

## **APPENDIX B**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT**

# **SLOAN CANYON NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA IMPLEMENTATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

## **COMMENT SUMMARY**

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014 a public meeting was held to review initial concepts for the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Implementation Management Strategy. The public meeting briefed interested parties on the study purpose, potential facility development, discussed the relationship between the program elements and the special account and gathered input on desired program elements and phasing.

### **Participation:**

Almost 100 people attended the public meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup> with 20 people providing input on comment forms provided at the meeting. To gather additional comments, an online virtual survey was developed that provided an overview of the materials presented at the meeting and a venue for comments. Another 52 comment responses were collected from the online virtual survey with over 100 reviewing the meeting materials. Seventy percent of responses came from Las Vegas residents while another 15% were from Henderson. A number of user groups (Hiking and Mountain Biking) and their members responded.

### **Key comments from the public comment period meeting are provided below:**

1. Importance of additional trails and completing the trail network
2. Improve road access to Petroglyph Canyon/Visitor Contact Station
3. Improve protection and management of Petroglyph Canyon through on site staff presence and facilities
4. General support for all program elements including Phase 1 and 2
5. Initiate design of Phase I and II to improve access and manage the resource
6. Additional emphasis on improvements to Dutchman Pass Road

Comments expressed a concern for the protection of resources, especially within the Petroglyph Canyon; responses identified partnerships with the city of Henderson and volunteer groups to be an important element of success in the NCA. Also stressed was the need to include these groups and the general public on the distribution of information regarding future developments as projects move forward. The importance of volunteers in stewardship of the NCA was also emphasized. Some responses mentioned compliance with the Resource Management Plan as well as inquiring how funds from the special account will be used.

### **Phasing**

Completing development at the Visitor Contact Station ranked as the number one priority. However, the importance of having initial facilities, before Phase 1 of the Contact Station, in place within the very near future was stressed. Suggestions for accomplishing this included providing a temporary structure and restrooms along with a dirt parking lot.

*“Temporary trailers with a graded entry road and parking area would allow interaction with petroglyph visitors by BLM and volunteer staff right away and at low cost; therefore, 2015 is proposed.”*

The table below summarizes the first two questions asked on the online survey. The rank lists in which order the survey respondents would like to see the potential development occur. The score is a weighted calculation. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is the sum of all weighted rank counts. The second part of the survey asked in which year potential development should occur. The majority of respondents would like to see all facilities developed prior to 2030.

Item	Score	Overall Rank	Time Frame (%)		
			2015	2020	2025
Visitor Contact Station Phase 1	200	1	37.5	62.5	0
Hidden Valley Trailhead	191	2	43.8	56.3	0
Dutchman Pass Trailhead	183	3	18.8	68.8	6.3
Dutchman Pass Road	181	4	59.4	25	3.1
Other	148	5	100	0	0
Quo Vadis Trailhead	130	6	18.8	68.8	6.3
Other	126	7	100	0	0
Visitor Contact Station Phase 2	114	8	16.1	22.6	51.6
Other	113	9	100	0	0

Common other answers included: “1. Additional trails in the NW NCA area 2. Graded road from Inspirada to Petroglyph Canyon trailhead 3. Temporary trailers and porta-potty for initial contact station”; additional trails near the Sun City Anthem Trailhead; and projects to protect resources.

The need to provide a barrier between the canyon and growing neighborhoods was also identified. Having an onsite staff presence will be important for resource protection as access is increased to the Petroglyph Canyon. A “graded road from Inspirada to Petroglyph Canyon trailhead” along with Phase 1 of the Contact station is suggested within the next five years. The facility should be designed for scalability with the ability to expand based on visitor needs.

The second phase of the Visitor Contact Station is suggested to be developed by 2025. This facility should include space for volunteers, staff and administrative support as well as exhibits to be implemented over time.

Facility development at the other NCA trailheads is preferred to be developed over the next 10 years. The Hidden Valley and Dutchman Pass trailheads ranked slightly higher in priority. Dutchman Pass Road ranked lower in priority but survey participants would like to see facility development built before other trailheads and the Contact Station. A paved road would improve official access to the east side of the NCA and distribute users. Greater usage of the Quo Vadis Trailhead may occur with development of this Road and improvements should not be considered until such time.

## Trails

As the vast majority of NCA users are trail users, a heavy emphasis was put on trails versus facility developed during the comment period. Additional trails were identified as a need throughout the Northwest portion of the NCA. The trail system should be connected to the regional trail system, which extends throughout the Las Vegas Valley. The adoption or formalization of some existing social trails should be considered.

*“Trails in the NW NCA should be expanded, including adoption of appropriate social trails when possible, including Sidewinder, Fracture Ridge and the local community NCA entry trails. These are all in regular use, demonstrating a current need. Remote cross country hiking should be kept open in the NW NCA.”*

Hiking, mountain biking and equestrian use are popular uses in the NCA and comments suggest that unmet needs exist. It was also noted that different user groups require different trail development standards and designs.

*“With the implementation of proper trailheads and accessible areas for hikers and mountain bikers, the BLM can develop a proper system for users on the southeast part of the greater Las Vegas Valley (Henderson) and mimic the success of Red Rock NCA. BLM needs partners in the community to support their plan, and we mountain bikers – SNMBA’ers – can be that support and key to building a better system within Sloan Canyon.”*

## **APPENDIX 1: Public Meeting Comments December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

### **Phasing**

Need phase 2 for visitor center now.

Encroachment by Inspirada and other development activities on the NCA necessitates immediate mitigation efforts for the protection of important petroglyph areas.

Operations and infrastructure support costs can have major impact on overall project implementation. These costs must be factored into the phased scenarios.

Do not wait for infrastructure to come to Sloan. Do your planning as if it is a rural site. I could name many places that have full facilities and are in rural areas.

Sounds like the beginning of a great planning process for long-term development and management of the NCA. I firmly believe, though, there are short-term, low impact items that can be put in place to protect and facilitate the petroglyph canyon and the rest of the NCA.

Have visitor contact station as soon as possible. The funds are there and the community wants it. I run the 101 three times a week. I never see any rangers or others utilizing the trails. There would be opportunity for residents and children to learn about the environment, wildlife, flora and fauna. A place that people can congregate is very important.

Hidden Valley toilet, etc then the other 2 trailheads.

I'm most interested in preserving petroglyph canyon. We don't have to wait for infrastructure to erect a contact station at Sloan. Seems like a good plan but let's make sure the petroglyphs are protected first.

Temporary facility at Petroglyph trailhead should have been established and staffed for resource protection by now.

It only makes sense to have interpretive facilities and features in Phase 1. Why wait until phase 2. Folks will need, want and value learning about it right away. Do not put this off, please.

Need a temporary facility, prior to phase 1 for admin, management, volunteers, gathering, etc.

Hidden Valley road is already there so start soon

Access available now at Dutchman pass- start soon. Why wait if access is available.

Sooner rather than later-start in 2015

I would like to see a contact station and restrooms the first completed project by end of 2016

### **Road Access**

Start on making public access a road from Democracy to contact station for easy access within 6 months.

Let's coordinate with COH on making sure good on and off street bike facilities are constructed to and from the trailheads whenever possible.

Grade Democracy Road soon for access-does not have to be paved.

Can some sort of partnership be developed with NV power to "improve" and repair road. It is very dangerous right now with little repair

To protect Petroglyph, which is a special spiritual Native American place, I suggest that no paved road be used. An improved graded dirt road used by 2 wheel drive would best, so that, only serious individuals would drive out. Two existing models: 1 Road to Grapevine Petroglyph canyon (Lake Mead) by Laughlin and 2) a New Mexican national Monument- road is practically dirt and subject to flash floods. Range said they want road not improved.

Road access graded.

