemented and Section 106 consultation is completed. Archaeological monitors may be required in special cases.
10. The operator is responsible for informing all persons associated with the project that knowingly disturbing cultural resources (historic or archaeological) or collecting artifacts is illegal.

Noxious Weeds

11. A noxious weed survey will be completed prior to any earth disturbing activity including cross-country travel. Noxious or invasive weeds that may be located on the site will be managed according to methods to be approved by the Authorized Officer. Should chemical methods be approved, the lessee must submit a Pesticide Use Proposal to the Authorized Officer 60 days prior to the planned application date. A Pesticide Application Report must be submitted to the Authorized Officer by the end of each fiscal year following chemical application.
12. 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; for emergency fire suppression; 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. Vehicles used for emergency fire suppression will be cleaned as a part of check-in and demobilization procedures. Cleaning efforts will concentrate on tracks, feet or tires, and on the undercarriage. Special emphasis will be applied to axles, 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 GPS or other mutually acceptable equipment and provided to the BLM Weed Coordinator or designated contact person.
13. Prior to the entry of vehicles and equipment to a project area, areas of concern will be identified and flagged in the field by a weed scientist or qualified biologist. The flagging will alert personnel or participants to avoid areas of concern.
 14. 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 the importance of controlling existing populations of weeds will be explained.
 15. To eliminate the transport of soil-borne noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes, infested soils or materials will not be moved and redistributed on weed-free or relatively weed-free areas. In areas where infestations are identified or noted and infested soils, rock, or overburden must be moved, these materials will be salvaged and stockpiled adjacent to the area from which they were stripped. Appropriate measures will be taken to minimize wind and water erosion of these stockpiles. During reclamation, the materials will be returned to the area from which they were stripped.
 16. Prior to project approval, a site specific weed survey will occur and a Weed Risk Assessment will be completed. Monitoring will be conducted for a period no shorter than the life of the permit or until bond release and monitoring reports will be provided to the BLM. If the spread of noxious weeds is noted, appropriate weed control procedures will be determined in consultation with BLM personnel and will be in compliance with the appropriate BLM Handbook sections and applicable laws and regulations. All weed control efforts on BLM lands will be in compliance with BLM Handbook H-9011, H-9011-1 Chemical Pest Control, H-9014 Use of Biological Control Agents of Pests on Public Lands, and H-9015 Integrated Pest Management. Submission of Pesticide Use Proposals (PUPs) and Pesticide Application Records (PARs) will be required.
 17. All vehicles and heavy equipment used for the completion, maintenance, inspection, or monitoring of ground disturbing activities; for emergency fire suppression; or for authorized off-road driving that are used to drive through, mow, harvest, scrape, or otherwise contact plant species listed on the Nevada

- Noxious Weed list or specifically identified by the Ely Field Office will be cleaned prior to continued use in weed free areas.
18. For mineral activity, retain bonds for weed control until the site is returned to desired vegetative conditions.
 19. In areas of known noxious weed infestations, monitoring of noxious weeds will be conducted on an annual basis. Monitoring will be conducted until project release. If the spread of noxious weeds is noted, the infested areas will be further evaluated to determine the appropriate remedial action and appropriate treatment. Appropriate weed control procedures, including target species, timing of control, and method of control, will be determined in consultation with BLM personnel.
 20. No noxious weeds will be allowed on the site for reclamation release. Any noxious weeds that become established will be controlled.

Soils and Vegetation

21. Existing access must be used whenever possible. Off-road vehicular travel shall be held to an absolute minimum necessary to complete operations. Additional roads, if needed, will be kept to an absolute minimum and the location of routes must be approved by the Authorized Officer prior to construction.
22. All vegetative clearing will be held to the minimum necessary to accommodate the planned operation.
23. During periods of adverse conditions affecting soil moisture caused by climatic factors such as thawing, heavy rains, snow, flooding, or drought, all activities off existing maintained roads that create excessive surface rutting may be suspended. When adverse conditions exist, the operator will contact the Authorized Officer for an evaluation and decision based on soil types, soil moisture, slope, vegetation, and cover.
24. Lands containing unstable/highly erodible soils may require additional protective measures such as restrictions on surface entry during periods of excessive runoff, avoidance of selected areas, and special reclamation techniques.

