



Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area

Draft Wilderness Management Plan

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Winnemucca District Office



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Introduction

Scope of the Wilderness Management Plan

This wilderness management plan (WMP) provides the primary management direction for the ten designated wilderness areas in the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area (NCA). These wilderness areas are:

- North Jackson Mountain Wilderness
- South Jackson Wilderness
- Black Rock Desert Wilderness
- Pahute Peak Wilderness
- North Black Rock Range Wilderness
- Calico Mountains Wilderness
- High Rock Lake Wilderness
- High Rock Canyon Wilderness
- East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness
- Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness Area.

Given their proximity, comparable natural resources and similar management issues, it is appropriate to incorporate the administration of the ten wilderness areas within the NCA into a single management plan. This plan also addresses appropriate actions on lands immediately adjacent to the wilderness areas including issues relating to wilderness access and visitor services.

Wilderness characteristics are cumulatively identified by the Wilderness Act of 1964 as large (usually greater than 5,000 acres) roadless tracts of land, untrammled (i.e. unrestrained, unhindered) by man, natural, undeveloped, having outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive, unconfined forms of recreation, and may include supplemental values. This wilderness management plan preserves the area's characteristics by:

- Identifying the conditions and opportunities for which the wilderness areas would be managed.
- Creating specific actions and decisions for managing resources and activities in the wilderness.
- Identifying management needs immediately adjacent to the wilderness areas including signing, staging areas, and access points.

The first part of the plan contains current comprehensive descriptions of the wilderness areas and identifies the Proposed Action, goals and objectives, management decisions and guidelines as well as monitoring needs. The second part is an Environmental Assessment fully describing and analyzing potential impacts relating to Proposed Action and alternatives.

This wilderness management plan is in conformance with the goals, objectives and decisions approved in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Black Rock Desert- High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area and Associated Wilderness Areas, and other Contiguous Lands in Nevada Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (NCA RMP) (2004).

This wilderness management plan incorporates the decisions analyzed within the Wilderness Route Reclamation Environmental Assessment (NV-020-02-030).

BLM planning regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.3.2[a]) require that BLM Resource Management Plans be consistent with officially approved plans of other federal, state, local, and tribal governments to the extent those plans are consistent with federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands. Although this regulation does not apply to other official plans created after the land use plan is implemented, the BLM strives for management decisions to be consistent with other official plans.

Compliance with Laws, Statutes and Regulations

The proposed action and alternatives are in compliance with the following laws, statutes, regulations, and plans:

- The Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 U.S.C. §§ 1131-1136, September 3, 1964, as amended 1978)
- The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. §§ 1701-1782, October 21, 1976, as amended 1978, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990-92, 1994 and 1996)
- The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4347, January 1, 1970, as amended 1975 and 1994)
- The Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-554) as amended by the Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-63)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 7.3-712, July 1918, as amended 1936, 1960, 1968, 1969, 1974, 1978, 1986 and 1989)
- Management of Designated Wilderness Areas (43 CFR Part 6300)

- Recreation Management Restrictions: Occupancy Stay Limitation (43 CFR 8365.1-2(a) and Federal Register Notice NV-930-4333_02)
- Unlawful Manner of Camping Near Water Hole (Nevada Revised Statute 503.660).

Relationship to Policies and Guidelines

The proposed plan is in conformance with the following handbooks, manuals, and guidelines:

- Management of Designated Wilderness Areas (BLM Manual 8560)
- Wilderness Management Plans (BLM Manual 8561)
- Grazing Guidelines (House Report No. 101-405, Appendix L)
- Wildlife Management Guidelines (House Report No. 101-405)
- BLM Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Handbook.



Fly Canyon in the High Rock Lake Wilderness

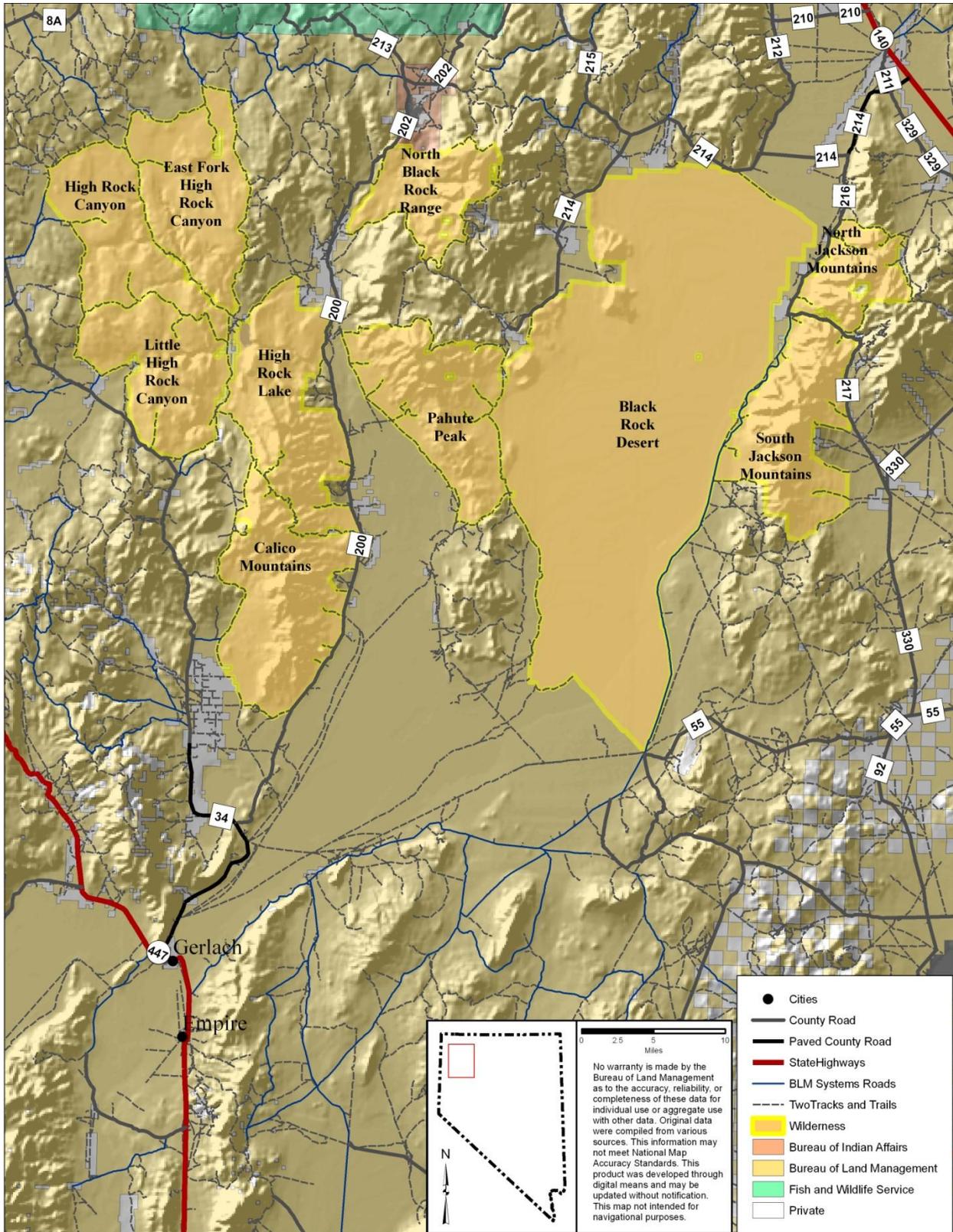
Wilderness Overview

The ten wilderness areas covered by this plan were added to the National Wilderness Preservation System by the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-554 Dec. 21, 2000; amended Nov. 6, 2001). The acreages for these wilderness areas are displayed in the table below.

Wilderness	Acres
Black Rock Desert	314,835
Calico Mountains	64,968
East Fork High Rock Canyon	52,618
High Rock Canyon	46,465
High Rock Lake	59,107
Little High Rock Canyon	48,355*
North Black Rock Range	30,648
North Jackson Mountains	23,439
Pahute Peak	56,890
South Jackson Mountains	54,536
*Additional 40 acres acquired in 2010	

The wildernesses are managed by the Bureau of Land Management Winnemucca District Black Rock Field Office with the support of the Surprise Field Office. There are nine private in-holdings in the wilderness areas along with several private parcels located adjacent to but outside of the boundaries of the areas. Maps 2-11 present an overview of the current conditions of each of the wildernesses.

The wildernesses are located in proximity to each other about 120 miles northeast of Reno, Nevada and 80 miles northwest of Winnemucca, Nevada in Humboldt, Pershing and Washoe Counties. Elevations range from flat expanses of desert below 4,000 feet, to jagged peaks reaching up to 9,000 feet.



Map 1. Location of the Planning Area



Black Rock Desert Wilderness

The ten wilderness areas contain a diverse representation of Great Basin landforms, plants, animals, and habitats. Located at the eastern side of the planning area, the North and South Jackson Mountains Wildernesses lie within the Jackson Mountain Range. These two areas are separated by Trout Creek and the adjacent county road. Between the Jackson Mountains and the Black Rock Mountain Range lies the vast, flat expanse of the east arm of the Black Rock Desert and the Black Rock Desert Wilderness, the largest designated wilderness in Nevada. Within the Black Rock Mountain Range are the Pahute Peak and North Black Rock Range Wildernesses. Still further west are the Calico Mountains and High Rock Lake Wildernesses. Finally on the western side of the planning area, characterized by high basalt tablelands and deep canyons, are the Little High Rock Canyon, High Rock Canyon, and East Fork High Rock Canyon Wildernesses—separated only by east-west motorized routes. The High Rock Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) includes portions of these three wildernesses.

Vegetation in the wilderness areas varies but is typical of the northern Great Basin. Large portions of the areas are predominantly sagebrush vegetation communities, with greasewood and salt desert scrub occurring at lower elevations. Some higher elevation uplands contain juniper, aspen, and mountain mahogany. Riparian areas contain aspens, cottonwoods, willows,

and red osier dogwood. Some of the wilderness areas contain infestations of non-native invasive species including cheatgrass, tamarisk, Russian knapweed and tall whitetop.

Wildlife found within the wilderness areas include mule deer, pronghorn antelope, California big horn sheep, coyote, bobcat, mountain lion, black-tailed jack rabbit, cotton-tail rabbit, pygmy rabbit, kit fox, and badger. Bird species include sage grouse, chukar partridge, and a wide variety of migrant song birds and raptors. Numerous reptiles, invertebrates and other small creatures are common throughout the areas. Certain streams also provide habitat for the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout and other native non-game fish. Wild horses and/or burros are found in all 10 of the wildernesses (though only in small numbers in the Black Rock Desert Wilderness) and 9 Herd Management Areas overlap the wilderness areas.

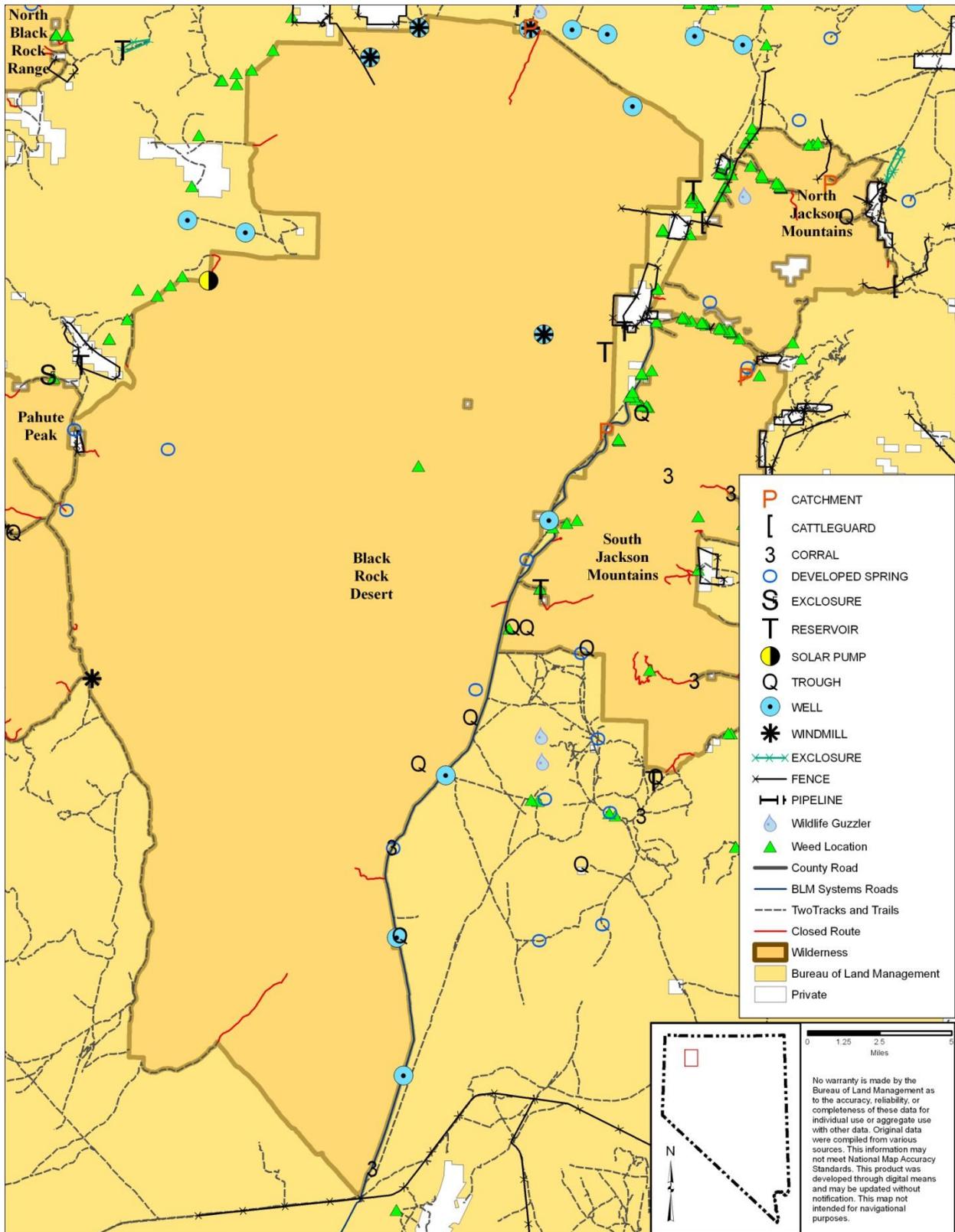
Many intermittent and perennial streams exist throughout these areas. Over 900 perennial springs throughout the areas discharge water from local and regional aquifers. A significant number of these springs have been developed for livestock use. There are 14 wildlife water developments (guzzlers) within these wilderness areas for birds and small game.

Scattered human caused developments and disturbances occur throughout the wilderness areas covered in this plan, including evidence of past mining, historic cabins, active and abandoned range developments, and former vehicle routes. These routes have been signed closed, actively decommissioned, and/or allowed to recover naturally. Since designation, 167 routes have been decommissioned.

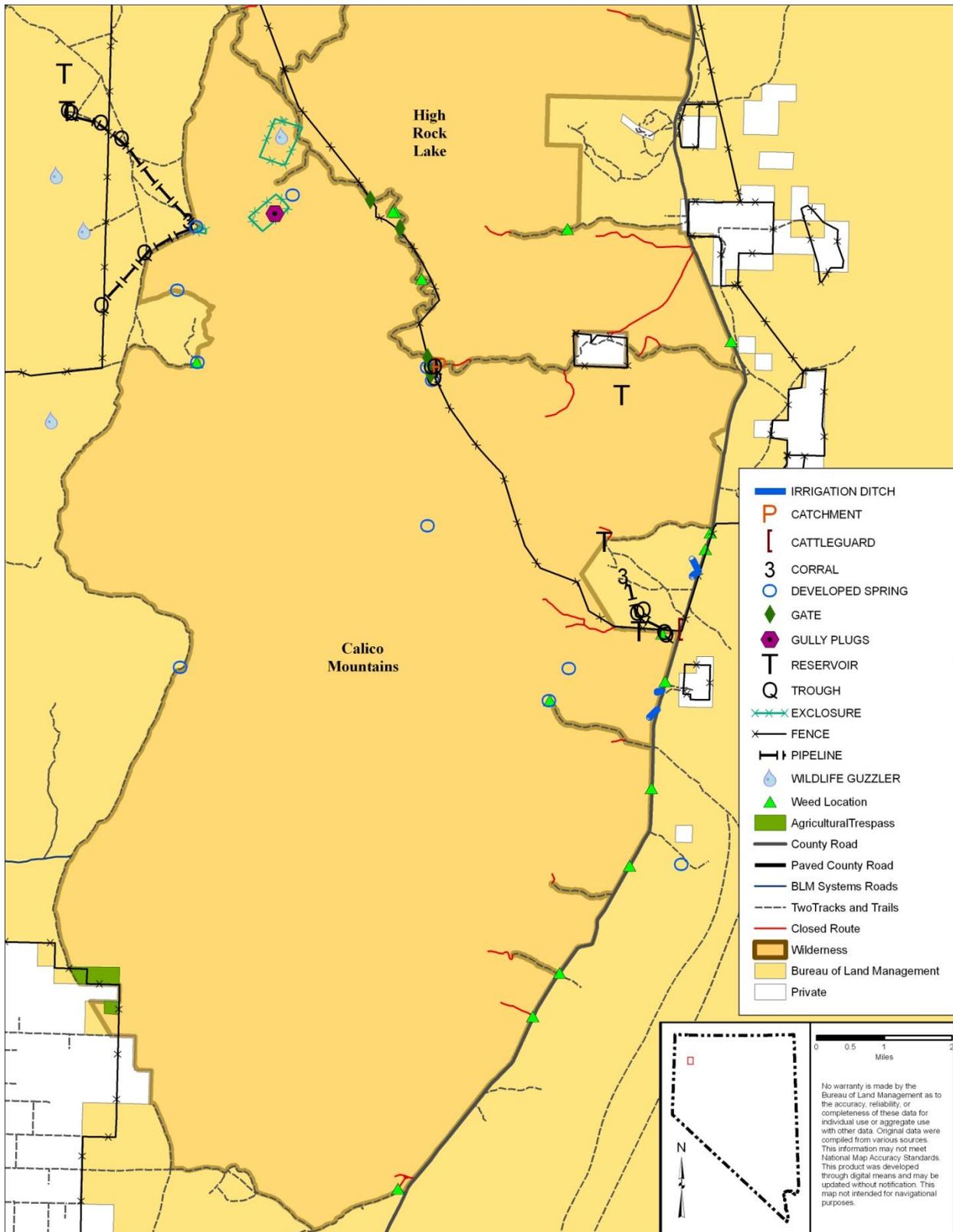
Sixteen grazing allotments (6 managed by the Surprise Field Office and 10 managed by the Winnemucca District Office) overlap the 10 designated wilderness areas. Most of the human developments in the wilderness areas are associated with range developments that support livestock grazing management in the allotments.

Recreational use levels are generally low. Hunting is currently the most common recreational use but other activities include hiking, wildlife viewing, photography, and rockhounding. There are no designated trails or other visitor use facilities within the wilderness areas.

