

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

### Black Rock Desert – High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Wilderness Management Plan Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-NV-W030-2011-0001-EA

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment (EA) DOI-BLM-NV-W030-2011-0001-EA, dated December 2012. After consideration of the environmental impacts as described in the EA, which is incorporated herein, I have determined that the proposed action (wilderness management plan) as described in the EA will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. This finding and conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.27), both with regard to the context and intensity of the impacts described in the EA.

I have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved Resource Management Plan (July 2004) for the Black Rock-Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area and Associated Wilderness and other Contiguous Lands in Nevada, and is "...consistent with other Federal Agency, state, and local plans to the maximum extent consistent with Federal law and Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) provisions" (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1).

#### **Context**

The Black Rock Desert Wilderness, Calico Mountains Wilderness, East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness, High Rock Canyon Wilderness, High Rock Lake Wilderness, Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness, North Black Rock Range Wilderness, North Jackson Mountains Wilderness, Pahute Peak Wilderness, and South Jackson Mountains Wilderness are part of the National Wilderness Preservation System and are located in northwest Nevada.

#### **Intensity**

##### **1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.***

The EA has considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of the wilderness management plan. Overall, the plan will result in enhancements to the wilderness characteristics of naturalness, opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude, and various special features including historic resources. Preserving a more natural system is considered as merely improving the quality of the human environment through proactive management, and is not considered a significant effect in the short or long term.

##### **2) *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.***

Implementation components of the wilderness management plan will not result in potentially substantial or adverse impacts to public health and safety.

##### **3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.***

The action areas are within designated wilderness. These ten areas were designated by Congress for their unique characteristics including high scenic qualities, diverse cultural resources, important wildlife habitat, and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreational pursuits. Park lands, prime farmlands, and wild and scenic rivers are not present.

**4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.***

The effects of implementing decisions of the wilderness management plan are well known and documented and not highly controversial in that wilderness management plans are essential to maintaining the natural condition of wilderness as required under the Wilderness Act. The methods chosen to complete implementation actions are accepted methods to meet resource and management objectives and are not considered highly controversial.

**5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.***

There are no effects of the proposed action identified in the EA which are considered uncertain or involve unknown risks. All actions proposed to be employed are accepted standard practices.

**6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.***

The proposed action does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about future consideration.

**7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.***

No significant cumulative impacts have been identified in the EA.

**8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.***

The proposed action will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP. The proposed action will not cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

**9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA of 1973.***

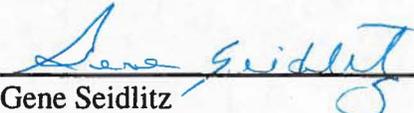
The EA has identified one threatened (Lahontan cutthroat trout) and one candidate species (Greater sage-grouse) in the project area. Review of the threatened and endangered species section of the EA indicates an overall improved/sustained ecological condition for the threatened and candidate species under the proposed action. The EA also identifies that the remote potential for accidental death may be caused from the implementation of portions of the proposed action. Potential impacts will be reduced by following the best management practices in BLM Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides Final Programmatic EIS (2007) and are considered extremely unlikely. The threatened and candidate species are expected to meet life cycle requirements.

Section 7 consultation was completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Reno, Nevada. A species list of federally listed, proposed or candidate species was requested on February 27, 2012, and was received March 26, 2012, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Formal consultation was requested on May 1, 2012, and a Biological Opinion was received September 14, 2012 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In part, the biological opinion stated, "...the

plan as proposed, is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT). If any of the proposed action would adversely affect the Lahontan cutthroat trout, the BLM would re-consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.***

The proposed action does not violate or threaten any known Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

  
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Gene Seidlitz  
District Manager  
Winnemucca District

12/21/12  
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Date