



**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
Bureau of Land Management

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July 2004



**Record of Decision  
and  
Resource Management Plan for  
Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon  
Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area and  
Associated Wilderness, and other  
Contiguous Lands in Nevada**

*First Desert Stretch, On Leaving the Humboldt River  
J. Goldsborough Bruff, 1849.*



BLACK ROCK DESERT-HIGH ROCK CANYON  
EMIGRANT TRAILS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA  
(NCA) AND ASSOCIATED WILDERNESS, AND OTHER  
CONTIGUOUS LANDS IN NEVADA

RECORD OF DECISION AND  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

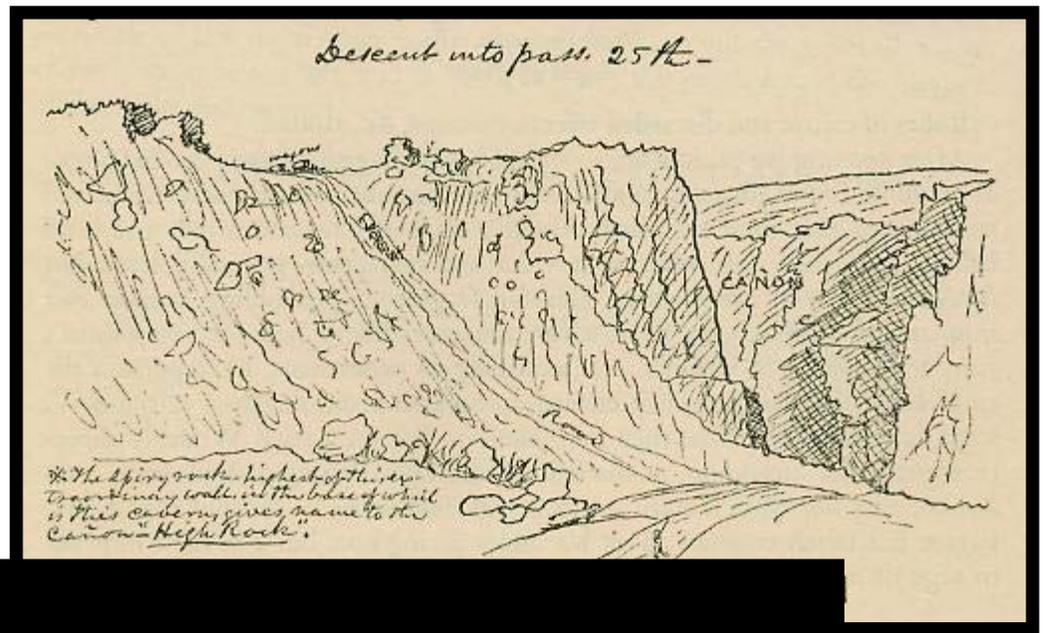
Prepared by:  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

WINNEMUCCA FIELD OFFICE  
WINNEMUCCA, NEVADA

SURPRISE FIELD OFFICE  
CEDARVILLE, CALIFORNIA

JULY 2004

Bruff's  
1849  
sketch of  
"Descent  
into High  
Rock  
Canyon"



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

# Chapter 1



*Aspen  
groves in the  
North Black  
Rock Range  
Wilderness*

## Introduction

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Black Rock Desert–High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area (NCA) and ten associated Wilderness Areas in northwest Nevada were established by Act of Congress in December 2000 (contained in Appendix A) to conserve, protect and enhance resources associated with the historic Oregon and California Emigrant Trails and surrounding areas for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. This legislation directed the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), to manage the NCA and Wilderness Areas in a way that conserves and protects the resources identified in the NCA Act.

The NCA Act found that the Black Rock–High Rock planning area contained nationally significant historic trails; an absence of development; unique Great Basin biota; and significant cultural, archaeological, paleontological, and geographical resources. The Act identified wilderness and recreation as values and resources to be conserved, protected and enhanced; and grazing and large-scale permitted events as resource values that are expected to continue in accordance with this Resource Management Plan and other applicable laws and regulations.

In summary, the Black Rock-High Rock country is a very special piece of the American landscape. It encompasses the prehistory of the continent, our nation's history, natural beauty and wildlife, and offers our generation a glimpse of the United States much as it was in its formative youth, in the earliest days of European-American settlement. Congress recognized this and sought, through legislation, to preserve this exceptional area and by doing so to ensure that the extraordinary experiences it provides today will still be available to future generations.



Bruff's 1849 sketch of "Boiling Spring at Black Rock"

Photo Credit

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Resource Management Plan (RMP) is to carry out the vision of Congress as it was expressed in the NCA Act of 2000. The need for the RMP is to comply with the requirement of the Act requiring BLM to prepare a comprehensive land use plan within three years. This Resource Management Plan is that land use plan.

## 1.3 PLANNING AREA

The Black Rock-High Rock planning area consists of 1.2 million acres of public lands in northwest Nevada (Map 1-1). This area – approximately the size of the State of Delaware – extends across portions of Washoe, Pershing and Humboldt Counties and is administered by BLM’s Winnemucca (Nevada) and Surprise (California) Field Offices. The provisions of the NCA Act apply to the NCA and the Wilderness Areas (totaling 1,172,680 acres), but several other relatively small areas not covered by the NCA Act are included in the planning area because they are contiguous to the NCA or Wilderness and similar planning issues apply to them (Table 1-1). These other areas (totaling 32,360 acres) are: the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area [consisting of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area (WSA), acquired federal lands within the WSA, the sliver of public land located between the WSA and the Summit Lake Paiute Indian Reservation, and other contiguous parcels and road and motorized trail corridors], the South Playa located between the south boundary of the NCA and the town of Gerlach, Nevada, and road and motorized trail corridors associated with Wilderness access and boundaries and with the NCA boundary. Collectively, the NCA, Wilderness and these other contiguous lands comprise the planning area to which this plan applies. This plan provides the framework required to effectively manage all lands included in the planning area, whether or not the NCA Act applies to those lands. This RMP also replaces four existing land use plans that applied to the respective part of this RMP planning area. The existing land use plans still provide valid guidance to the lands outside this RMP planning and are not superceded by this RMP outside the planning area. The land use plans are: Tuledad/Home Camp Management Framework Plan (MFP) (1976), Sonoma/Gerlach MFP (1982), Paradise/Denio MFP (1982), and Cowhead/Massacre MFP (1983).

Table 1-1. Federal Acreage of Planning Area Units

Planning Area Unit	Land Area (Acres)
<b><i>Lands designated in the NCA Act</i></b>	
NCA , including 378,329 acres of wilderness inside NCA:	799,165
Wilderness Areas outside the NCA:	373,515
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,172,680</b>
Note: the <b>entire</b> designated as wilderness <b>encompasses</b> 751,844 acres	
<b><i>Other Areas covered in RMP</i></b>	
Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT) Area: Which includes:	
<i>LCT WSA:</i>	<i>12,378 acres</i>
<i>Acquired Public Lands in but not part of WSA:</i>	<i>734 acres</i>
<i>Area between WSA &amp; Summit Lake Reservation:</i>	<i>2,186 acres</i>
<i>Road Corridors south and west of WSA:</i>	<i>448 acres</i>
LCT Area sub-total:	15,746

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Table 1-1. Federal Acreage of Planning Area Units

Planning Area Unit	Land Area (Acres)
South Playa:	14,672
Road and Motorized Trail Corridors: (Not Included in LCT Area)	1,942
<b>Total of Other Areas:</b>	<b>32,360</b>
<b>Grand Total Federal Acres in Planning Area <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1,205,040</b>

<sup>1</sup>**Note:** Total land area within the planning area boundaries is 1,222,816 acres. This includes 17,776 acres of intermingled private lands that are not part of the planning area and are not covered by the RMP.

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## 1.4 SETTING

The planning area is vast and diverse. It is both typical of the northwestern Great Basin and unique in the resources and habitats it encompasses. It includes one of the flattest places on Earth, the 165-square-mile Black Rock Desert Playa; and several jagged mountain ranges thrusting nearly a mile above the desert floor. Most of its area is sparsely vegetated desert receiving less than 6 inches of precipitation per year, but in this unique place looks are deceiving.

The landscape of the planning area is sparsely vegetated, primitive and exposed. Dominant terrain features include open desert playas (dry lake beds) with reflective whitish-beige, silt surfaces and rocky shorelines, making them appear – especially at dawn, dusk and in moonlight – much like the living lakes they were ten thousand years ago; sagebrush flats, bajadas (slopes at the feet of mountains) and rolling hills – grazed by pronghorn antelope – create the transition from playa and desert floor to the surrounding canyons and mountains that are home to deer and bighorn sheep. In the low country widely separated hot springs bubble to the surface from deep underground, some of which create streams that provide habitat to a unique species of fish, the Soldier Meadow desert dace, found nowhere else on Earth. Small, shallow, ephemeral lakes and intermittent and perennial streams are scattered throughout the transition and mountain parts of planning area. Some of the colder, perennial streams in the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area and adjacent public lands that feed nearby Summit Lake provide habitats for one of the last two remaining genetically pure populations of the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout. And the High Rock Canyon part of the planning area features cliffs, canyons, rimrock, and sagebrush steppe habitats favored by bighorn sheep and raptors for rearing their young.

Significant cultural resources are found throughout the planning area, including the Applegate-Lassen Emigrant Trail, designated as a national historic trail. Other historic resources include the Nobles Trail, the route of the old Western Pacific Railroad (now Union Pacific), sites associated with seven historic mining districts, military sites, and traces of an early motion picture location and past ranching activity. Prehistoric resources are also well represented, with quarrying sites, lithic scatters, rock shelters and caves, campsites, and rock art.

The first trail through the Black Rock-High Rock country was blazed by the famous explorer John C. Fremont in 1843-44. A few years later, emigrants to Oregon and California built on Fremont's exploration to create branching and intersecting wagon routes across the area. No one knows for certain the total number of pioneers who used these trails to travel the 2000 miles from the settlements Back East "in the States" to California and the Pacific Northwest, but it is generally accepted that 7 to 9 thousand did so in the year 1849 alone. This was an epochal migration that helped lead to early statehood for California (1850) and Oregon (1859). Today the landscape within the planning area looks and feels much the same as it did to those early emigrants. A goal of this RMP is to protect that view and the experiences it engenders into the future.

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## 1.5 OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

This RMP was developed in a collaborative setting and is the result of extensive input and idea sharing provided by Native American Tribes, State and other federal agencies, a subgroup created by two Resource Advisory Councils (RACs), area residents, interest groups, and members of the general public who all contributed extensively throughout the planning process.

Public participation was sought within weeks of passage of the NCA Act of 2000 when Tribal governments, and State and federal agencies were invited to consult with BLM throughout the planning process, and when the



*Emigrant  
Trail  
through  
High Rock  
Canyon*

general public was asked to comment. Ideas and concerns submitted from all sources were carefully considered by BLM during preparation of the Draft RMP, and the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) were fully met.

In June of 2001, the Winnemucca Field Office sponsored a three-day training session entitled “Community-Based Partnerships and Ecosystems: Ensuring a Healthy Environment.” This 3-day course, presented by BLM’s National Training Center in Phoenix, Arizona, was attended by about 60 people from BLM, Tribal, State and local governments, other federal agencies, and the general public, including several members of the RAC NCA Subgroup. The course showcased successful collaborative planning and management efforts from around the nation and provided guidance on how to achieve similar results in the local area. This training set the stage for the successful collaborative planning process that developed this Resource Management Plan.

BLM used various mechanisms to maintain contact with participants in the planning process including: agency letters, a project website, newsletters, press releases, and media ads. BLM met directly with participants at many meetings in two states. These meetings included official consultations with Tribal Councils and various State and federal agencies, informational and scoping meetings with the general public and constituent groups, and meetings with the RAC NCA Subgroup held at key milestones during the process.

In addition to formal consultation with Native American Tribal governments, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Historic Preservation Office, several other groups were convened to assist BLM in preparing the RMP. A State Black Rock Planning Team consisting of representatives from State of Nevada agencies was formed and tasked with providing input into the development of this RMP and insuring that it was as consistent as possible with the laws and resource related plans, policies and programs of the State of Nevada. Coordination and consultation was also conducted with an Economics Sub-Team composed of representatives from Washoe County, Nevada, Humboldt County, Nevada, Pershing County, Nevada, Modoc County, California, the Nevada Association of County Governments, University of Nevada-Reno, Nevada BLM State Office, and members of the Black Rock-High Rock planning team.

