

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM**

**Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area  
FY 2009 Manager's Report**

Introduction

- Unit: Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area  
Red Rock/Sloan Field Office  
Southern Nevada District Office  
BLM Nevada State Office
  
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- Manager: Robbie McAboy  
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- Established: Public Law 107-282, November 6, 2002
  
- Acreage: 48,438 BLM acres
  
- Annual visitation: 19,969

Body

Please report on and briefly describe the following:

**1. Natural and Heritage Resources Conditions**

The entire NCA contains cultural resource sites, although certain areas have higher site density. A Class I cultural resources inventory (a literature review performed in 2003) identified 54 known archaeological sites in and around Sloan Canyon NCA. Eighty-five percent were determined to be prehistoric sites and 15 percent historic sites. A Class II inventory was later performed which identified 90 additional sites, 80 percent of which are prehistoric.

The Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site contains more than 300 panels of rock art with more than 1,700 elements recorded along a .5-mile stretch of the canyon. As a whole, the archaeological artifacts found in Sloan Canyon are in good condition, although impacts have occurred as a result of erosion, recreational use and vandalism. 19 site stewards have donated 243 hours monitoring 30 sites within Sloan. As a result, four impact reports were filed.



Vegetation within Sloan Canyon NCA is diverse and representative of the Mojave Desert ecosystem. Natural resources appear to be in good condition. The primary factors affecting the condition of the natural resources continue to be impacts from unauthorized motorized use, illegal dumping and vandalism. In June of 2008, 2.5 miles of fencing was installed in the NE corner of Sloan where these activities were more prevalent. To date, the number of incidents in this area is almost nonexistent. Some OHV use has moved south of this area and evidence of increased use is starting to show there as well as in other parts of Sloan.



As for dumping, it appears that dump sites are starting to appear or get progressively worse on BLM lands surrounding Sloan. The Las Vegas Field Office in conjunction with the City of

Henderson has held several clean-up events in an effort to manage these areas and maintain a sense of presence with Law Enforcement.

## **2. Recreation Facilities, Roads, and Trails Conditions**

Over the past two years tremendous effort has been put into developing a comprehensive trails plan for Sloan that will meet the needs of hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders. On December 21, 2009 the Decision Notice for this comprehensive planning effort was signed. The Army Corps of Engineers has since been brought on board to manage the construction phase of this 44 mile trails project. The construction phase of this project is anticipated to be completed by October 2010.



The sign plan for Sloan was completed in 2006. In 2007, five area/portal signs were ordered from the BLM Sign Shop and installed. Three of those signs are still standing and in good condition. One was recently shot down and needs to be reinstalled in the Hidden Valley area. The sign near Sandy in Henderson was not reinstalled after it was taken down because it was located in an area that has since been fenced and no longer accessible by motorized means.

### 3. Outreach, Environmental Education, Interpretation, and Volunteers

Sloan Canyon NCA was unable to participate in outreach events this year due to lack of staffing and prior commitments. Efforts are underway to fill vacant positions and attend events in the upcoming year. Plans are currently underway to unveil the completely constructed Sloan Trail System at the 2010 Henderson's Trails Day event.

As mentioned earlier, 19 site stewards have donated 243 hours towards monitoring resources within the NCA. In addition to monitoring cultural sites, they also assist with reporting of health and safety issues, illegal dumping, and resource damage caused by unauthorized use.

We continued under agreement with UNLV's Geology Department to develop a traveling trunk for educators to teach about the geology of Sloan and the volcanic activity that helped shape Henderson's skyline. Information from this agreement will also be used in developing displays for the future visitor center for Sloan as well as for interpretative displays along trails.



### 4. Science

We are currently working with Lake Mead National Recreation Area to capture an acoustical baseline of sounds. To provide data for this objective, one monitoring site was set up in Sloan Canyon on March 25, 2009. Below is a preliminary snapshot of the acoustical conditions on March 31, 2009.

Figure 1 plots the dB levels for 33 one-third octave band frequencies over the day and night periods at the monitoring site. The grayed area represents sound levels outside of the typical range of human hearing. The typical frequency levels for transportation, conversation and songbirds are presented on the figure as examples for interpretation of the data. These ranges are estimates and are not vehicle-, species-, or habitat- specific.

