

2.2.20 RECREATION

The NCA Act emphasizes protection and enhancement of the cultural, ecological and recreational resources of the planning area while allowing opportunities to experience the terrain, sights and conditions as they were during the emigrant passage. The decisions in the following section are intended to allow for historical and traditional uses, while protecting significant resources from use-related impacts.

Objectives

- To retain the unique resources and provide opportunities for a diverse range of recreation experiences consistent with the intent of the NCA Act.
- To protect the physical and visual integrity of the Applegate-Lassen National Historic Trail from impacts associated with human uses, including organized events.
- To provide suitable alternatives to traditional camping areas to reduce resource conflicts, rehabilitate sensitive areas and reduce visitor conflict.
- To provide opportunities for a diverse range of permitted activities consistent with the NCA Act while providing public access and solitude for other users.

Recreation Management

Visitor Management

Administration/Allocation

REC-1: The entire 1,205,040 acre planning area will be administered as a Special Recreation Management Area.

REC-2: Permit systems may be implemented to mitigate resource impacts in areas where visitation is causing resource damage, user conflict or crowding at attraction areas, or specific uses create safety concerns.

Note: Permits would be used to limit visitation numbers, increase education, or maintain public safety.



*Visitors
Backpacking*

Chapter 2 –Management Plan

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.

Note: Standards would be established for the Front Country, Rustic, and Wilderness Zones. Tolerance for group activities and encounters would generally be very low in the Wilderness Zone and highest in the Front Country Zone.



Land
Sailor on
Black
Rock
Playa

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.

Camping Designations

REC-5: Dispersed camping will generally be allowed throughout the Rustic and Wilderness zones, and on the Playa portions of the Front Country Zone, except as noted below.

Note: Visitors will be encouraged to use existing disturbed areas for camping and for pulling off roads and motorized trails to access camping areas, and will be required to leave vegetation intact. Consistent with transportation management decisions in this plan, motorized or mechanized vehicles may pull off designated routes no more than 50 feet for direct access to camping areas off the playa (See TRAN-11)

REC-6: Vehicle camping will be limited to designated sites (36,867 acres) in the following areas (See Maps 2-14a & b):

High Rock Canyon ACEC, including Stevens Camp.

Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area.

Class A and B trail segments of the Emigrant Trails.

Front Country Zone including the Soldier Meadow ACEC, with the exception of the playa.

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 designated sites away from private property,

REC-8: Camping will be restricted to areas more than 300 feet from springs, consistent with Nevada Revised Statute 503.660, unless otherwise designated.

Chapter 2 –RMP Management Plan

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 of the emigrant trail, archeological sites, or critical wildlife habitat.

REC-10: Where camping is adversely impacting sensitive resources and suitable alternative camping locations are available on nearby private or Tribal lands, camping may be restricted without a need to designate new campsites on public land.

Facilities

REC-11: Primitive campgrounds will be established to direct overnight use to appropriate areas if other management tools prove ineffective.

Note: Campgrounds will likely be established in a limited number of Front Country locations. In the Rustic zone, efforts to disperse use will be used prior to concentrating use in campgrounds. Specific management actions will be provided in the Recreation Area Management Plan.

REC-12: The development of privately operated campgrounds will be encouraged on public lands outside of the NCA and on private or Tribal lands both inside and outside the NCA boundary.

Note: Private operators both inside and outside of the NCA will be encouraged to develop visitor services that are consistent with preserving the primitive character of the NCA landscape and are sensitive to zone character.

REC-13: In cases where facilities are found necessary to prevent resource degradation, they will be located and designed to be unobtrusive and aesthetically compatible with the landscape. Primitive and natural materials and colors will be used whenever possible.

REC-14: If monitoring indicates that unacceptable resource impacts are occurring at hot spring attraction areas or that public safety is unreasonably compromised by hazards, facilities such as fencing or boardwalks may be constructed around hot springs.

Trails

REC-15: Non-motorized trails may be constructed, relocated or closed to mitigate human-caused impacts. If conflict among different uses occurs or increased volume of use necessitates, non-motorized trails may be developed to separate different user types, or times and locations for certain modes of travel may be assigned.