Hazardous Materials

25. No oil or lubricants will be drained onto the ground surface. Any spills less than 25 gallons will be immediately cleaned up; spills over 25 gallons will be reported to the Authorized Officer and NDEP.
26. All construction, operation, and maintenance activities will comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations regarding the use of hazardous substances and the protection of air and water quality.

Fire

27. The operator will make every effort to prevent, control, or suppress any fire in the operating area. The operator may be required to have fire-fighting equipment available on-site while operations are in progress, depending on hazards inherent in the type of operation and fire hazard levels. Reports of uncontrolled fires will be relayed immediately to the Ely Field Office Manager or Authorized Officer. The BLM Fire Dispatch telephone number is (775) 289-1925 or 1-800-633-6092. After working hours call 911 or the White Pine County Sheriff's office at (775) 289-8801, the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office at (775) 962-5151, or the Nye county Sheriff's Office at (775) 482-8101

Wildlife and Livestock

28. Under no circumstances will wild horses, burros, wildlife, or livestock be willfully harassed. When traveling roads, all livestock gates will be closed after use.
29. To protect wildlife and wild horses, perimeter fences will be flagged every 16 feet with white flagging. The flagging should be at least one inch wide and with at least twelve inches hanging free from the top wire of the fence. Fences will also avoid obvious horse migration routes (deep trails, stud piles) if at all possible.
30. If the project involves heavy or sustained traffic, road signs for safety and protection of wild horses and wildlife will be required.
31. Any new disturbance commencing between April 15 and July 15 must first be surveyed for nesting migratory birds. If nests are found, the project may be moved or delayed until July 15.

Reclamation

32. To provide for effective rehabilitation of the disturbed area, all available growth medium, as practical, will be removed and stockpiled. Any trees removed will be separated from soils and stockpiled separately.
33. Topsoil stockpiles and road berms, if scheduled to be left in place over the growing season, will be seeded with an approved site-specific interim seed mix to reduce erosion, preserve the biological flora and fauna, and prevent the establishment of noxious weeds and other undesirable plant species.
34. The operator shall reclaim the disturbed area concurrently or at the earliest feasible time by recontouring to conform to pre-existing topography (including filling of trenches), to the extent possible, followed by redistribution of stockpiled topsoil over the reclaimed area. Compacted areas will be ripped to a depth of

- 12 inches unless in solid rock. Ripped areas may need further work to break up large clods and produce a fine-grained seed bed.
35. Site preparation for reclamation may include contour furrowing, terracing, and reduction of steep cut and fill slopes, and the installation of water bars, etc.
 36. Reseeding may be required, in which case a site-specific seed mixture will be recommended by the operator and approved by the Authorized Officer. Seeding is recommended only between October 1 and March 15 for the northern part of the District, and November 1 through March 1 for the southern part of the District.
 37. Reclamation will normally be accomplished with native seeds only. These will be representative of the indigenous species present in the adjacent habitat. Rationale for potential seeding with selected non-natives must be documented. Possible exceptions could include use of non-natives for a temporary cover crop to out-complete weeds. Where large acreages are burned by the fires and seeding is required for erosion control, all native species can be cost prohibitive and/or unavailable. In all cases, seed mixes will be approved by the Authorized Officer prior to planting.
 38. All interim and final seed mixes, hay, straw, and hay/straw products must be tested for noxious weeds and certified free of plant species listed on the Nevada Noxious Weed list.
 39. The Ely Field Office Manager or the Authorized Officer will be notified within 5 days of completion of reclamation work so that timely compliance inspections can be completed.
 40. The area is considered to be satisfactorily reclaimed when all disturbed areas have been recontoured to blend with the natural topography, erosion has been stabilized, and an acceptable vegetative cover has been established. The Nevada Guidelines for Successful Revegetation for the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S.D.A Forest Service (or most current revision or replacement of this document) will be used to determine if revegetation is successful.