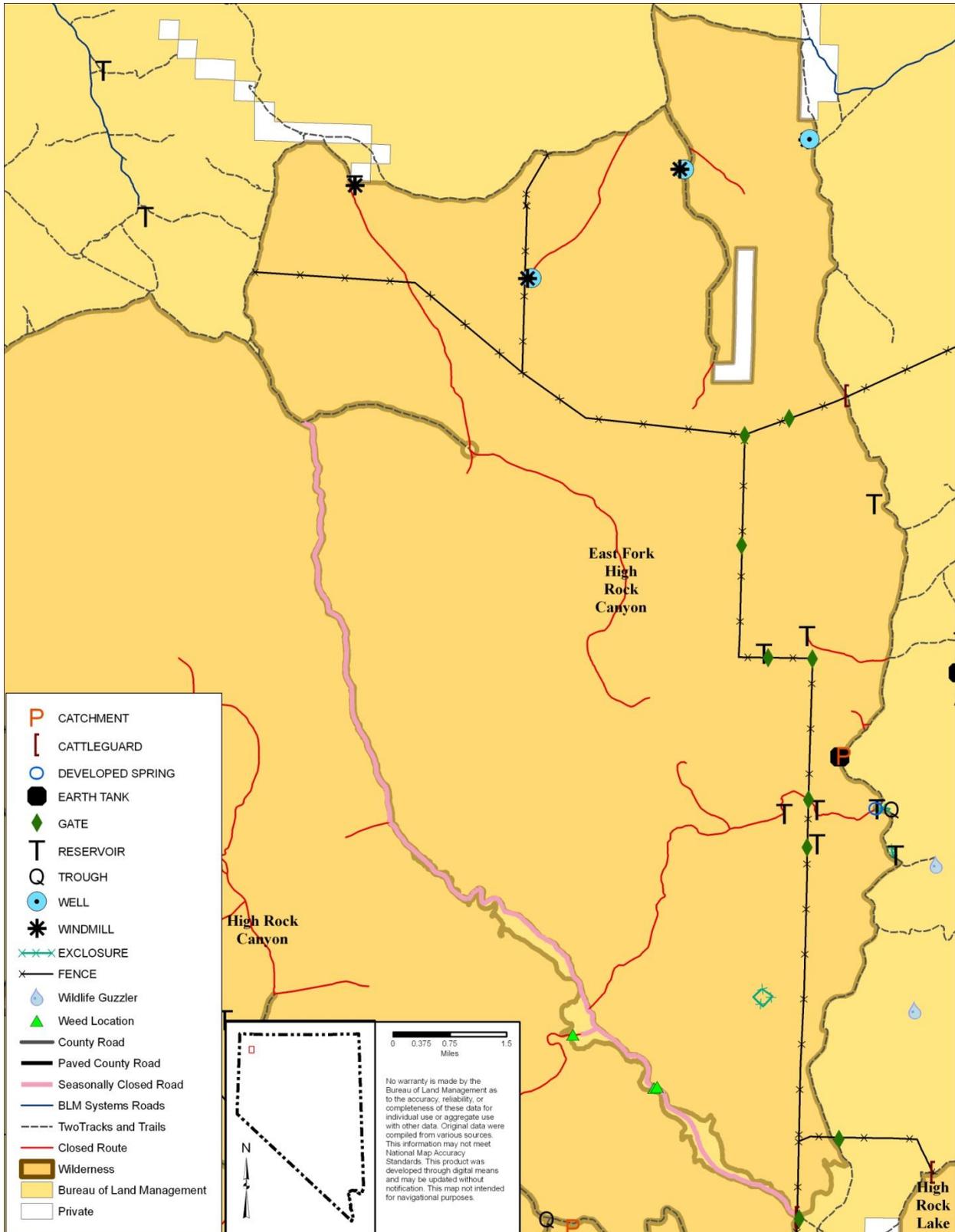
A more comprehensive description of the area is incorporated into the Affected Environment section in the Environmental Assessment following the plan.



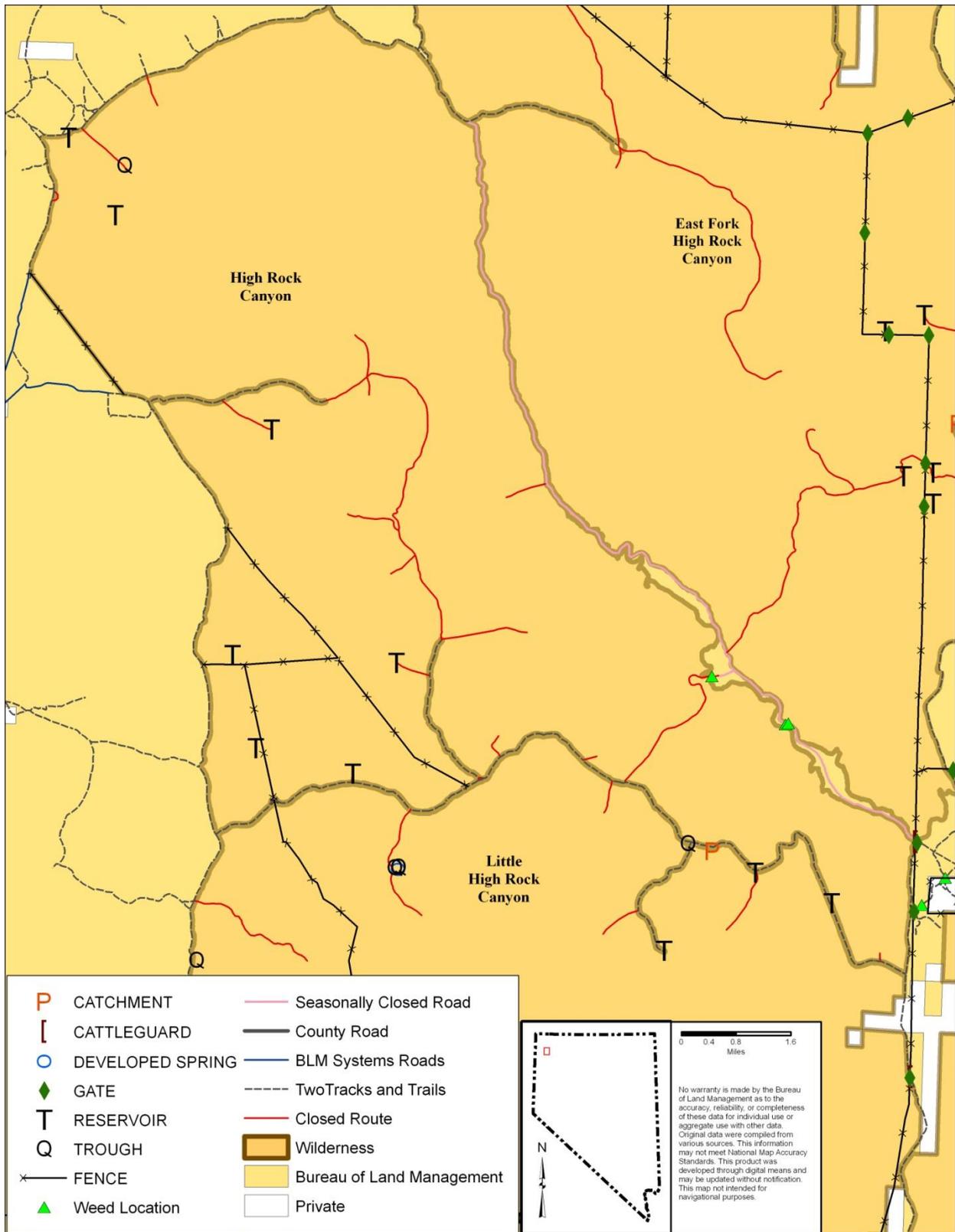
Map 2. Overview of Black Rock Desert Wilderness



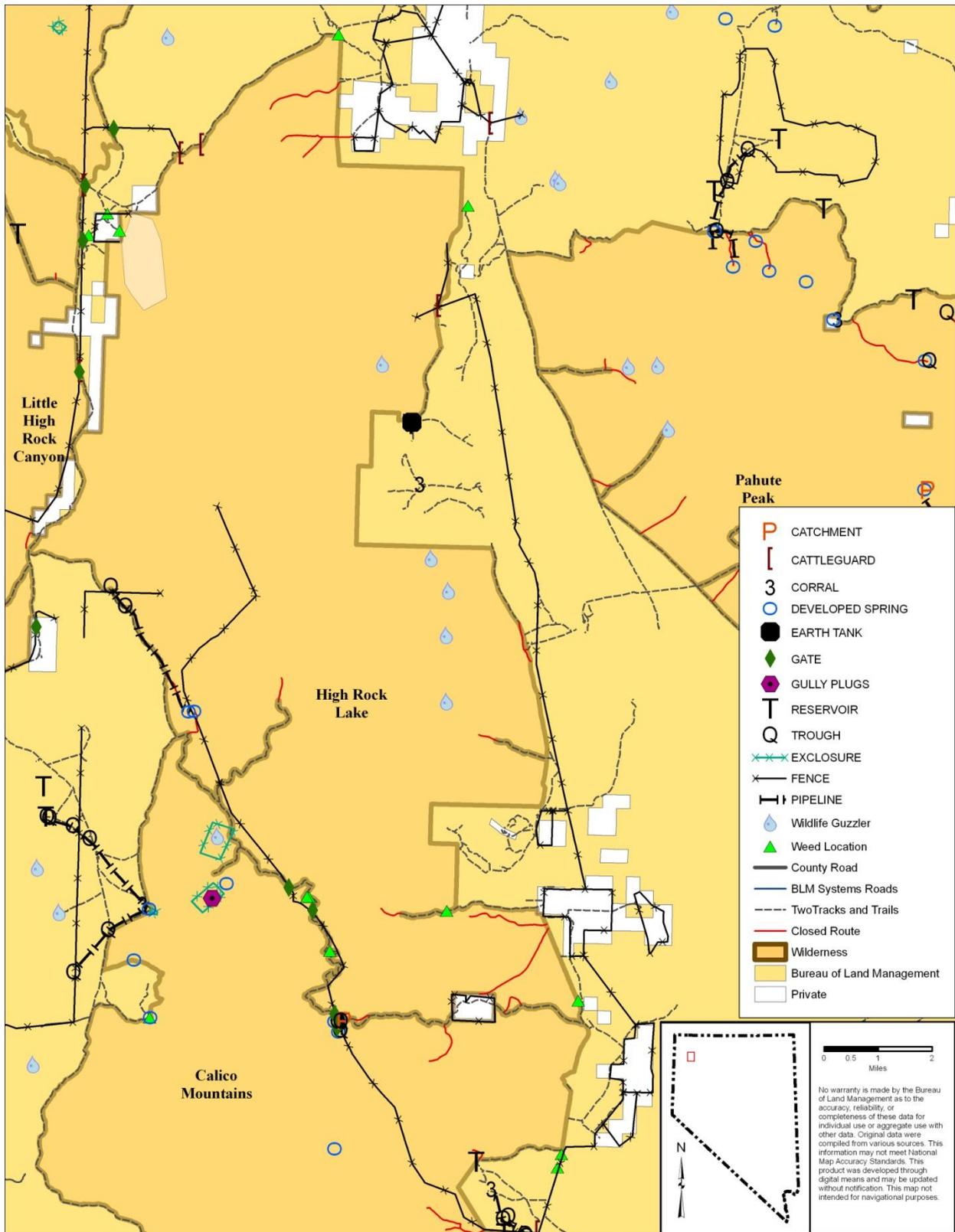
Map 3. Overview of Calico Mountains Wilderness



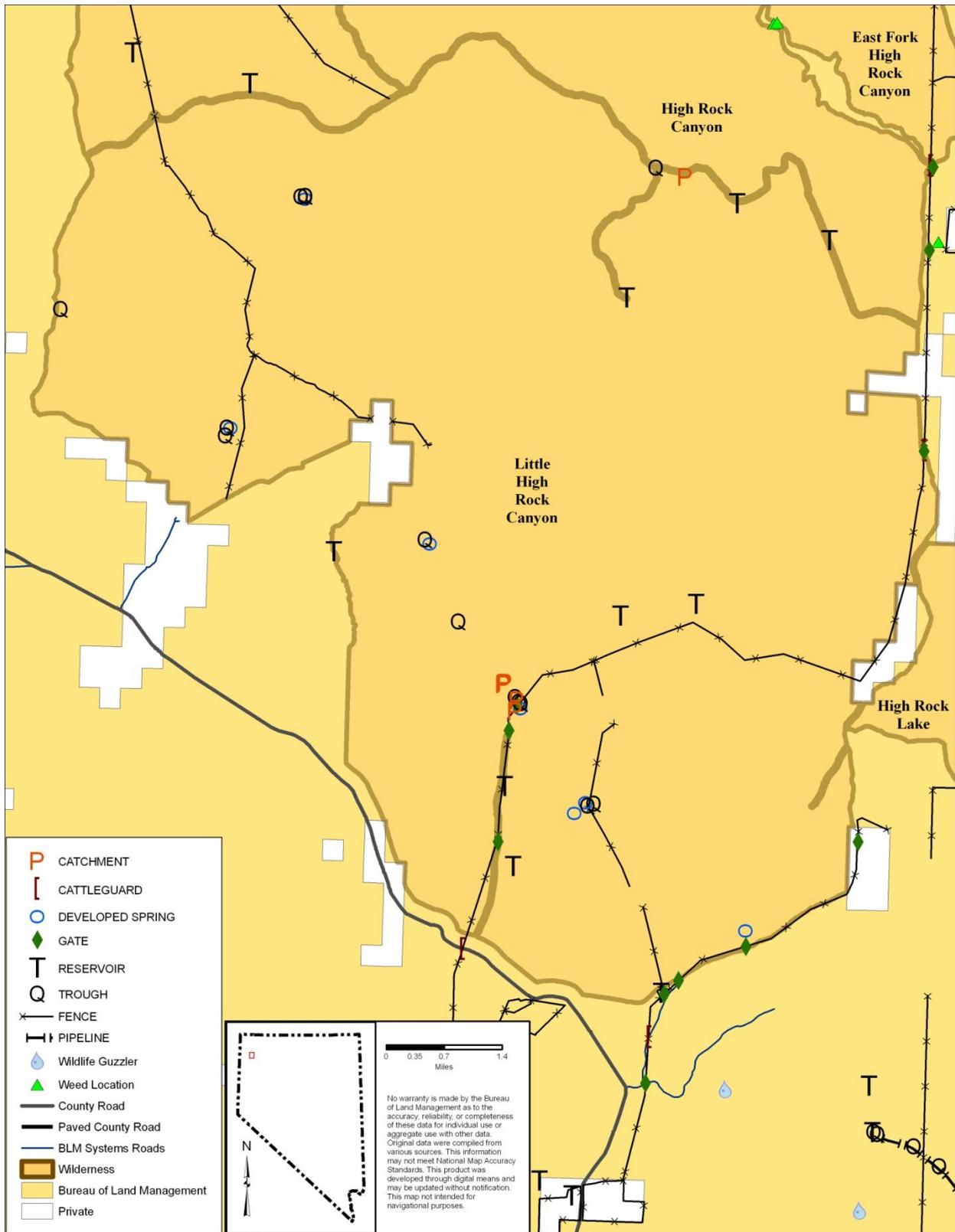
Map 4. Overview of East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness



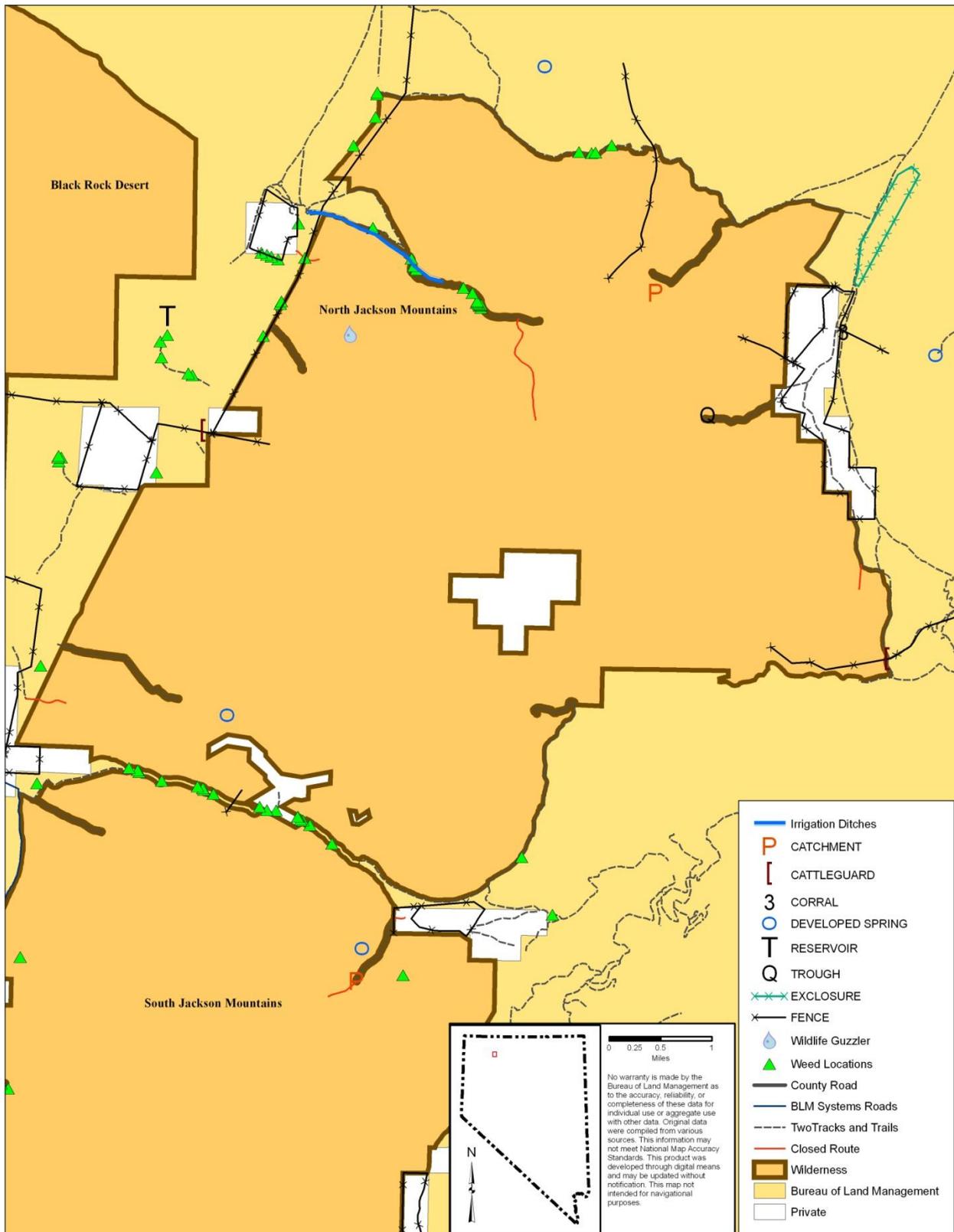
Map 5. Overview of High Rock Canyon Wilderness