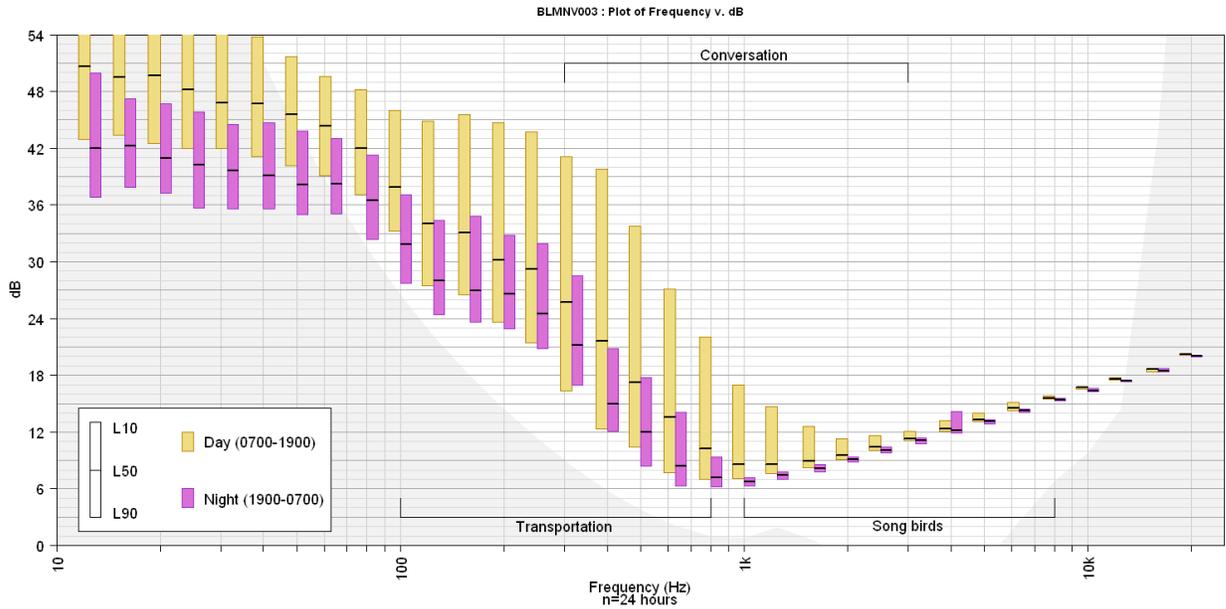
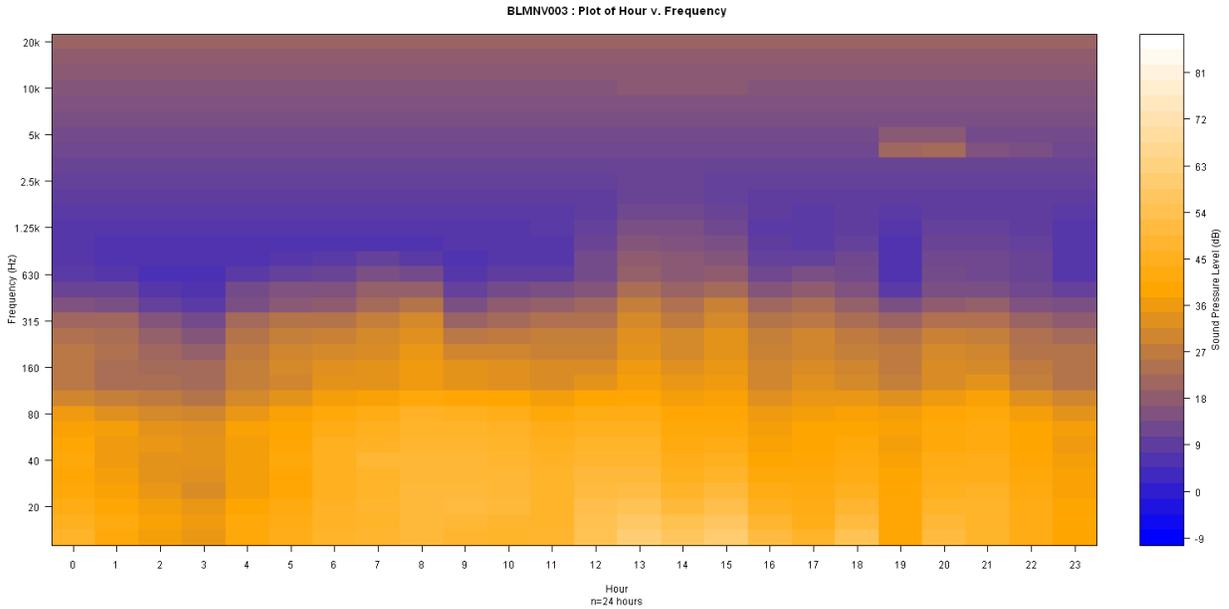