### **Contact Station**

I like the idea of a large investment in the visitor center. In size, attractions, and interpretive aspects- such that it serves as a suitable distinction for visitors and future residents, as well as a nice facility 20+ years in the future

Being contact station early on as a temporary place with kiosk and parking area, restrooms and better access

How about a mobile contact station to start with-It could be motor home outfitted with interpretive information and double as a classroom when needed.

Make Visitor center larger and include a lot of parking

Multiple trailhead access must be limited to the Canyon area. For example access to the petroglyph areas must be controlled through single access only.

Facility design should feature scalability. increased parking, additional expansion of visitor center, rest should be a part of the plan.

Wider pole & chain barrier to keep bikes out of the rock art area.

Basic restrooms facilities near the 101 right now (people are taking care of business with or without it now.

On site "police" presence is important for preserving integrity.

Facility should include space for volunteer organizations.

I am concerned about the permitting process in the future. I don't want to have to wait a long time for a permit.

Small visitor center is good to keep cost low. Keep footprint small.

Since contact station is in the future- possibly provide ranger on weekends to be in canyon to "educate" public. Contact station should contain area for BLM staff and area for volunteers to meet. Could temporary contact station be housed in area- benefits-educates public on resources.

Please be sure to have staff available at entry to Sloan/Visitor center as soon as paved roads bring people there or you will have more access and less enforcement/protection.

Time limit to spend in the canyon is needed. The spiritual experience of visiting petroglyph canyon should be maintained

### **Trails**

I think the trails and other aspects of SCNCA should be designed to give lots of opportunities for people to recreate so the petroglyph area can remain some isolation

Trails would probably be wise to invest in prior to the visitor center (funneling to its location) so people can see and anticipate (look forward to) further development. This would generate word of mouth for future.

Create Ridge Trail along top of ridge on North to view canyon with periodic free telescope to view petroglyphs.

Trail monitoring devices should be installed to get an actual count on hikers entering and existing.

### **Design**

An design of facilities should consider environmental friendly elements (solar power primarily).

Access by handicap (legal requirement) will be an issue so perhaps simulated tom (virtual tom) should be included of the petroglyph canyon.

### **Trailheads**

I would like to see secure bike parking at some of the trailheads. Cyclists love to ride the trails, but feel unsafe locking their bikes to a standard bike rack.

Leave all roads rough until facilities can be developed.

More trailhead overall in Sloan

### **Hidden Valley**

Should have camping facility with firepots. Prime place to bring children for outdoor education and walks in the McCullough's.

Keep the road rough, develop later.

Road is there- seems like this trailhead should be started soon.

### **Dutchman Pass**

Access available now- start soon. Why wait if access is available.

### **Partnerships**

Let's coordinate with COH on making sure good on and off street bike facilities are contracted to and from the trailheads whenever possible.

Can some sort of partnership be developed with NV power to "improve" and repair road. It is very dangerous right now with little repair

More network of volunteer groups

### **Overall/Other**

Better use of social media and community outreach.

Thanks for all your hard work.

Need a professional editor before printing any more signs.

Well presented program.

Please revisit and analyze the petroglyph area usage numbers developed in 2006 (RMP) if possible.

Can you post existing plans of expanding the multi-use trail system. Dates and Locations.

The community takes care of canyon. Trust the community and provide access.

The estimates (and restrictions) for visitation of about 80 people seems astoundingly low compared to your plans for access and expansion of West Henderson over decades. That bottleneck will be a serious problem if you don't plan properly. Don't hurt yourself for the sake of a bad estimate in the RMP.

Limit the sale of BLM land give it to the Native American Cultural Foundation to

Observe animal wildlife without damaging natural habitat

Don't mess with the sacredness of the canyon.

## APPENDIX 2: Online Survey Comment Responses December 31st, 2014

1. Select in which order you would like to see the potential development occur. If you select other please comment in the box below on the specifics of the other element you would like to see.

	Score*	Overall Rank
Visitor Contact Station Phase 1	200	1
Hidden Valley Trailhead	191	2
Dutchman Pass Trailhead	183	3
Dutchman Pass Road	181	4
Other	148	5
Quo Vadis Trailhead	130	6
Other	126	7
Visitor Contact Station Phase 2	114	8
Other	113	9

Total Respondents 35

\*Score is a weighted calculation. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is the sum of all weighted rank counts.

### Comments

Count	Response
1	Complete trail system and links to the regional trails system
1	Mainly emphasize trails more than new facilities. Keep trails protected but open
1	1. Other - Additional trails in the NW NCA area 2. Graded road from Inspirada to Petroglyph Canyon trailhead. 3. Temporary trailers and porta-potty for initial contact station
1	1. Additional trails in the NW NCA area. 2. Graded road from Inspirada to Petroglyph Canyon trailhead. 3. Temporary trailers and porta-potty for initial contact station
1	1. Additional trails in the NW NCA area. 2. Graded road from Inspirada to Petroglyph Canyon Trailhead. 3. Temporary trailers and porta-potty for initial contact station.
1	1. Additional trails in the NW NCA area. 2. Graded road from Inspirada to Petroglyph Canyon trailhead. 3. Temporary trailers and porta-potty for initial contact station
1	1. More trails to be developed in the NW NCA 2. Grade road from Inspirada to Petroglyph Canyon 3. Initial Contact Station with trailer, pit toilettes, containerized potable water
1	1. Additional trails in the NW NCA area 2. Graded road from Inspirada to Petroglyphs Cy trailhead 3. Temp trailers and porta potty for initial contact station.
1	1. Other = Additional Trails in NW NCA 2. Other = Graded road to petroglyphs 3. Other = temporary trailer contact station
1	1. Graded road from Inspirada to Petroglyph Canyon trailhead. 2. Additional trails in the NW NCA area 3. Temporary trailers and porta-potty for initial contact station



## Comments

Count	Response
1	Connecting trail systems between Sloan and Henderson is critical
1	Implement plan as soon as road and utility infrastructure is in place.
1	There is no 2018 option for development to occur for the potential facility improvements.
1	Whatever is practicable
1	Temporary trailers with a graded entry road and parking area would allow interaction with petroglyph visitors by BLM and volunteer staff right away and at low cost. That is why the year 2015 is proposed.
1	Other 3. Simple facility with a graded road and parking with volunteer and BLM staffing to interact with visitors. Can be done soon. And allows over a year or two, to gauge visitor volume for future expansion needs.
1	Temporary trailers with a graded entry road & parking would allow early access to petroglyph visitors and BLM/volunteer staff at low cost.
1	1. Other = Additional Trails in NW NCA 2. Other = Graded road to petroglyphs 3. Other = temporary trailer contact station
1	3. Temporary trailers with a graded road would allow interaction with petroglyph visitors right away.
1	Emphasis on temporary facilities and graded entry road to facilitate soonest access by hikers and other visitors.
1	Other 3: Temporary trailers with a graded entry road and parking area would allow interaction with petroglyph visitors by BLM and volunteer staff right away and at low cost; therefore, 2015 is proposed.
3	Other 3. Temporary trailers with a graded entry road and parking area would allow interaction with petroglyph visitors by BLM and volunteer staff right away and at low cost. That is why the year 2015 is proposed.
1	Prepare the area with temporary roads and facilities for immediate use before and during construction phases.
1	I know the Sun City Anthem Hiking Club will be providing input on behalf of members. I wanted to also make my own separate comment entry indicating that I support the club input, and that as a resident living adjacent to the Sloan Canyon NCA I would like to see the Implementation Plan provide increased hiking opportunity as a near term priority. Access to the outdoor environment is one reason we enjoy living here. I am thankful to the NCA and would like to see it continue to provide hiking opportunity as a priority usage in the future, expanding the options of local residents for outdoor enjoyment.
1	Temporary trailers with a graded entry road and parking area would allow interaction with petroglyph visitors by BLM and volunteer staff right away and at low cost. That is why the year 2015 is proposed.
1	Other 3. Temporary trailers with a graded entry road and parking area would allow interaction with petroglyph visitors by BLM and volunteer staff right away and at low cost. That is why the year 2015 is proposed.”
1	1. Other = Additional trails in NW NCA 2. Other = Graded Road to petroglyphs 3. Other = Temporary trailer contact station