The contributions to the successful development of the RMP made by the RAC NCA Subgroup formed by the Northeast California and Sierra Front-Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Councils cannot be overstated. The subgroup was composed of 26 RAC members and representatives of constituent and stakeholder groups, Tribal, State and local governments, and the general public. Over a

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

2½ -year period the subgroup met ten times with BLM managers and staff. Subgroup members donated hundreds of hours of their time learning the details of all of the most controversial and difficult issues connected with management of the Black Rock-High Rock area. The subgroup members worked hard with BLM planners to try to reach consensus on these issues and develop the best management alternatives. Consensus was reached on most issues and in the remainder majority positions emerged with differing views noted. Reports were made to the parent RACs on this work and the RACs used the information provided by the subgroup to advise BLM on how various issues should be addressed in the RMP. Of the 82 RAC NCA Subgroup decisions recommended by a consensus of the group, 81 are included in this RMP. BLM sincerely appreciates the hard work contributed by every member of this remarkable group of concerned and involved people during this long and complex planning effort.

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## 1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN



*Aspen Grove on Mahogany Creek*

The RMP is in three chapters:

**Chapter 1** (this section) includes background information, the purpose and need for the plan, an overview of the planning process, and the vision and objectives for the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System, which includes National Conservation Areas and Wilderness units, and the management goals for the Black Rock-High Rock planning area.

**Chapter 2** contains resource and program specific objectives and decisions grouped by resource program.

**Chapter 3** includes information on how the plan will be implemented. Topics covered include adaptive management, monitoring of resources and plan decisions, evaluation of the plan and the objectives, implementation priorities and time frames and coordination with other plans, and future changes to the RMP.

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## 1.7 MISSION AND VISION

### 1.7.1 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM

An essential consideration in developing the RMP was that it be consistent with the overall vision of BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). The NLCS assembles BLM's premier designations, including NCAs and Wilderness Areas, into an organized system to increase public awareness of the cultural, scientific, educational, ecological, and other values associated with these areas.

*The NLCS overall vision: "BLM's Great American Landscapes: healthy, wild and open."*

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### *Five NLCS objectives help to achieve this vision:*

- Above all, commit to conserving, protecting and restoring special values of the landscape, as directed by BLM's organic act [the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA)].
- Build and sustain community relationships to foster collaborative stewardship.
- Continue to manage compatible uses and valid existing rights, consistent with the values for which the area was designated.
- Provide opportunities for the individual to explore and discover these special areas.
- Foster scientific research and public education and acquire a better understanding of how to manage these landscapes.

### 1.7.2 PLANNING AREA GOALS

The planning process included development of broad goals to assure that the RMP would be consistent with the spirit and intent of legislative and other constraints and with the overall mission of the National Landscape Conservation System.

BLM worked with the previously mentioned RAC NCA Subgroup, a 26-member group composed of representatives of the Sierra Front-Northwestern Great Basin and Northeastern California RACs, as well as citizen members with particular interests in the planning area, including representatives of Tribal, State and local governments to identify goals for the planning area. These goals are listed below.

**Goal 1:** Provide current and future generations of Americans with unique opportunities to experience what the emigrants experienced.

- Preserve significant segments and the setting of the national historic emigrant trails within the planning area.
- Preserve opportunities for solitude and primitive experiences within the viewshed of historic emigrant and exploration trails.

**Goal 2:** Protect a large area of the Northern Great Basin in its current, predominantly natural state and prevent further decline of associated resources.

- Preserve archaeological, paleontological, geological, and geographical resources of the region.
- Protect the remote and undeveloped character of the landscape.
- Foster scientific inquiry and research to enhance resource management and public education.

**Goal 3:** Support visitor services and resource management activities in a manner that protects the planning area's resources.

- Provide educational materials to the public to assist in the protection and interpretation of the area's resources.
- Provide opportunities for visitor activities, including large-scale permitted activities on the Black Rock Desert Playa, recognizing that the playa is the primary destination for the majority of visitors to the NCA.
- Maintain access for the reasonable use and enjoyment of the planning area.

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

**Goal 4:** Manage the planning area's plant and animal species in a way that would provide for their continued presence as part of a healthy ecological system.

- Manage wild horses and burros to achieve identified appropriate management levels (AMLs).
- Recover populations and habitats of special status, previously eliminated, or declining plant and animal species.
- Enhance native and desired naturalized wildlife.

**Goal 5:** Manage Wilderness Areas for visitors' use and enjoyment, in a manner that would provide opportunities for solitude and primitive experiences while leaving the areas unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness.

- Manage Wilderness Areas under a principle of non-degradation, by using the minimum tools, equipment and structures necessary to successfully, safely and economically accomplish effective wilderness management.
- Allow for spontaneity of use and preserve as much freedom from regulation as possible.
- Manage nonconforming but accepted uses in a way that prevents unnecessary degradation of the area's wilderness character.

**Goal 6:** Allow for social and economic uses that benefit local communities compatible with the protection of the area.

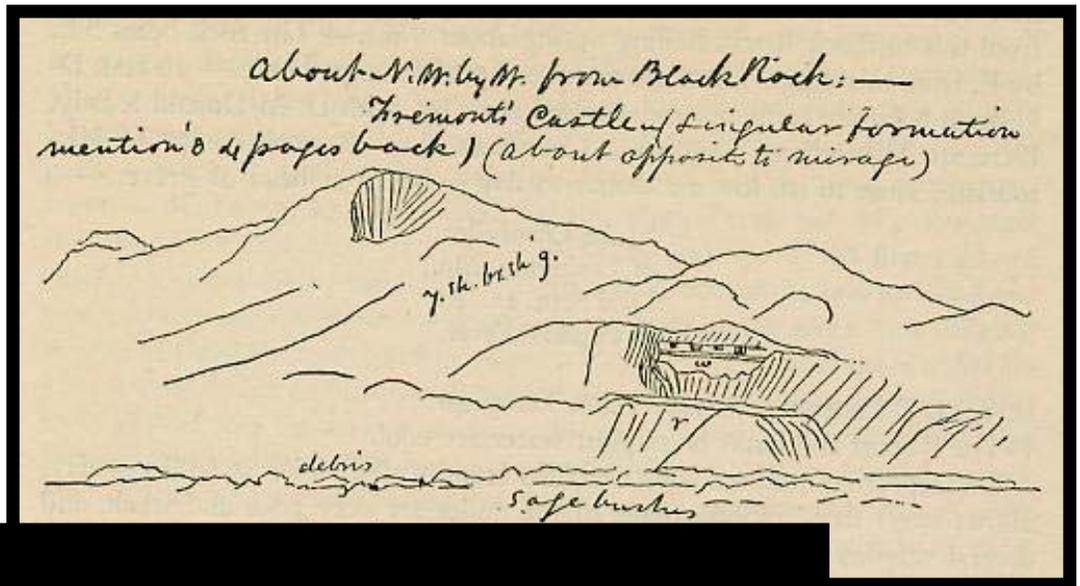
- Maintain permitted grazing activities in a manner compatible with the rangeland health of the area and consistent with standards and guidelines.
- Manage and sustain multiple-use activities consistent with applicable legislation.
- Provide reasonable access to privately owned land or interests (including valid and existing rights) on land within the boundaries of the planning area, consistent with historical multiple use.

**Goal 7:** Provide for the protection of cultural, religious and agricultural values developed through historical practices in the planning area.

**Goal 8:** Cooperate and partner with local, State, Tribal, and other collaborating agencies and private interests to support resource management activities and ensure consistency among plans and policies where these are consistent with federal laws and regulations.

Bruff's 1849  
sketch of  
"Fremont's  
Castle"

Photo Credit \*



# Chapter 2

## Management Plan

# Chapter 2



*Mahogany  
Canyon in the  
High Rock  
Canyon  
Wilderness*

# Management Plan

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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains objectives and decisions for managing the natural, physical and cultural resources described in the Act and those located in parts of the planning area not included in the National Conservation Area or designated Wilderness Areas. Background information is provided for each of these resources to establish points of reference for the decisions that follow.

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## 2.2 PROGRAM-SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND DECISIONS

### 2.2.1 LAND HEALTH STANDARDS

Land Health Standards are expressions of physical and biological condition or degree of function required for sustainable environmental health. These standards engender measurements that describe on-the-ground conditions in relation to the four fundamentals of healthy, properly functioning ecosystems that are identified at 43 CFR § 4180. These fundamentals are:

- Watersheds in properly functioning physical condition; soil and plant conditions support infiltration, soil moisture storage, and the release of water that is in balance with climate and landform and maintain or improve water quality, water quantity, and timing and duration of flow. Ecological processes, including the hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow, are maintained in order to support healthy biotic populations and communities.
- Water quality complies with State water quality standards and achieves BLM management objectives.
- Habitats are restored or maintained for listed, proposed, candidate and other special status species.

## Chapter 2 –Management Plan

Standards are achieved through the use of guidelines developed for specific programs and uses. Because the Standards were originally applied to livestock grazing, guidelines for livestock grazing (Appendix B) will continue to apply to that use. Guidelines for other uses and programs will be implemented as part of the adaptive management process (see Chapter 3). Currently existing guidelines for resources and programs will be incorporated during RMP implementation and new guidelines will be developed where none exist. The participation of the public, State, Tribal and local governments, and other federal agencies will be used during the adoption and development of guidelines.



*View from  
Soldier  
Meadows hot  
spring pool*

### Objective

To manage public lands to meet the fundamentals of land health.

### Management

LHS-1: Land Health Standards developed with the assistance of the two Resource Advisory Councils will apply to all uses and programs as indicated in Table 2-1 and Map 2-1. The complete text of the standards is in Appendix B.

Table 2-1. Land Health Standards

Standards	Acres
Northwestern Nevada-Sierra Front Area	1,018,751
Northeastern California	186,289

Note: There are no specific soils objectives or decisions in the RMP. The soils requirements for Land Health Standards and the objectives and decisions related to vegetation provide adequate guidance for the health of soil related resources.

**2.2.2 TRANSPORTATION AND OHV ROUTES**

Together, BLM system roads and motorized trails; non-BLM roads, including State and county roads; and designated off-highway vehicle (OHV) areas constitute the transportation network for the planning area. This transportation network will be managed consistent with the intent of the NCA legislation, to provide reasonable access to visitors, local residents and property owners. (Appendix C contains road and motorized trail classifications and maintenance levels.)

The BLM transportation network in the planning area includes two types of motorized vehicle routes, system roads and motorized trails, and will be managed to provide administrative and public access at the minimum levels required to prevent resource damage and provide safe access.

BLM system roads form the backbone of the transportation system and are regularly maintained. System roads are further subdivided into functional classes depending on intended use. Definitions of the functional classes are included in Appendix C.

All other motorized vehicle routes within the planning area are classified as motorized trails. Motorized trails are low standard vehicle routes that are maintained infrequently and locally in order to retain vehicular access.

**Objective**

To provide a transportation network for effective access, consistent with the NCA Act, public safety and resource objectives.

**Transportation Management**

TRAN-1: BLM system roads will be managed to provide primary access to the planning area consistent with the functional and maintenance classifications shown in Table 2-2 and Maps 2-2a – 2-2g.

**Table 2-2. BLM System Roads (Proposed RMP)**

Road Number	Road Name	Maintenance Level
<b>Collector Roads</b>		
2048	High Road	4
2049	Sulphur-Jackson	3
<b>Resource Roads</b>		
2094	Playa Access	4
37017	Stevens Camp	3
new	Playa Access associated with rail crossing	4
	Two existing Playa Access roads	4

TRAN-2: All other roads and vehicle trails considered BLM system or county roads will be managed as motorized trails and maintained as necessary to provide existing access consistent with trail maintenance level 2

TRAN-3: Maintenance of BLM roads and motorized trails will occur in a manner that minimizes disturbance of resources and visual setting.

TRAN-4: New roads or trails may be developed when consistent with the intent of the NCA Act.

Miller &  
Lux  
Freight  
Wagon



Photo  
Credit \*

TRAN-5: One new playa access road and associated rail crossing between Sulphur and Gerlach will be developed and managed as a BLM system road to provide public access to the playa while meeting applicable rail crossing standards (Table 2-2). . Additional sites may be developed to provide public access to the playa or the emigrant trail corridor consistent with future access needs.

Note: Due to safety concerns associated with public use of rail crossings, the railroad has determined that none of the existing crossings between Sulphur and Gerlach can be managed for public use. Existing locations that cannot be managed safely or economically will be closed. There will be an interim period during which not all the existing crossings will be closed while the new crossing is being completed

TRAN-6: BLM will pursue agreements or other means to provide all weather access on the Pershing County portion of Soldier Meadows Road consistent with standards of the Humboldt County portion of the road. If Pershing County relinquishes the road, BLM will add the road to its transportation system as a Collector road, maintenance level 4, as shown on Map 2-2d.

TRAN-7: Wilderness access routes and routes defining wilderness boundaries that are designated as motorized trails (343 miles as shown on Map 2-2g) would be maintained in accordance with motorized trail maintenance level 2 to provide continued vehicle access consistent with their conditions at the time of wilderness designation. Any change in the functional or maintenance classification of these motorized trails will require an amendment to this plan.

TRAN-8: Except as noted in TRAN-7, functional classification or maintenance levels of BLM system roads or motorized trails may be changed following an evaluation of vehicle use and resource issues.