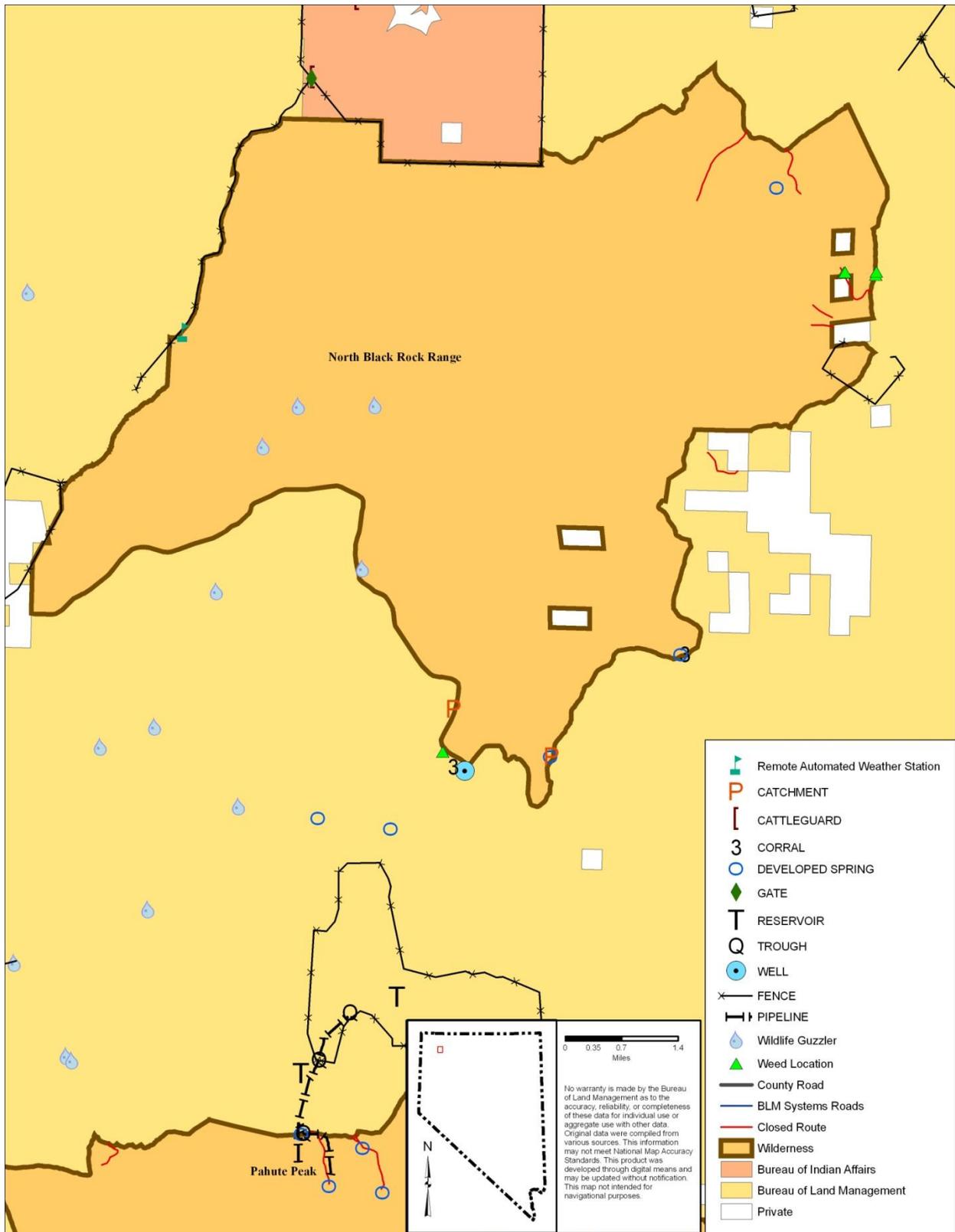
Map 6. Overview of High Rock Lake Wilderness



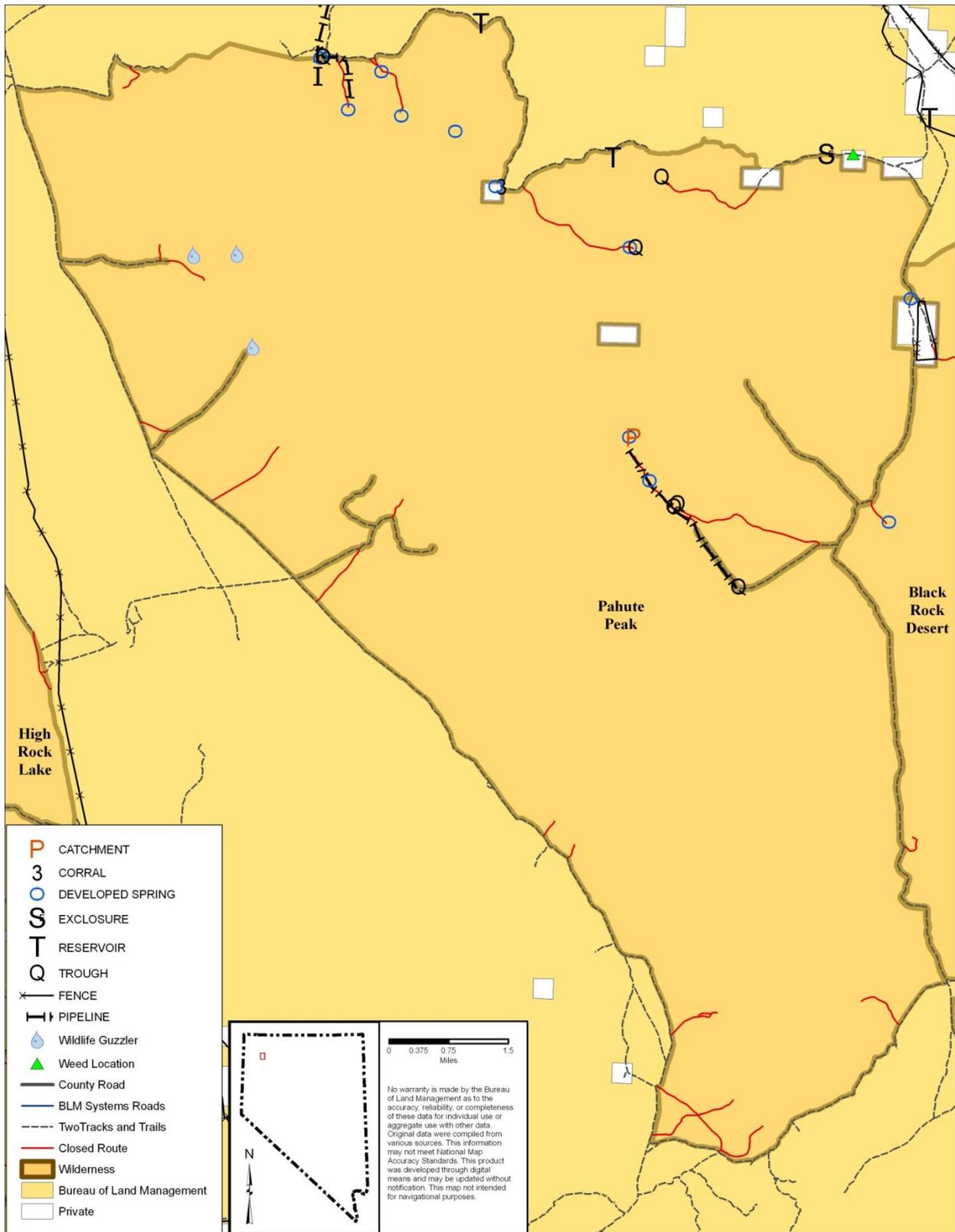
Map 7. Overview of Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness



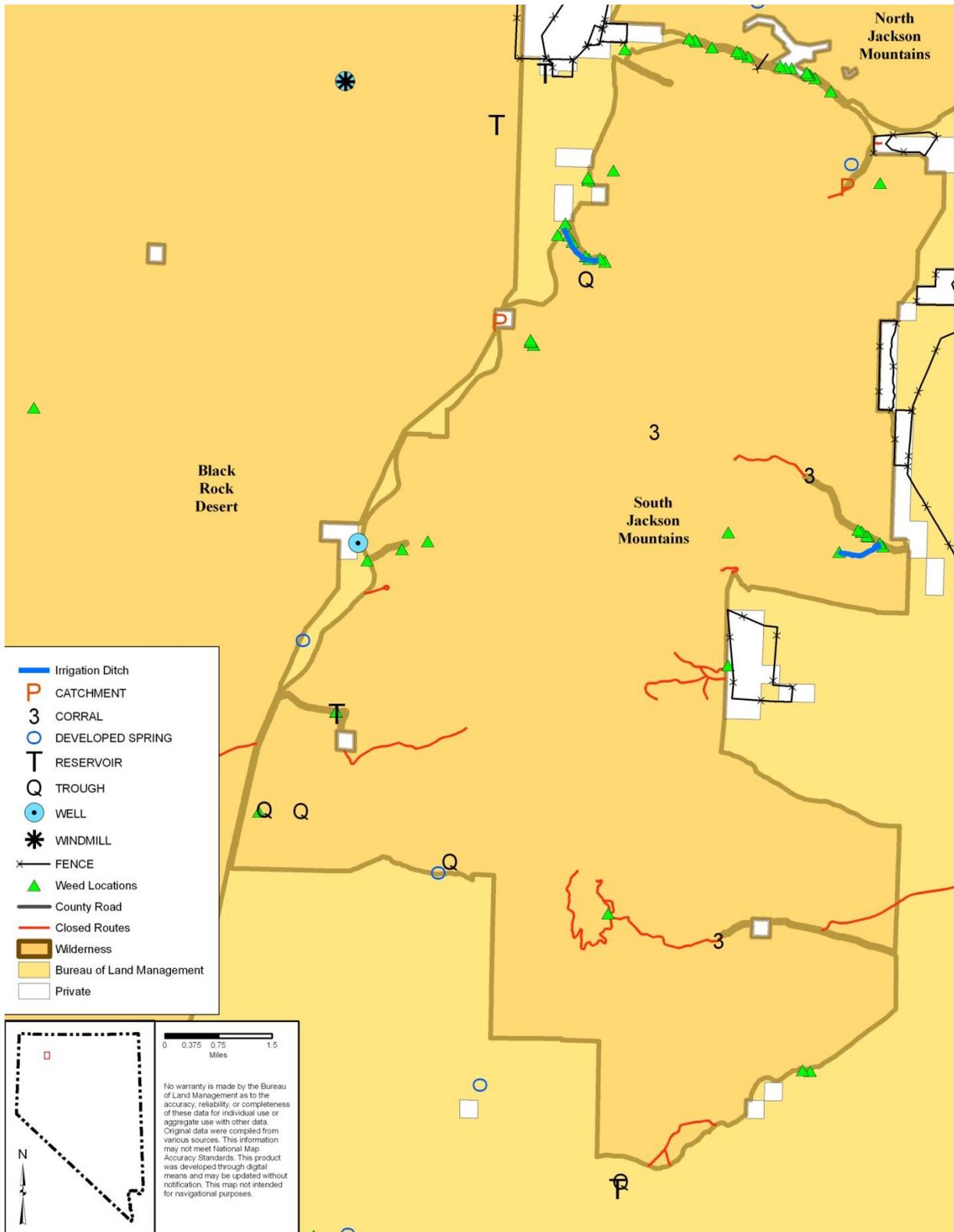
Map 8. Overview of North Jackson Mountains Wilderness



Map 9. Overview of North Black Rock Range Wilderness



Map 10. Overview of Pahute Peak Wilderness



Map 11. Overview of South Jackson Mountains Wilderness



Wash in Calico Mountains Wilderness

Wilderness Characteristics

The Wilderness Act of 1964 defines wilderness and mandates that the primary management direction is to preserve wilderness character. Although wilderness character is a complex idea and is not explicitly defined in the Wilderness Act, wilderness characteristics are commonly described in the Wilderness Act as:

- **Large, roadless tracts of land** – area is at least 5,000 acres of land with no permanent roads, or is of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition
- **Untrammeled** – area is unhindered and free from modern human control or manipulation.
- **Natural** – area appears to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature.
- **Undeveloped** – area is essentially without permanent improvements or human occupation and retains its primeval character.

- **Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation** – area provides outstanding opportunities for people to experience solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, including the values associated with physical and mental inspiration and challenge.
- **Supplemental values** – complementary features of scientific, educational, scenic or historic values.

Some trammeling (control, manipulation) activities occur in the wilderness areas. However, the impact to wilderness values caused by these activities is minimal. The trammeling activities include: human caused fires, fire suppression and ignition of prescribed fires, activities related to repeated gather and removal of wild horses and burros to prevent overpopulation, reintroduction, augmentation and removal of native fish and wildlife populations (i.e. bighorn sheep and Lahontan cutthroat trout), development of artificial water sources for small game (guzzlers), alteration of natural plant succession and ecology through past excessive livestock and/or wild horse grazing, the presence of former vehicle routes along with the restoration work that has been done on them, and the control of non-native and invasive plant populations.

The naturalness and primeval character of the areas has generally been preserved. However, some changes to the native vegetation community succession have occurred, caused by wildfires, infestations of invasive weed species, and past excessive livestock and/or wild horse grazing.

Non-native chukar partridge are found in all ten wilderness areas and are considered a naturalized species. Wild horses are also present in all ten of the wilderness areas.

Most of the land in these wilderness areas remains undeveloped. What developments there are include range developments such as fences, pipelines and troughs, former vehicle routes, and the remains of past mining operations such as cabins and adits.

The remote ridges, canyons and drainages of the planning area along with the east arm of the Black Rock Desert provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation. The citizen-proposed Desert Trail, a point-to-point orienteering route, passes through or between several of the wilderness areas. There are no designated campgrounds or trails within the wilderness areas. Visitors are required to use their skills to navigate the vast terrain. The distinctive values of the area that attract visitors include the scenic vistas, solitude, dark night skies, historic trails, world class hunting, and the associated opportunities for primitive recreation in this vast and largely undeveloped region.

While each wilderness area possesses its own special values, all ten areas share the rich prehistoric and historic values of the region which include ancient and scientifically important

paleontological remains, unique evidence of prehistoric and modern native cultures, routes of early explorers and 19th century emigrants, reminders of early homesteading, ranching, mining and traces of military activities. Each of the wilderness areas possesses evidence of these values to varying degrees. The wilderness areas preserve these values for current and future generations.



Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness

Wilderness Issues

Issues to be addressed in this wilderness management plan were identified through public scoping in the form of workshops, meetings, written letters, and email as well as by BLM staff. A letter requesting public input was sent to individuals and organizations on the Winnemucca District Office wilderness mailing list, advising of the BLM's intention to prepare a wilderness management plan for the ten wilderness areas managed by the Black Rock Field Office. There was a 30 day scoping period which ended on March 30, 2006. The Proposed Wilderness Management Plan was presented at a Tribal Coordination Meeting at the Summit Lake Reservation on May 16, 2009. Thirty public comments were received as a result of the public scoping process. The NCA RMP also provides several management goals which guide management of these wilderness areas. All issues and concerns were considered during the development of the range of alternatives described in the Environmental Assessment (EA) following this plan. Issues in the ten wilderness areas to be addressed in this plan that were identified through public scoping, tribal consultation, the NCA RMP, or Bureau staff are as follows:

1. Opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation:
 - How will visitor education, interpretation and law enforcement be implemented?
 - What criteria, such as social and ecological elements, should be used to establish use capacities?
 - How will public use be facilitated through commercial outfitter-guide permits, maintenance and development of facilities such as roads and trails as well as access easements?
 - What is the appropriate amount and type of signing necessary to manage wilderness areas?
 - How should cultural and paleontological resources be managed to protect their values?
2. Protecting and enhancing the undeveloped and natural appearance of the wilderness areas:
 - How will historic structures be managed? What will be the minimum tool for preservation of structures to be retained or for removal of those structures where active preservation will not occur?
 - How should non-historic surface disturbances including former vehicle routes and mining disturbances be restored?

- How will unnecessary and non-historic facilities and trash be removed?
3. Preserving naturalness, primeval character and influence of the wilderness areas:
- When will wildlife trapping and relocation activities be permitted?
 - Will management of wild horses and burros in wilderness be based on this plan or the development and/or revision of Herd Management Area Plans (HMAP)?
 - What is the appropriate management for fire? Should natural and human-caused fires be managed the same way?
 - How will timely and effective Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) following fires in wilderness be conducted?
 - What are the appropriate methods for restoration of native vegetation communities?
 - How will fuel levels be managed in relation to fire?
 - How will threatened and endangered species be managed?
 - What are the appropriate methods and levels of control of non-native invasive species?
 - How will natural conditions of riparian areas be restored or maintained?
4. Management of special non-wilderness uses allowed by the Wilderness Act:
- How will access to and maintenance of existing authorized range developments within wilderness be permitted?
 - How will access to and maintenance of existing wildlife water developments be permitted?
 - How will private in-holdings be accessed?
 - How will access for emergency operations including search and rescue, downed aircraft and livestock be managed?

Some issues identified during public scoping are already addressed in existing planning documents or policy and are not within the scope of this plan. These items are listed below and in the EA which follows the wilderness management plan:

- Issuance of livestock permits—The Wilderness Act explicitly allows grazing to continue at levels equal to those prior to wilderness designation.
- Wild Horse and Burro Herd Management Areas (HMA) and Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) — Adjustments to established AMLs are done through site specific evaluations of resources potentially impacted by wild horses and burros. This plan establishes a schedule for the development or review of all Herd Management Area Plans (HMAPs) that include wilderness areas.

- Aircraft over flights—Neither the Wilderness Act nor the NCA Act include authorization for management of aircraft flying above wilderness areas.
- New surface disturbing projects—Existing guidance provided by manual sections and handbooks is adequate to address any future projects within wilderness. Decisions related to future surface disturbing projects, except for those specifically identified in the plan, will be excluded from the plan.
- Management of fish and wildlife populations—Both the Wilderness Act and the NCA Act provide for the continued jurisdiction of the State of Nevada for the management of fish and wildlife.
- Allowing public use of motorized or mechanized vehicles or equipment within wilderness. The Wilderness Act prohibits motorized vehicles in wilderness, other than specific exceptions such as immediate threats to human safety.
- Moving wilderness boundaries to allow motorized access to adjacent areas. Only Congress has the authority to move or modify wilderness boundaries and legislation would have to be enacted to authorize any changes.

Wilderness Management Goals and Objectives

Direction and purpose for managing wilderness is guided by four primary goals as defined in Appendix 1 of the BLM Wilderness Management Planning Manual (BLM Manual 8561). In turn each of these goals is refined into specific associated objectives and in turn each objective is coupled with a management action(s) that will lead to accomplishment of the objective and the goal. This section outlines the goals and objectives for this wilderness management plan.

Goal 1

To provide for the long-term protection and preservation of the area’s wilderness character under a principal of non-degradation. The area’s natural condition, opportunities for solitude, opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and any ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value present would be managed so that they would remain unimpaired.

Objectives

- Preserve the primeval character and influence of the wilderness areas by managing for the integrity of an indigenous Northern Great Basin ecosystem, including reducing non-native plants in favor of native plants.

- Manage wildlife habitat to provide for healthy, viable and naturally distributed wildlife populations with the least amount of environmental disturbance necessary.
- Preserve the primeval character and influence of the wilderness by allowing fire as a natural process of disturbance and succession where the ecosystem is fire dependent; manage fire where it threatens wilderness character and/or natural ecological conditions or processes; prevent and suppress fire where it threatens human life or property.
- Protect, preserve and study the outstanding archaeological, paleontological, and historic resources of the areas while allowing for visitor enjoyment of those resources.

Goal 2

To manage the wilderness areas for the use and enjoyment of visitors in a manner that would leave the areas unimpaired for their future use and enjoyment as wilderness. The wilderness resource would be dominant in all management decisions where a choice must be made between preservation of wilderness character and visitor use.

Objectives

- Provide for the use and enjoyment of the wilderness, along with outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude, in such a way that protects natural conditions with minimal on-the-ground developments and minimal regulation of visitor activities.
- Provide for vehicle access to the boundaries of the wilderness areas while also deterring vehicles from entering the wilderness areas.
- Emphasize education and interpretation to manage visitor activities.

Goal 3

To manage the wilderness areas using the minimum tool, equipment, or structure necessary to successfully and safely accomplish the objective. The chosen tool, equipment, or structure should be one that least degrades wilderness values temporarily or permanently. Management would seek to preserve spontaneity of use and as much freedom from regulation as possible.

Objective

- Implement proposed actions in a manner that will have the least impact to wilderness characteristics.

Goal 4

To manage non-conforming but accepted uses permitted by the Wilderness Act and subsequent laws in a manner that would prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the areas' wilderness character. Non-conforming uses are the exception rather than the rule; therefore, emphasis is placed on maintaining wilderness character.

Objectives

- Allow for special provision land uses specified by the Wilderness Act or the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon NCA Act while minimizing developments, degradation to naturalness and other impacts to wilderness resources. These special provisions include:
 - management of access to and maintenance of existing authorized range developments within wilderness
 - maintenance of existing wildlife water developments
 - access to private in-holdings
 - management of emergency operations including search and rescue, downed aircraft, and livestock.
- Maintain or enhance the natural appearance of the wilderness areas by removing unnecessary facilities and minimizing or restoring human-caused surface disturbances when opportunities arise.