### 3. Please feel free to leave additional detailed comments below (space unlimited):

Count	Response
1	Thanks

**Count Response**

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- 1 Trails in the NW NCA should be expanded, including adoption of appropriate social trails when possible, including Sidewinder, Fracture Ridge and the local community NCA entry trails. These are all in regular use, demonstrating a current need. Remote cross country hiking should be kept open in the NW NCA. I enjoy the current outdoor recreational opportunities available in the NCA right near my home and would love to see them increased with trail expansion, rather than decreased by removal of some social trails currently in use. I love having a wilderness area so near my home! It helps preserve the atmosphere I love about living in Nevada!
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- 1 Cycling, hiking and equestrian(ing?) is already happening in some areas of Red Rock NCA, and is alive and well with management of those trails keeping things in order and environmentally friendly. Rouge trail building in Red Rock NCA is non-existent and the trail networks there are plentiful meeting everyone's standards, therefore the system works in Red Rock. The question remains, why can't Sloan Canyon be as accessible to mountain bikers as Red Rock Canyon? By comparison, RR NCA is 195,000 acres, and Sloan is 48,000. We are not allowed to bike within the boundary of the Scenic Loop and the park itself, but in the outer southern limits such as Cottonwood or northern limits on Kyle Canyon Road. This would apply to the boundary of the petroglyph area which would be strictly off-limits. Allowing mountain bikers access to more acreage of land within the Sloan NCA and away from critical habitat or sensitive history will create a better relationship with the land managers and cyclists as proper user-designed trails can be developed within a prescribed area, limiting illegal trails. With the implementation of proper trailheads and accessible areas for hikers and mountain bikers, the BLM can develop a proper system for users on the southeast part of the greater Las Vegas Valley (Henderson) and mimic the success of Red Rock NCA. BLM needs partners in the community to support their plan, and we mountain bikers – SNMBA'ers – can be that support and key to building a better system within Sloan Canyon
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**Count Response**

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1 The Sun City Anthem Hiking Club (SCAHC) is submitting the following comment input (ref # scahc1) on behalf of the club's members, who presently number close to 400 individuals. The comments have been determined by and approved by the clubs board. Some members have indicated they will also make additional comments, using separate comment input submissions.

1. The Implementation Plan (IP) should provide a strategy and timeline for implementing the RMP and how and when funds in the special account should be used for that purpose. It should also make clear any guiding documents used in its preparation and the process to obtain approval and keep it updated with changing conditions. We recommend an annual request for public input on suggested changes and publication of an updated status review and decision on suggested changes. The plan and any update should include a full accounting of the use of the special account funds. 2. The special account is for the entire NCA and not just a contact station or visitor facility at the entrance to Petroglyph Canyon. Its stated purposes include construction and operation of facilities and construction and repair of trails and roads, research, interpretation and conservation. Of those purposes, data that was presented at the Dec 4 meeting, as well as current observation, shows the vast majority of visitors are trail users in parts of the NCA not associated with the petroglyphs. Further, the presence of recent "social" trails in the NW portion of the NCA indicates user desires are not met by current progress on approved trails. For this reason we feel it is essential to include near term planning of additional trails as part of the IP. We suggest an important part of that planning should be contact with users of "social trails". They are used in both remote areas and for local community access. BLM should determine if a partnership can be established providing improvement and maintenance of those trails and adoption into the trail system. That could avoid spending money to remove trails that users have shown they want to use, and then spending more money providing different trails. The Sidewinder/Mushroom and Fracture Ridge trails are among those the club considers desirable to evaluate for improvement and adoption. 3. In the petroglyph entry area, initial steps could be made almost immediately toward a contact station capability using temporary trailer office quarters with AC, solar or generator power, and a porta-potty. This could be staffed by the two current Sloan personnel. The road could be graded from Inspirada to the trailhead, possibly using a grader provided by the City of Henderson or an Inspirada contractor. Educational signs and exhibits could be added over time based on experience interacting with visitors. For the next few years this may be all that is required to provide contact, education and protection improvements for Sloan. The cost would be a relatively small portion of the special account. Longer term a permanent facility could be added as justified by visitor traffic and experience. 4. We believe it is important for the protection of the petroglyphs that multiple access points be provided into the wilderness area that do not require entering through the petroglyph access area. In addition, this multiple entry access is a recreational desire by trail users to be able to reach areas of solitude. That capability is not supported by the current Trails Master Plan and that deficiency should be remedied with an update to that plan, which we believe should be initiated now. Much has changed in the 5 years since the plan was done. It is of utmost importance that planning be done in collaboration with current trail users and the City of Henderson. 5. We have indicated our suggestions on development order and timing in Items 1 and 2 of this Feedback and Comment submission to the IP Surveygizmo web page and repeated below as part of this comment. We look forward to those benefits in addition the others we have suggested in this comment. Suggested development order and dates: 1. Other, additional trails in NW NCA 2015 2. Other, graded road to petroglyphs 2015 3. Other, temporary trailer contact station 2015 4. Dutchman Pass Road 2015 5. Dutchman Pass Trailhead 2015 6. Visitor Contact Station Phase 1 2020 7. Hidden Valley Trailhead 2020 8. Quo Vadis Trailhead 2020 9. Visitor Contact Station Phase 2 2025 Contact Information: Sun City Anthem Hiking Club, 2450 Hampton Road, Henderson, NV 89052 Comment reference number: scahc1 Email contact regarding this submission: shoascahc@aol.com

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1 Trails in the NW NCA should be expanded, including adoption of appropriate social trails when possible, including Sidewinder, Fracture Ridge and the local community NCA entry trails. These are all in regular use, demonstrating a current need. Remote cross-country hiking should be kept open in the NW NCA. I enjoy the current outdoor recreational opportunities available in the NCA right near my home and would love to see them increased with trail expansion, rather than decreased by removal of some social trails currently in use.

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1 There are several connector trails in the East Anthem area which are not on the trails map. I recognize some of these may be "social" trails installed by avid users in the area. However, several of them far exceed the quality and the beneficial use of the designated East Anthem Trail (most of which are poorly graded, adopted power line roads.) Frankly, the designated trails lack reasonable grades and surfaces for use by hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers for which they are supposedly intended. In fact, several of the sections are so steep and poorly graded that they are dangerous to use by pedestrians and cyclists. Furthermore, the designated road-trails are ugly and do not attract users. Please consider and look for a way to incorporate several of the best trails into the designated network. I know there are several user groups willing to assist with implementation and even maintenance if it would benefit the process. Similarly, in the event any of the trails approach sensitive areas, critical sections could easily be re-routed. The result of such action would be a tremendous improvement to the poorly implemented East Anthem Trails network.