Note: The evaluation may conclude (1) that the road should be either upgraded or downgraded in functional classification or maintenance level; (2) that other measures may be implemented that will resolve resource or safety issues; (3) that the road could be closed either temporarily, seasonally or permanently; or (4) that no change in management will occur.

TRAN-9: Where public roads cross private property, BLM will acquire public access easements or develop road alignments to avoid the private property following a route analysis process that includes appropriate environmental analysis.

TRAN-10: Public access on the east side of the Black Rock Range from Humboldt County Road 214 will be managed to provide north-south access to Black Rock Point and east-west access to the Soldier Meadows area. Map 2-2a shows the evaluation area for this access.

## Chapter 2 –Management Plan

TRAN-11: Vehicles will be allowed to pull off to the sides of existing roads and motorized trails for distances up to 50 feet from road edges where minimal damage is done to vegetation and new parallel roads are not created.

Note: This will accommodate parking, passage of vehicles on narrow roads and camping.

TRAN-12: Temporary closures of playa access points may be implemented to provide for recovery of vehicle ruts.

Note: The Cultural Resources, Special Designations and Wilderness sections of the RMP contain additional decisions that affect operation of the transportation system.

### Transportation Signage

SIGN-1: Directional signs will be used where needed to prevent resource damage or known safety concerns. Needs will be determined based upon historic locations, public surveys and other monitoring.

SIGN-2: Sign locations, information content and installation specifications will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that directional signs are the minimum needed to meet the intent of the NCA legislation.

SIGN-3: Alternative methods of providing location and directional information that will either supplement or replace traditional signing will be evaluated and implemented consistent with the intent of the legislation.

### OHV Designations

OHV-1: OHV areas will be designated as open, closed or limited to designated routes as shown in Table 2-3 and on Map 2-2a. Wilderness Areas will remain closed to vehicle use. The flat, barren portion of the west arm of the Black Rock Desert playa will be open to vehicle use. Vehicle use, including OHV use, in the remainder of the planning area will be limited to the designated roads and motorized trails.

Table 2-3 OHV Area Designations

Designation	Acres
Closed to OHV use--Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas	751,894
Open to OHV use--Black Rock Desert playa	104,775
Limited to OHV use on designated roads and trails	348,371

### Implementation

OHV-2: Maps numbered 2-2a through 2-2g show roads and trails specifically designated for motorized use (398 miles). (See also TRAN-8.)

Note: Creation of a Transportation Plan is a priority during RMP implementation. The Transportation Plan will contain the details of how the BLM roads, motorized trails and transportation signage will be managed, including actions associated with road upgrades, maintenance schedules, road relocations, motorized trail closures, and guidelines for additional signage. Preparation of this plan will include opportunities for required consultations and public involvement and will be subject to analysis under NEPA.

*Chapter 2 –Management Plan*

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## 2.2.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING EMIGRANT TRAILS

### Objectives

- To protect the setting and physical traces of emigrant trails for the benefit of current and future generations.
- To protect and interpret all cultural resources for the benefit of current and future generations.

CRM-1: BLM will inventory the traces of the Applegate and Nobles Trails within the planning area using the guidelines established by the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) and in coordination with OCTA and Trails West. Trail traces will be placed into appropriate categories developed by the BLM but based on OCTA evaluation criteria (Appendix D). Trail traces with high or significant historic value will be monitored. Restrictions on the use, or stabilization activities, will be undertaken to preserve trail traces with high or significant values.

CRM-2: Class A and B segments of the Applegate Historic Trail are closed to motorized vehicles.

CRM-3: Two Class C segments of the Applegate Historic Trail shown on Map2-2a (located in Upper High Rock Canyon and in the vicinity of BLM Road 2048) are closed to motorized vehicles.

**Note:** Paralleling motorized transportation system routes either already exist or may be created (outside of the immediate viewshed of the historic trail) to provide routes for vehicles that would not impact the historic trail. (See Appendix D for definitions of the trail classes.) Other historic trail segments could be closed through route evaluations as identified in decision TRAN-8.

CRM-4: Additional National Historic Preservation Act Sec. 110 Class III cultural resource inventories of large areas will be undertaken. Cultural resource inventories will be prioritized and will focus first on the emigrant trail corridor, second on the Wilderness Areas, and finally on the remainder of the planning area, unless other needs are identified.

**Note:** A comprehensive overview and research design will be developed for the planning area to guide future inventories, eligibility evaluations, research needs, and other management decisions. Outstanding eligible resources identified and recorded as a result of inventories may be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.



Native  
American  
Projectile  
Point

Photo  
Credit \*

## Chapter 2 –Management Plan

CRM-5: BLM will encourage scientific research into cultural resources, including public participation in inventories, excavations and scientific analyses where appropriate (See description of the Scientific Partnership in Appendix E). Information will be disseminated through publications, museums, and visitor centers.

CRM-6: Cultural resource sites will be identified by site type and placed into appropriate cultural resource use categories, as defined in Appendix F. The emphasis for cultural resources will be public use, making many sites available for educational and recreational use by the general public. Interpretation and development of information will reflect consultation with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office. Based on site monitoring, fences, erosion control devices and other protective structures may be constructed to prevent or limit damage. If protective devices are ineffective, then the site may be removed from the public use category, so that it would no longer be available for use by the general public, and placed into a more appropriate use category such as conservation or scientific use.

**Note:** Archaeological testing, data recovery, historic research, oral histories, ethnographic research, and other treatments may be necessary to gather sufficient information for suitable educational and interpretive uses and to prevent damage from proposed recreational or educational uses.

### Implementation

**Note:** Preparation of a Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) is a priority during RMP implementation. The plan will cover all cultural resources in the planning area including historic trails. The CRMP will contain the definitions of site types and use categories, historic and prehistoric overview and contexts, priorities for inventory, provisions for a site stewardship program, and research designs. Preparation of this plan will include opportunities for consultations and public involvement.

## 2.2.4 NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES

As a result of government-to-government consultation with area Native American Tribes, the objectives and the decisions for Native American values were developed consistent with existing regulation and policy. For the purposes of this document, a Native American value is defined as, of or relating to a tribe, people, or culture that is indigenous to the United States.

### Objective

- To protect Properties of Cultural and Religious Importance for the use and benefit of current and future generations of Native Americans.

### Native American Values Management

NAV-1: BLM will coordinate regularly with the Tribes concerning Properties of Cultural and Religious Importance, especially prior to cultural resource inventories. The purpose of the coordination will be to obtain information on Properties of Cultural and Religious Importance, as well as information on other prehistoric and historic Native American sites likely to occur in the inventory areas, and to obtain information on the classification and management of these resources. Information acquired from a Tribe will be kept confidential at the request of that Tribe. In addition, information acquired during inventories will be shared with Tribal governments in an appropriate manner.

NAV-2: Properties of Cultural and Religious Importance will be managed under the Traditional Use category, as defined in Appendix F. Uses that are consistent with resource objectives for that area and that do not interfere with the sustainability of the resources will be allowed.

Photo Credit \*



*Tules  
harvested  
for use by  
Native  
Americans*

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## 2.2.5 PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

### Objective

- To manage paleontological resources in ways that prioritize research needs, facilitate educational and recreational needs, and protect important sites.

### Paleontological Management

PAL-1: Inventories of paleontological resources will focus on the West Arm of the Black Rock Desert, Soldier Meadows and the Black Rock Desert Wilderness.

Note: Other paleontological inventories will be conducted as needed and as funding becomes available.

PAL-2: Paleontological sites will be identified by site type and placed into appropriate paleontological use categories as defined in Appendix F. The emphasis will be conservation that allows for appropriate scientific research. If sites are damaged, use categories may be shifted to provide better protection or easier recovery of scientific values.

PAL-3: The Hanging Rock Petrified Forest area as shown on Maps 2-14a and 2-14b (these are at the end of section 2.2.20 Recreation) will be closed to collecting petrified wood, other fossils, rocks, and minerals unless such collecting is for scientific purposes and authorized by a permit.

PAL-4: Collecting common invertebrates and petrified wood will be allowed, except in the Hanging Rock Petrified Forest, under the same terms stated for rock collection in the decision REC-20.

PAL-5: BLM will encourage scientific research into paleontological resources, including public participation in inventories, digs and laboratory analyses (Appendix E). Information will be disseminated through publications, museums and visitor centers.

Photo Credit \*



*Skull of  
Mammoth in  
Black Rock  
Desert*



Photo Credit \*

*Petrified forest  
near McConnell  
Canyon, 1934*

*Chapter 2 –Management Plan*

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## 2.2.6 WILDERNESS

The Wilderness Areas will be managed consistent with the Wilderness Act of 1964 (see Appendix A for language of the Wilderness Act). These areas were designated to protect and preserve their natural conditions, exceptional opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and the integrity of the viewshed of the historic emigrant trails. Management of the areas will focus on protecting these values in such a manner as to leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness.

Under most circumstances, commercial enterprise, roads, motor vehicles, motorized equipment, motorboats, landing of aircraft, mechanical transport, and structures and installations are not allowed in Wilderness Areas. However, the Wilderness Act allows the BLM to conduct or authorize actions that are generally prohibited by the Act if they are the minimum required action for the management of the area as wilderness. To determine whether a project is the “minimum required” action, a site-specific analysis must be conducted that demonstrates how the project will be required to maintain or enhance the wilderness characteristics (naturalness, opportunities for solitude, and primitive recreation) of the area. The analysis also examines how the project or action will be accomplished and determines which method will have the least impact on wilderness characteristics. This analysis is commonly referred to as the “minimum required/tool analysis.” (Details on how this analysis is conducted are found in Appendix G).

BLM may also use or authorize other agencies to use motorized equipment and mechanical transport in support of emergencies that involve the health and safety of persons within the Wilderness Areas, to meet temporary emergencies involving violations of criminal law, and to protect private property from wildfires.

The following wilderness related objectives and decisions provide broad direction for the protection of wilderness values.

### Objectives

- To maintain or enhance the natural and untrammeled character of the Wilderness Areas.
- To provide outstanding opportunities for visitors to experience solitude and to participate in primitive and unconfined recreation, consistent with the preservation of the area’s wilderness character.

Objectives and actions that support wilderness can also be found in the Transportation and OHV Routes, Vegetation, Wild Horses and Burros, Fish and Wildlife, Visual Resources, Lands and Realty, Mineral Resources, Air Quality, Recreation, and Public Outreach and Visitor Services sections of the RMP.

### Wilderness Areas Management

**WILD-1:** The NCA Act closed all “ways” to motorized and mechanized vehicle use within the Wilderness Areas. Closed ways will be managed to maintain natural conditions and will require the occasional installation of barriers at the point where ways enter Wilderness Areas to discourage continued motorized trespass and gates on ways that may occasionally be used for authorized purposes.

Note: This decision does not include the 33 vehicle access routes designated by Congress in the NCA Act as amended and shown on Maps 2-2a to 2-2g, that provide vehicle access to the interior of the Wilderness Areas but are not themselves designated as Wilderness.

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WILD-2: Wilderness boundaries will be adequately signed to identify boundaries for the public. Signing will be concentrated in areas where motorized trespass occurs, including closed ways and along major boundary roads. To aid in the enforcement of the wilderness regulations some boundaries may require that signs be placed within sight of each other. When trespass 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 will be signed only as required to prevent trespass. Signs will be placed at the entrance to each wilderness access route identifying the route as open to motorized vehicles.

### Implementation

Note: After completion of the RMP, preparation of a Wilderness Management Plan (WMP) is a priority. During BLM's preparation of the WMP interested publics and agencies will be provided opportunities to participate in and supply input to the planning process. The WMP will contain specific objectives, and outline management actions and monitoring procedures by which the objectives will be accomplished. The WMP will establish the type and level of environmental assessment necessary, including “minimum requirement and minimum tool analyses” for all site-specific management actions.



*Aspen, sage,  
and rabbitbrush  
in the Lahontan  
Cutthroat Trout  
WSA*

### Wildlife Management

The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) has jurisdiction for managing wildlife in the wilderness areas in compliance with Federal wilderness laws, regulations and policies including: the Wilderness Act of 1964, which outlines general management including wildlife management in wilderness; Wilderness Regulations found in 43 CFR 6300, which further specify what actions are prohibited and how BLM is to manage wilderness areas; and BLM Manual 8560 and Handbook 8560-1, that provide policy guidance for specific wilderness management issues. Chapter III of Handbook 8560-1, which was written in conjunction with the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, provides guidance for specific wildlife management actions in wilderness. To streamline the “minimum required/tool analyses” process, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in December 2003 by NDOW and BLM.

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This MOU provides guidance and procedures applicable to any wildlife actions proposed to occur in BLM administered Wilderness Areas in the State of Nevada. The MOU provides for BLM and NDOW to hold annual meetings to review the previous year's accomplishments and identify projects proposed for the coming year. Proposed actions requiring site-specific, "minimum required/tool analyses" will be identified at the operations meetings. (See Appendix H for the complete text of this MOU; and see section 2.2.12, "Wildlife Management in Wilderness" for a more detailed description of this topic.)