Current Situations and Assumptions

Current situation and assumption statements define local conditions and expectations with regard to any particular aspect of the wilderness resource covered by the plan. Because areas in the National Wilderness Preservation System vary in their characteristics, level of use, and other local conditions, important information including constraints and assumptions about how things will change in the future are identified below.

Current Situation: Cultural and Paleontological Resources

There are numerous prehistoric, historic and paleontological resources in these wilderness areas including historic structures, rock shelters pictographs, and petroglyphs.

Assumption: The potential for damage to historic, prehistoric and paleontological resources in these wilderness areas will increase as use increases. Increased population growth combined with an increased awareness of wilderness recreation opportunities will lead to increased visitation. This increased visitation may result in more damage to historical, prehistoric, and

paleontological resources. Over the life of this plan, use increases are predicted to be relatively low with more pronounced increases at easily accessible attractions. Structures not associated with valid and existing rights, and which are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, may be removed or allowed to decay naturally.

Current Situation: Invasive Plant Species

Preservation of the natural character of these wilderness areas is currently affected by infestations of invasive annual grasses and non-native invasive species such as cheatgrass, tamarisk, Russian knapweed, and tall whitetop. Establishment of annual grasses and non-native invasive species following fire has altered fire regimes and condition classes at lower elevations.

Assumption: Over the life of this plan, the combination of motorized trespass, increased recreational use, and wildfire will further the establishment of noxious weeds and non-native plant species, which in turn will impair proper ecological function and continue to alter natural fire regimes in these wilderness areas.

Current Situation: Plant Community Composition and Succession

Past grazing, mining, fire and fire suppression activities, and OHV use have altered the natural composition of plant communities and plant succession within these wilderness areas.

Assumption: One aspect of preserving the wilderness areas' natural and primeval character involves the maintenance of healthy, viable and naturally distributed vegetation communities. In some wilderness areas the natural composition of plant communities has been altered more than others. Over the life of this plan it will be necessary to manipulate vegetation communities in order to preserve the area's naturalness.

Current Situation: Fire Regime

A large portion of the Black Rock- High Rock Emigrant Trails NCA is classified as having a high departure from the natural (historic) Fire Regime Condition Classes. Parts of the NCA are classified as having a more moderate departure from the natural Fire Regime Condition Classes.

Assumption: Increased visitation, changing Fire Regime Condition Classes, drought, the importance of protecting historic structures, and NCA RMP guidance will cause fire and fuels management to be an important part of the future management of the wilderness areas. Prescribed fire, fuels treatments and Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation will be necessary over the life of this plan to protect and manage the wilderness areas.

Current Situation: Recreational Opportunities

Opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation are currently outstanding with a slight decrease during the hunting season. The majority of use is concentrated at numerous access points, pullouts and primitive campsites along the wilderness boundaries. Motorized trespass is common at a

few locations. The NCA RMP states the entire planning area will be administrated as a Special Recreation Management Area.

Assumption: Population growth in Nevada combined with increased awareness of wilderness recreation opportunities has resulted in increased participation in hunting and other back country recreation activities in the ten wilderness areas. However, during the life of this plan, use increases are predicted to be relatively low overall with easily accessible attractions and camping areas adjacent to wilderness seeing a more pronounced increase in use.

The Winnemucca District will be completing a Recreation Activity Management Plan (RAMP). This plan will outline specific actions for the management of recreation use outside of wilderness. However, issues which affect wilderness management will be addressed in this wilderness management plan. These issues include management of wilderness information facilities (signs and kiosks), legal access and other adjacent facilities.

Current Situation: Commercial Uses

Commercial guides and outfitters operate within the wilderness areas. Commercial uses include hunting, hiking and tours.

Assumption: Over the life of this plan, the use of commercial guides and outfitters will continue and may become more popular. As the population of the United States becomes increasingly urbanized, the demand for commercial guides and outfitters to provide safe access into the wilderness for hunting, camping, and general tours is expected to grow.

Current Situation: Information, Interpretation, and Environmental Education

Visitor information and education is currently available offsite at BLM offices, mobile visitor centers and from the State of Nevada and non-profit partner organizations. Information kiosks are located at primary NCA access portals and the upper and lower ends of High Rock Canyon. Overall onsite education and interpretation occur on an opportunistic basis and as necessary. Some direction and recommendations concerning education and interpretation can be found in the NCA RMP.

Assumption: As the numbers of visitors to a wilderness area increase, motorized and mechanized trespass and impacts to wilderness values will likely increase. The need for user education and information will become increasingly important.

Current Situation: Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species

The federally designated threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout occur in some of the wilderness areas covered by this plan. Also present are a number of BLM sensitive species including California bighorn sheep and federal candidate species greater sage grouse.

Assumption: One aspect of preserving the wilderness areas' natural primeval character involves the maintenance of healthy, viable and naturally distributed wildlife populations. Over the life of this plan it may be necessary to implement wildlife management activities to prevent degradation to and enhancement of threatened and endangered species.

Current Situation: Special Provision Land Uses

There are several non-conforming but accepted trammeling activities permitted by the Wilderness Act, the Black Rock Desert- High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act (2000) and the Congressional Grazing Guidelines (House Report No. 101-405, Appendix L). These include active grazing allotments, the presence of authorized allotment fences, pipelines and water troughs. There are 14 wildlife water developments in the planning area. Mechanized or motorized equipment may be allowed when deemed necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of these ten areas as wilderness and/or for emergencies such as fire suppression or search and rescue activities.

Assumption: Over the life of this plan maintenance of authorized allotment fences, pipelines and water troughs will be required. Prior to wilderness designation, the maintenance of range and wildlife developments and livestock management required the occasional use of mechanized or motorized equipment and may do so in the future. Additionally, there may be a need for emergency or administrative use of motorized equipment in one or more of the wilderness areas. Fires have occurred and will occur over the life of the plan.

Current Situation: Grazing and Wild Horses and Burros

Wild horses and burros along with livestock are impacting vegetation and water resources within the wilderness areas.

Assumption: One aspect of preserving the wilderness areas' natural primeval character involves the maintenance of healthy, viable and naturally distributed wildlife populations. Excessive numbers of wild horses and burros negatively impact wildlife habitat. Wild horse and burro gathers are scheduled to occur approximately every 3-5 years or as funding allows. Detailed criteria for gathers will be developed as part of the Herd Management Area Plans. Between gathers, population fluctuations may occur and could lead to negative impacts to wilderness. Livestock grazing will continue in the wilderness areas at current levels as required under the Wilderness Act.

Wilderness Management Strategy

The overall strategy for managing these ten wilderness areas is to achieve desired wilderness conditions through protecting, preserving and restoring ecological function and natural appearance of the wilderness landscape with the minimum amount of management, interference or manipulation necessary.

Due to their proximity and similar management issues, management actions are virtually the same for the ten wilderness areas except for a few site-specific actions. All management actions, including site-specific actions are described in this plan and in the Environmental Assessment (EA) following this plan. Based on the current situation and assumptions, national wilderness goals, wilderness management objectives, and wilderness issues that were identified through scoping, the following actions would guide the management of these areas. This plan is supplemental to and consistent with wilderness laws, regulations and policies on page 2. This set of laws, regulations and policies must be further consulted in the event of future and unforeseen issues. The wilderness management objective along with any guidance from the NCA RMP precedes each wilderness management action.

Under current Nevada BLM policy (Instruction Memorandum No. NV-2004-043), all proposed actions within designated wilderness areas in Nevada are subject to public notification and 30-day public comment period procedures. This policy applies to the wilderness areas in this wilderness management plan unless the impacts and environmental consequences of the proposed actions have been analyzed in the EA accompanying this wilderness management plan.

Any ground disturbing activities associated with the following activities would follow the best management practices outlined in the BLM Nevada Migratory Bird Best Management Practices for the Sagebrush Biome, 2003.

The Nevada BLM and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) have entered into a Programmatic Agreement concerning the actions in this WMP. This Programmatic Agreement covers all aspects of the planning, development, and construction of the elements in the WMP. The implementation of the actions contained in the WMP would be administered in accordance with the stipulations contained in the Programmatic Agreement (refer to Preliminary Environmental Assessment Appendix B).

Wilderness Management Actions



Structure within the South Jackson Mountains Wilderness

Historic Structures, Cultural and Paleontological Resources.

Objective *Protect and preserve the outstanding archeological and historic resources of these areas while allowing for visitor enjoyment of those resources.*

NCA RMP Guidance *Objective 2.2.3B, PAL-1 and CRM-6*

There are numerous historic structures, i.e., cabins, mining shacks, and windmills, as well as roads and fences and other ranching features within the wilderness areas. Two of these structures (historic homesteads) have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and future inventory and evaluation would likely find several of the other structures eligible as well. Within ten (10) years of completion of this plan, BLM would

inventory and evaluate the National Register eligibility of the buildings in the ten wilderness areas, as shown on Table 3-5 Identified Structures Within Wilderness in the Preliminary Environmental Assessment.

For the protection and enhancement of archaeological resources and historic structures, vegetation may be cut back or removed up to several feet from a resource or structure. This work would be accomplished with pruning shears and Pulaski's as well as other hand tools. This work would be completed by appropriately trained staff or volunteers. Work will only be done to historic structures that are either unevaluated or have been determined to be historically significant or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Structures not determined to be historically significant or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places would either be removed from the wilderness area or allowed to decay naturally. The method for removing structures from wilderness would use the method of least disturbance.

Protection of cultural and paleontological resources from damage by wilderness visitors would be accomplished with the minimum on-the-ground actions. Resources would be monitored but not specifically identified for the public. If monitoring reveals that damage is occurring to cultural or paleontological resources, the BLM Black Rock Field Office Wilderness Planner and Archeologist would work together to develop a management strategy for preventing further damage. Options include, but are not limited to, education, signage and barriers.

The NCA RMP directs paleontological inventories to be focused on the west arm of the Black Rock Desert, Soldier Meadows and the Black Rock Wilderness.

As part of this plan, excavations less than one cubic meter may be authorized to gather information in support of permitted archeological or paleontological research efforts within the wilderness areas. All excavations would be restored to their previous natural appearance at the end of the site visit. Excavations must follow BLM/SHPO protocol, Native American Consultation process, the completion of an Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) permit, BLM field work authorization, MRDG analysis, and all other applicable laws, policies, and regulations. All work would be completed with hand tools with materials being transported in and out of wilderness on foot or with pack stock. Under this plan, no excavations would occur within established buffer zones and seasonal restrictions for species of concern or federally threatened or endangered species. All excavation activities would occur outside of the nesting season for migratory birds.

Research requiring excavations larger than one meter may be authorized on a case-by-case basis following BLM/SHPO protocol, Native American Consultation process, the completion of an Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) permit, BLM field work authorization, MRDG analysis, all other applicable laws, policies, and regulations, and NEPA evaluation.

Mechanized equipment or vehicles may be authorized following subsequent MRDG analysis, NOPA, and NEPA evaluation in addition to other permitting requirements.

Commercial exploitation of paleontological resources within the wilderness areas is prohibited.

Introduction, Spread and Control of Non-native Invasive Species

Objective *Preserve the primeval character and influence of the wilderness areas by managing for the integrity of an indigenous Northern Great Basin ecosystem, including reducing non-native plants in favor of native plants.*

NCA RMP Guidance *Objectives 2.2.8D, E, F, G and H, Veg- 7, Veg- 11, Veg-12, Water-1, Water- 3, LHS-1.*

The management ideal is to sustain only native species in wilderness areas. The invasive annual cheatgrass is present throughout the ten wilderness areas (and most of northern Nevada) and may require different management techniques than other invasive weeds. A systematic weed inventory program would be implemented across the planning area. The program would include:

- Training of staff and volunteers in weed species identification.
- Coordination with local weed management districts.
- Exploration of remote sensing techniques to enhance field inventories.

Noxious weeds in Nevada are classified by the Nevada Department of Agriculture and the Plant Protection Act (2000). To date, inventory efforts have identified six noxious weeds within the planning area: perennial pepperweed [a.k.a. tall whitetop] (*Lepidium latifolium*), Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*), bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), tamarisk or salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*), whitetop or hoary cress (*Cardaria draba*), and Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*). Maps 2-11 show the location of confirmed invasive species infestations within the wilderness areas as of 2009. Additional undiscovered infestations are likely. As a priority, efforts would focus on the eradication and control of existing species which present a high degree of risk to ecosystem stability and which are small populations of newly introduced species most easily treated over the short-term. Treatments for well established large weed populations would focus on areas of high resource value. These areas include endangered/threatened species habitat, rare or unique habitats, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and spring sources.

Current large infestations of noxious weeds occur in certain locations in or near the wilderness areas. Virtually all perennial and intermittent streams in the North and South Jackson Mountains Wildernesses have infestations of salt cedar (*Tamarix spp.*). The same is also true for the wilderness areas in the Black Rock Range Wilderness, though to a lesser degree. Treatment in these areas has occurred in the past with limited success.

A large infestation of perennial pepperweed with isolated populations of salt cedar occurs along the portion of the Quinn River which flows through the Black Rock Desert Wilderness. Treatment has occurred along portions of this infestation in the past.

There is a substantial, though widely scattered population, of hoary cress (*Cardaria draba*) with a small population of perennial pepperweed in the Soldier Meadows ACEC. The infestation is adjacent to wilderness. The area was treated in 2009, and was part of a larger treatment plan identified for 2010.

Leadville Canyon has a large infestation of Russian knapweed, though this is largely contained along the areas near the county road which follows the canyon. There have been infestations discovered in the adjacent Calico Mountains Wilderness along access roads which are likely satellite populations which were transported from this source. Treatment in Leadville Canyon has occurred annually. The Pahute Wilderness is also infested with Russian knapweed.

The High Rock Lake Wilderness also has a substantial population of hoary cress within the lakebed that changes due to seasonal inundation.

Most other noxious weed infestations that have been identified are small scattered infestations located along access and cherry-stem roads in the various wilderness areas.

Integrated Weed Management practices would be implemented including:

1. Prevention of disturbing activities to maintain competitive vegetation/root cover and reduce the distribution and introduction of noxious weed seed.
2. Manual removal with hand tools if weeds could be controlled or eradicated without causing re-sprouting, without soil disturbance leading to expansion of non-native invasive species, and where infestations are of a size manageable by hand crews.
3. Herbicides applied by backpack and stock equipment, where manual control is not effective.
4. Biological control agents approved by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service where infestations are of such size that eradication by manual removal or herbicides is not feasible.
5. Herbicides applied aerially or with motorized equipment, where control is feasible, where control impacts are quickly and readily rehabilitated, and where the infestation is

of such a size that herbicide cannot be effectively applied without motorized equipment.

6. Reseeding treated areas with native species.

Managing the Natural Vegetation Condition of Wilderness Areas

The planning area has numerous intermittent and perennial (year-round) streams. Approximately 100 miles of perennial streams occur in the planning area. Most lotic (flowing water) systems are functioning at risk as a result of past land management practices. Riparian vegetation exists in the mountainous areas before the water goes underground. Cold water and thermal (hot) springs, seeps and flowing (artesian) wells are common and significant attributes of the planning area.

The NCA RMP provides specific direction for the management of riparian areas within the wilderness areas including the goal *“to maintain or achieve within 15 years, properly Functioning Condition status for 90 percent of the wetland vegetation community sites within the planning area consistent with Land Health Standards.”* The Land Health Standards are those developed by the Sierra Front-Northwestern Nevada and NE California-NW Nevada Resource Advisory Councils (RAC) as identified in Appendix B of the NCA RMP.



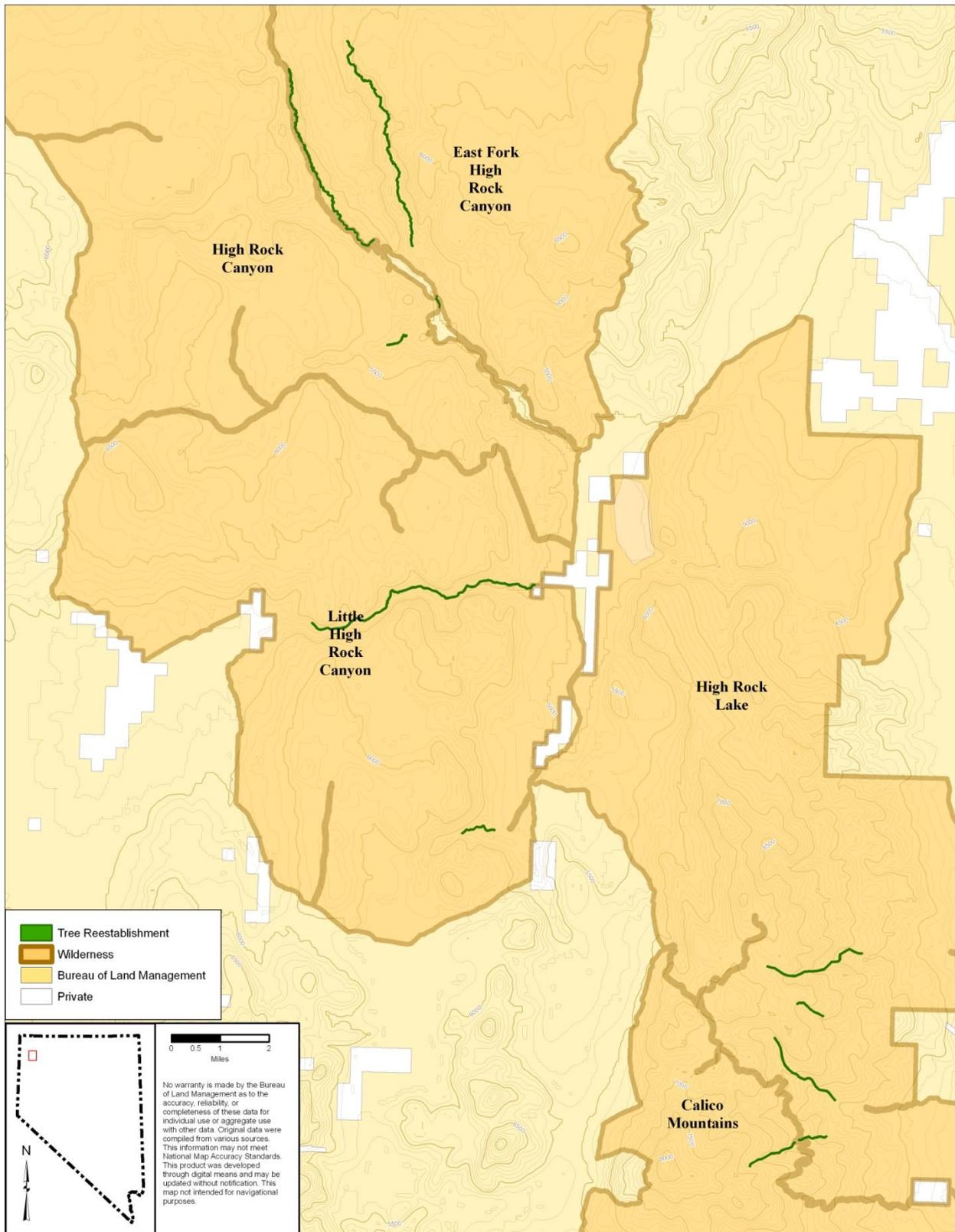
The process for assessing Proper Functioning Condition would follow protocol in technical references 1737-9 *Process for Assessing Proper Functioning condition for Lotic Areas*, 1737-11 *Process for Assessing Proper Functioning condition for Lentic Riparian-Wetland Areas*, or 1737 *Using Aerial Photographs to Assess Proper Functioning Condition of Riparian – Wetland Areas*. An evaluation and action process would also be developed to determine best management practices for those riparian systems not meeting applicable Land Health Standards or water quality standards and for Lahontan cutthroat trout streams not meeting the life history requirements of the Lahontan cutthroat trout. Staff and volunteers would be trained in these processes.