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**Count Response**

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- 1 I would like to know the plans for the current water development projects (guzzlers) and the potential disruption on the native Big Horn Sheep as this project will occur in the middle of their natural habitat. Will the Fraternity of the Big Horn be a stakeholder in your decision-making plans? Thank you, Jelindo Tiberti II nevadahunter@aol.com
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- 1 Gary Desler 2337 French Alps Ave Henderson, NV 89044 (702) 989-9885 gdesler@me.com Red Rock/Sloan Field Office 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive Las Vegas, NV 89130 Input to the December 4th plan presentation Dear BLM Managers; December 9, 2014 I am pleased to see some progress on the long stalled improvements to Sloan Canyon. I truly understand your mission to preserve this natural and important historic site. It would seem to me to preserve the wilderness by installing a wire fence is just plain wrong and counter to your objectives. To prevent possible vandalism the fence would have to be high like a prison fence, else anyone could climb it. Maybe it would seem more natural to build a stone fence; we certainly have access to plenty of rocks. If you have \$64 million dollars and plan on spending only ~10% of it where is the rest of the money going? Can it be used to seed a perpetual trust fund to be used to staff the center? How and how easy will it be to get the required pass? Will the passes be available over the internet? To reach the last plateau where the petroglyphs are one must scale a difficult rock wall; to help us older folks is that one of the planned improvements to the trails? Can some temporary (dirt) access roads be made available before Democracy is extended. Perhaps working with Inspirada to use the road parallel to the water canal running North South from Bicentennial? Yours Truly, \_\_\_/Gary Desler/\_\_\_\_\_
- 
- 1 Trails in the NW NCA should be expanded, including adoption of appropriate social trails when possible, including Sidewinder, Fracture Ridge and the local community NCA entry trails. These are all in regular use by our Sun City Anthem Hiking Club, demonstrating a current need. Remote cross country hiking should be kept open in the NW NCA. I enjoy the current outdoor recreational opportunities available in the NCA right near my home and would love to see them increased with trail expansion, rather than decreased by removal of some social trails currently in use. We use these trails and care for the trails for they were an important reason I moved to this area.”
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- 1 As a resident of Sun City Anthem I frequently hike/walk in the adjacent area, including McCullough Hills, Anthem East Trail, Arden Peak, Black Mt., Park Peak and [occasionally] to the Petroglyph area. I would like to see the hiking opportunities in these areas increased. Also, the access to the petroglyph area needs to be improved and simultaneously the visitor contact station needs to be improved so monitors/guides can be stationed there to protect the area. I previously was a site monitor at the petroglyph area and would be happy to volunteer again to help monitor once the area is further developed and access is improved.
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- 1 The sooner the visitor center is built the better. We also need to have the site better secured. I think an entry station with fee like Red Rock has would be reasonable.
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- 1 I enjoy the current outdoor activities available in the NCA in my neighborhood and would like to see them increased with trail expansion including social trails and protection of the natural and historic resources.
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- 1 I hike the Sloan NCA trails at least once per week. The Black Mountain trail is great but mileage signs were installed on the first 1.25 miles and then they stopped. Fractured Ridge needs to be reopened since it is in regular use. We need these trails. As a City of Henderson Trail Watch Volunteer, I see many hikers using the trails and more options are needed. Mike Carey 702 614-9036
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- 1 I don't know much about all these areas but would like to visit and hike in them. The problem right now is that some areas require high clearance 4 wheel drive vehicles. This restricts most people from having the opportunity to hike these areas without having to do extended hikes. We don't absolutely need paved roads to all Trail heads. We need graded roads with maybe some gravel overlay. My major concern is protecting the environment and the Petroglyphs. Where my concern is, some people just want to take paint spray and destroy stuff. So, if the roads are graded there at the very least needs to be gates to keep vehicles out after dark. I would like to hike Petroglyph Canyon someday.
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- 1 I am a mountain bike enthusiast that lives in the Anthem area. I have been riding in the Anthem East area since before there were actual trails. I have witnessed the growth of the trail system and enjoy the new options. My comment relates to the design of some of joint use biking trails. Many of the corners/turns seem to not be designed for use by a mountain bike. They have a tight radius and are not properly banked. These facts combined with the soft sandy soil make many sections not rideable except for the most technical of riders. It would be great to involve the IMBA in the building of the biking trails to insure proper design and safety. Happy to get involved. Alan Dees 702-525-4342
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**Count Response**

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- 1 .Please expand trail options, including adoption of appropriate social trails when possible, including Sidewinder, Fracture Ridge and the local community NCA entry trails. These currently used regularly. Remote cross country hiking should be kept open in the NW NCA. e
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- 1 This structured format does not allow me to comment on variations to the proposal (such as partial implementation or temporary structures) or other items besides these particular facilities proposals that are important to an implementation plan. I am hoping that this is provided for after I click the submit button, but that was not indicated to be the case in the introduction to this survey. There is also no provision for me to be able to click through this (it says there was an error) and find out what is next before filling out the survey. This is maddeningly limiting, response controlling, and does not induce constructive commenting reactions. I want to make constructive inputs, but so far this just allows me to prioritize BLM proposals, which I may not agree with in full. Taking a survey on something so limiting seems contrived. I hope BLM will focus on a broader range of inputs than just forced response to their own proposals.
- 
- 1 Not sure the intended route and surface of the Dutchman Pass Road and whether it connects to the other dirt roads on the south end (it would be nice if this was listed on the description pages), but the existing dirt road, which is the extension of Horizon Ridge Parkway and is east of the NCA, runs right through Dutchman Pass as labeled on topographic maps. It is not a good road for passenger cars and it would be great to have an improvement available. The new road should allow connection to the network of power line utility roads to the south, as they are used to access the SW NCA. Of course it should also connect to the Quo Vadis trailhead and the trail network. It is listed on this submission by itself with a 2015 date, as that would bring immediate benefit to those accessing the west side of the NCA by vehicle. The other developments will be addressed in a separate entry. If this is intended to be a new route using the dirt road that exists inside the NCA, I would suggest the name of that road be changed to West Dutchman Pass Road or something else, as the existing road outside the NCA is the one that runs through Dutchman Pass on the maps and has been referred to as Dutchman Pass road by at least some users.
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- 1 I feel that the trails in the NW NCA are past due for expansion. Living close to the area, I feel frustrated that trails don't reach to obvious areas of interest such as more peaks, ridge lines and view points. Social trails in many cases, where they are appropriate, could be adopted into the official system (rather than spending funds to erase and rebuild). Trails connecting to gates (installed by developers) have emerged out of need and practical use. Bike trails have also emerged out of need. A quality bike trail like Sidewinder, is well built and maintained, and it would be a shame to erase it. Fracture Ridge trail is a great trail born out of necessity to reach the beautiful and peaceful ridge. Hannah peak and Beer Bottle Butte are two of many others in need of improving and recognizing a trail. It seems to me that it would be a mistake to funnel all trails to and out of Sloan Canyon. Distributing access points separate of the Canyon for those not desiring to view the petroglyphs would help lessen impact on that sensitive area. Addressing the water issue at the contact station: Wells are extremely expensive and vulnerable to drying up. It seems that a conversation about water with the City of Henderson on a creative solution for the purpose of the Petroglyph Canyon should be made. If economically it's impractical for now, portable potable water would be a reasonable solution until the City's water line comes closer to the site. To me, a simple approach to the contact center to start with makes sense. Then after a year or two, evaluate visitor volume and needs, and implement with a better understanding the perfect center with just the right kind of infrastructure and needs for the future.
- 
- 1 Trails in the NW NCA should be expanded, including adoption of appropriate social trails when possible, including Sidewinder, Fracture Ridge and the local community NCA entry trails. These are all in regular use, demonstrating a current need. Remote cross country hiking should be kept open in the NW NCA. I enjoy the current outdoor recreational opportunities available in the NCA right near my home in Sun City Anthem and would love to see them increased with trail expansion, rather than decreased by removal of some social trails currently in use. I know the Sun City Anthem Hiking Club will be providing input on behalf of members. I wanted to also make my own separate comment indicating that I support the club input, and that as a resident living in Sun City Anthem, which is adjacent to the Sloan Canyon NCA, I would like to see the Implementation Plan provide increased hiking opportunity as a near term priority. Access to the outdoor environment is one reason we enjoy living here. I am thankful for the NCA and would like to see it continue to provide hiking opportunity as a priority usage in the future, expanding the options of local residents for outdoors enjoyment
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- 1 The City of Henderson's Community Development & Service Department encourages the BLM to implement the capital improvements to the Sloan Canyon NCA as early as possible in the development process. Daniel J. Fazekas, AICP Planner II Community Development Department & Services City of Henderson (702) 267-1539 daniel.fazekas@cityofhenderson.com
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- 1 Area historical items should be categorized and protected. Prepare temporary trails and install markers for less experienced hikers. Provide connector trails to existing trails in other preserve areas.
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**Count Response**

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1 Trails in the NW NCA should be expanded, including adoption of appropriate social trails when possible, including Sidewinder, Fracture Ridge and the local community NCA entry trails. These are in regular use, supporting and demonstrating a current need. Remote cross country hiking should be kept open in the NW NCA. I am a member of the Sun City Anthem hiking club do a great deal of hiking near my home in the Anthem hills. I would like to see increased hiking opportunity included in the Implementation Plan.