Figure 2 illustrate the variation in natural ambient dB across all frequencies by hour. Darker shades denote lower dB values while lighter shades denote higher dB values. The onset of loud low frequency sounds reflects increased aircraft activity as well as an increase in intrinsic sounds such as wind.



This is a preliminary snapshot designed to get salient acoustical information back to the agency as quickly as possible. This does not replace a full acoustical report, which will follow, pending further data analysis. The primary objective for collecting this data is to have additional baseline information prior to flights over Sloan from the proposed Jean Airport.

To summarize the data collected at BLMNV003 on 3-31-2009, the existing median ambient (L50) levels ranged from 18.8 dBA to 34.3 dBA. The existing ambient (L50) level is the median sound level. It is the composite of all sounds at a site, both human caused and natural. On March 31, 2009, the quietest hour occurred at 0300 hours. In contrast the loudest hour occurred at 1300 hours.

## **5. Partnerships**

We continue to have a great working relationship with the City of Henderson. They were actively involved in the development of the Sloan Canyon Trails Master Plan and continue to move forward with plans to partner on a visitor contact station for Sloan.

SHPO is also a working partner under the site stewardship program, which is essential to tracking, reporting and analyzing general and specific trends. This program provides for the continued recruitment and retention of volunteers and assists with promoting responsible use of federal lands through on-the-ground education of the members of the public that may be encountered as part of their duties. The program also offers opportunities for cultural stewards to participate in community and public environmental education programs, which are currently being developed under other SNPLMA-funded Cooperative Conservation Initiatives, particularly the Wilderness program.

## **6. Planning and Business Practices**

Sloan Canyon continues to operate solely off of the endowment account established through special legislation through the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act. The total projected budget for Sloan was just over \$1.4 million for the year.

There were several key positions vacated in Sloan over the last year; NCA Manager, Outdoor Recreation Planner and Environmental Education Specialist. The NCA Manager position was filled by the Lead Outdoor Recreation Planner and we are awaiting the certificate of eligibles for the ORP. As for the EE Specialist, we are considering a possible lateral to fill that position as soon as possible. There are also a number of new positions that were not shown to be fully funded for FY09. Priorities changed and the emphasis shifted to refilling vacant positions instead of filling new positions. We are currently reevaluating the organization for Sloan to determine if the previous organization structure is still needed based on future plans for Sloan.

Funding was received through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to fund the construction of the Sloan Canyon Trail Master Plan. \$800,000 was received to construct 44 miles of trails in Sloan for hiking, mountain biking and equestrian use. Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in February of 2010.

## **7. Manager's Corner**

This was a very challenging year for Sloan. With the loss of key personnel, a number of very important projects were not acted upon as planned. We had hoped to focus on developing a Friends group for Sloan, but without someone available to work directly with interested parties to see this through, it became less of a priority. With the loss of our Environmental Education Specialist, we will have a delay in getting some interpretative displays along the trails at Sloan. Also, some of the annual maintenance and patrols that need to occur just didn't happen because no one was available to respond. It is critical that these positions are filled so that in the upcoming year Sloan gets the attention it deserves. With the completion of the trails plan, more and more people are going to visit Sloan and it is imperative that we are there to provide a presence and be proactive in responding to anticipated needs.