REC-16: The National Desert Trail route (93 miles) will be designated through Wilderness and the NCA (See Map 2-14a).

Campfires

REC-17: Open fires will be allowed, restricted or prohibited in accordance with applicable BLM Field Office fire management policies and restrictions and the decisions of this plan.

REC-18: Fires on the playa (as shown on Map 2-14a) and within adjacent dune areas as will be allowed only with the use of a surface-protecting device, such as an elevated platform, open grill, fire blanket, or fire pan.

Collection

REC-19: Cutting of green or standing trees in the planning area will be prohibited, and wood collection may be further restricted in sensitive habitat areas or where resources have been depleted.

Note: Visitors would be encouraged to use firewood obtained from areas outside of the NCA.

REC-20: Collection of rocks, minerals, and common invertebrate fossils will be authorized except in the 252 acre Hanging Rock Petrified Forest as shown on Map 2-14b. 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. Collection limits may be waived for scientific or educational use under permit.

Special Recreation Permits

Special Recreation Permit Management

REC-21: All recreation permittees will be required to adopt Tread Lightly! and Leave-No-Trace® principles. Permit stipulations will emphasize the Tread Lightly! and Leave-No-Trace® principles.

REC-22: Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) will be assigned to one of four classes of permitted activities (I through IV). A description of the classification system is provided in Appendix M.

Allocations

REC-23: SRPs will be limited to certain geographic areas based on the permit class that the proposal is given. Table 2-9 identifies the areas where various scales and types of SRPs would be authorized (See Maps 2-13 and 2-15).

Table 2-9 Special Recreation Permit Classes and Areas

Permit Class	Geographic Area
Class I	Throughout all zones (1,205,040 acres)
Class II	Primarily in the Rustic and Front Country Zones (888,964 acres) Wilderness Zone when compatible with wilderness management (767,719 acres)
Class III	Large Scale Permit Area (78,676 acres) Along the Emigrant Trail for uses that are consistent with the management objectives for historic trails (148 miles)
Class IV	Large Scale Permit Area (78,676 acres)

REC-24: Class III and IV permitted activities will be concentrated on or near the South Playa to maintain visitor solitude on northern portions of the playa, . Northern portions of the playa may be made available for Class III and IV permits when playa conditions are unsuitable or public safety or public access may be compromised.

REC-25: Special recreation permits will be authorized at times, in locations and for durations consistent with providing opportunities for solitude and full public access to the playa for at least one-half of the summer season (Memorial Day through Labor Day). The number of Special Recreation Permits issued could be limited to protect resources or the visitor experience.

REC-26: Class III and IV events may occur simultaneously, but only one may be a Class IV event.

REC-27: No more than two access points to the playa will be closed on the same weekend in conjunction with permitted events.



*Land
Sailors on
the Black
Rock
Playa*

REC-28: Rocket launching activities would be required to use the rocket launching area (12,499 acres) indicated on Map 2-15, unless otherwise approved for public safety, resource concerns, or due to specific operating requirements.

Implementation

Priorities for the recreation program will include the development of a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) and a comprehensive permitting process for organized recreation events and other permitted activities. Both plans would tier to the RMP and would be developed with the help of the public.

Recreation Area Management Plan

The RAMP will be used to direct the implementation of recreation land-use decisions made within the broader RMP. It will address all recreation uses and potential recreation opportunities within the planning area. Standards will be established for resource conditions and the recreation experience, and resource conditions will be evaluated through continual monitoring of appropriate indicators. Thresholds would be set to trigger management actions (see Section 3.7).

The RAMP will provide guidance in implementation of the following items:

- Resource Monitoring System
- Public Outreach Facilities and Programs
- Recreation Site Development
- Visitor Management
- Camping Designations
- Signage

Special Recreation Permit Policy

The SRP policy will establish guidelines for the permit application process and administration of permits including stipulations, fees and other permit requirements. Permit issuance will be based on a classification system for events of similar scale and potential impacts. This permit process will streamline permit issuance, set standards for when permits are required and support resource, visitor experience and other management objectives.