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1 I realize the Sun City Anthem Hiking Club will be providing input on behalf of members. I want to make my own comment entry indicating that I support the club input, and as a resident living adjacent to the Sloan Canyon NCA I would like to see the Implementation Plan provide increased hiking opportunity as a near term priority. Access to the outdoor environment is very important to me. I have hiked over 500 miles this year including approx. 350 miles just with the SCA hiking club. I am thankful for the NCA, expanding the options of local residents for our "backdoor" and would like to see it continue to provide hiking opportunity as a priority usage in the future, expanding the options of local residents for outdoors enjoyment.

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2 Trails in the NW NCA should be expanded, including adoption of appropriate social trails when possible, including Sidewinder, Fracture Ridge and the local community NCA entry trails. These are all in regular use, demonstrating a current need. Remote cross country hiking should be kept open in the NW NCA. I enjoy the current outdoor recreational opportunities available in the NCA right near my home and would love to see them increased with trail expansion, rather than decreased by removal of some social trails currently in use.

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1 Trails in the NW NCA should be expanded, including adoption of social trails when possible, including Sidewinder, Fracture Ridge and the community NCA entry trails. These are all in regular use, demonstrating a current need. Remote area cross country hiking should be kept open in the NW NCA.

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1 To whom it may concern, We welcome improvements to the Sloan NCA including a new paved access road, and the new proposed trailhead improvements. Our members currently access the petroglyph area of Sloan Canyon from a public park in Anthem as there is a lack of a suitable paved road to the area. Our members also do not currently frequent the Dutchman Pass area due to a lack of an established parking area but are instead using the nearby McCullough Hills parking area. A new parking area would relieve congestion at the already popular McCullough Hills trail. Paul Cuni Vegas Hikers

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**Count Response**

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1 It is anticipated that the design and construction specs will take several years and that any development on-the-ground will likely be three years out. Given that time frame, it is recommended that temporary office space be leased at Inspirata. The entire management approach and permitting system outlined in the approved Resource Management Plan is dependent on BLM presence at a contact station/visitor center. Sloan suffers today without an active BLM presence and a place from which BLM staff, volunteers and other partners can work out of. It is unrealistic to have that point of contact 40 minutes away at the Red Rock Canyon visitor center. This puts the resource, particularly the petroglyphs in the Petroglyph Canyon Area, at risk from vandalism or misuse. Local users say they never see a uniformed BLM employee on the trails or at the trailheads. It is also inappropriate to invite the public into the area without providing some form of sanitary facility. Along with the visitor contact station, it is critical to provide improved road access into the Petroglyph Canyon area from Inspirada. This could be a shared cost between BLM and Henderson. Henderson's Open Space & Trails Plan, Desert Edge Plan, and West Henderson Plan all talk about the need to protect the Desert Edge next to Sloan. The potential exists to have a nationally significant edge treatment adjacent to Sloan, one that could be a model for the nation. There is a unique opportunity to integrate Henderson's trails with Sloan and to buffer the National Conservation Area by providing a soft transition. For example, the city has invested a tremendous amount of time and resources into evaluating the 700-acre tract between Inspirada and the Sloan boundary that is scheduled to go up for auction in the foreseeable future. They have done hydrological studies on all the washes and want to conserve them by keep them in a natural condition and providing an integrated trail system. This is an oxymoron for Las Vegas who famously channelizes most natural washes at a huge expense while eliminating some of the most diverse pieces of our desert environment. One option that needs serious consideration is to have those wash areas and associated trails within the 700 acres conveyed to the City of Henderson prior to auction under the R&PP program. This use of the R&PP lease program is legal and an appropriate vehicle to accomplish both Henderson's goals and those of BLM in providing a soft transition adjacent to Sloan. BLM's draft Resource Management Plan designates the area adjacent to Sloan Canyon NCA within the Las Vegas Valley SNPLMA Disposal Area an Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). Most of the remainder of the areas adjacent to Sloan but outside the disposal boundary are designated as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). The Las Vegas Valley SRMA was established for open space and trail connectivity within the local community. The Recreation Area Management designations are land units where recreation and visitor services objectives are recognized as a primary resource management consideration and specific management is required to protect the recreation opportunities. The requirement in the Plan for both the ERMA and SRMA are for "BLM to coordinate with county and city governments to identify land for reserve recreational trails, open space, and parks, as needed prior to land disposals. Reservation should be done through R&PP applications by local governmental agencies." The Plan further requires "BLM to identify public lands on the perimeter and within the Special Recreation Management Area that are appropriate for recreational uses in support of local government land-use plans. These plan requirements give added weight to the use of the R&PP program leases for the wash trail system in the 700-acre tract adjacent to Sloan. We understand that there may be competing interests in BLM. On the one hand, the SNPLMA staff are trying to maximize revenue generated by the public auction process. On the other hand, we believe BLM has an equal or greater responsibility to protect the values of Sloan, one of the key units in the National Landscape Conservation System. Having s model edge would be a huge feather in BLM'S cap. And lastly, the Draft Resource Management Plan points out that "The socioeconomic significance of BLM's place in development of a regional trails system is that by helping increase connectivity, BLM lands contribute to greater accessibility to recreation resources with attendant quality-of-life benefits and contribute to the overall appeal of Southern Nevada as an outdoor recreation area, thereby generating new trips to the region or leading to extended trips made for other purposes, which increases the influx of non-local dollars to the regional economy." In regards to community engagement, there needs to be an elevated level of communication and community involvement. This can help deal with the rumor mill that tends to develop if people are unaware of what is happening. Although public meetings serve a purpose, they are not the most effective way of communicating more complex issues and day-to-day activities. More informal meetings with community, user, and interest groups seem more effective

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1 Can you add a statement about Dutchman Pass Road so I know how to prioritize it? Where does it go from/to and what is its intended use and benefit and is it dirt or paved?

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1 The SCA Hiking Club members hope any development will be tasteful and not overly restrictive.! Hope your planning goes well!  
Larry Klar, Sun City Anthem resident

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**Count Response**

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1 Sloan NCA is an 'unknown treasure' in West Henderson, and it should be kept that way. In my opinion, I think the five main entry points should be marked with outdoor bulletin boards that have trail maps displayed. Vault-style bathrooms could be at these points, too. I think Sloan and its petroglyph canyon should not be advertised as a destination. Allow anyone who is interested in the site to find out about it by word of mouth. Keep local volunteer stewards involved so there are eyes out there. The endowment could be used to improve and modify the existing trails and to stage occasional educational talks and tours. One more thing, it is too hot in the summer months to expect much activity there, so permanent fixtures, such as bathrooms and an enclosed visitor center, would be overkill and impractical.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Sloan Implementation Plan (IP). My comments are addressed in the following points. I would be happy to discuss any of them in further detail if that would be useful. The contact email provided can be used for that purpose. The development comments are based on the 9 developments allowed by your Surveygizmo web page. The number indicates the order I proposed for their implementation. The dates were chosen out of the 5 year increments allowed by the web page.