### LCT Area Management

LCT Area-1: The inventoried units with wilderness character within the LCT area and other public lands included in the LCT Area as shown on Map 2-3 will be managed consistent with the recovery of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, to maintain surface water quality in the LCT Area and to retain wilderness character.

LCT Area-2: In the LCT area, with specified exceptions, the following activities are not allowed:

- Commercial enterprises
- Construction of permanent roads
- Construction of temporary roads
- Use of motor vehicles off designated routes
- Mechanical transport off of designated routes
- Use of motorized equipment
- Landing of aircraft
- Construction of structures or installations

Exceptions to these prohibitions are:

- Valid Existing Rights. Prior-existing rights may continue. New discretionary uses that create valid existing rights are not allowed.
- Administrative Activities. The BLM may use any of the above activities if it is necessary to meet the minimum requirements to administer and protect the important values of the LCT Area and to protect the health and safety of persons within the area.
- Other General Allowances. Subject to limitations determined by the State Director, general allowances may include: 1) actions necessary to control fire, insects, and diseases, 2) recurring Federal mineral surveys, 3) established livestock grazing, and 4) commercial services (such as outfitter and guides) to the extent necessary for activities that are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness character purposes and compatible with the defined values, and adequate access to non-Federal lands.

**Note:** During preparation of the RMP, a wilderness inventory was conducted on ten units of acquired lands totaling 1,092 acres inside the existing Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area. This inventory found that all ten units, when considered with the existing WSA, contained wilderness characteristics (see inventory results in the FEIS/RMP Section 3.6.2).

During the comment period for the Draft Plan, the Department of the Interior settled a lawsuit with the State of Utah. The settlement in *Utah v Norton* acknowledged that the BLM's authority to conduct wilderness reviews, including the establishment of new WSAs, expired no later than October 21, 1993, with the submission of the wilderness suitability recommendations to Congress pursuant to Section 603 of the FLPMA; and that the BLM is without authority to establish new WSAs and to manage any additional lands under the Interim Management Policy. The settlement did not, however, diminish BLM's authority under Section 201 of the FLPMA to inventory public land resources and their other values, including

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wilderness characteristics. The BLM may continue to consider information on wilderness characteristics when preparing land use plans, and wilderness characteristics may be managed to protect or preserve some or all of those characteristics. Therefore, while the settlement rescinded BLM’s authority to designate the acquired lands as part of the LCT WSA, BLM has determined that these inventoried parcels do have wilderness characteristics.

LCT Area-3: Vehicle travel in the LCT Area will be limited to motorized trails shown on Map 2-3.

LCT Area-4: If monitoring indicates that impacts are occurring to the spawning habitat of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, appropriate motor vehicle restrictions will be implemented in the LCT Area. These restrictions may be seasonal or permanent closures of trails. Where practicable, BLM will also construct hardened stream crossings where motorized trails cross streams in the LCT Area.



*Springtime  
cottonwoods  
along the  
boundary of the  
South Jackson  
Mountains  
Wilderness*



*Canyon walls  
reflected in the  
East Fork of High  
Rock Canyon  
Wilderness*

## 2.2.7 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

### Objectives

- To employ special management actions to retain the important values associated with specially designated areas such as ACECs (Areas of Critical Environmental Concern) containing important natural or cultural resources, systems or processes.

### Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

ACEC-1: Private lands adjacent to an existing ACEC that contain resources relevant and important to the resources for which that ACEC was established, if acquired by BLM will be incorporated into the ACEC.

ACEC-2: If the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area is released for purposes other than wilderness designation, the entire Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area will be designated as an ACEC with the primary objective of protecting habitat for the trout.

Note: A description of the lands and acres included in the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area is found in Chapter 1, Section 1.1 and Table 1.1.

### High Rock Canyon ACEC

High Rock Canyon contains exceptional scenic values, important wildlife habitat including bighorn sheep habitat and high-density raptor nesting, National Register quality archaeological sites and districts, and 18 miles of the Applegate Trail (a National Historic Trail) with extant emigrant graffiti.

**ACEC-3:** Approximately 5,664 acres in High Rock Canyon are designated as an ACEC, encompassing the High Rock Canyon Road corridor, Stevens Camp, and the Pole Corral areas (See Map 2-4).

#### **Special management actions:**

- Vehicle camping will be allowed only in designated camping areas within the area shown on Map 2-14b.
- Rock climbing will not be allowed to protect the sensitive raptor nesting and cultural resources in High Rock Canyon.
- The portion of the High Rock Canyon trail between the mouth of High Rock Canyon and about 5 miles below Stevens Camp as shown on Map 2-2b will be seasonally closed each year to vehicle use. The closure period will be from the end of Chukar hunting season (about the 1st of February) until the second weekend in May each year.

Note: The intent of the closure is to prevent damage to the emigrant trail and reduce human disturbance of wildlife, including disturbance to lambing bighorn sheep and nesting raptors.



*Autumn  
colors in  
the  
Lahontan  
Cutthroat  
Trout  
WSA*

### **Soldier Meadow ACEC**

The complex of hot springs at Soldier Meadows contains endemic fish, plant, and invertebrate species. The area also is near the Applegate Trail and contains archaeological sites and districts considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The popularity of the hot springs for recreation use causes impacts to the important natural and cultural resources.

ACEC-4: Approximately 2,077 acres of public lands in the Soldier Meadow area are designated as an ACEC including desert dace habitat, basalt cinquefoil populations and habitat for four endemic springsnails (Map 2-4).

ACEC-5: The following special management actions will be taken in the Soldier Meadow ACEC:

- Camping will be allowed only in designated camping sites (Map 2-4)
- The existing hot spring access road will be closed
- Other roads that directly impact resource values will be rerouted to avoid sensitive resources (Map 2-2f and 2-4)
- Grazing by livestock will be permitted within fenced portions of the ACEC when consistent with the recovery plan for the rare species within the ACEC
- Wild horse use will not be allowed in the fenced portion of the ACEC.

### **Wild and Scenic Rivers**

WSR-1: No stream segments are recommended for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Note: Sixteen eligible stream segments considered eligible for Wild and Scenic River designated were evaluated during the planning process. It was determined that designating the 16 eligible streams as Wild and Scenic Rivers would not provide additional protection for their outstandingly remarkable values.

## 2.2.8 VEGETATION

The planning area supports vegetation typical of the Great Basin. The extremes of climate, elevation, exposure, and soil type combine to produce a diverse growth environment for a wide variety of plant species. The primary plant communities in the planning area are desert sink scrub, saltbush scrub, sagebrush scrub, Utah juniper woodland, and subalpine woodland. Secondary plant communities include broadleaf riparian scrub, dune, and meadow.

Playas make up approximately 15% of the planning area, which are barren. Salt-tolerant shrubs such as greasewood grow in edge-area dunes, mounds, and sand sheets. The deep soils along lower slopes (3,800 to 4,200 feet) on the flats adjacent to the playas support sagebrush and black-greasewood. Shadscale, bud sagebrush, and Bailey greasewood dominate the alluvial fans at elevations of 4,200 to 5,000 feet. Big sagebrush types dominate mountain sites up to about 5,500 feet elevation. Mountain big sagebrush, low sagebrush, bitterbrush, mountain mahogany, Utah juniper, and aspen are found at elevations above 5,500 feet.

The vegetation communities along with the soils that support them form the base resources that support many other resources and uses including wildlife and fishery populations, livestock, wild horses and burros, and recreational uses.

### Objectives

- To retain sagebrush communities on at least 75 percent of the potential sagebrush habitat in the planning area with sagebrush cover sufficient to support sagebrush-dependent wildlife species.
- To retain non-sagebrush-dominated shrubland and woodland communities (e.g., salt-desert shrub, mountain shrub and Utah juniper) over greater than 75 percent of potential sites within the planning area.
- To achieve native woody, forb, grass, and nonvascular vegetation composition, productivity and community structure within the planning area that is consistent with the indicators described in the Land Health Standards.
- To retain all existing aspen clones, to expand the area occupied by existing aspen stands where possible, and to achieve mixed age classes in stands over the life of the plan.
- 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.
- To protect the natural condition and biodiversity of the planning area by preventing or limiting the spread of noxious weeds [as identified in the Nevada State Noxious Weed List (Nevada Revised Statute 555.0100)] that displace native vegetation; to use Integrated Weed Management principles to detect and eradicate all existing infestations; to eliminate new infestations before they begin to spread; and to prevent or limit the spread of established weeds into areas containing little or no infestation.
- To prevent the total acres dominated by invasive annual species (cheatgrass and other similar plants) within the planning area from increasing over the life of the plan.
- To maintain or achieve, within 15 years, Properly Functioning Condition status for 90 percent of wetland vegetation community sites within the planning area consistent with Land Health Standards.



*Balsam root  
flowering in  
the High  
Rock area*

## Vegetation Management

VEG-1: Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be conducted in areas that have been burned by wildland fires or invaded by invasive species. Seed mixes will be used that have a high probability of successful establishment of species that provide for site stabilization and recovery. Native shrub and herbaceous species will be emphasized, but nonnative species may be used in restoration or rehabilitation where natives are not likely to be successful.

VEG-2: Rangeland vegetation communities at risk of stand conversion from native species to introduced annuals because of wildfire may be protected through the establishment of green stripping or other techniques using appropriate seed mixes and project layouts consistent with the objective of maintaining a natural landscape.

VEG-3: Seed collection will be allowed by permit within the planning area to support restoration of native plant communities.

VEG-4: Management will maintain or establish diversity mosaics and connectivity of upland communities at multiple scales across the landscape. Management will include a variety of methods to increase or decrease sagebrush over-stories to meet site-specific resource objectives.

VEG-5: Vegetation manipulation projects will be implemented primarily to move plant communities toward desired conditions, improve structural and species diversity, and protect soil and water resources.

VEG-6: The frequency, distribution and ecological function of stands of mountain shrubs will be restored to stable conditions, and then maintained consistent with site potential and other management objectives.

VEG-7: Site-specific prescriptions will be created for restoration and maintenance of individual aspen stands to achieve the objectives.

VEG-8: On portions of rangelands that are dominated by monoculture stands of annual grasses, where the likelihood of restoration is high, habitat complexity and structure will be restored through seeding.

VEG-9: Mature sagebrush cover will be retained on sage-grouse habitats unless an evaluation conducted as part of an adaptive management process shows that alteration of shrub cover will increase habitat values for sage-grouse and other sagebrush-dependent wildlife species.

VEG-10: Vegetation treatments, including prescribed fire, will be allowed in all Wilderness Areas, consistent with a site-specific minimum required/ tool analysis, to restore the naturalness of areas that have been impacted by human activities.

**Noxious Weeds**

VEG-11: Control of noxious weeds will be conducted using the best combination of treatment practices developed specifically for the target species and infested site, consistent with Nevada Revised Statute 555.010. Such treatments will include Best Management Practices consistent with Integrated Weed Management principles.

Note: Practices will include prevention of disturbing activities to maintain competitive vegetation cover and reduce the distribution and introduction of noxious weed seed; use of mechanical methods to physically remove noxious weeds; performance of management actions that limit the spread of noxious weeds by natural means; and application of herbicides and biological controls.

VEG-12: Weed infestations in the Wilderness Zone will be controlled by methods consistent with a minimum required/tool analysis and Integrated Weed Management principles. Noxious weeds in the Wilderness Zone will be controlled using hand tools and, where manual treatments alone will not eradicate weed populations, with chemical and biological methods.



Notes: The Livestock Grazing, Wild Horse and Burro, Wildlife, and Wilderness sections of the RMP contain additional decisions that affect the management of vegetation resources.

There are no specific soils objectives or decisions in the RMP. The soils requirements for Land Health Standards and the objectives and decisions related to vegetation provide adequate guidance for the management of soil related resources.

*Springtime in the Calico Mountain Wilderness looking out on the west arm of the playa*

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**2.2.9 LIVESTOCK GRAZING**

The legislation designating the NCA and Wilderness Areas provided that livestock grazing will continue where permitted at the time of designation subject to applicable laws, regulations and executive orders. Adjustments in grazing may occur in the future following site-specific evaluations that apply the requirements of those laws, regulations and executive orders.

Land Health Standards and the associated Guidelines for livestock grazing management (Appendix B) will be among the primary considerations during these evaluations.

Objectives

- To promote healthy sustainable rangeland ecosystems and maintain or restore public rangelands consistent with Land Health Standard indicators in conformance with the procedures in the Rangeland Health Standards handbook (H-4180-1).
- To provide forage suitable for livestock on a sustainable basis for the foreseeable future, consistent with other resource objectives and with public land use allocations.

Grazing Management

GRAZ-1: The current livestock grazing use authorizations (Table 2-4) will be maintained until evaluations identify the need for adjustments in livestock grazing practices to meet Land Health Standards or other objectives. Changes in livestock management will conform to regulations and land use plans. Monitoring, field observations, ecological site inventories, or other BLM acceptable data will support management changes.