Restoration of Native Vegetation Communities

Native vegetation communities and successional processes have been altered within the planning area as a result of past and current disturbances associated with agriculture, mining, livestock grazing, road construction, OHV use, and wildfire. The NCA RMP directs managers to *“consider the maintenance and enhancement of natural ecological processes as the dominant factor in determining the composition and distribution of plant communities in the Wilderness Zone.”*

Site-Specific Action—Aspen and Cottonwood Propagation

Approximately 275 acres within the Calico Mountains, High Rock Lake, High Rock Canyon, Little High Rock Canyon and the East Fork High Rock Canyon Wildernesses have been identified as potential aspen and/or cottonwood reestablishment sites (see Map 12 for the location of these sites). Suitable sites would be planted with propagated root segments from the genetic stock in close proximity. Root segments would be harvested and planted with hand tools only. Plants would be temporarily protected from wildlife and livestock browsing by either range cages or T post and wire fences. These fences or cages would be removed as soon as the trees were sufficiently established. Restoration of aspen and cottonwood stands would enhance the naturalness of the affected wildernesses by restoring native vegetation communities and associated wildlife use.



Map 12. Aspen and Cottonwood Reestablishment Sites

Site-Specific Action—Meadow Restoration

Prescribed burning would be conducted to restore native meadow communities in portions of the East Fork High Rock Canyon, High Rock Canyon and Little High Rock Canyon Wildernesses. The burns would have an objective of increasing native grass cover while maintaining sagebrush cover within the range of natural variability (zero to 15% canopy cover) with the following constraints:

- Burn sites would have pre-burn minimum native grass densities of 15 plants/100ft line transect, minimum sagebrush cover of 15%, and maximum rabbit brush cover of 5%.
- Maximum individual burn block size would be 50 acres.
- Maximum burn area in any burn season would be 100 acres.
- All burn areas and control lines would be inspected for historical features during preparation of the burn plan. Appropriate mitigation would be detailed in the burn plan, approved by the District Manager, and implemented prior to burning consistent with the guidelines for the applicable cultural resource report.



Prescribed Fire in High Rock Canyon

Management of Fire Suppression, Fuels and Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation

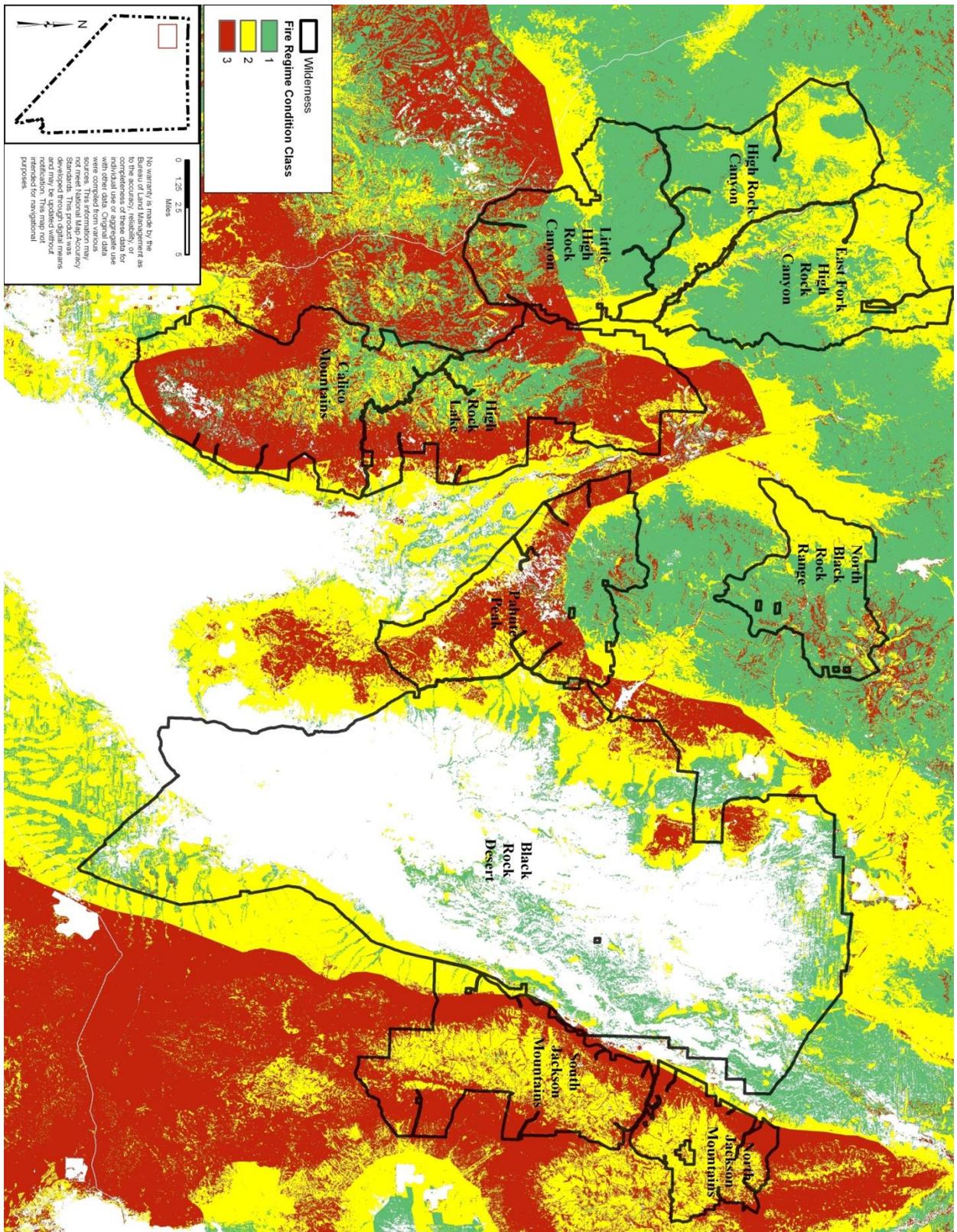
Objective *Preserve the primeval character and influence of the wilderness by allowing fire as a natural process of disturbance and succession where the ecosystem is fire-dependant; manage fire where it threatens wilderness character and/or natural ecological conditions or processes; prevent and suppress fire where it threatens human life or property.*

NCA RMP Guidance *Objective 2.2.11C, FIRE-1, FIRE-2, FIRE-3, FIRE-4, VEG-1*

Fire management actions in the wilderness areas would be structured in accordance with the Winnemucca District Fire Management Plan and the Surprise Field Office Fire Management Plan along with applicable updates. The areas covered by this plan fall within the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails NCA and Associated Wilderness Fire Management Unit (FMU). The majority of the FMU is represented by Fire Regime Conditions Class (FRCC) III, having a high departure from the central tendency of the natural (historic) regime. A FRCC is a classification of the amount of departure from the natural fire regime. Portions of the Black Rock Range and areas near Pahute Peak have Condition Class II, having a more moderate departure from the natural regime. (See Map 13)

Fire management within wilderness areas would include suppression actions and allowing fire to be used for resource benefit subject to applicable laws, guidance and consistent with wilderness management and fire plan objectives.

All of the lands within the FMU have been placed into two categories. Category A directs full suppression for wildland fire. Category B allows for the less than full suppression for wildland fire to meet desired outcomes. This plan would emphasize the maintenance and restoration of natural conditions and natural plant community succession. Nearly all lands within the planning area are in Category B. Category A lands are primarily located near private property, structures, and other sensitive areas. See Map 14 in the Preliminary Environmental Assessment for the locations of Category A lands.



Map 13. Fire Regime Condition Classes

Fire Suppression Guidelines

Consistency with wilderness resource management objectives would be considered. The following points and District policy would guide suppression within wilderness:

- A wilderness advisor would be assigned to all fires occurring in or threatening wilderness areas.
- Use of heavy equipment (bulldozers et cetera) would only be used in the wilderness if the fire is threatening human life, property, or wilderness characteristics. The District Manager must approve the use of heavy equipment in all cases.
- Air resources including helicopters, smokejumpers and air tankers would be included in the WILDCAD system for all wilderness fire suppression activities.
- Use of retardant must be approved by the District Manager; if retardant is not approved, water may be dropped from retardant aircraft.
- All fire suppression activities would use Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) at all times.
- Hand crews may use conventional hand tools and may use chain saws, if necessary and approved by the line manager, for fire line construction. Chain saw use and line width should be kept to a minimum. Utilization of existing natural barriers, minimum “scratch line” and cold trailing is encouraged where feasible. Handline construction would be rehabilitated back to natural contour after mop-up.
- A “Leave No Trace®” policy would be used in the wilderness areas. All evidence of human activity must be removed, to the maximum extent possible.
- The Winnemucca District Office and Surprise Field Office Noxious Weed Prevention Schedule as updated, which identifies best management practices, would be utilized. Suppression equipment would be inspected and washed to prevent the spread of noxious weeds. Wash-down sites would be recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit, if possible, and reported to the Winnemucca District Office or Surprise Field Office Weeds Coordinator. Camps and other assembly points would not be located in noxious weed infestation areas.
- Helibases, staging areas and fire camps would be located outside of the wilderness areas, unless they are authorized by the wilderness Resource Advisor.
- Landing of helicopters would be kept to minimum and would only occur in existing openings.
- If motorized vehicle use is authorized in fire suppression efforts in wilderness it would remain on previously disturbed routes, or on routes determined by the wilderness advisor.

Fuels

Vegetation treatments including prescribed fire, mechanical or chemical projects could be used on a project-by-project basis to reduce fuels in wilderness without causing serious or long lasting damage to watersheds or wilderness characteristics in order to achieve one or more of the following:

- Maintain natural conditions.
- Improve or sustain a primary wilderness value.
- Promote perpetuation of threatened or endangered species.
- Correct unnatural conditions.
- Restore fire where past control measures have interfered with natural or ecological processes.
- Protect important natural and cultural resource values.

Each proposed treatment would be evaluated using the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide (MRDG) before being implemented.

Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation

Emergency stabilization includes planning and implementation of emergency treatments to minimize threats to life or property or to stabilize and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources resulting from fire. Emergency stabilization actions must be taken within one year following containment of a wildland fire. The purpose of rehabilitation is to emulate historical or pre-fire ecosystem structure, function, diversity, and dynamics consistent with approved land management plans, or to restore or establish a healthy, stable ecosystem in which native species are well represented (Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R) Handbook, H-1742-1, 2007). Rehabilitation efforts must be undertaken within three years of containment of a wildland fire.

For every wildland fire within wilderness, an interdisciplinary team which includes a Wilderness Specialist would be convened to identify rehabilitation and restoration needs and initiate ES&R planning, if necessary. Following site specific assessments and planning, Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation activities may be undertaken in accordance with current Department of Interior policy (620 DM 3 Wildland Fire Management Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation) and Bureau of Land Management policy (H-1742-1 Burned Areas Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Handbook).

The following points would guide ES & R within wilderness:

1. Natural recovery by native plant species is preferable to planting or seeding. The potential for recovery of existing vegetation and the potential establishment of invasive species should be evaluated prior to recommending seeding or planting. Seeding or planting would only be used when objectives cannot be accomplished without seeding or planting and there is a threat to wilderness values if no action is taken. When seeding or planting is recommended, the use of native material, preferably of local genetic stock, would be prioritized. When material of local genetic stock is not available timely, economically, or would not accomplish objectives, then other sources would be utilized.
2. The use of non-native species may be approved on a case-by-case basis. The use of non-native seed is appropriate only if 1) suitable native species are not available; 2) the natural biological diversity of the proposed management area would not be diminished; 3) exotic and naturalized species can be confined within the proposed management area; 4) analysis of ecological site inventory information, if available, indicates that a site would not support reestablishment of a species that historically was a part of the natural environment; 5) resource management objectives cannot be met with native species (H-1745 Introduction, Transplant, Augmentation, and Reestablishment of Fish, Wildlife, and Plants).
3. The following activities occurring in wilderness may be approved on a case-by-case basis and would follow guidelines presented in the Fire Suppression Guidelines section (page 43):
 - The use of overland motorized equipment.
 - The location of helibases and helispots.
 - Sling loading materials into or out of wilderness using a helicopter.
 - Helicopters or other aircraft for aerial seeding.
4. Temporary structures such as hydrologic, meteorological, or climatological collection devices may be approved if deemed essential to flood warning, flood control, or water reservoir operation activities. Exclosure fences to protect seeding may also be installed.
5. Erosion control techniques such as the installation of anchored logs, bales, wattles, the application of mulch, or the use of other techniques to slow water flow may be approved when their presence would contribute to the long-term enhancement of wilderness character or are necessary to meet E S & R or land use plan objectives.
6. Minor developments and facilities (e.g., fences, exclosures, small water pipelines, boundary signs, water control structures, corrals, guzzlers, trails, etc.) burned or damaged by wildfire could be repaired or replaced to pre-fire specifications when this repair or replacement would contribute to the long-term enhancement of wilderness character or is necessary to meet ES & R or land use plan objectives.

7. Monitoring of ES&R treatments would be conducted in accordance with ES&R Guidelines, the Wilderness Act, and the monitoring section from this plan.
8. Burned or seeded areas may be temporarily closed to the public and or grazing to protect recovering vegetation if unacceptable resource damage would occur, if danger to the public is present due to fire damage or ES & R activities, or until safety assessments can be completed.
9. Efforts to stabilize and prevent post-fire related degradation to cultural resources including archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, traditional cultural properties, and historic structures may be undertaken.

Management of Primitive and Unconfined Recreation Opportunities

Objective *Provide for the use and enjoyment of the wilderness, along with outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude, in such a way that protects natural conditions with minimal on-the-ground developments and minimal regulation of visitor activities.*

NCA RMP Guidance *Rec-1,2,4,6,7,8,16,19,20,23 Zones-1*

General Recreation Recommendations

NOTE: In 2004, prior to development of this wilderness management plan, the NCA RMP was completed. The entire planning area covered by the NCA RMP including the 10 wilderness areas was designated as a Special Recreation Management Area. As a result, many of the recreation management decisions in the NCA RMP are applicable to management of these wilderness areas. The following decisions apply to the 10 wilderness areas but additional, specific policies have been developed as part of this plan.

NCA RMP Decisions

- Rec.-2: Permit systems may be implemented to mitigate resource impacts in areas where visitation is causing resource damage, user conflict or crowding.
- Rec.-3: Where monitoring indicates that large groups are causing resource damage or adversely impacting the visitor experience, limits on group size will be implemented for day or overnight use.

- Rec.-4: Limits on human activities may be set in areas that experience adverse impacts to resources or the visitor experience. These limits may affect areas of use, group size, duration of stay, number of people or vehicles, or types of activities allowed.
- Rec.-5: Dispersed camping will generally be allowed throughout the Rustic and Wilderness zones.
- Rec.-7: To protect resources in areas where monitoring data indicate that camping is causing impacts to resources or the visitor experience, camping may be restricted, eliminated or assigned to new or relocated sites.
- Rec.-8: Camping will be restricted to areas more than 300 feet from springs unless otherwise designated.
- Rec.-9: Dune and Hummock areas associated with the playa may be closed to camping if monitoring indicates negative impacts to sensitive soils, vegetation, the viewshed, archaeological sites, or critical wildlife habitat.
- Rec.-15: Non-motorized trails may be constructed, relocated or closed to mitigate human-caused impacts.
- Rec.-16: The National Desert Trail route will be designated through Wilderness and the NCA.
- Rec.-17: Open fires will be allowed, restricted or prohibited in accordance with applicable BLM Field Office fire management policies and restrictions.
- Rec.-18: Fires on the playa and within adjacent dune areas will be allowed only with the use of surface protecting devices such as elevated platforms, open grill, fire blanket, or fire pan.
- Rec.-19: Cutting of green or standing trees in the planning area will be prohibited, and wood collecting may be further restricted in sensitive habitat areas or where resources have been depleted.
- Rec.-20: [Personal, non-commercial] collection of rocks, minerals, and common invertebrate fossils will be authorized. Collection using non-motorized hand tools and causing minimal surface disturbance will be allowed without permit. However, permits may be required in areas experiencing resource damage or where desirable material becomes depleted. Collection will be limited to 25 pounds per day plus one piece, with a maximum collection of 250 pounds per year.



Solitude in the South Jackson Mountains

- Rec.-21: All recreation permittees will be required to adopt Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace© principles.
- Rec.-23: Within designated wilderness, Special Recreation Permits will be limited to Permit Class I types. See Appendix M in the NCA RMP for a description of these classes. [Example of a Class I SRP would be a wilderness outfitter.]
- Trans.-7: Wilderness access routes and routes defining wilderness boundaries that are designated as motorized trails would be maintained in accordance with Motorized Trail Maintenance Level 2 consistent with their condition at the time of wilderness designation.
- ACEC-3: The portion of the High Rock Canyon Trail between the mouth of High Rock Canyon and about 5 miles below Steven’s Camp will be seasonally closed to vehicle use from February 1 until the second weekend in May. [For protection of bighorn sheep and nesting raptors.]
- VIS-3: BLM will work with local interest groups and other non-governmental organizations to recruit volunteers to assist in developing and implementing interpretive and environmental programs as well as other resource and outreach projects.

General Wilderness Management Plan Recreation Actions

The following recreation actions may be initiated in response to negative impacts to wilderness character and resources if they develop. Actions taken are not limited to this list.

- Increase public outreach and education activities including Leave No Trace© and Tread Lightly!© principles to encourage minimum impact practices.
- Provide more information to the public on non-wilderness recreational opportunities in the region to decrease use impacts.
- Establish protective zones around sensitive areas where recreation activities would be restricted or limited.
- Close or limit use in specific areas or trails/routes to all or certain types of recreation activities.
- Institute camping restrictions and/or carrying capacity limits. These could include establishment of permit systems, length of stay limitations, establishment of designated camping areas, rotation of use sites, group size limits, and/or seasonal restrictions.
- Rehabilitate and/or rest impacted sites.
- Organize clean-up projects.
- Improve boundary signing.
- Place signs within the boundary to inform visitors of sensitive resources, i.e., cultural or historic sites.

- Publish maps and guides displaying use areas, restrictions, and regulations and policies.
- Establish a monitoring program to determine when established standards or thresholds have been exceeded.

Specific Recreation Actions

Camping

- Dispersed camping would be allowed throughout the ten wilderness areas.
- The BLM standard 14 day stay limit for camping would apply to the 10 wilderness areas. However, if negative impacts to wilderness character and resources exceed acceptable limits, the allowable length of stay for certain areas may be limited.
- Campsite condition and associated impacts would be evaluated using the campsite standards in the Preliminary Environmental Assessment D: Campsite Condition Classification.
- Campsites impacting riparian systems would be removed and rehabilitated.
- In areas where impacts from camping have exceeded the prescribed standard or threshold, camping may be limited to designated campsites.
- In areas where campsite impacts routinely exceed the prescribed Campsite Condition Class due to campfire use, the use of fire pans or fire blankets would be required.
- Camping is prohibited within 300 feet of springs or other water sources. (Under Nevada state law, camping is prohibited to protect sensitive riparian areas and to allow wildlife and wild horses and burros to access water which is extremely limited in the planning area.)
- In areas where monitoring indicates that standards or thresholds for visitor encounters and/or campsite condition are being exceeded due to large group size, group size could be limited.

Geocaching

- Geocaching within the wilderness areas would be limited to “virtual” caches only. Traditional geocaching would not be allowed as it requires signs of human activity to be left in wilderness and encourages surface disturbance.

Climbing

- Existing and any permanent climbing anchors installed in the future would be evaluated for safety and visual impacts. Unsafe or visually intrusive permanent anchors would be removed using hand or small battery operated tools.
- The rock climbing prohibition in High Rock Canyon would be enforced (Federal Register 2008).