**1. Suggested development order and dates**

- a. **1. Other, additional trails in NW NCA 2015** The growing presence of social trails in the NW portion of the NCA is an indication that trail development has not kept pace with user desires. Addressing that quickly with additional trails, including adoption of any social trails that could be modified to meet acceptable standards, would seem a more urgent need than providing additional projects in areas that are not yet as heavily used. Making this a priority and developing trail user contacts and cooperative partnerships might reduce the risk of excessive social trail development. The City of Henderson may have user contacts that could be helpful to that process. I recommend that a revision to the Trails Master Plan be the top priority on any list of projects, given the heavy and growing concentration of NCA visitors using trails in the NW portion of the NCA. I also recommend that the special account funds, for which the explicitly stated second objective is “construction and repair of trails ...”, be used to accelerate completion of the already planned trails and to implement appropriate trail adoptions and construction of new trails.
- b. **2. Other, graded road to petroglyphs 2015** The road from Inspirada to the Petroglyph Canyon trailhead could be dramatically improved if it was lightly graded. That is all BLM land and the portion inside the NCA was classified as VRM III with a management emphasis area zone classification of “Developed”. Possibly a light grading of an existing road would fall under the existing EIS. The portion outside the NCA is BLM land inside the disposal boundary, but possibly a ROW with the city or developer could allow a light grading there. An improved parking area could also be provided. Collaboration with the City of Henderson and the Inspirada developer on mutual benefits could possibly result in both a short term temporary access road through Inspirada during construction and an early implementation of the planned paved road. This would be a major improvement to existing access routes, and would allow much better public access to a unique part of history that has always been intended as accessible to visitors, as indicated by inclusion of a visitor center in the RMP.
- c. **3. Other, temporary trailer contact station 2015** In the petroglyph entry area, initial steps could be made almost immediately toward a contact station capability by using temporary trailer office quarters with AC, solar or generator power, and a porta-potty. These could be added with minimal surface disruption. It could be staffed by the two current Sloan personnel to provide immediate visitor contact information. Educational signs and exhibits could be added over time based on experience interacting with visitors. Over time some reference to local mining, cattle and early settler history should be included along with the petroglyph, Native American and geology history and local flora and fauna information. For the next couple of years this may be all that is required to provide contact, education and protection improvements for Sloan. The cost would be a relatively small portion of the special account. Longer term a permanent facility could be added as justified by visitor traffic and experience. While a specific assessment may be needed, presumably the RMP proposed visitor center environmental impact was already generally addressed in the EIS classification of Development Area, which might be adequate for the smaller impact

of a minimally disruptive temporary facility appropriately aligned with long term future plans.

- d. **4. Dutchman Pass Road 2015** Any road that improves access from the City of Henderson to the SE portions of the NCA would be a big improvement over the current (gas line) dirt road that runs through Dutchman Pass outside the eastern boundary of the NCA. It is not a good road for passenger cars and it would be great to have an improvement available. It should provide a good connection to the power line roads outside the eastern boundary of the NCA, the 500, 601, 701 trails, the Quo Vadis Mine Road and the future Quo Vadis Trailhead. Given that other roads in the area all dirt roads, it seems appropriate to provide a dirt or gravel surface with a maintenance plan that will maintain an acceptable surface condition. Routing to minimize washouts should be an important focus. Collaboration with the city and users on possible alternatives and benefits seems especially desirable. Since the proposed road does not actually run through Dutchman Pass as designated on topo maps, it seems desirable to change the name of the proposed road to something different. If Dutchman Pass is to be retained in the name, perhaps it could be modified to West Dutchman Pass Road. The money to pay for roads is in the special account and that use is explicitly specified under the second usage item.
- e. **5. Dutchman Pass Trailhead 2015** The Dutchman Pass Trailhead is not prioritized as highly as the road in my inputs because it does not seem to address a clear current need, given the existence of the McCullough Hills Trailhead just 1 mile to the north and the seemingly inconvenient distance from the East Horizon Ridge Parkway entrance to the McCullough Pass area. I recommend review of the options for the location of this trailhead with the city and users before proceeding. Perhaps a right of way on the (non-NCA) BLM land at the end of the parkway could be granted that the city could use, perhaps in collaboration with city partners, to provide better vehicle access to the trailhead and McCullough Pass Road. One of the existing dirt roads there could possibly be made into an access road. I suggest collaboration occur in the near term, even though the trailhead itself may not be justified immediately. Clearly this access road discussion also relates to the McCullough Pass Road considerations recommended for earlier implementation. For the trailhead itself, providing access roads and parking, even just on dirt, seems the first priority. Facilities could come later.
- f. **6. Visitor Contact Station Phase 1 2020** I suggest putting this item off until there has been significant learning from visitor interaction at a temporary contact station, as indicated under item 1.c. above. The requirement to access the petroglyphs by trail, currently planned to be the Cowboy Trail, may make it difficult to forecast the expected visitor load and the timing of any needed visitor station. Clearly the petroglyphs are not a typical “step out and view it” tourist stop. For the next couple of years, I suggest the plan should be for information gathering at a temporary facility. The longer term plan should allow modification in multiple ways depending on what is learned. I do not think any approach should even consider the possibility of spending the \$4.4M forecast for city water (although further consultation with the city may uncover lower cost alternatives). A cost effective implementation is critical to funds preservation. Toilets are available without water requirements and bulk drinking water could be purchased for decades at much lower cost. Collaboration with user groups that are particularly focused on petroglyph access considerations, such as Friends of Sloan, may provide opportunity for increased information and alternative strategies for petroglyph access. But all users, including the city, should be fully involved prior to any final proposal.
- g. **7. Hidden Valley Trailhead 2020**

- i. This trailhead is also more dependent on access roads than on any current significant usage pattern. The recently signed routes to the trailhead could be lightly graded for significant improvement. Once roads are improved, there will be an equally important need to add west side trails to the Trails Master Plan and a plan update should be associated with the implementation of this trailhead. Among the trails that should be considered is a “primitive” trail to Hanna Peak, portions of which exist based originally on some game trails. It would seem important to have discussions with the non-Sloan BLM land managers and the city to try and determine if any plan for better access roads can be agreed for the future. Initially a simple graded parking area with signage seems adequate for this trailhead.
- ii. A related consideration is the significant amount of shooting that occurs in the hills NW of this trailhead location. On occasion, some of that shooting is not properly backstopped and represents a possible risk when driving through some northern access roads in the area to the trailhead. Possibly the LV BLM, city and county could be consulted to see if any improved shooting area options could be provided in the more secluded and well backstopped areas of the hills to minimize risks at the same time the access roads are enhanced. In the meantime, suggesting use of the (unfortunately much longer, but generally not as rough) southern Hidden Valley access route on any access route maps might be the preferred alternative.
- h. **8. Quo Vadis Trailhead 2020** This trailhead is proposed in an area that currently seems little used. Once there is a Dutchman Pass Road there may be greater demand. I recommend that a key part of this trailhead be information on the mining history of the area, including information on the history of the Quo Vadis mine and several other producing mines nearby, as well as the nearby wood/tent and wagon Quo Vadis town site in 1914.
- i. **9. Visitor Contact Station Phase 2 2025** This evolution of the Visitor Contact Station brings the same comments to mind as item 1.f. above. However, by the time of a phase 2 implementation it may be that visitor traffic could support a small souvenir and book shop. Contact with Western National Parks Association to determine the viability of their participation is suggested.

## 2. Other Implementation Plan Recommendations

- a. The Implementation Plan (IP) should **provide a strategy, actions and timeline for implementing the RMP and how and when funds in the special account will be used** for that purpose. It should also make clear any guiding documents used in its preparation and the process to obtain approval and keep it updated with changing conditions. Based on recommendations on p33 of the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook, I suggest an annual request for public input on suggested IP changes and publication of an updated status review and decision on those suggested changes. The plan and any update should include a full accounting of the use of the special account funds expended and upcoming planned expenditures. Due to some overlap in topics, this report could possibly be combined with the annual NCA manager’s report.
- b. The **IP should be available for public comment in draft form** prior to finalization. This seems consistent with the public involvement requirements of BLM Land Use Planning Handbook p2 item C. The current IP comment process emphasized only timing of developments, allowing suggestions for other developments and comments related to them. There was no provision of a comment id number when entered, or request for contact information to follow up. There was an inquiry as to whether the submitter would like to add an email address to receive updates. I suggest using that list and other known interested parties’ lists to follow up with a draft IP review process that allows formal commenting. While there was no notice on the surveygizmo web page that any comments would be published (as there was no notice about public availability of comments and caution about personal contact information), I do feel it is important that a draft IP summarize the comments

received and the BLM decisions regarding those comments. That will avoid repeating some of the same comments in a draft plan review.