Table 2-4 Livestock Grazing Allotments

Allotment	Total Acres	Percent in Planning Area	Class of Animals	AUMs Active Use
Bare	201,705	8.4	Cattle	13,308
Blue Wing	1,376,261	1.9	Cattle Sheep	14,057 6,060
Bottle Creek	139,388	0.1	Cattle Sheep	3,433 0 <sup>1</sup>
Buffalo Hills	483,725	23.4	Cattle Sheep	3,990 130
Deer Creek	30,851	29.8	Cattle	757
Denio	24,231	25.7	Cattle	1,542
Happy Creek	99,178	6.4	Cattle Sheep	3,723 0 <sup>1</sup>
Home Camp	146,119	0.9	Cattle	9,086
Jackson Mountains	375,796	41.0	Cattle Sheep	8,857 0 <sup>1</sup>
Leadville	57,110	51.0	Cattle	1,298
Long Valley	74,059	3.2	Cattle	2,655
Majuba	280,265	4.3	Cattle Sheep	1,813 1,512
Massacre Lakes	46,964	8.1	Cattle	3,215

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Allotment	Total Acres	Percent in Planning Area	Class of Animals	AUMs Active Use
Massacre Mountain	149,059	90.5	Cattle	5,823
Nut Mountain	71,348	16.7	Cattle	4,903
Paiute Meadows	176,396	46.6	Cattle	4,298
Pine Forest	142,706	20.6	Cattle Horses	9,625 75 <sup>2</sup>
Soldier Meadows	341,936	79.6	Cattle	7,650
Wall Canyon (East)	40,806	27.1	Cattle	3,234

<sup>1</sup> Domestic sheep trailing authorized through the allotment, but no trailing AUMs included in grazing permit.

<sup>2</sup> Horse use authorized outside the planning area.

GRAZ-2: The class of livestock in allotments will not be changed by this plan. Domestic sheep trailing will be allowed in portions of the Buffalo Hills, Blue Wing–Seven Troughs, Jackson Mountains, and Majuba Allotments where it has been previously licensed.

GRAZ-3: Areas of the Black Rock Desert shown on Map 2-5 will remain unallocated for livestock grazing, except as noted in GRAZ-12. The ungrazed portion of the Massacre Mountain Allotment associated with High Rock Canyon and the Little High Rock portion of the Bare Allotment will not be grazed on a regular basis. Grazing in these areas may occur under an approved grazing prescription developed specifically to accomplish the objectives of the plan.

GRAZ-4: The Mahogany Creek Enclosure portion of the Soldier Meadows Allotment as shown on Map 2-3 will be excluded from livestock grazing.

GRAZ-5: Massacre Ranch will be included in the Massacre Mountain Allotment and may be available for livestock grazing as part of a plan for the Massacre Mountain Allotment that includes specific objectives and actions for the meadows and grazing management facilities at the ranch.

GRAZ-6: Existing authorized structural rangeland projects will be maintained where beneficial to resource values. New rangeland projects may be developed when consistent with achieving Land Health Standards and the objectives of the plan. Projects no longer needed to meet livestock and other resource management objectives will be removed and the sites restored.

*Hereford cow on Rangeland*



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GRAZ-7: 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 spring developments will also be modified to provide water for wildlife at ground level adjacent to the spring source.

GRAZ-8: Authorizations of grazing use including multiple use decisions and activity plans will incorporate specific grazing management prescriptions (covering, but not limited to, timing, duration, intensity, and frequency of livestock use) that an evaluation showed will provide the best opportunity to meet the objectives of the plan and the applicable Land Health Standards.

GRAZ-9: Adjustments in livestock and/or wild horse and burro forage will be implemented in an equitable manner on the basis of monitoring data or site-specific resource evaluations. If monitoring data indicate that impacts on resources are occurring as a result of livestock, or wild horse or burro use, appropriate adjustments will be made to the specific class of use. In the absence of monitoring data, adjustments in available forage will be proportional to applicable livestock active animal unit months (AUM) and wild horse and burro AMLs.

GRAZ-10: The Stanley Camp Pasture within the Soldier Meadows Allotment as shown on Map 2-3 will be excluded from livestock grazing on a regular basis. Grazing in this area may occur under an approved grazing prescription developed specifically to accomplish the objectives of the RMP.

GRAZ-11: Livestock grazing within the fenced portions of the Soldier Meadow ACEC will be authorized when an evaluation process concludes that grazing is consistent with the resource management objectives for the ACEC.

GRAZ-12: The boundaries of the Buffalo Hills, Jackson Mountains and Paiute Meadows Allotments will be adjusted as shown on Map 2-5 to better conform to historical grazing patterns. No adjustment in permitted forage use will be made as a result of the boundary adjustments.

Note: Special Designations, Wilderness, Vegetation, Wildlife, Special Status Species and Wild Horse and Burro sections of the RMP contain additional decisions that may affect Livestock Grazing in the planning area.

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**2.2.10 WILD HORSES AND BURROS**

Wild horses and burros are identified in the NCA legislation as one of the recognized features of the area. The NCA is one of only two units within the BLM’s National Landscape Conservation system that contain substantial numbers of wild horses and burros. The presence of these herds provides BLM with an excellent opportunity to provide opportunities for wild horse and burro viewing and development of an appreciation among the visitors of this resource.

Appropriate Management Levels (AML), which are desired population ranges BLM establishes for each herd of wild horses or burros are in place for all but one herd. AMLs must be established or adjusted based upon site-specific monitoring information and are therefore not being changes in the RMP. However the periodic evaluation of each AML must take into account the guidance and decisions contained in this RMP. AMLs allow preservation of a thriving natural ecological balance between wild horses and burros and other values and uses on public lands. The current AMLs and estimated 2004 wild horses and burro populations for each herd are shown in Table 2-5.

Objectives

- To manage sustainable populations of wild horses in nine Herd Management Areas (HMAs) and wild burros in two HMAs consistent with the intent of the NCA Act within established AMLs to maintain a thriving ecological balance among wild horse and burro populations, wildlife, livestock, vegetation resources, and other values and uses.
- To maintain free roaming behavior of wild horses and burros.

Wild Horse and Burro Management

WHB-1: The HMAs referenced in Table 2-5 and shown on Map 2-6 will be retained and the wild horse or burro populations will be managed consistent with plan objectives.

Table 2-5 Herd Management Areas

Herd Management Area (Field Office)	Total Acres	Acres Within Planning Area	% in Planning Area	AML Range	Est. Pop 2004
Black Rock Range East (WFO) <sup>1</sup>	93,438	24,681	26.4	60–93	189
Black Rock Range West (WFO)	93,199	79,919	85.8	60–93	169
Calico Mountains (WFO)	160,822	121,208	75.4	250–333	926
Fox-Hog (SFO) <sup>1</sup>	97,017	16,776	17.3	120-220	578
High Rock (SFO)	94,391	94,391	100	78-120	319
Jackson Mountains (WFO)	283,766	79,891	28.1	136–217	293
Kamma Mountains (WFO)	57,386	3,836	6.7	58–77	120
Lava Beds (WFO)	232,967	4,428	1.9	Horses: 111–148 Burros: 12-16	Horses: 137 Burros: 2
Massacre Lakes (SFO)	39,870	905	2.3	30 <sup>2</sup>	94

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Herd Management Area (Field Office)	Total Acres	Acres Within Planning Area	% in Planning Area	AML Range	Est. Pop 2004
Nut Mountain (SFO)	40,214	11,945	29.7	30-55	127
Wall Canyon East (SFO)	41,051	10,726	26.1	15-25	59
Warm Springs Canyon (WFO)	91,708	33,198	36.2	Horses: 131–175 Burros: 18–24	Horses: 398 Burros: 55

Total Acres include all land ownership types within each herd management area.

<sup>1</sup>Field Office abbreviations: WFO—Winnemucca, SFO—Surprise.

<sup>2</sup>AML not set, number is an estimate based upon the Cowhead/Massacre MFP.

WHB-2: The Antelope Range Herd Area as shown on Map 2-6 will not be designated as an HMA.

WHB-3: Contiguous HMAs with documented reproductive interaction will be managed as complexes to enable better management of genetic traits for the population and to improve coordination of monitoring and gathering.



*Wild horse stallions defending their territories*

WHB-4: No adjustments in HMA boundaries will occur as a consequence of this plan. However, if subsequent planning adjustments in HMA boundaries associated with the planning area, those adjustments will also apply to this plan.

WHB-5: Horses and burros will be gathered from the HMAs to maintain horses and burros within the AML as funding permits. Aircraft will continue to be used for the management and, when necessary, removal of wild horses and burros. Gather activities will be scheduled to avoid high visitor use periods whenever possible.

WHB-6: 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 the gather operations unless such use was consistent with the minimum tool requirement for management of Wilderness.

WHB-7: Adjustments in livestock and/or wild horse and burro forage will be implemented in an equitable manner on the basis of monitoring data or site-specific resource evaluations. If monitoring data indicates that impacts on resources are occurring as a result of livestock or wild horse or burro use, appropriate adjustments will be made to the specific class of use. In the absence of monitoring data, adjustments in available forage will be proportional to applicable livestock active animal unit months (AUM) and wild horse and burro AMLs.

WHB-8: Holding corrals may be developed at one or more sites to facilitate gathers, sorting of gathered horses, and to provide opportunities for providing wild horse and burro information to the public.

Note: The Land Health Standards, Wilderness, Vegetation, Wildlife, Special Status Species and Livestock Grazing sections of the RMP contain additional decisions that may affect Wild Horses and Burros in the planning area.

**2.2.11 WILDLAND FIRE**

The planning area has historically had few large wildland fires. However the potential for large wildland fires exists in many part of the area and there are natural and human related resources that could be adversely affected by wildland fires. There are also native plant communities and some wildlife habitats that would benefit from future fires. The challenge for fire managers is to suppress undesirable fires at the smallest possible acreage while carrying out desired prescribed fire projects in a safe manner.

Objectives

- To provide an appropriate management response (AMR) to all wildland fires, with emphasis on firefighter and public safety, considering the resource values to be protected, consistent with overall management objectives and fire suppression costs.
- To contain naturally-caused wildland fires in Category A areas to less than 50 acres 90 percent of the time.
- To contain all human caused fires to less than 50 acres 90 percent of the time.
- To recognize fire as a natural process in vegetation change and to use fire to protect, maintain and enhance resources in plant communities within the planning area where consistent with objectives.

Wildland Fire Management

FIRE-1: Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be conducted in areas burned by wildland fires and subject to invasion by invasive species (see Vegetation section).

FIRE-2: All of the planning area will be placed in one of two management categories shown in Table 2-6 and Map 2-7 with corresponding Appropriate Management Responses based on the criteria in Appendix I.

Note: Category A areas are primarily associated with private lands, BLM facilities and other areas where wildland fire is not desired. Category B areas are wildlands without structures or other facilities where a variety of fire suppression techniques is appropriate to meet the resource objectives consistent with the intent of the NCA legislation and other site-specific activity plans. Fire Management Plan evaluations may be used to change areas designated as Category A and B or further subdivide Category B areas to better identify site-specific resource objectives or fire management needs.

Table 2-6 Fire Management Zones

Category	Description	Acres
A	Full Suppression	42,841 <sup>1</sup>
B	Wildland fire could be used to meet desired outcomes	1,162,199 <sup>2</sup>
<sup>1</sup> Category A areas also include an additional 10,049 acres of private land <sup>2</sup> Category B areas also include an additional 7,727 acres of private land		

FIRE-3: Prescribed fire treatment of vegetation may be used in both Category A and Category B lands to achieve vegetation and other objectives consistent with the intent of the NCA Act and protection of private property.

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**Note:** It is anticipated the prescribed burning will be used for small scale projects with specific vegetation and wildlife habitat objectives. Mechanical treatments utilizing low-surface-disturbance techniques will be the preferred means of fuel reduction.

**FIRE-4:** In all wildland fire situations, priority will be given to placing resources capable of initiating aggressive suppression in a position to evaluate the fire using the criteria contained in Appendix I to determine the best response for local conditions. Site-specific fire suppression techniques will be applied for each wildland fire situation appropriate for the weather, fuel and available fire suppression resources and consistent with the intent of the NCA Act.

**FIRE-5:** Minimum impact suppression techniques will be used throughout the area described in Appendix I. Use of heavy, surface-disturbing equipment will be minimized and will require prior approval by the field manager.

### Implementation

Updating the current Fire Management Plans (FMP) will be a priority during the first year of RMP implementation. FMPs are used to guide wildland fire suppression, fuels management and other aspects of fire management. These plans will be periodically evaluated and updated based on changes in technology, policy, scientific knowledge, and other factors in a manner consistent with the purposes for which the planning area is managed. FMPs will provide appropriate fire suppression resources in or near the planning area for initial attack consistent with resource objectives.