Wildlife Blinds

- The creation or construction of permanent blinds in wilderness is not allowed.
- Temporary portable or “pop-up” blinds are allowed for hunting, photography, wildlife observation, and similar purposes for a period of fourteen (14) days if they are packed or carried in and out and do not require the disturbance or destruction of native soil, rock or vegetation. Portable and “pop-up” blinds must be attended or occupied at least some portion of a ten day period and may not be used for more than 14 days. If blinds are not attended or occupied for 10 days, they would be considered unattended property and/or permanent structures and would be subject to removal by the BLM and subject to disposition under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended.

Trapping

- Traps not removed within 10 days of the close of trapping season would be considered unattended property and would be subject to removal by the BLM and subject to disposition under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended.

Equestrian and Pack Stock Use

- Recreational horseback riding and use of pack stock animals would be allowed both on and off trail.
- Other than incidental browsing, riding and pack stock animals may only be fed with packed-in, certified weed-free feed.

Trails

- Foot and horse trails may be constructed, closed or relocated if visitor use results in adverse impacts. Currently the areas have no designated trails as visitor use levels do not require their construction for resource protection.

Desert Trail

- The NCA RMP directs that the citizen-proposed Desert Trail route (93 miles) be designated through wilderness and the NCA. This route would not be a constructed route on the ground, but would be a route identified and traversed using Global Positioning System (GPS) orienteering skills for navigation. There would be no signage or markers of any kind along the route. The alignment would be shown on maps.
- This route has not been evaluated for impacts to resources such as cultural sites, sage grouse breeding areas, bighorn sheep lambing areas, and areas with excessively steep

terrain and erodible soils. Adjustments to the location of the point-to-point orienteering route may be necessary to minimize the potential for adverse impacts.

Fuel wood Collection

- According to BLM Wilderness policy, any fuel wood collection in wilderness areas would be limited to dead and down material. Wood collection may be further restricted in sensitive areas or where resources have been depleted.

Rock Hounding

- Collection of rocks, minerals and common invertebrate fossils for personal, non-commercial use, are allowed within the planning area. Collection must be done using non-motorized hand tools and causing minimal surface disturbance. In areas experiencing resource damage or where desirable material has become depleted, use would be restricted. Collection is limited to twenty-five (25) pounds per day plus one piece, with a maximum collection of two hundred and fifty (250) pounds per year. Collection limits may be waived for scientific or educational use under permit.

Commercial Outfitting and Guiding

- Based on historic commercial use for any single wilderness area, no more than six (6) commercial outfitters or guides would be allowed to operate within any single wilderness area during the peak use season. Guide activities would be monitored and if the management standard or threshold is exceeded in two of five consecutive calendar years, a competitive, limited commercial permit system would be implemented with the award of commercial permit based upon historic use and an outfitter or guide's ability to meet the wilderness and recreation management objectives.
- Stipulations for new permits would include a requirement for all outfitters and guides to follow basic Leave No Trace®/Tread Lightly!® practices.
- Only Special Recreation Permits (SRP) for commercial outfitting and guiding within the wilderness areas authorized by the Black Rock Field Office, Winnemucca District would be considered valid.

Special Recreation Permits

- As determined in the NCA RMP, only Special Recreation Permit (SRP) Permit Class I are allowed. SRP Permit Class I are small, trivial impact permits such as outfitters. No competitive permits would be allowed in Wilderness.

Access and Transportation

Objective *Provide for vehicle access to the boundaries of the wilderness areas while also deterring vehicles from entering the wilderness areas.*

NCA RMP Guidance *Tran-7, 9*

- Boundary roads and wilderness access routes (cherry stems) would be maintained to provide traditional levels and types of access as defined in the Preliminary Environmental Assessment Appendix F: Condition and Use of Wilderness Access/Cherry Stem Routes.
- Maintenance Level 1 would be applied across the majority of the planning area.
 - Maintenance Level 1 – (Low Intensity) Routes where minimal maintenance is required to protect adjacent lands and resource values. These roads may be impassible for extended periods of time. Emphasis is given to maintaining drainage and runoff patterns. Grading, brushing or slide removal is not performed unless route bed drainage is being adversely affected causing erosion.
- In areas where natural obstacles are not adequate to prevent vehicles from crossing into wilderness and mechanized trespass is a repeated problem, vehicle barriers could be constructed outside of wilderness. Implemented barriers could include the following:
 - Wilderness sign, berm, small rocks, and/or vegetation placement or restoration
 - Large boulders moved by heavy equipment
 - Posts
 - Fences or gates.

Legal Public Access

Public access to the wilderness areas is provided through a variety of primitive roads, routes and trails. The majority of these routes are located on land managed by the BLM. However, segments of some routes pass through parcels of private property and in many cases no easement exists to ensure continued public access across these private parcels. In many cases, legal public access to the wilderness areas could be achieved through alternate routes. However, securing legal access along the existing routes would maintain the type and level of access the public currently enjoys. Easements across parcels identified in this plan would be actively pursued from willing landowners.

If the BLM determines the likelihood of obtaining access across a parcel identified in this plan is very low, motorized (outside of wilderness) or non-motorized (within wilderness) routes could be constructed. A non-motorized route is the only feasible alternative for Route A.2 as identified on Map 14. If the construction of these routes is deemed necessary, they must meet established BLM standards for foot travel and pack stock as well as accessibility standards for primitive recreation trails.

Specific Actions—Legal Public Access

Priority routes which currently lack legal public access are as follows. These are the routes for which easements would be pursued to ensure continued public access to wilderness across private parcels.

Route A.1.—Four-wheel drive access along approximately 0.6 miles of existing road through a private parcel along Slumgullion Road (T.40N, R.25E, sec. 19, E ½) to maintain public access to the North Black Rock Range and Pahute Peak Wilderness Areas.

Route A.2.—Four-wheel drive access along approximately 0.9 miles of existing road through a private parcel at Jackass Flats (T.37N, R.25E, sec 20) to maintain existing access to the Calico Mountains and High Rock Canyon Wilderness Areas.

Route A.3. – Four-wheel drive access along approximately 1.2 miles of existing road through private parcels along Shoestring Valley (T.42N, R.24E, sec. 30, SW ¼ ,SE ¼ and sec.31 W ½ ,NE ¼ and sec. 31 W ½ , SE ¼) to maintain public access to the East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness Area.

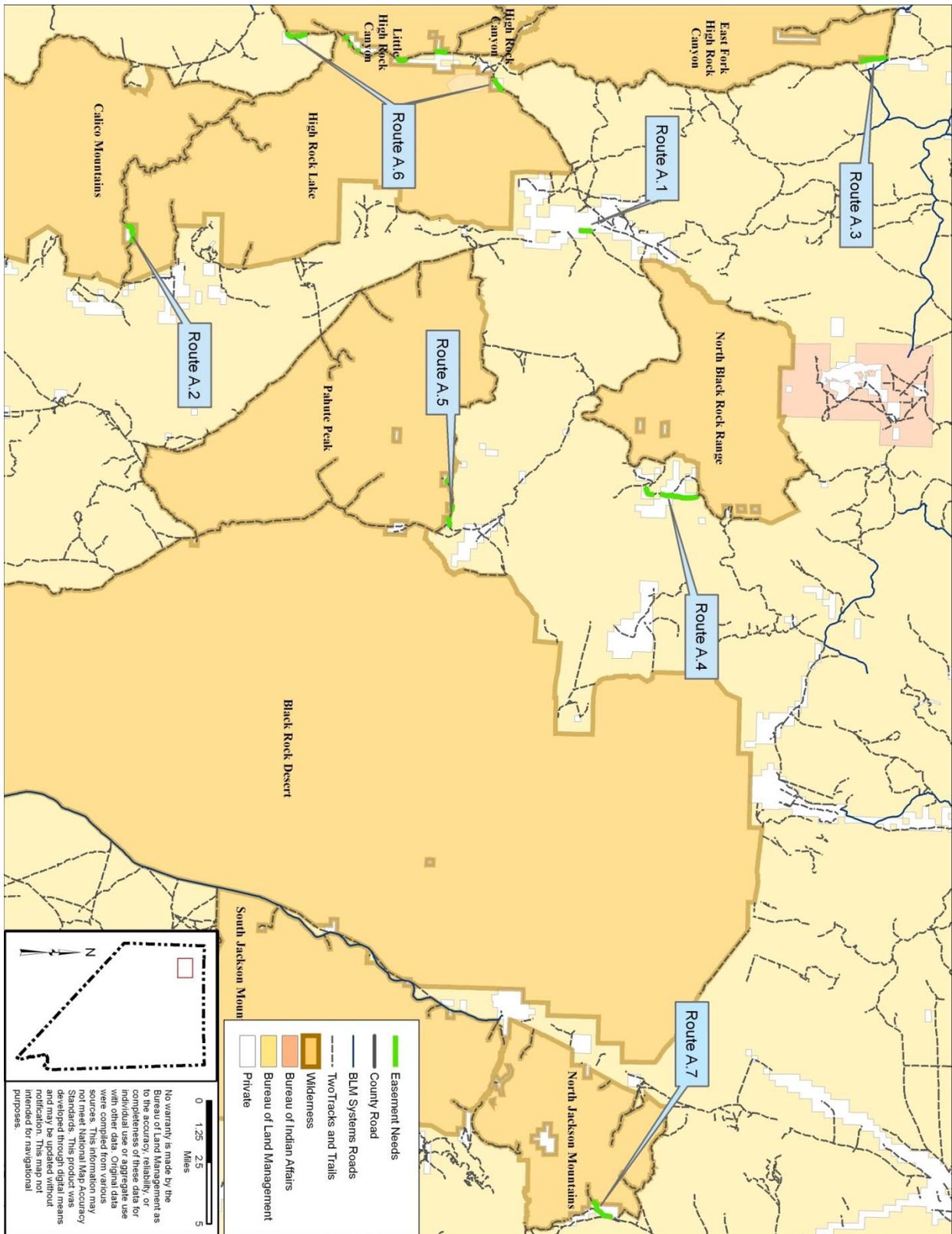
Route A.4.—Primitive high-clearance, four-wheel drive access along 2.1 miles of existing road through two private parcels in the upper portion of the North and South Forks of Battle Creek (T.41N, R.26E, sec. 35, E ½; T.40N, R.26E, sec. 1, W ½ and sec. 2, SE ¼) to maintain public access to the North Black Rock Range and Pahute Peak Wilderness Areas.

Route A.5.—Primitive high-clearance, four-wheel drive access along approximately 0.9 miles of existing road through three parcels in the lower portion of Sheep Creek (T.39N, R.27E, sec 16, T.39N, R.26E, sec 13, SW ¼ ,NE ¼ and sec. 14, S ½ , NE ¼) to maintain public access to the North Black Rock Range and Pahute Peak Wilderness Areas.

Route A.6.—Primitive high-clearance access along approximately 3.1 miles of existing road between Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness and High Rock Lake Wilderness (T.39N R.24E sec. 8 NW ¼, 30 SW ¼, and 31 SW ¼; T.49N R.23E sec. 24; T.38N R.23.5E sec. 1, 13 SW ¼, and 24 NW

¼) to maintain access to Little High Rock Canyon, High Rock Lake, and High Rock Canyon Wildernesses.

Route A.7—Primitive high-clearance access along approximately 1.2 miles of existing road to maintain access to Happy Camp cherry-stem within North Jackson Mountains Wilderness Area. (T.41.N R.32.E sec. 33; T.42.N R.32.E sec. 5 NE ¼)



Map 14. Transportation Easement Needs

Visitor Education and Interpretation and Law Enforcement

Objective *Emphasize education and interpretation to manage visitor activities.*

NCA RMP Guidance *Section 2.2.21, WILD-2*

The NCA RMP directs that educational and interpretive efforts within the NCA be divided into two major components: Off-site which include maps, websites, and brochures and On-site actions which have physical locations on BLM lands.

Off-site Activities

Most areas would be limited to the use of off-site information for public outreach purposes. At high-use access points such as Soldier Meadows and Stevens Camp, maps and some limited contacts by agency or volunteer personnel may be provided. The following public outreach products and programs would be developed and implemented as funding and staffing become available:

- A hunting ethics and responsibilities guidebook would be developed. Partnering with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), the guidebook would be distributed to license and tag holders as well as published in the Nevada Hunt Book. Information would include the BLM's policy for overnight camping, game retrieval, and temporary structures (i.e. hunting and photography blinds) within wilderness.
- A public map would be developed with adequate scale to clearly articulate wilderness boundaries and designated vehicle routes.
- Web-based information would be developed in cooperation with partners. Web information would include the following information:
 - Wilderness regulations
 - Detailed maps sufficient to clearly articulate wilderness boundaries and hunting units
 - Wilderness use ethics—Leave No Trace®/Tread Lightly!® principles
 - Recreation opportunities for hiking, hunting and horseback use
 - Opportunities for public education/outreach and peer monitoring utilizing programs such as Leave No Trace® and Tread Lightly!® trainer and awareness courses.

On-site Tactics

- Most on-site information would be located outside but relatively near wilderness boundaries and would include area personnel, signs, kiosks, and NCA portal sites.
- Within wilderness, on-site visitor services would be either non-existent or very limited with area personnel seldom available.
- Ranger patrols would become more evident in areas if monitoring indicates negative impacts on wilderness characteristics due to increasing or inappropriate visitor use.
- Information could include maps and brochures disseminated by law enforcement, wilderness rangers, and volunteers.

Signs

- Wilderness boundaries would be adequately signed to identify boundaries for the public. Signs would consist of narrow, brown fiberglass posts. In areas where the fiberglass signs are repeatedly vandalized or damaged, steel posts of similar size and appearance would be used. These steel posts would be set in concrete.
- Signing would be concentrated in areas where unauthorized mechanized access occurs, including closed ways and along major boundary roads.
- To aid in the enforcement of wilderness regulations, some boundaries may require that signs be placed within sight of each other.
- When unauthorized access problems are reduced, signs may be removed to decrease visual impacts.
- Wilderness boundaries that follow contour lines, surveyed lines or other map based features that are not near vehicle access routes would be signed only as required to prevent unauthorized mechanized access.
- Signs would be placed at the entrance to each wilderness access route identifying the route as open to motorized vehicles.
- NCA portal signs would include wilderness information.
- The Gerlach Administrative Facility and Visitor Contact Station (construction began Fall 2010) would provide information on the ten wildernesses.



Wildlife Management Activities

Objective *Manage wildlife habitat and wild horses to provide for healthy, viable and naturally distributed wildlife populations with the least amount of environmental disturbance necessary.*

NCA RMP Guidance *Section 2.2.12, FW-7, WHB-7*

Over the life of this plan it may be necessary to implement wildlife management activities to prevent degradation to or enhance wilderness characteristics by promoting healthy, viable and more naturally distributed wildlife populations. Wildlife management activities within these wilderness areas would be conducted in conformance with the BLM-NDOW Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in December 2003, the NCA Act (2000), and the NCA RMP (2004).

The MOU directs NDOW to submit annual operations and maintenance schedule to the BLM. The schedule will consist of proposed fish and wildlife management activities, projects and developments planned within wilderness areas for the subsequent twelve-month period beginning July 1st and ending June 30th of the following year.

The NCA RMP states that, *“wildlife projects that are determined by the BLM to be the minimum required action to ensure that natural processes are maintained or that wildlife populations are allowed to operate as freely as possible with minimum interference from humans will be authorized. These kinds of projects could include such actions as reintroducing native California bighorn sheep into a wilderness area where the sheep were extirpated due to human influence or constructing a water development where monitoring indicates that vehicle use in High Rock Canyon is having an impact on the bighorn population’s ability to obtain water in the canyon bottom. In such a case, a water development may be constructed inside the wilderness on the rim of the canyon to mitigate the impacts caused to the canyon-bottom water source by human use.”*



Wildlife Water Development in the Pahute Peak Wilderness

Wildlife Water Developments

Existing Wildlife Water Developments

Currently there are 14 water developments (guzzlers) constructed for wildlife within the North Jackson Mountains, Pahute Peak, North Black Rock Range, High Rock Lake, and Calico Mountains Wildernesses. All of these guzzlers were constructed for the benefit of birds and small game; none were built for big game use. The NCA RMP directs that the *“maintenance of the 14 guzzlers in wilderness will be limited to normal upkeep and repair of the catchment, tank, lid, ramp and protective fencing as necessary to maintain proper function of the unit and integrity of the enclosed area. Access to guzzlers may be by foot or horseback unless major reconstruction requires the use of aircraft consistent with the minimum tool analysis contained in Appendix J of the NCA RMP.”*

Inspection records indicate that all 14 of the developments within wilderness are currently in working condition. The BLM would coordinate with NDOW to ensure that wildlife guzzlers

within wilderness are monitored annually to determine condition and maintenance needs. Monitoring would be accomplished by BLM staff, NDOW staff or properly trained volunteers. Both the BLM and NDOW would continue to build volunteer support for the maintenance and reconstruction of these developments with the use of primitive tools and non-motorized equipment.

Removal, Replacement, Modification, and New Water Developments

Should maintenance (as defined in the NCA RMP) be required for existing wildlife water developments, the Winnemucca District Manager will follow the procedures established in the NCA RMP and the BLM-NDOW MOU (2003). The Minimum Requirements Decision Guide in Appendix J of the NCA RMP determined that access to the 14 existing guzzlers would be by foot or horseback, materials would be hauled to the guzzler sites on foot or pack stock, and only non-motorized or small battery operated handtools would be used to conduct the maintenance. Helicopters could be used to sling in large items such as the 320 gallon tanks. All other items including fencing, angle iron, and apron material will be brought in on foot or horseback. Modifications to existing water developments may be made as long as the designed capacity or dimensions are the existing development are not exceeded.

If there is a need for removal, construction, or modification beyond maintenance of a water development, the Winnemucca District Manager will issue a NOPA, prepare a MRDG, NEPA evaluation, and appropriate decision documents as prescribed by BLM policy and procedure.

Wildlife Relocation

According to the BLM-NDOW MOU (2003), wildlife transplants (i.e. removal, augmentation, or reintroduction of wildlife species) may be permitted if judged necessary to perpetuate or recover a threatened or endangered species or to restore populations of indigenous (including sensitive) species eliminated or reduced by human activities. Locations outside of wilderness boundaries would be utilized first; if not available, activities would be implemented in a manner compatible with wilderness characteristics. Transplant projects, including monitoring, require advance written approval from the BLM if the action involves ground-disturbing activities, motorized/mechanized methods, or temporary holding and handling facilities. The BLM would coordinate with NDOW on all releases near these wilderness areas. Release of wildlife on public lands would be in conformance with BLM Manual 1745 (Introduction, Transplant, Augmentation, and Reestablishment of Fish, Wildlife and Plants, 1992) and the BLM-NDOW MOU. A MRDG analysis and site specific NEPA evaluation would occur for site specific actions.

If motorized or mechanized means are authorized, staging would occur outside wilderness boundaries. When feasible, the specific project implementation would occur during periods

when visitor use is low (such as weekdays). In order to inform visitors of impending activity, relocation dates would be posted on the BLM website a minimum of two weeks in advance and a NOPA would be sent to the wilderness mailing list.

Wildlife Damage Management

To maintain the areas' natural character, wildlife damage management may be necessary to protect federally listed, declining, and reintroduced indigenous wildlife species; to prevent transmission of diseases or parasites affecting other wildlife and humans; or to prevent substantial loss of livestock. Wildlife damage management may be conducted at the request of federal, state, or local agencies, private organizations, or individuals.

Activities would use the minimum amount of control necessary to resolve wildlife damage problems. Acceptable control measures include lethal and non-lethal methods. However, toxicants (poisons) and M-44 devices (sodium cyanide) are prohibited. Activities would be conducted on foot and may include the use of stock. Use of motorized or mechanized vehicle or equipment must be approved by BLM on a case-by-case basis. Activities occurring within wilderness would require prior approval of the BLM and be conducted in conformance with the BLM-APHIS MOU (1995) and BLM Manual 8560 (Management of Designated Wilderness). As a courtesy and in order to inform visitors of impending activity, a NOPA would be mailed to the wilderness mailing list.