- c. **Collaboration** with key stakeholders is important to the best future evolution of the NCA. Developing ongoing relationships using the principals of the “Bureau of Land Management 2007 Collaboration Desk Guide” should be an objective addressed in the IP. Likewise a successful future for the petroglyph area will require not only collaborative relationships, but also an ongoing volunteer program. Some approaches that may be useful are contained in the “BLM Recreation Strategy, Connecting with Communities, 2014-2019” and “BLM Nevada National Landscape Conservation System Strategy” Goals 2B, 2D, and 3B. The city may represent a potential partner as they already have a trail volunteer program and user community contacts. Friends of Sloan may also represent an opportunity as they have a specific interest in promoting awareness and education relative to the petroglyphs and nature. Volunteers at the SHPO Site Stewardship Program may also be able to play a role beyond monitoring cultural resource damage. Plans for addressing both collaboration and volunteer programs should be addressed in the IP.
- d. **Public availability** of the IP and all supporting or related documents and future updates should be provided on the Sloan Canyon NCA Management web page, as should links to all public Sloan documents, such as the current and prior manager’s reports and a link to any pages asking for public input, such as the current IP document process. That way someone seeking documents also finds out about any documents under development. A document that has been difficult to find is a clear topographical map with the boundaries for the NCA and wilderness areas (Google Maps appears to be in error?). This should be available in downloadable PDF form. Ideally a GPS map layer would be available for download to GPS systems. (The enacting legislation says a map entitled “Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act” and dated October 1, 2002 is supposed to be available from the BLM, but it does not show up online). Presently there seems no clear way for a hiker to have a clear idea where the boundaries are. Also, while a number of documents are available at various locations, having documents distributed on multiple web pages is confusing – there should be a single page that provides ALL the relevant document related links, even though other pages may also provide some of the same links. It is suggested the IP make this an objective. This increases perceptions of transparency and openness and provides a better climate for collaboration, in addition to keeping interested users informed about the NCA.

**3. Items Related to RMP Update** – since implementation of the RMP is to be addressed in the Implementation Plan, the comments in this section reference the relevant RMP section numbers.

- a. **Cross country hiking** (RMP 2.2.2, p6)
  - i. Cross country hiking could evolve to a more limited option as designated trails increase in the northern non-wilderness portions of the NCA and visitor loads increase. This is stated only as a possibility in the RMP (“**some** or all of these areas **may be** restricted”). I suggest that any areas so designated be limited to those that show clear risk of further degradation due specifically to cross country hiking.
  - ii. Closing broad areas that are not showing any significant signs of degradation due to hiking eliminates opportunity for exploratory hiking, observation of unique locations in nature and finding solitude. It also severely limits the possibilities for educational outings.
  - iii. With the limited number of existing designated trails it would also eliminate all north access to the wilderness area, except through the 101 trail, which goes to the petroglyph access area. Keeping areas that do not have trails open to cross country hiking also reduces the load on the wilderness area by those seeking solitude, as it may be found more conveniently in the remote areas of the north NCA.

- iv. It is recommended that people be encouraged to use trails when available for their intended destination, but that cross country be allowed when the trails do not serve the hikers purpose. A statement such as currently used on trail markers "To protect natural resources, please stay on the trail" seems a good choice to encourage trail users to stay on the trail they are using and not make shortcuts. The statement on trailheads and trail maps that shows the entire north McCullough area in blue with the statement "Hiking Restricted to Designated Trails Only" is overly restrictive. I recommend it be replaced in future with the other statement "To protect natural resources, please stay on the trail".
- v. Selected areas that need urgent restoration should be separately designated and be signed to indicate "Areas outside of designated trails in this region are closed for Restoration". A map showing the designated region should be posted at the trailhead and on line. Some areas in the NE portion of the NCA were damaged by prior OHV use. That use has already been prohibited in those areas. Some of them may also need to be restricted from cross country hiking to recover, although in many cases that could be achieved just by closing the unauthorized trail route, rather than closing all cross country hiking in adjacent, but undamaged areas. In general those extreme conditions do not exist in most of the NW portions of the NCA, which should be kept open to cross country hiking. I recommend the IP make this a planned strategy.
- b. **Trails** are to be added to the NCA through a systematic process (RMP 2.2.2, p10).
  - i. The trails planning process has been initiated with a Trails Master Plan. That plan was issued 5 years ago and has not been updated since. It should be a living document, updated as needs arise. Like the RMP, it should be reviewed for possible needed changes a minimum of every 5 years, or as soon as changed needs become evident. While it has not yet been fully completed, it is still overdue for a revision. The plan should be revised now as a near term IP objective. Justification includes the designated trails not keeping pace with user needs as indicated by increasing social trail construction and lack of ANY designated trails in the NW portion of the NCA providing access to the wilderness area except the 101 trail, which ends at the entrance to the petroglyphs.
  - ii. The 101 trail funnels all designated trail traffic to the petroglyph access area, which is not the destination many hikers choose once they have already seen the petroglyphs. It is a destination where unnecessary traffic should be reduced for petroglyph protection.
  - iii. Multiple opportunities exist for trails to the wilderness area both east and west of the petroglyph access area and they should have trails to route hikers outside the Petroglyph Management Area. It is important to protecting the petroglyphs from excess traffic and to providing the full range of hiking experience to add wilderness access trails and also to maintain the cross country hiking option from existing trails into areas which are isolated from users, especially including the wilderness area.
  - iv. In addition to a plan revision, the special account should be used as needed to accelerate the completion of presently planned trails, as well as any that may be added to the plan. Such trails should be determined through an early 2015 revision to the Trails Master Plan.
  - v. I would specifically recommend consideration for adoption be given to the Sidewinder/Mushroom Loop and Fracture Ridge trails and some community access trails. This could add trails at less cost and time delay.
  - vi. A related recommendation is to provide more primitive trails, with reduced environmental impact and a greater sense of being out in nature, on trails further in from the NCA boundaries. A potential candidate for this type of trail is the north Black Mountain 404 or Lichen Trail, which started out as just a series of game trails.