*Prescribed  
burn in  
High Rock  
Canyon*



*Prescribed  
burn in  
Little High  
Rock  
Canyon*

2.2.12 FISH AND WILDLIFE

The wildlife and their habitats within the planning area are typical representations of northern Great Basin flora and fauna. The planning area contains a rich diversity of diverse habitat types within a relatively small area. Extensive areas of sagebrush steppe provide year-long habitats for mule deer, sage-grouse and pronghorn antelope. Aspen, mountain mahogany and juniper woodlands provide nesting sites for a variety of bird species more commonly found in more heavily timbered areas. Extensive areas of rim rock associated with the canyons and mountainous areas provide cliff and rock slope habitats that are the primary nesting sites for numerous bird species, including high densities of raptors. These rocky areas also provide escape cover and foraging sites for bighorn sheep, denning sites for predators and year-long homes for many small mammal species. Abandoned mine shafts and adits and natural caves provide roosting sites for bat species.

Water sources and the vegetation associated with these spring, seep and streams provide water and dense, green vegetation with importance to most wildlife species that exceeds the very limited distribution within the planning area. Riparian, stream and wetland habitats are used extensively by wildlife, including neotropical migrant bird species, sage-grouse, waterfowl, shorebirds, big game, small game, small mammals, fishes and invertebrates.

This plan shall not diminish the jurisdiction of the State of Nevada with respect to fish and wildlife management, including regulation of hunting, trapping and fishing, on public lands within the conservation area (NCA Act § 5(d)) or lands designated as wilderness (NCA Act § 8(e)(1)).

BLM recognizes the roles of the Nevada Department of Wildlife, Tribal governments and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in the management of habitats and populations of fish and wildlife and will work cooperatively with them to integrate habitat and species management.



Mule Deer

Fish and Wildlife Management

Objectives

- To provide habitat within the planning area to support a diverse range of game and non-game wildlife species and to give visitors high-quality opportunities to hunt, fish, trap, or view wildlife.
- To maintain, restore, or enhance riparian areas and wetlands within the planning area so they provide

diverse and healthy habitat conditions for riparian and wetland obligate species and other wildlife species.

- To manage upland habitats in woodland and rangeland vegetation types to provide forage, water, cover, structure, and security necessary to sustain healthy populations of shrubland and woodland obligate and other wildlife species.
- To provide high-quality habitats for sagebrush-dependent species, including sage-grouse, in the sagebrush steppe portions of the planning area. All existing lek, breeding, brood rearing, and winter sage-grouse habitats will be conserved during the life of the plan.

## Chapter 2 –Management Plan

- To provide habitat for migratory birds, including forage, water, cover, structure, and security, to support healthy populations of resident and migrant species.
- To restore, maintain, or improve habitat to provide for diverse and self-sustaining communities of fish and other aquatic organisms in spring systems and streams throughout the planning area.
- To maintain High Rock Canyon, the South Jackson Range and the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area as Watchable Wildlife Sites.
- To implement management actions for all uses and programs that sustain or improve sage-grouse winter, breeding, nesting, and brooding habitats. Activities that have a high risk of disturbing breeding or brooding sage-grouse will not be allowed within suitable habitats.

Coyote



*Strutting male sage-grouse*



Photo Credits \*

### Management

FW-1: Use of aircraft to survey and monitor wildlife populations will continue, but flights will be scheduled to avoid high-visitor-use periods.

FW-2: Habitats for sage-grouse and other sagebrush obligate species will be managed to retain the vegetation and other attributes necessary for the long-term sustainability of sage-grouse and other sagebrush-dependent wildlife species.

Note: Management will be guided by Rangeland Health Standards, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies guidelines, and the local plans of the Washoe-Modoc and North Central sage-grouse working groups. Periodic adjustments to the management of sage-grouse habitats and the guidelines will be based on the best available information.

FW-3: Activities that may affect migratory bird species will include habitat and population conservation principles, measures and practices appropriate for the affected species and the proposed activities.

Note: Conservation principles, measures and practices will initially be based upon best management practices contained in the “Nevada Bird Conservation Plan” (1999), “BLM Nevada Migratory Bird Best Management Practices for the Sagebrush Biome” (2003), and “Birds in the Sagebrush Sea” (Ritter and

Paige, 2000). Best Management Practices will be expected to change during the life of the plan to incorporate new research and experience gained through use of the practices.

FW-4: Construction of new water developments or other wildlife-related projects outside Wilderness may be authorized when the project promotes healthy, viable, and more naturally distributed wildlife populations.

FW-5: Existing or future small game wildlife water developments will be repaired, maintained and reconstructed.

Note: BLM is responsible for the management of wildlife habitats, while the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service are more directly responsible for the management of wildlife populations. Therefore objectives and decisions associated with the Land Health Standards, Special Designations, Wilderness, Vegetation, Livestock and Wild Horse and Burro sections of this RMP are the primary tools that BLM uses in achieving the wildlife objectives and managing wildlife habitats.

### Wildlife Management in Wilderness

As stated in Section 8(e)(1) and (2) of the legislation that established the NCA, “Nothing in this Act diminishes the jurisdiction of the State of Nevada with respect to fish and wildlife management, including regulation of hunting and fishing on public land in areas designated as wilderness under subsection (a). . . . Any action in the areas designated as wilderness under subsection (a) shall be consistent with the Wilderness Act.”

To remain consistent with the NCA Act of 2000 this plan will not diminish Nevada Department of Wildlife’s (NDOW) jurisdiction, but all actions proposed for the designated wilderness areas will be consistent with the law, regulation and policy that guides the BLM’s management of wilderness. A substantial amount of regulation and policy exists that governs wildlife management in wilderness areas. The Wilderness Act outlines general management; Wilderness Regulations found in 43 CFR 6300 further specify what actions are prohibited and how BLM is to manage wilderness areas, and BLM Manual 8560 and Handbook 8560-1 provide policy guidance for specific wilderness management issues. Chapter III of Handbook 8560-1 was written in conjunction with the International Association of Fish and Game Agencies and provides guidance for specific wildlife management actions in wilderness.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in December 2003 by NDOW and BLM describes the coordination and cooperation between the two agencies regarding management of wildlife and provides guidance and procedures applicable to any wildlife actions proposed within BLM administered Wilderness Areas in the State of Nevada. (See Appendix H for the complete text of this MOU.)

As agreed to in the MOU the BLM and NDOW will hold an annual operations meeting. That meeting will review the previous year’s accomplishments and identify proposed projects for the coming year. Those proposed actions requiring site-specific, “minimum required/tool analyses” will be identified at the operations meetings.

Wildlife projects and actions 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 identifies 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.

Site-specific authorizations and minimum required/tool analyses for wildlife projects proposed early enough in the process of developing the Wilderness Management Plan (WMP) may be incorporated in that plan.

Desert  
dace



Photo  
Credit \*

### Objectives

- Management activities in Wilderness will emphasize the protection of native species and natural population dynamics.
- Ensure that wildlife populations operate as freely as possible with only minimum human influence.

### Management

FW-6: The MOU with the NDOW concerning wildlife management in Nevada BLM Wilderness Areas (Appendix H) will be used for guidance on all wildlife actions in the Wilderness Areas.

FW-7: Habitat rehabilitation and restoration projects and activities within Wilderness must be consistent with a site-specific minimum required/tool analysis (Appendix G). Examples of such activities and projects include changes in authorized uses; seeding following fires to enhance recovery of wildlife habitats and to prevent establishment and dominance of invasive, exotic plant species; and construction of protective fencing to recover, establish or enhance riparian systems.

### Implementation

FW-7: Existing small game wildlife water developments will be repaired, maintained and reconstructed (Map 3-10 in Volume 2 of the FEIS shows the locations of guzzlers that existed at the time of approval of the RMP). 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 the 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.

## 2.2.13 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

Special status species are those plants and animals that fall into one of the following categories:

- Listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- Proposed for listing by FWS
- Identified as a candidate species for listing by FWS.
- On the Species of Concern List provided by FWS for the planning area.
- On the Nevada BLM Species of Concern list.

Special status designations are assigned for many reasons, including limited distributions, habitat losses, population declines, or a combination of these factors.



### Objective

To manage habitats and populations of special status plant taxa and animal species to meet the standards for “secure” ranking within 10 years. Any new listing of threatened or endangered species will require consultation with FWS.

### Special Status Species Management

SSS-1: Existing and future biological opinions, recovery plans and other cooperatively developed agreements designed to conserve and recover special status species will guide management actions in habitats of those species.

Note: There are currently two recovery plans for the Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) and the rare species of Soldier Meadows and one multi-agency memorandum on LCT management that involve lands within the planning area.

SSS-2: Actions and stipulations necessary to protect special status species and their habitats will be made in authorization and actions that occur during RMP implementation.

Note: The objectives and decisions associated with the Land Health Standards, Special Designations, Wilderness, Vegetation, Livestock and Wild Horse and Burro sections of this RMP also support the conservation and recovery of special status populations and habitats.

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**2.2.14 VISUAL RESOURCES**

Descriptions of Visual Resource Management (VRM) classes are provided in Appendix K. Two of these classes apply to the entire planning area.

Class I preserves the existing character of the landscape and provides for natural ecological changes, however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

Class II retains the existing character of the landscape allowing for low levels of change to the characteristic landscape. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Objectives

- To provide a primitive and natural visual setting for visitors.
- To protect the visual integrity of the emigrant trail corridor.

Visual Resource Management

VRM-1: Actions and activities within the ten Wilderness areas and the LCT Area will be managed to meet the requirements for VRM Class I as shown on Map 2-8.

VRM-2: Actions and activities within the planning area outside of the ten Wilderness areas and the LCT Area will be managed to meet the requirements of VRM Class II as shown on Map 2-8.

The following table provides the number of acres managed for VRM Classes I and II:

Table 2-7 VRM Class Size

Class	Acres
VRM Class I	767,475
VRM Class II	437,565



*The east face of King Lear Peak in the South Jackson Mountains Wilderness*



*Sunset across the Black Rock Desert Wilderness*

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## 2.2.15 WATER RESOURCES

The planning area has numerous intermittent and perennial (year-round) streams. There are approximately 100 miles of perennial streams in the planning area. Many of the perennial streams contain existing populations or are considered potential habitats for Lahontan cutthroat trout.

Coldwater springs are common throughout the planning area. A less common, but ecologically and culturally significant spring type that is encountered in the planning area is the thermal spring. Thermal springs near Soldier Meadows support a number of endemic, special status species. Springs, seeps and flowing wells are of considerable significance in the natural and cultural history of the Black Rock Desert. Routes used by nineteenth century explorers, soldiers and emigrants were dictated largely by the spring locations.

### Objectives

- To manage the quality of water resources in the planning area in a way that achieves the chemical, physical and biological integrity that each resource is capable of producing, consistent with Nevada Revised Statute chapter 445A.
- To manage the use of water resources within the planning area to enhance the natural and cultural resource values that the NCA was created to protect, consistent with Nevada Revised Statute chapters 533–534.

### Water Resources Management

#### **Black Rock, Calico and Jackson Mountain Ranges**

WATER-1: The water quality of the Mahogany Creek, Summer Camp Creek, Pole Creek, Battle Creek, Colman Creek, Snow Creek, Donnelly Creek, Bartlett Creek, Paiute Creek, Jackson Creek, Happy Creek, and Mary Sloan Creek watersheds will be managed to meet the life history requirements of the Lahontan cutthroat trout where they currently occur or as potential recovery streams as shown on Map 2-9.

#### **Soldier Meadows**

WATER-2: The water quality of those areas near Soldier Meadows that provide habitat for the endemic aquatic species will be managed to meet the life history requirements of the desert dace and springsnail species.

#### **Remainder of the Planning Area (Other Watersheds)**

WATER-3: Water quality will be provided for current and future uses through establishment of measurable water quality objectives consistent with EPA, State or Tribal water quality standards, and implement management practices to achieve those standards. Objectives and practices will be adjusted to conform to changing resource and user conditions.

Note: Permitted uses are subject to Best Management Practices, based on monitoring and evaluation, to provide the best opportunities to meet plan objectives and Land Health Standards related to water resources.

Water Rights

WATER-4: BLM will file for water rights with the State of Nevada to support uses consistent with the intent of the NCA Act that help to achieve resource management objectives and maintain healthy and functioning riparian and upland systems.



*Black Rock  
Hot Spring  
with Calico  
Range in  
Background*

*Thermal  
pool near  
Soldier  
Meadows*



Photo  
Credit \*

## 2.2.16 LANDS AND REALTY

The plan area encompasses approximately 1.2 million acres of public land. BLM is required to retain these lands in public ownership (NCA ACT § 6(a)).

There are an additional 17,776 acres of private lands within the planning area. These private lands are used primarily in support of agriculture and minerals uses. Several landowners have expressed interest in sale or trade of their lands within the planning area. Many of the private lands are accessed by BLM roads and motorized trails for which no rights-of-way have been granted across public land. Nor are there easements for public access across some private lands. The NCA Act supports the maintenance of public and private access to and across these parcels (§ 5(b)).