Wild Horses and Burros

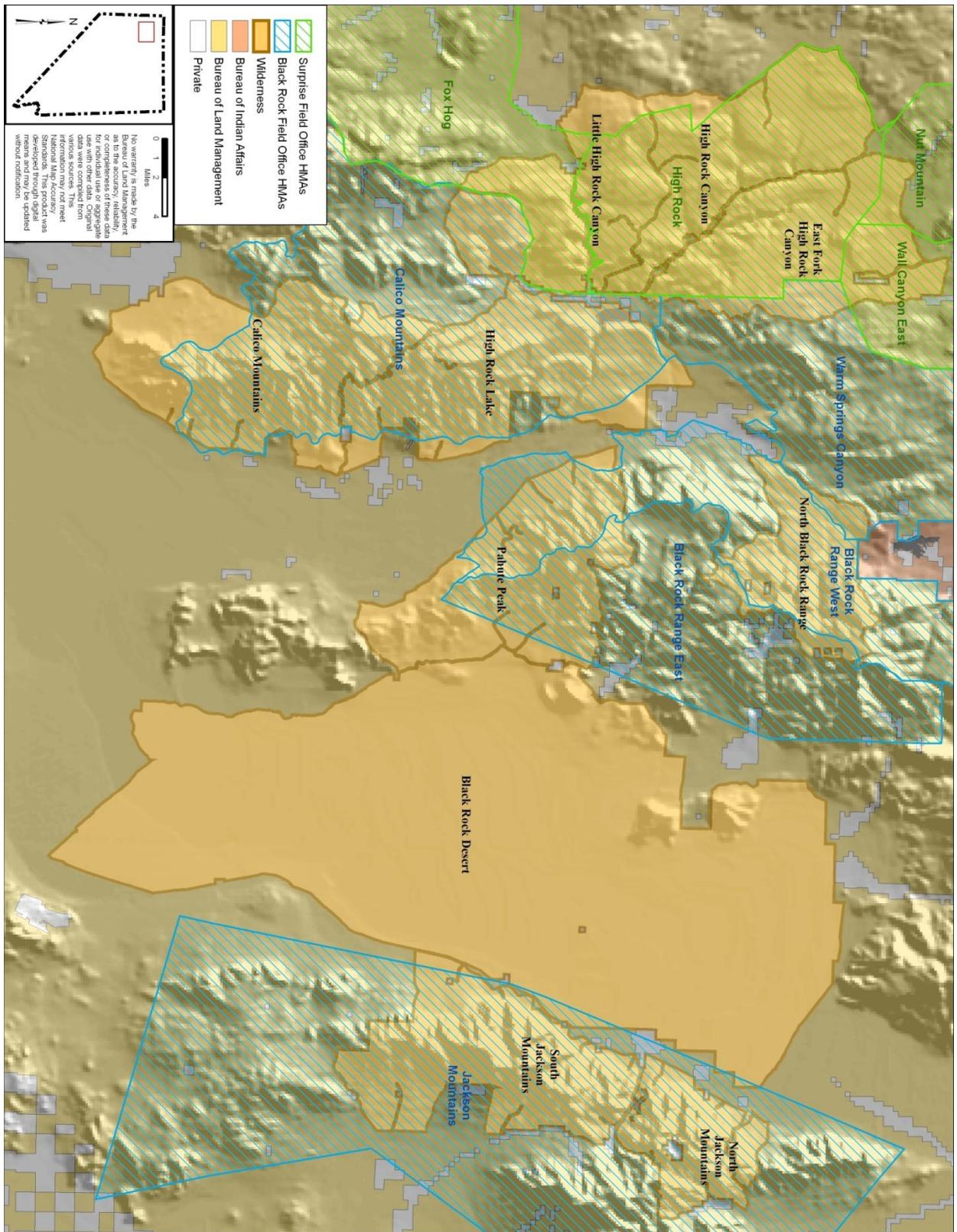
Wild horses and burros are managed within Herd Management Areas (HMAs). The ten wilderness areas covered by this plan occur within nine HMAs (refer to Map 15 for the location of the HMA Boundaries). Horse populations in these HMAs often exceed Appropriate Management Level (AML) objectives.

The NCA RMP states that “gathers in wilderness will continue to be conducted by herding the animals by helicopter or on horseback to temporary corrals, generally located outside of wilderness. No landing of aircraft will occur in wilderness areas except for emergency purposes and no motorized vehicles will be used in wilderness in association with gather operations unless such use is consistent with the minimum tool requirement for management of wilderness.”

BLM policy requires that Herd Area Management Plans (HMAPs) and the associated Environmental Assessment must be developed in wilderness areas containing wild horses and burros. The HMAPs would detail the present condition and potential of herds and HMAs and would describe management actions required to meet wilderness objectives as well as herd

needs. In addition, each HMAP would specify the use of motorized and mechanical equipment including aircraft and temporary structures. The HMAP would also specify the location, frequency and timing of such uses. Upon approval, those portions of each HMAP relevant to the wilderness areas would become an amendment to this plan.

A process would be initiated to develop or review a HMAP for at least one HMA per year until each of the nine HMAs which include wilderness have been completed or updated.



Map 15. Herd Management Areas

Management of Access and Maintenance of Range Developments

Objective *To manage non-conforming but accepted uses permitted by the Wilderness Act and subsequent laws in a manner that would prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the areas' wilderness character.*

NCA RMP Guidance *GRAZ-6, 7*

The ten wilderness areas are overlapped by portions of 16 grazing allotments (10 managed out of the Winnemucca District Office and 6 managed out of the Surprise Field Office). Refer to Map 16 for the location of these allotments. Planning related to grazing operations would be guided by the Congressional Grazing Guidelines (House Report 105-405 Appendix L, 1990), BLM Manual 8560 (Management of Designated Wilderness Areas) and, The NCA RMP.

Activities and the necessary facilities used to support livestock grazing would be permitted to continue in wilderness. The following excerpt from the Congressional Grazing Guidelines provides direction for facilities maintenance and use of motorized equipment in wilderness:

“The maintenance of supporting facilities, existing in an area prior to its classification as wilderness (including fences, line cabins, water wells and lines, stock tanks, etc.) is permissible in wilderness. Where practical alternatives do not exist, maintenance or other activities may be accomplished through the occasional use of motorized equipment.... Such occasional use of motorized equipment should be expressly authorized in the grazing permits for the area involved. The use of motorized equipment should be based on a rule of practical necessity and reasonableness.... Moreover, under the rule of reasonableness, occasional use of motorized equipment should be permitted where practical alternatives are not available and such use would not have a significant adverse impact to the natural environment. Such motorized equipment uses will normally only be permitted in those portions of a wilderness area where they had occurred prior to the area's designation as wilderness or are established by prior agreement.”

Permits for livestock operations can only be issued for those areas where grazing was established at the time of wilderness designation. Map 2-5 of the NCA RMP illustrates those portions of the Black Rock Desert Wilderness Area where livestock grazing was not established at the time of designation. Grazing was established within all other portions of the wilderness areas at the time of designation.

As stated in the NCA RMP, grazing within those portions of the High Rock Canyon, East Fork High Rock Canyon and Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness Areas within the Massacre Mountain and Bare allotments would not occur on a regular basis, but may occur under an approved grazing prescription developed specifically to accomplish the objectives of the NCA RMP.

Range Developments

Maps 2-11 show the 82 known developed springs, troughs, reservoirs, catchments, earth pits, earth tanks, wells, and windmills located within the wilderness areas at the time of designation. Existing fences and water pipelines are also shown on the maps. Of these 82 known developments, 53 have been evaluated as being part of an existing BLM permit or cooperative agreement while the other 29 remain to be evaluated. A list of these projects and their current status is included in Preliminary Environmental Assessment Appendix G: Range Developments. Within eight years of approval of this plan, standard BLM Range Improvement Markers would be located at all authorized structural range developments within the wilderness areas (fences excluded). Each marker would include the assigned Range Improvement Project number, the common name of the development, the year constructed and/or authorized if known, and a description of the exact geographic location.



Range Development in the South Jackson Mountains Wilderness Area

Usually inspection and routine maintenance of range developments would be accomplished on foot or horseback. Management direction for the use of motorized equipment and vehicles for the maintenance and reconstruction of range developments would only apply to those developments identified in this plan and which are included in a current decision or document (i.e. final multiple use decision, allotment management plan, grazing decision, permit, lease, or cooperative agreement). The use of motorized equipment or vehicles for the maintenance or reconstruction of range developments not specifically identified in this plan would be evaluated through a MRDG analysis and a separate NEPA evaluation.

Except in the case of emergency, permittees must obtain written authorization from the District Manager prior to using any motorized equipment or vehicles within the wilderness areas.

All authorizations for the use of motorized equipment or vehicles would specify the type and number of vehicle passes and the route(s) to be used. The number of vehicle passes authorized would be based upon the minimum number necessary to safely accomplish maintenance objectives. The selection of vehicles to be used would be based upon readily available and cost-effective equipment which minimizes soil disturbance, compaction and damage to riparian areas. Approved motorized access would be confined to established administrative access routes except in cases where the potential for resource damage is determined to be unacceptable; in such a case an alternate route may be identified. Administrative access routes have been restored to their natural condition in order to prevent unauthorized motorized use. It is anticipated that most repair or reconstruction of range developments requiring motorized vehicles would be accomplished with a single trip using one vehicle and possibly one trailer. For scheduled repair or construction, the use of motorized vehicles or equipment would be scheduled to minimize disturbance to riparian areas, soils, wildlife, and the visiting public.

For the purposes of allowing motorized equipment and/or vehicles for grazing management, an emergency is defined as any unpreventable or reasonably unforeseeable set of circumstances which, without immediate action, would likely result in the death of livestock or result in long-term or irreversible impact to the wilderness resource. At a minimum, grazing permittees must obtain verbal authorization from the District Manager or their designee for each instance in which motorized equipment or vehicles are to be used in the wilderness. Verbal authorization must be followed up with a written authorization for the wilderness file. In the event that the District Manager or their designee is not available, the permittee must notify the District Manager as soon as practicable but not later than 48 hours following the use of motorized equipment or vehicles.

The transportation of other materials or items in support of range management may be allowed in conjunction with the authorized use of motorized vehicles or motorized equipment

for repair or replacement of range projects, provided the addition of such items does not require the use of additional motorized vehicles or equipment.

Removal of Unnecessary Developments

Non-historically significant projects, debris, materials or other items not associated with existing authorized range developments included in a current allotment plan, HMAP, multiple use decision, cooperative agreement or other authorization would be removed in accordance with BLM Manual H-4120-1.36.

Water catchments, earth tanks, reservoirs and other earth constructed water impoundments which are unauthorized or abandoned within the wilderness areas would be typically left to naturally recover and revegetate. In those cases where the project continued to impound water, it would be breached using the minimum tools necessary to restore the unaltered flow of water while maintaining an acceptable rate of erosion from the breached project. Prior to removal, projects would undergo NEPA evaluation, including evaluation for impacts on cultural resources, wildlife, and wild horses and burros.

Developed Springs

As part of this plan, the use of motorized vehicles or equipment for routine replacement of stock troughs may be authorized not more than once every ten (10) years. The District Manager may allow additional use of motorized equipment or vehicles on a case-by-case basis where the BLM determines the need for replacement is due to extraordinary circumstances (i.e. flash flood, wildfire, vandalism, etc.). The use of motorized equipment or vehicles may be allowed to maintain the functional condition of catchments, pits, dirt tanks, and reservoirs. Major repairs include: restoration of dam faces or riprap, reconstructing spillways, replacement of control structures and sediment removal greater than three (3) cubic yards. Requests for more frequent use of motorized vehicles or equipment would be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

The smallest temporary enclosure necessary may be constructed around any water source associated with an authorized range development, so long as it does not exceed 128 feet in total length or the existing footprint of the development, whichever is greater. Materials and design would be consistent with BLM Technical Note 397 and would visually blend with the surrounding area. Each enclosure would be designed to allow wildlife and people ease of access. No ground disturbance would be allowed for the construction of enclosures. The area must be inventoried for the presence of cultural resources to prevent trailing that could impact significant archaeological sites. The construction of larger enclosures or those not associated with an approved range development would require a separate NEPA evaluation and MRDG analysis.

Replacement troughs, pipe and head boxes would be designed and constructed to function ten (10) years or more under normal conditions of use with routine maintenance and to blend with the surrounding environment to the extent practicable.

Any trough, catchment or other water storage development which is reconstructed or replaced would be designed to divert and store only the minimum amount of water necessary to achieve management objectives or the valid water rights. All additional water would remain in its natural location to meet the riparian purposes of the NCA and the wilderness areas.

Following the Decision Record for the plan, all spring developments within the wilderness areas would be evaluated to determine if they meet the NCA RMP guidance. The NCA RMP directs that *“All spring developments will be modified where necessary to maintain, improve or restore the biotic integrity of the spring system in accordance with BLM Technical Reference 1737-17. These water developments will also be modified to provide water for wildlife at ground level adjacent to the spring source.”* Site-specific actions would be developed and implemented for those developments that do not meet this guidance. Site-specific actions for modification of developed springs could include but are not limited to you:

- Installation of float valves.
- Installation of diversion valves.
- Moving troughs out of meadow areas.
- Removing troughs from abandoned spring developments.
- Bird Ladders.

Fences

A number of barbed wire fences are located along the boundaries of or entirely within the wilderness areas. Since the time of wilderness designation, one new fence has been constructed within the North Black Rock Range Wilderness to administer grazing within the Soldier Meadows Allotment. Any non-historic fences which are no longer necessary for range management would be dismantled and removed from the wilderness areas.

Fences throughout the planning area require routine maintenance. Additional maintenance may be required due to damage from wildfires, animals, deep and drifted snow, or intentional destruction. Currently there are various fence segments which do not function properly and are in need of repair.

For any single segment of preexisting fence at least one-quarter mile from any designated motorized route and at least one-half mile in length; the use of the motorized vehicles or equipment may be allowed for replacement or repair to damage otherwise unpreventable through routine inspection and maintenance (i.e. destruction by wildfire, extreme snow

loading, or extensive damage from wild horses or other animals). It is anticipated that damage which would require the use of motorized equipment or vehicles to replace segments longer than one-half mile would be uncommon and would not occur more than once every 15 years. Alternative fence locations, materials, construction techniques, and the use of additional gates would be evaluated prior to authorizing more frequent use of motorized equipment or vehicles for fence that repeatedly requires repairs.

Pipelines

As part of this WMP, the use of motorized vehicles or equipment may be authorized for the routine replacement of below-ground pipeline segments greater than 40 feet in length no more than once every ten (10) years. Requests for more frequent use of motorized vehicles or equipment would be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The entire section of pipeline replaced must meet BLM trenched or ripped trench pipeline construction standards for depth below grade, construction material, venting, and grade to minimize the risk of future failure and need for future repair or replacement.

Where an existing below-ground pipeline is to be replaced by an above-ground pipeline, a one time use of a motorized vehicle and trailer would be allowed for installation.

Windmills

For the routine maintenance of windmills, the use of portable gas-powered equipment along with a motorized vehicle to transport the equipment along predetermined routes would be allowed as needed to pull sucker rods for the routine replacement of leathers. It is anticipated such activities would occur every one to two (1-2) years.

As part of this plan, the use of motorized vehicles may be authorized not more than once every five (5) years for those windmills at least one-quarter of a mile from any designated motorized route for moderate to major maintenance and parts replacement. This includes the transport of replacement parts, tools and equipment to conduct repairs such as the replacement of sucker rods, cylinders and complete windmill rebuilding. The District Manager may allow additional use of motorized vehicles or equipment and a case-by-case basis where the BLM determines the need for replacement is due to extraordinary circumstances beyond the permittee's control (i.e. flash flood, wildfire, vandalism, etc.).

For major repairs or replacement of entire windmills, including the replacement of windmill motors or tower reconstruction, the minimum number of vehicle passes along previously established routes would be authorized on a case-by-case basis. It is anticipated that such authorizations would not occur more than once every ten (10) years for a single windmill.

The one time use of a vehicle and trailer along a predetermined route would be authorized for the removal of nonfunctional windmills and replacement with solar-powered electric pumps at the Black Rock Desert and Hay-Quinn rural wells.

Management of Valid Existing Rights

Water Rights

A number of existing water rights exist within the wilderness areas. Since 1909 a variety of water rights have been granted by the State of Nevada to various individuals for the purposes of irrigation of lands outside of wilderness or the watering of livestock on lands that are now within the wilderness areas (Preliminary Environmental Assessment Appendix H: Existing Water Rights indicates the type of use and general location of current water rights within the wilderness areas). Most water rights for irrigation have associated ditches and small canals and were granted prior to the passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976.

Individuals and other agencies continue to file for water rights within the wilderness areas. There are some water sources within the wilderness areas which have valid water rights associated with them but lack a corresponding right-of-way to legally transport water outside of wilderness. Decisions on these water rights and right-of-way issues would be made on a case-by-case basis under the guidance of existing laws and policies.

Mining

The Wilderness Act allows for claims with valid existing rights which existed at the time of wilderness designation to remain. All other portions of the wilderness areas were withdrawn from mineral entry at the time of designation (December 21, 2000) and as a result no new mining claims can be established within the wilderness areas.

Two mining claims existed at the time of wilderness designation. The claimants have maintained the active claim status. These claims are located in the southern portion of the Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness Area in T. 38N, R. 23E, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 21, and NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 22.

Mining claimants must perform annual assessment work or may pay maintenance fee(s) for mining claims to maintain active claim status. Beginning in the assessment year after locating a mining claim, the claimant must expend \$100 in labor or improvements for each claim for each assessment year preceding the date on which they file for a small miner waiver. Paying claim maintenance fee(s) in lieu of performing assessment work satisfies the requirements of the mining law and FLPMA.

Consistent with the regulations at 43 CFR 3809.100, after the date on which the lands are withdrawn from appropriation under the mining laws, BLM would not approve a plan of operations or allow notice-level operations to proceed until BLM has prepared a mineral

examination report to determine whether the mining claim was valid before the withdrawal, and whether it remains valid. If the report concludes that the mining claim is invalid, BLM would not approve operations or allow notice-level operations on the mining claim. BLM would also promptly initiate contest proceedings.

If BLM has not completed a mineral examination report, if the mineral examination report for proposed operations concludes that a mining claim is invalid, or if there is a pending contest proceeding for the mining claim, BLM could approve a plan of operations for the disputed mining claim proposing operations that is limited to taking samples to confirm or corroborate mineral exposures that are physically disclosed and existing on the mining claim before the segregation or withdrawal date, whichever is earlier; and approve a plan of operations for the operator to perform the minimum necessary annual assessment work. A claimant may only conduct exploration under a notice limited to taking samples to confirm or corroborate mineral exposures that are physically disclosed and existing on the mining claim before the segregation or withdrawal date, whichever is earlier. If a final departmental decision declares a mining claim to be null and void, the operator must cease all operations, except required reclamation.

Areas of historic mining exist within the North and South Jackson Mountains, Calico Mountains and Black Rock Range Wilderness Areas. During the summer of 1995, the Winnemucca Field Office conducted an Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) inventory within the wilderness areas to determine the location and type of all significant mining features in the area. Past mining in the study area was exhibited by sparse, low density distribution of mining related features. Three of the 4 sites identified are historic. These sites require further evaluation. Table 3-3 of the EA shows valid mining claims within the wilderness areas.

Private Inholdings

Nine parcels of private property are located within and completely surrounded by wilderness areas. These parcels occur in the North Jackson Mountains (three parcels), the North Black Rock Range (four parcels), the Pahute Peak (one parcel), and Black Rock Desert (one parcel) Wildernesses (refer to EA Table 3-2 Private Inholdings and the Current Conditions maps).