- vii. Any trail plan revision should be done starting with a collaborative process involving the City of Henderson and other current key stakeholders. I recommend that the best results might be achieved if any such process emphasizes the approaches to collaboration listed in the Bureau of Land Management 2007 Collaboration Desk Guide, with particular emphasis on sections 7 and 8.
- c. **Social trails** are not allowed in the NCA, but come to exist when users are not finding their needs met by existing designated trails.
  - i. The RMP has recognized their existence and possible future occurrence and provided for an appropriate decision process when they are discovered (RMP 2.2.2, p10). One possibility is to adopt them into the system. When appropriate, this avoids the expense of restoring an existing trail that is in use and often being maintained and then having the expense of meeting the need that caused the social trail to be developed by building a new designated trail.
  - ii. I recommend that an adoption process be defined in the IP that allows trails to be designated for “adoption evaluation” and places them in a status where they will not be restored until such consideration has been completed. Two trails that I recommend for immediate designation for “adoption evaluation” are the Sidewinder/Mushroom Loop mountain bike trail (all the way to the Coventry trailhead), which is also used by many hikers as a more remote area hiking opportunity to the designated trails, and the Fracture Ridge hiking trail, which has been used for many years to access the ridgeline hike into the wilderness area.
  - iii. I suggest “adoption evaluation” trails be evaluated to see if modification could provide adequate improvements for adoption. I recommend those evaluations be done after consultation with trail users and, if contact is possible, with those who maintain those trails.
  - iv. There are also some social trails from local communities which provide access for those who live adjacent to the NCA, without requiring getting in a car and driving to a major trailhead. Where those trails do not encroach on other resident’s privacy and do not harm the environment, I suggest they be allowed to remain. Residents desiring such trails should be encouraged to have their communities provide restricted gate key or code access to avoid non-resident entry (some communities already have this). Trails that encroach on resident’s privacy could be evaluated to see if alternative routing would resolve that problem.
- d. **Mountain biking** is allowed in much of the northern portion of the NCA (RMP 2.2.2, p6) on designated multi-use trails and roads. However, some of the designated trails do not seem to be well designed for mountain biking in all sections. For example, one awkward section exists on the Anthem East Trail, where excessively sharp turns near the Crescent Heights water tanks make it difficult for mountain bikes to make the turns without coming close to a complete stop. This appears to result in frequent corner cutting and the trail path should probably be corrected to eliminate any overly sharp turns. I recommend review of mountain bike suitability and possible improvements with users as a part of any update of the Trails Master Plan. The city should be able to provide contacts. As indicated elsewhere the number of mountain bike trails seems inadequate to user needs and the Sidewinder/Mushroom Loop trail should be considered for adoption evaluation.
- e. **Right of Way and Roads** currently exist and new ones may be granted (RMP 2.2.9, p29). Most of these have lease terms and some could end up not being renewed when they expire. Restoration to nature is allowed (RMP 2.2.10, p32) for roads not designated for public use. Many of these ROW’s are 2 track dirt roads used by hikers as alternative trails. (The planned 500 trail route has long been hiked along the ROW road and part of the

Anthem East Trail overlays a ROW road). Any ROW that expires should be retained as a hiking route rather than being fully restored, unless there is some reason it is unsuitable for that purpose. (It might be appropriate to have some routes evolve to single track trails rather than double track). There should be an automatic classification of “available for public hiking use” on any road not used for other purposes. This classification should apply now to the Duck Creek Road accessing the Bensen camp in the wilderness area, as it is the best hiking route in that area and its use avoids any new disturbance. The same comment applies to existing roads in the SW NCA, they should be kept available for hiking and should be so designated in the IP.

- f. **Special Recreation Permits** (RMP 2.2.2, p 12 and 2.2.3, p20) are issued at the discretion of the local BLM Authorizing Officer. I suggest the Implementation plan specify that no permits will be issued for the wilderness area portions of the NCA, as those are a place to find solitude and also require increased protection. (Presently Organized Group Activity and Event Use can be permitted). The Petroglyph Management Area (PMA) may be an exception for qualified petroglyph guides who have had the qualifications and training of each individual guide reviewed to criteria established by the BLM as appropriate, with guiding motivations that are consistent with NCA guidelines, and with no financial compensation involved. Financial benefit encourages excess traffic for financial gain and should be discouraged in sensitive protected areas. Group sizes must be small enough to be fully monitored by the guides. This should not be extended to other portions of the wilderness area (WA), where increased traffic is not desirable for both protection and solitude reasons. Guiding in the WA will unnecessarily increase public awareness of other sensitive sites. Any permit should specify these limitations. The use of trained site steward volunteers is also recommended for guides within the PMA.
- g. **Interpretation** (RMP 2.2.7, p26 and 2.2.4, p21) provides for interpretive media at trailheads and contact stations. The IP should specify that interpretive media and exhibits will include uses of the NCA and surrounding lands by early settlers, miners, ranchers, explorers, surveyors, Spanish trail users and others in addition to the use by Native Americans. Such content should be specified in the detailed plans for any exhibit area on the list of planned developments. Areas of emphasis for certain developments should be specified. For example, it seems appropriate that mining be an area of emphasis for the Quo Vadis Trailhead, while Native American history should be emphasized at the Petroglyph Management Area Contact Station with a minor emphasis on cattle and the presumed Bensen camp area, fossils, plants and geology. Geology might be an appropriate area of emphasis at the Dutchman Pass Trailhead. A printed summary of both the Bensen Camp remnants and the Quo Vadis area mining history was provided to the BLM in 2012. I have additional photos, location information and document references which are available if they should be needed for any future interpretation planning.
- h. **Disturbed wilderness area restoration** is proposed in Vegetation Management (RMP 2.2.11, p34). However, any such restoration should specifically exclude the historically significant presumed Bensen camp collapsed structures, well, dam, can scatters, rock walls and rock surface initials and date graffiti along Duck Creek. These items are of sufficient age and historical importance to be protected by historic preservation laws and they should be featured in NCA interpretation and history. Such policy should be stated in the IP.
- i. **Use fees** may be charged (RMP 2.2.2, p6) as determined at a later time. I recommend that the IP specify there is no plan to charge use fees until a clear need has been demonstrated and there has been a public review process of any proposed fees. Any such process should include a clear indication of why such fees are needed in addition to the benefits of the special account.

- j. **Camping sites** are an allowed addition (RMP 2.2.1, p5) to the entire north NCA area designated as “Roaded Natural”. I recommend the IP indicate there is no plan to provide any camp sites in the foreseeable future and that any such long term possibility would require a formal public review process. Section 2.2.2, p12 actually indicates there will be no camping sites for nighttime use, presumably prohibiting the allowance of section 2.2.1. If so, it should be removed from section 2.2.1.
- k. **Dogs** are allowed in the north NCA, but must be on leashes and cleaned up after (RMP2.2.2, p10). This policy is frequently violated and some trail users have been bitten. While unlikely to make a significant difference, I recommend a clear sign (separate from the small print on the kiosk) at every NCA perimeter trail entrance stating the policy, and the provision of a bag dispenser and garbage can at every major trailhead. Since the city and some communities seem to provide bag dispensers, there may be a possibility to partner in this area.
- l. **Grazing** is permitted in the Hidden Valley Allotment (RMP 2.2.16, p38). I believe that allotment is no longer active and the IP should indicate that grazing will no longer be permitted.

#### 4. Special Account Comments

- a. The special account (PUBLIC LAW 107–282—NOV. 6, 2002) money was designated to be spent on specific items and not to be held. The account’s uses and status should be publicly available and included in an annual IP Review or Sloan Manager’s Report covering the full scope of Sloan management and progress against the Implementation Plan. Staff funding that is required from the designated BLM management responsibilities at Sloan should always be drawn from the Southern Nevada BLM budget, as that role is not listed in the special account purposes. While the BLM has used the term of endowment account in the past, which often means that only interest may be expended, the account might better be termed an implementation account. I suggest that the account funds be used as needed for a timely completion of additional trails and the accomplishment of a better access road and temporary contact station in the petroglyph access area. For other developments that are understood and going to be implemented, I suggest completing the essential portions as quickly as possible. It is my opinion that costs grow much faster than current financial returns on the funds. This is not just due to labor and materials inflation, but also due to ever increasing regulation conformance costs. However, it is certainly important that development needs be understood first and that all developments be done in the most cost effective manner in order to conserve funds for future development needs that may not yet be anticipated.
- b. If the BLM believes that the NCA cannot be properly supported long term financially with planned BLM resource commitments and the use of the existing special account funds, they should demonstrate the need and propose options for appropriate funding in the IP. One approach to additional long term funding may be a request for use of the SNPLMA funds from the sale of the 700 acre parcel in the West Henderson area to be dedicated only to projects benefitting Sloan and its access. As justification it may be argued that the parcel would not be for sale if it were not squeezed between the NCA and the city and is thus not much different from sale of the federal parcel that provided the special account funds. I would strongly suggest that any such request be fully coordinated with the city, as they may also benefit from use of such funds on trails adjacent to Sloan and providing access to the NCA. Conceivably it could also help with funding of improved access roads in the Dutchman Pass and Hidden Valley areas.