There are two existing utility corridors within the planning area that support power lines and a railroad right-of-way. There is also some potential demand for future utility rights-of-way to private lands.

### Objectives

- To provide access to private lands, consistent with applicable laws, while minimizing environmental impacts.
- To establish utility corridors and grant rights-of-way when they are consistent with management objectives for the NCA.
- When practical and appropriate, to pursue opportunities within the planning area to acquire private parcels or interests only from willing owners who initiate the sale or exchanges processes leading to public acquisition of their lands.
- To allow development and establishment of new private interests on public lands only when consistent with the resource goals of the planning area.



*Part of historic  
Camp  
McGarry on  
the Soldier  
Meadows  
Ranch*

### Lands and Realty Management

LAND-1: Access to private lands entirely surrounded by Wilderness (also known as inholdings) will be allowed for the reasonable purposes for which the property is held or used. Access will be limited to the routes and modes of travel that existed at the time of designation. When vehicle access is provided, it will

## Chapter 2 –Management Plan

be authorized through issuance of renewable land use permits. Until issuance of a land use permit, landowners will only be allowed to use non-motorized and non-mechanical means of accessing their property.

LAND-2: Access to private lands and valid existing rights outside of Wilderness may be authorized by granting rights-of-way that provide for the reasonable use and enjoyment of private lands by their owners while minimizing impacts on resources.

LAND-3: No new utility corridors will be established in the planning area.

LAND-4: Two existing utility corridors (Map 2-10) will be retained. One corridor crosses the mile-wide “neck” in the northwest part of the NCA. This corridor is one mile wide and centers on the existing Los Angeles Water and Power electrical transmission line. The second corridor runs in an east-west direction and includes the Union Pacific Railroad line and a parallel power line. This corridor is 2.75 miles wide with the Union Pacific rail line located at its northern edge.

LAND-5: Utility rights-of-way may be granted outside of Wilderness where in conformance with visual quality objectives and the NCA Act.

LAND-6: Permanent above-ground facilities will not be allowed on the 104,546 acre playa of the Black Rock Desert.

LAND-7: BLM may acquire private lands or property interests within the planning area that will provide public benefits. Land acquisitions may occur through exchange proposed by private owners where no disposal of public land occurs within the NCA or Wilderness; through purchase from willing landowners or their agents; or through donation. Acquired lands would be subject to applicable sections of the RMP.

LAND-8: Recreation and public purposes leases and Section 302 leases will not be issued within the planning area.

LAND-9: Land use permits may be issued consistent with the guidelines for special recreation permits (see Section 2.20.2).



*Construction  
of railroad  
siding to the  
1926  
“Winning of  
Barbara  
Worth” movie  
set*

Photo Credit \*

## 2.2.17 MINERAL RESOURCES

Federal lands within the NCA and designated Wilderness Areas, subject to valid existing rights, were withdrawn from location, entry and patent under the 1872 General Mining Law by the NCA Act (§ 6(a)). Valid existing rights for mining claims in the NCA and wilderness at the time of designation will be determined consistent with existing regulations. Claims found to be valid will be managed under applicable mining laws and regulations. There are no existing mineral leases within the NCA or Wilderness Areas and the legislation eliminated future leasing. A small number of existing gravel pit permits are held by BLM and the counties. The NCA Act provides for the continuing use of these pits in support of road maintenance.

Areas within the planning area but outside the NCA and Wilderness Areas, including the South Playa, the LCT Area and narrow strips of public land between Wilderness Areas and associated with wilderness access routes in the eastern portion of the planning area are the focus of Mineral Resources decisions related to locatable and leasable minerals.

### Objective

To recognize valid existing rights and allow development of mineral resources in the planning area, consistent with the intent and requirements of the NCA Act.

### Locatable Minerals Management

Locatable minerals are metallic and non-metallic minerals, including gold, silver, fluorspar and mica, regulated under the general mining laws such as the Mining Law of 1872. Miners locate claims to acquire mineral rights and thus the term Locatable Minerals. When a valuable deposit is found, the mining claim may be patented and title obtained to both the mineral and surface land.

#### **South Playa and LCT Area**

MIN-1: Subject to valid existing rights, federal lands within the South Playa Area, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area and vehicle access routes outside the NCA, as shown on Map 2-11, will be withdrawn from location, entry and patent under authority of the 1872 General Mining Law and other applicable laws and regulations.

### Leasable Minerals Management

Oil and gas, coal, geothermal, sodium, and other similar minerals are available through mineral leasing. Leases are issued for specific periods of time, and the lessee pays a rental fee and royalties on the minerals produced.

#### **South Playa and LCT Area**

MIN-2: Subject to the terms of existing leases, federal lands within the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area and vehicle access routes outside the NCA are withdrawn from the mineral leasing laws.

MIN 3: The South Playa (14,672 acres) as shown on Map 2-12 is closed to sodium/potassium leasing and development.

MIN-4: The South Playa is open to new geothermal leasing.

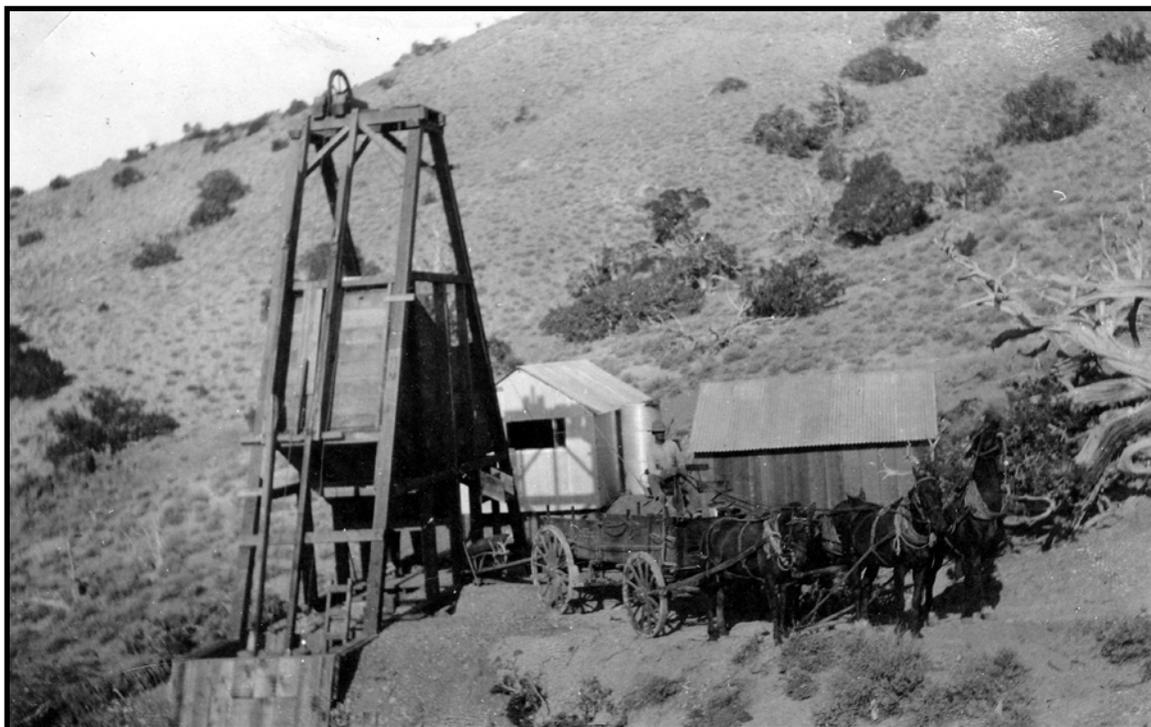
## Chapter 2 –Management Plan

**Note:** Geothermal leases in the South Playa will be administered under the terms of the leases and applicable laws and regulations. The existing geothermal leases would be extended for: 1) five years if drilling over the end of the primary lease term (10 years) or production of byproducts occurs, 2) up to two 5-year periods if diligent development occurs, and 3) for as long as unit commitment occurs. If geothermal resources are produced, or are capable of being produced in commercial quantities, the lease will be placed in additional term for 40 years from the end of the primary period, as long as production continues. If at the end of the additional term, the land is not needed for other purposes and production is ongoing, the lessee would have a preferential right to renew the lease for an additional 40-year period under the terms and conditions applied.

### Salable Minerals Management

Common sand, gravel and other construction and road construction and maintenance materials are considered salable minerals. They are normally available to the public through material sales at fair market value or through free use permits to government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

**MIN-5:** Gravel pits and rock sources may be permitted, developed and used for the maintenance of roads under the terms of the Mineral Materials Act of 1947, consistent with the NCA Act.



*Copper Mine in the Jackson Mountains 1912*

Photo Credit \*

2.2.18 AIR QUALITY

The existing air quality in and surrounding the NCA is typical of undeveloped regions in the Western United States. Ambient pollutant levels are usually below or near measurable limits. Exceptions include high, short-term, localized concentrations of particulate matter (primarily windblown dust or smoke from wildland fires).

Objective

- To ensure that BLM management activities and land use authorizations conform to local, State and federal laws and regulations pertaining to air quality.

Air Quality Management

AIR-1: The NCA and wilderness areas will be managed as a Prevention of Significant Deterioration Class II area as designated by the Clean Air Act. All BLM actions and use authorizations will be designed or stipulated to protect air quality.

AIR-2: Site-specific project proposals affecting BLM and adjacent lands will be reviewed for compliance with existing air quality laws and policies. Mitigation will be incorporated into project proposals to reduce air quality degradation. Projects will be designed to minimize further degradation of existing air quality.

*Spring  
snowstorm  
in the  
Pahute  
Peak  
Wilderness*



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**2.2.19 VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT ZONES**

Management zones are land use designations designed to support management objectives and improve management of natural and historic resources while providing for a range of visitor services. Zones reflect the capability of the resources, capability of the landscape to support visitor services, visitor use patterns, potential recreation experiences and management philosophy or requirements. Zone designations consider patterns of visitor use, visitor expectations, and resource values and sensitivity. Within each designated zone, varying management techniques are appropriate to insure the conservation, protection and enhancement of resources, as while providing an appropriate range of public uses. Certain actions may be appropriate in one zone, but unacceptable in another zone. Stipulations for the issuance of Special Recreation Permits, or the management of dispersed recreation, will be based upon zone boundaries and management criteria.

Objective

- To provide managers and visitors with designated geographic areas where visitor services and visitor experiences can be managed to provide resource protection while allowing for an appropriate range of services.

Visitor Use Zones

ZONES-1: All public lands within the planning area are assigned to one of the three zones, Front Country, Rustic or Wilderness (see Table 2-8 and Map 2-13). Management zones will be used to guide recreation and visitor services management activities in the planning area. Appendix L contains detailed descriptions of the philosophy and management guidelines for each zone.

Table 2-8: Management Zone Area

Management Zone	Acres
Front Country	121,245
Rustic	316,076
Wilderness	767,719

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## 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*

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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.

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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.

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## 2.2.21 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND VISITOR SERVICES

### Objectives

- To make available conditions and settings similar to and largely unaltered from those experienced by pioneers as they traveled the historic emigrant trails in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.
- To provide the public with a better understanding and appreciation of the area's natural, cultural and biological resources.
- To expand public awareness of the ethics of responsible land and resource use.
- To build and maintain positive relationships with local communities.
- To enhance visitor experiences, foster economic development and protect area resources, by encouraging development of visitor services and facilities on private and Tribal lands or on public lands located outside the planning area.
- To expand public awareness of the dangers and hazards in the area while stressing the need for self-reliance and personal safety.
- To develop an outreach and interpretive plan for the NCA and Wilderness Areas.

### Public Outreach and Visitor Services Management

BLM will expand public awareness and appreciation of NCA resources by implementing and supporting a variety of outreach materials and programs. The outreach strategy will focus on providing a physical presence in the NCA through partnerships and programs, as well as an increased BLM presence, and will emphasize off-site tactics. The outreach strategy consists of three primary components: Increased BLM presence in the NCA, Partnerships and Programs, and development of Outreach and Interpretive Materials.

#### Increased BLM Presence

VIS-1: BLM will develop cooperatively managed multifunctional visitor centers in partnership with counties, Tribes and local communities. The visitor centers would provide important information and interpretive opportunities to potential visitors.

VIS-2: An administrative site would be developed near the NCA. The administrative site would serve as a public information outlet, and may also serve as BLM employee residence.

#### Partnerships and Programs

VIS-3: BLM will work with local interest groups and other non-government organizations to recruit volunteers to assist in developing and implementing interpretive and environmental programs, as well as other resource and outreach projects.

VIS-4: BLM will foster the development of resource and cultural site stewardship programs (see Appendix E). Scientific research into resources and uses that occur within the NCA and Wilderness will also be encouraged.



## Implementation

A variety of potential information and formats will be used to provide outreach and interpretive opportunities. The various outreach and interpretive materials and programs can be divided into two major components: Off-site and On-site techniques.