In 2003 NCA staff conducted an inventory of access to each private inholding within the wilderness areas. Motorized access occurring at the time of wilderness designation was documented for one parcel located within the North Jackson Mountains Wilderness (parcel 1068001). The existing route to this parcel has been recorded and inventoried by the BLM. No motorized access to the parcel has been requested since the wilderness area was designated in 2000. In accordance with BLM policy, an attempt would be made to acquire or exchange this parcel for non-wilderness lands prior to authorizing motorized travel along this route. If requested, the mode of travel would be limited to off highway vehicles (OHVs) along the

existing route for the purpose of managing livestock grazing within the parcel. This use would be authorized through stipulations to grazing permits.

In addition, access to parcel 822656 within the North Black Rock Range Wilderness did occur along an existing route at the time of wilderness designation. The existing route has been recorded and inventoried by the BLM. However, motorized use was determined not to have occurred for many years prior to designation and therefore would be determined not to be necessary to serve the reasonable purposes for the use of this parcel. No motorized access to the parcel has been requested since the wilderness area was designated in 2000.

No additional routes would be authorized to provide motorized or mechanized access to private inholdings within the wilderness areas.

Search and Rescue Operations

The Humboldt, Pershing and Washoe County Sheriff's Offices are responsible for managing all search and rescue operations within the wilderness areas within their respective jurisdictions. Search and rescue incidents within the planning area are typically in response to overdue hunters, hikers or campers. The BLM assists the counties in search and rescue operations as requested, generally providing personnel, transportation and equipment.

For the purposes of this section, an emergency is defined as a sudden, urgent, usually unforeseen event or set of circumstances that pose an imminent threat to human life, health or safety requiring immediate action. An "emergency" is ultimately determined by the appropriate Sheriff's Department Incident Commander in consultation with the District Manager.

The choice of emergency response would reflect the steps necessary to eliminate genuine threats to life, health or safety. Where there is doubt about the appropriate method of response, decisions would error on the side of preserving human life, health and safety.

Emergency operations would be sensitive to wilderness designation, minimizing the use of motorized vehicles and avoiding aircraft landings whenever possible. Searches for lost persons and the rescue of sick, injured or stranded visitors may constitute emergencies. The determination of an emergency will be made by the Incident Commander and District Manager and may depend on several criteria including but not limited to, weather, topography, mental condition, age, physical condition, preparedness, and other relevant factors.

Upon completion of emergency operations, the BLM may request from the Office initiating the request for the use of motorized vehicles reimbursement for all rehabilitation costs within the wilderness area.

Reclamation of Small-Scale Surface Disturbances

Small-scale surface disturbances include abandoned developments, dispersed campsites, disturbances related to mining including abandoned mine shafts, and linear disturbances created by motorized vehicle traffic that are largely denuded of vegetation. Reclamation seeks to return these disturbances to their natural vegetative condition. All non-historic former vehicle routes, including future incursions, would be decommissioned and restored. The majority of this work has already been completed. The reclamation of certain former vehicle routes could include the decommissioning of one of the tracks in a two track road while leaving the other track unrestored as a foot path or trail. Based on monitoring results, repeat treatments may occur. Artificial barriers may be placed outside of wilderness to facilitate successful long term reclamation. Environmental Assessment NV-020-02-030 may be referenced for disturbance reclamation.

Work would be completed by BLM staff, contractors and volunteers. Reclamation work would be done outside migratory bird breeding and nesting seasons unless a survey has been completed and no impact to migratory species would occur. All crews would be trained in the use of required tools and equipment as well as being made aware of any unique wildlife, plant, cultural, and/or wilderness resources. All vehicles would be limited to designated and existing roads outside wilderness. All reclamation activities in wilderness would be conducted with non-motorized equipment and non-mechanized transport. A few of the following procedures are similar but not directly related to Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation procedures and implementation would generally be conducted in the following order:

1. **Decompaction:** Working the top few inches of the entire disturbed surface to relieve the compaction of the soil. This action would be completed with the use of soil spades, spading forks, McLeod rakes, Pulaski's, shovels, horse-drawn implements, etc.
2. **Scarifying/Pitting:** Loosening and texturizing the impacted, disturbed surface in random locations to better capture water, organic debris and wind-blown seeds to stimulate natural revegetation.
3. **Recontouring:** Reshaping the disturbed areas to mimic the surrounding landscape. Berms would be pulled in and the soil distributed across the disturbed surface. Vehicle

tracks in sandy washes would be raked. This would lessen visual contrasts and provide a surface for natural revegetation.

4. Vertical Mulching: Dead and down vegetation is “planted” to obscure the visible portions of the disturbance and is obtained from the surrounding areas. Additional dead vegetation, rock material and organic matter may be distributed over the disturbed surface to decrease visual contrasts, create sheltered sites to aid in natural revegetation and to add organic debris.
5. Erosion Control: Placing sterile, weed-free straw bales or creating light terracing/berms to reduce erosion and to create barriers to vehicles on steep slopes. This is especially effective on hill climbs. The straw bales break down over time and provide additional organic debris to the reclamation site.
6. Vegetative Restoration: This involves planting, transplanting and/or seeding as necessary to help stabilize soil, speed overall recovery and to camouflage evidence of disturbances. This action would be completed using non-motorized hand tools.
7. Rehabilitation locations would be monitored for future unauthorized motorized use and may require repeat treatments.
8. Entities (e.g. individual, agency or company) creating large surface disturbances, such as those that may be caused by heavy machinery, would be responsible for developing a restoration plan and conducting necessary environmental analysis.

Structures, Installations and Other Human Effects or Disturbances

Existing summit registers at Lear, Donnelly, and Pahute Peaks would not be removed. Other structures and installations may be removed if they are not the minimum necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness, or if they are not associated with a prior use and a valid existing right.

Wilderness staff and volunteer monitors would be given instructions on the identification of human effects that would be considered unattended personal property or refuse. Unattended personal property not associated with an active camp, including geocaches, would be removed by BLM personnel upon discovery and temporarily held at the BLM Winnemucca District Office. In the case of a traditional geocache, the BLM would request that it be removed. In the instance that a virtual geocache identifies a sensitive site, the sponsor would be asked to remove the site from the internet.

Human effects for which questions of age exist would be photographed for further consideration by a District Archaeologist. Historic and prehistoric artifacts would not be disturbed unless some disturbance is necessary for preservation of the resource, research activities, or interpretive purposes.

Where mine shafts or adits are found in the wilderness areas, they could be closed in order to promote wilderness character and public safety using conforming actions such as but not limited to, hand tools, foam, and/or dynamite filling. NEPA and MRDG analysis would be required for non-conforming actions including but not limited to, bulldozers and bat gates. If mine shafts or adits are proposed for closure, both cultural and wildlife (bat) surveys would be necessary.

Specific Action – Calico Mountains Agricultural Trespass

A portion of the Calico Mountains Wilderness was used for agricultural purposes by an adjacent landowner without authorization from the BLM. This portion of the wilderness was converted to agricultural use for the production of alfalfa. In addition to the alteration of the native vegetation there are numerous developments within the wilderness area. The area no longer demonstrates wilderness characteristics. Because the use involved cultivation for irrigated crops, this area was repeatedly disked, planed and compacted, developing a ‘Plow Pan’ in the soil from 8” to 12”. Reclamation of this site would consist of the following considerations and steps:

To develop a proper seedbed for this site, it will be necessary to rip the soil to a depth of 12” to allow for adequate moisture infiltration and seeded species root penetration for successful germination and establishment of selected seed mix. After broadcast seeding over the ripped soil surface, incorporation of the seed into the soil will be necessary using a ‘Drag Bar’, ‘Mat Harrow’ cultipacker, imprinter or some other mechanical means.

The seed mix for this site would consist of the following species at the described rates:

Species	PLS/Lbs/Ac	Bulk/ Lbs/Ac	Seeds/Ft ²	Native?
Sandberg’s Bluegrass	1	1.4	23.0	Yes
Indian Ricegrass	3	3.3	9.7	Yes
Bottlebrush Squirreltail	3	4.3	13.2	Yes
Shadscale	3	6.3	4.5	Yes
TOTAL	10	15.3	50.4	Yes

This area would be removed from grazing pressure for a minimum of three years to allow seedlings to become fully established. This site is located within the Buffalo Hills grazing allotment but outside any HMA.

Monitoring

Monitoring tracks the outcome of proposed activities on the qualities of wilderness character previously defined. A single activity is likely to affect several qualities of wilderness character. For example, an activity such as weed control is intended to restore natural conditions over the long term but may diminish the untrammeled condition of the wilderness in the short term. These separate outcomes, the improvement of “naturalness” and decreased “untrammeled nature”, would be monitored separately.

On the other hand, separate activities undertaken for different purposes may cumulatively diminish the same qualities of wilderness character. For example, a trail might be designated to control visitor impacts on vegetation. In the same vicinity, a fence or barrier may be in place to protect a sensitive resource from recreational impacts. Though the two activities are unrelated, both activities have an effect on the “undeveloped” quality of wilderness character. Monitoring the effects of single activities to multiple qualities of wilderness character would improve understanding of the effects upon wilderness character in combination and over time.

Effects of intentional, unintentional and unauthorized activities would be captured under the monitoring system. The monitoring program would provide a greater understanding of the overall and specific condition of each wilderness area. Information generated in monitoring wilderness conditions would indicate: 1) the current state of wilderness character; 2) how wilderness character is changing over time; 3) how stewardship actions are affecting wilderness character and 4) what stewardship priorities and decisions would best preserve and sustain wilderness character. Monitoring would also provide wilderness managers with more complete information which would improve the evaluation of future proposed activities. However, monitoring would not be used to compare conditions and changes within these wilderness areas with other wilderness areas in the National Wilderness Preservation System. This monitoring plan would be implemented subject to Bureau priorities, funding, and staffing. The following monitoring is associated with specific wilderness characteristics.

Untrammeled

- ❖ A log of all annual management and other activities that control or manipulate flora, fauna, soils, water, or natural disturbance factors present in the wilderness would be maintained in each area’s permanent wilderness file. A description, location, purpose and expected outcome of each activity would be documented. Activities that may be tracked include:
 - Campsite expansion and dispersion
 - Rehabilitation projects
 - Vegetation restoration and fuels treatment projects
 - Fire suppression activities

- Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation activities
- Treatments of noxious or invasive vegetation
- Wildlife management activities
- Periods of livestock grazing
- Archaeological and historic resource protection projects.

Solitude or Primitive, Unconfined Recreation

- ❖ A log of sights and sounds of civilization would be maintained in each area’s permanent file. A description and location of the activity inside or outside wilderness would be documented.
- ❖ A log of all regulations or restrictions occurring in the areas would be maintained in each area’s permanent file. A description of the regulation and its purpose would be documented.
- ❖ Visitor use encounters would be monitored through one or more of the following methods:
 - Visitor sign-in and comment forms at trailheads and access points.
 - Public comment received by mail or email.
 - Automated visitor counters located at trailheads or access points.
 - Wilderness rangers or volunteer stewards would visit trailheads and access points at least once every two months or as funding allows to record the number of vehicles and collect written comments or other trail data.
- ❖ On-site interviews with visitors would be conducted as funding allows to determine a variety of visitor perceptions including:
 - The number of other groups/visitors encountered within the areas.
 - The number of other groups/visitors encountered while traveling along routes adjacent to the areas.
 - How visitors perceive encounters with other groups during their visit in terms of solitude and crowding.
 - The average number of days visitors recreate in the area per trip.
- ❖ The wilderness areas would be monitored for unauthorized use at boundary roads and access points at least once every three months, or as funding allows, by wilderness staff and law enforcement rangers or volunteer stewards.
- ❖ Monitoring of campsite condition is critical in describing the evidence of other users and the impacts of this use within each opportunity class. The campsite monitoring protocol would follow the indicators and standards or thresholds listed in Preliminary Environmental Assessment Appendix D.

- ❖ Popular hunting areas in the wilderness areas would be monitored regularly for motorized trespass, foot-worn hiking trails and proliferation of campsites during hunting seasons.

Developments

- ❖ A log of all the developments, structures and facilities present in the wilderness areas—both permanent and temporary—would be maintained in each wilderness area’s permanent wilderness file. A description, location, purpose, and expected outcome of the feature would be documented.
- ❖ Within five (5) years of the Decision Record for the plan or as funding allows, determine if any permanent structures which have not been previously evaluated have historical significance which warrants retention as a feature of the wilderness area or are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- ❖ All former vehicle routes and other rehabilitated disturbances would be assessed for motorized use at least twice a year or as funding allows. Photo points would be established and photos would be taken as part of the monitoring.
- ❖ Popular hunting areas within wilderness would be monitored at the end of hunting season and structures associated with hunting, such as illegal and unauthorized blinds, would be removed. After 14 days, blinds would be considered unattended property and subject to removal by the BLM (43 CFR 8365.1-2(b)).

Naturalness and Primeval Character

- ❖ A log of all known human alterations to the ecosystem would be maintained in each area’s permanent wilderness file. A description and location would be documented or referenced. Conditions that may be tracked include:
 - Noxious and Invasive weeds
 - Special status species
 - Air quality
 - Presence, abundance and distribution of native species.
- ❖ A log of natural disturbances would be maintained in each area’s permanent wilderness file. A description and location would be documented or referenced. Activities that may be tracked include:
 - Fire
 - Flood
 - Insect or disease outbreaks.

- ❖ Monitoring for noxious and invasive weeds would occur at least once a year or as funding allows, with priority given to springs, trails, and washes which receive regular visitor use.
- ❖ Wildlife monitoring would be accomplished primarily by NDOW, according to the agency's established protocol. The BLM wilderness rangers would also record wildlife sightings, in particular for nested raptors and special status species. Monitoring or research by other entities may occur according to the protocol described in the plan.
- ❖ Sightings of wild horses and burros will be recorded.
- ❖ Findings, or a reference to the findings, from inventory, monitoring and research projects would be included in each area's permanent wilderness file. Other documented research outside of wilderness but applicable to the understanding of wilderness ecosystems may be referenced.
- ❖ Monitoring to assess the effects of recreation on wildlife habitat use and behavior would occur if feasible monitoring methods are developed.
- ❖ Monitoring would be included to account for changes to the natural fire cycle occurring from introduced annual grasses. The additional monitoring would aid fire management in determining Appropriate Management Response (AMR) on an annual basis. For fires having greater potential to convert native vegetation to unnatural annual grass-dominated vegetation, fire management would have better information to adjust response to the most active suppression response compatible with the fire management objectives and procedures for the area.
- ❖ Monitoring archaeological resources and historic properties by BLM staff and through the cultural site steward program would be done as schedules allow at known sites and for areas of high visitor use.
- ❖ Within five (5) years of the Decision Record for the plan or as funding allows, evaluate and categorize all previously recorded cultural resource sites within the wilderness areas to determine site-specific management actions. In the future, as new sites are recorded a use category for each would be assigned.
- ❖ Within three (3) years of the Decision Record for the plan, dependent upon available funding and staffing, initiate routine visits to the western portion of the Black Rock Desert Wilderness Area to locate and record paleontological resources. Efforts would initially focus on those areas accessible from the Pahute-Black Rock road. All sites would be placed into one of the categories listed in the NCA RMP Appendix F.

- ❖ BLM staff or qualified volunteers will conduct annual site visits to the northern portions of the High Rock Canyon and East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness Areas to locate and record paleontological resources as funding and staffing allow. Diagnostic samples would routinely be collected using hand tools which would result in minimal surface disturbance. All excavations would be restored to their previous natural appearance.
- ❖ Within three (3) years of the Decision Record for the plan, implement a systematic weed inventory program across the planning area. This program would include,
 - Training of staff and volunteers in weed species identification
 - Coordination with local weed management districts
 - Exploration of remote sensing techniques to enhance field inventories.
- ❖ Within two (2) years of the Decision Record for the plan, complete a stratified sampling of spring sources and meadows to determine condition, functionality, risks and priorities for restoration.
- ❖ Within two (2) years of the Decision Record for the plan, dependent upon funding, complete an inventory of all springs and associated meadows in the High Rock Canyon, East Fork High Rock Canyon, High Rock Lake and Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness Areas to support the National Riparian Service Team project and the evaluation of wildlife waters as previously agreed to with the Nevada Department of Wildlife and other entities.

Monitoring of Site-Specific Actions

- ❖ Additional monitoring would occur for the following site-specific actions associated with the attached Environmental Assessment in order to ensure that wilderness character is protected and that undue impacts to other resources are not occurring as a result of the proposed actions:
 - Reclamation of excavations for cultural and paleontological resources.
 - Success of weed treatments.
 - Success of projects to maintain or enhance native vegetation and riparian areas.
 - Access to and maintenance of range improvements,
 - Success of small-scale surface disturbance reclamation.
 - Use of staging areas.
 - Use of any alternative access routes constructed.
 - Effectiveness of sign protocol

Plan Implementation

Plan Implementation Sequence

Management of the ten wilderness areas would be carried out in accordance with this plan under the direction of the BLM Black Rock Field Office staff. Other BLM staff and volunteers may be called upon for support or resource expertise.

The following list shows the priority sequence of accomplishing the management activities addressed in this plan. The actual implementation could be altered based on funding and staff availability outside of the control of this plan.

Ongoing Activities

- ❖ Maintenance and installation of boundary signs.
- ❖ Vegetation clearing around archaeological resources and historic structures.
- ❖ Wilderness monitoring:
 - Natural resource monitoring.
 - Wilderness character monitoring.
 - Visitor resource impact monitoring
 - Visitor information dissemination.

Site-Specific Projects

Implementation would not require additional NEPA analysis for the following projects because they are analyzed in the EA associated with this plan:

- ❖ Archaeological, botanical, and threatened and endangered species inventories to support plan implementation.
- ❖ Cultural and paleontological barricades and excavations.
- ❖ Projects to maintain or enhance native vegetation and riparian areas (aspen/cottonwood propagation, meadow restoration in High Rock Canyon area).
- ❖ Rehabilitation of small-scale disturbances.
- ❖ Signing
- ❖ Removal of unnecessary structures and installations.
- ❖ Maintenance, modification or removal of livestock developments as appropriate, including the installation of small enclosures.
- ❖ Herbicide, mechanical, and biological treatments for non-native invasive species infestations.

Potential Future Projects Requiring Subsequent NEPA Analysis.

- ❖ Riparian area restoration to mitigate wild horse and livestock grazing impacts.
- ❖ Vegetation restoration projects not analyzed in the EA.

- ❖ Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation projects.
- ❖ Installation of new water developments.
- ❖ Archeological or paleontological excavations greater than 1 cubic meter.

Environmental Protection Measures

In order to avoid short term impacts to wilderness character, all ground disturbing activities implemented as a result of this wilderness management plan would be guided by the following points.

- ❖ Work projects would be scheduled to avoid times of high visitor use such as weekends or peak visitation seasons (hunting season, holiday weekends, etc).
- ❖ Visitors to the area would be notified of the projects in order to give them the opportunity to select alternate destinations.
- ❖ Crews involved in plan implementation projects would stage equipment and camp outside of the wilderness areas.
- ❖ Plan implementation projects would temporarily affect a very small percentage (less than 1%) of the wilderness areas at any given time.

To maintain compliance with the Endangered Species Act, the BLM is conducting Section 7 consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for the proposed action to establish measures to minimize impacts to listed species and establish incidental take limits for actions that may harm or harass the species. Minimization measures may include pre-construction surveys and, construction monitoring, and payment of remuneration fees into the Section 7 mitigation bank. Implementation of this plan would include following all terms and conditions of the Biological Opinion received from the Fish and Wildlife Service.

All activities would comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Native American consultation procedures, and all other applicable laws, policies, and regulations.

Plan Evaluation

All field reports, photographs, and monitoring data would be maintained in the official wilderness files at the BLM Winnemucca District Office. The plan would be revised when the management actions prescribed no longer meet the wilderness management objectives, or when a change in the existing situation warrants revised management. The need for revision would be reviewed every five years. If the decision is made to revise the plan, it would be

accomplished with public participation. Minor revisions such as typographical or cartographical errors may be made by inserting an errata sheet.