APPENDIX C: RISK ASSESSMENT FOR NOXIOUS & INVASIVE WEEDS

Gibson Gravel Pit Expansion White Pine County, Nevada

On April 7, 2011 a Noxious & Invasive Weed Risk Assessment was completed for the Gibson Gravel Pit Expansion. Operations at the Gibson Road Gravel Pit are approaching the 5 acre threshold authorized under the current contract, N 87338, dated Nov 12, 2010. Projected gravel needs for the On Line transmission line construction, future oil well road and pad construction, and local needs, would require as much as 15 acres of disturbance. As much as 100,000 cubic yards of pit run gravel would be produced over two to five years as required by construction schedules. Operations would remain the same as those for the current operation and use the same access road. Gravel would be excavated and stockpiled using dozers and front end loaders, then screened and conveyed to sized stockpiles. Stockpiled material would be loaded onto highway-legal trucks to be hauled to various project sites in the White River Valley area.

No field weed surveys were completed for this project. Instead the Ely District weed inventory data was consulted. There are currently no mapped weed infestations within the project area. The following species are found along roads or drainages leading to the project:

<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	bull thistle
<i>Tamarix spp.</i>	salt cedar
<i>Lepidium latifolium</i>	tall whitetop

There is also cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*) in the project area and scattered along roads in the area. The project area was last inventoried for noxious weeds in 2010.

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 Moderate (5) at the present time. Salt cedar is not likely to spread into the project area. Tall whitetop is found near the pit and could easily

spread into the project area. With the equipment being used for this project and the weed species in the area it is likely that part of the project area could become infested.

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 High (8) at the present time. The project area is currently considered to be weed free so any new infestations would have adverse cumulative effects on the nearby native plant community. Also, this gravel source would be used along a the OnLine power line corridor and if weeds established within the gravel pit, they could be spread along the corridor. The other concern is that weeds could be transported by equipment from outside the watershed and spread in the pit as well as along the corridor. The weed risk assessment for the corridor addressed these concerns and has specific stipulations regarding these concerns including using gravel that has been inspected and is noxious weed free.

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 Moderate (40). This indicates that the project can proceed as planned as long as the following measures are followed:

- 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.
- Prior to project approval a site-specific weed survey will occur. Monitoring will be conducted for a period no shorter than the life of the permit or until bond release and monitoring reports will be provided to the Ely District Office. If the presence and/or spread of noxious weeds is noted, appropriated weed control procedures will be determined in consultation with Ely District Office personnel and will be in compliance

with the appropriate BLM Handbook sections and applicable laws and regulations. All weed control efforts on BLM-administered lands will be in compliance with BLM Handbook H-9011, H-9011-1 Chemical Pest Control, H-9014 Use of Biological Control Agents of Pests on Public Lands, and H-9015 Integrated Pest Management. Submission of Pesticide Use Proposals and Pesticide Application Records will be required.

- 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 Weed Coordinator or designated contact person.
- To eliminate the introduction of noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes all interim and final seed mixes, hay, straw, hay/straw, or other organic products used for reclamation or stabilization activities, feed, bedding will be certified free of plant species listed on the Nevada noxious weed list or specifically identified by the BLM Ely District Office.
- 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.)
- Reclamation would normally be accomplished with native seeds only. These would be representative of the indigenous species present in the adjacent habitat. Rationale for potential seeding with selected nonnative species would be documented. Possible exceptions would include use of non-native species for a temporary cover crop to out-compete weeds. Where large acreages are burned by fires and seeding is required for erosion control, all native species could be cost prohibitive and/or unavailable. In all cases, seed mixes would be approved by the BLM Authorized Officer prior to planting.
- No noxious weeds will be allowed on the site at the time of reclamation release. Any noxious weeds that become established will be controlled.

Reviewed by: /s/ Mindy Seal

Mindy Seal
Natural Resource Specialist

04/07/2011

Date