### Off-site techniques

To provide information without compromising the undeveloped character of the NCA, off-site tactics would be emphasized. Potential types of off-site materials and programs include, but are not limited to:

- Maps and Driving Guides
- Internet Sites
- Academic Outreach (teacher reference materials and field trips)
- Museum displays
- Materials supporting heritage tourism
- Brochures
- Orientation points near key NCA entrances
- Visitor contact programs and displays in local communities
- Day and evening interpretive programs

### On-site techniques

On-site outreach and information developments and programs are concentrated in the Front Country Zone, but will also be used in areas of the Rustic Zone where monitoring indicates resource impacts. The following table shows the degrees to which various types of tactics are likely to be used in each management zone.

Table 2-10 On-Site Outreach Tactics by Management Zone

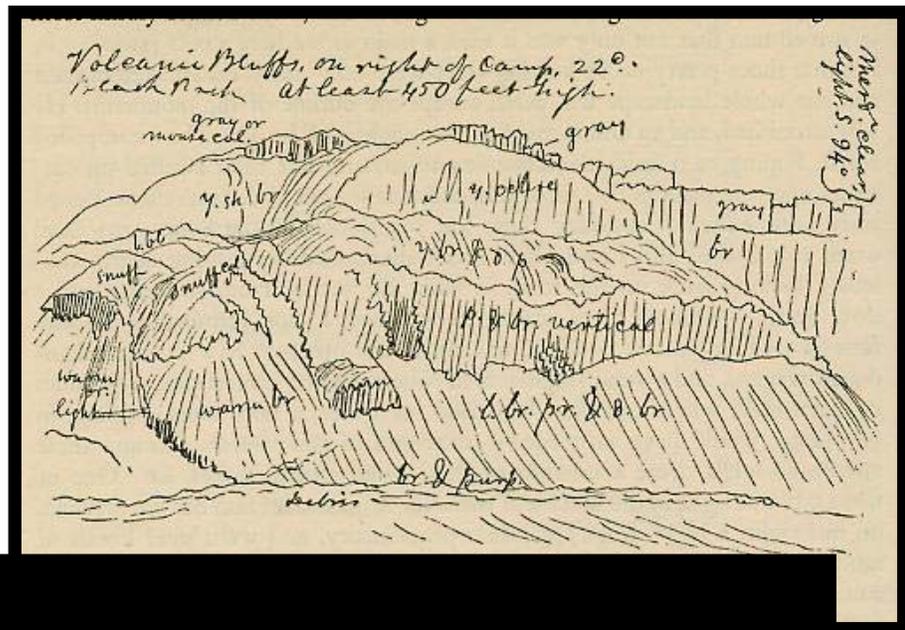
Outreach Tactics	Front Country	Rustic	Wilderness
Small information kiosks	likely	limited	unsuitable
Small signs at specific resources or hazards	likely	limited	unsuitable
Interpretive tours or self-guided trails	likely	likely	limited
Regulatory signage	likely	limited	limited
Low-power radio transmissions	likely	limited	unsuitable
Leave-no-Trace and Tread Lightly programs	likely	likely	likely
Scenic Overlooks	likely	unsuitable	unsuitable
Wayside Interpretive Exhibits	likely	unsuitable	unsuitable

## *Chapter 2 –RMP Management Plan*

A priority for visitor services will be to develop a visitor outreach and interpretive plan. This plan will be developed in an open public forum. Site specific decisions will be made concerning the following items.

- Visitor needs/demands
- Interpretive themes
- Monitoring process for evaluation and revision of outreach materials
- Types of information to be provided
- Construction guidelines/specifications
- Locations and techniques for distribution of outreach materials/programs
- Partnerships/programs that will be pursued

Bruff's 1849  
sketch of  
"Black Rock  
Promontory"



# Chapter 3

## Implementation

# Chapter 3



## Implementation

*Looking through the narrows of High Rock Canyon to its confluence with the East Fork*

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Black Rock-High Rock RMP provides broad direction to meet the requirements of the NCA Act. Implementation of an RMP involves completion of many tasks. Some these tasks are completed when the plan is adopted, while others will continue over the 20-year life of the plan. This section provides a framework to guide implementation of the planning decisions contained in the RMP, and future actions that may occur as a result of this plan. Implementation of future actions will often require additional site-specific planning to implement the broad guidance contained in the RMP. This chapter also contains information on the process to maintain the RMP in the future as additional information becomes available and changes in conditions or resource uses change.

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### 3.2 IMPLEMENTATION/BUSINESS PLAN

An Implementation/Business Plan will be completed after the RMP is adopted. The purpose of the Implementation/Business plan is to outline the priority tasks and resources needed during the first 3 to 5 years of implementation of the RMP. The Implementation Plan will also contain a schedule for the development of the priority activity plans identified in the RMP including:

- Transportation/Sign Plan
- Cultural Resource Management Plan
- Wilderness Management Plan
- Recreation Area Management Plan
- Visitor Education and Interpretation Plan

More information about the priority activity plans is contained in section 3.4.

The Implementation/Business Plan will also contain:

- Guidance on Resource Advisory Council supported subgroups to assist BLM with management of the planning area
- Results of the consistency review of existing BLM activity plans
- Cost estimates for the first five years of implementation of the RMP
- Strategies for funding implementation of the RMP

- A schedule of implementation actions.

During development of the Implementation/Business Plan, several workshops including one for the public, Tribal, State and other agencies, will be conducted to educate the BLM staff in both the Winnemucca and Surprise Field Offices and external parties about the RMP, how it will be implemented and to encourage partnerships to improve the efficiency of implementation efforts and cost-effectiveness.

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### **3.3 TIME FRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Implementation of decisions made through this planning process will occur in several phases. Although the use of the word “phase” implies sequential steps, some of the phases may be implemented concurrently. These phases include:

**Pending/Ongoing:** Generally, any ongoing, short-term activity will not be changed as a result of the RMP decisions. Short-term activities where National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis has been completed and decisions are pending will be screened to ensure they are consistent with the decisions in the Resource Management Plan prior to implementation.

**Short-term:** Actions where implementation will begin in the immediate future (i.e., within the first several years) are included in this category. These include development of the priority activity plans, implementing route closures, designating primitive camping areas and initiating a public information program. The monitoring/adaptive management process also needs to be initiated, to include establishment of coordination efforts and priorities for monitoring and research programs.

**Longer-Term:** This phase includes actions that need to be implemented over the planning horizon (up to 20 years). In addition to ongoing regulatory requirements, a major part of this effort includes site-specific project and activity planning needed to implement the RMP but not specifically outlined in the plan. The monitoring/adaptive management strategy continues to be implemented throughout the life of the plan, which may lead to changes in the plan through an amendment or revision process that considers information collected during implementation. This process is discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

In the adaptive management process, evaluation of information collected may result in changes in time frames for implementation. Data may indicate a need to accelerate a protective management action or an action could be delayed because impacts are less than originally anticipated.

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### **3.4 LINKING BROAD-SCALE DECISIONS TO MORE DETAILED PLANS AND ACTIONS**

The RMP provides general direction and guidance for the entire planning area and makes some specific implementation decisions (e.g., route designations). However, most management actions necessary to achieve broad-scale objectives, such as developing an effective visitor information program, will require further planning and additional decisions. This additional planning will:

- Validate, refine or add-to information concerning current and historical resource conditions
- Address issues not appropriately addressed at the broad scale
- Prioritize implementation actions consistent with achievement of management goals and objectives
- Guide the type, location and sequence of appropriate management activities
- Identify specific monitoring and research needs

### Chapter 3 - Implementation

The additional detailed plans and actions will “step-down” broad-scale objectives and decisions in the RMP to site-specific actions. This step-down process will be designed to ensure that RMP goals, objectives and decisions are applied to on-the-ground management in a manner consistent with the RMP.

Where RMP decisions do not adequately provide the detail needed to manage resources and uses, activity plans may be used to supplement the RMP (i.e., planning specific to a particular resource program such as a Fire Management Plan or a Special Recreation Management Plan). Activity planning is an intermediate step between the broad guidance of the RMP and the specific details of project development. These plans fill a need to provide specific program guidance, while allowing the flexibility to adjust management decisions over the life of the RMP without requiring an RMP amendment.

The RMP identifies activity plans that should be completed in the first several years after the RMP is adopted. These highest priority plans include:

- **Transportation/Sign Plan:** This plan will identify the priorities and costs associated with management of the BLM road system to meet the requirements of the RMP, identify the initial on-the-ground transportation sign needs and define the guidelines to be used for changing road condition or maintenance and signage levels.
- **Cultural Resource Management Plan:** This plan will determine into which use categories site types will be placed. It will also identify priority areas for future inventory. The plan will include a context and research design to aid in the evaluation of cultural resources for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Wilderness Management Plan:** This plan will contain objectives for maintaining the area's wilderness resources and will outline the management actions and monitoring procedures by which the objectives will be accomplished. The plan will also establish the type and level of environmental assessment necessary, including “minimum requirement and minimum tool analyses” for all site-specific management actions.
- **Recreation Area Management Plan:** This plan will establish thresholds for resource conditions that if reached would trigger corrective recreation management actions. The plan will also provide guidance for implementing the Resource Monitoring System, Public Outreach Facilities, Recreation Site Development, Visitor Management, Camping Designations, and Signage.
- **Visitor Education and Interpretation Plan:** This plan will identify the priorities and costs associated with the management of visitor services for the planning area. The visitor education and interpretation plan will determine methods to be used to measure, evaluate, address or establish Visitor needs/demands, the Monitoring process for evaluation and revision of outreach materials, Interpretive themes, Types of information to be provided, Locations and techniques for distribution of outreach materials/programs, Construction guidelines/specifications, and Partnerships/programs that will be pursued.

Implementation of specific, on-the-ground management actions such as development of a campground or maintenance of a road may require detailed project plans. These plans will be consistent with the RMP and applicable activity plans.



*The  
southern  
end of  
Calico  
Mountain*

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## **3.5 COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**

The RMP includes goals, objectives and decisions that were subjected to environmental analysis as required by NEPA during the preparation of the RMP. Subsequent planning at the project or activity plan level will require additional NEPA analysis in most cases and rarely an amendment to the RMP. The BLM will continue to conduct site-specific inventories and perform appropriate level NEPA analyses as part of the planning and decision making processes described above. Management changes resulting from the adaptive management process can also require NEPA analysis. Changes beyond the scope of the land use plan that are deemed desirable in the adaptive management process, may result in a plan amendment.

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## **3.6 CONSULTATION, COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION**

This plan has been prepared in close coordination and collaboration with other federal agencies, State, Tribal and local governments, and other interested parties. Collaborative approaches to implementation are necessary to assure success. While the Bureau of Land Management retains the responsibility and authority for land management decisions, these decisions are more meaningful, effective and enduring if made in a collaborative and open process. Therefore, close working relationships among management and regulatory agencies need to be developed and maintained. In addition, others outside of the BLM (State and local agencies, universities, volunteers, etc.) should be involved in subsequent analysis, monitoring, evaluation, research, and adaptive management processes.

The ability of a subgroup formed by the two Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) with advisory responsibilities in the NCA Planning Area to provide high quality input into the planning process was essential to the timely completion of the RMP. The continuing involvement of these two RACs will assure that management decisions are made in a collaborative manner. Continuing opportunities for public participation may include, among other things:

- regular involvement of a RAC sanctioned group similar to the planning subgroup to provide the RACs with recommendations relating to the management of the planning area
- volunteer partnerships or assistance agreements with other agencies to complete assessments, establish baseline data, monitor, and recommend management actions as a result of these processes
- working groups, agreements and memorandums of understanding with State and Tribal governments.

The successful collaborative planning work of the RAC NCA Subgroup provides a model for how a similar group could help BLM to better manage the many diverse and sometimes conflicting uses in the NCA, associated Wilderness areas and South Playa. One of the RAC NCA Subgroup's final recommendations to the parent RACs was that a similar group be formed to help BLM and the parent RACs with future management of the planning area. Both RACs support this proposal.

Therefore, BLM will ask the Northeast California and Sierra Front-Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Councils to form a collaborative subgroup with a suggested composition of 12 to 16 members with at least one member from each parent RAC, representing State, local and Tribal governments, and constituencies, groups and individuals with interests in the Black Rock-High Rock area to work with BLM on a regular basis to gain an in-depth understanding of management of the NCA, associated Wilderness areas and South Playa and to regularly report to the parent RACs. The RACs will also be asked to specify any interests they feel should always be represented on the subgroup (i.e.,

### Chapter 3 - Implementation

ranching, recreation, SRPs, OHV enthusiasts, etc.), and the length of terms of subgroup members (perhaps staggered 2- or 3-year terms).

Individual members of the subgroup will serve as information conduits between BLM and the groups and interests they represent, which will greatly enhance community involvement in management of the NCA. As a whole, the subgroup's purpose will be to provide detailed information and recommendations to the parent RACs concerning management of the area. The subgroup will not be an oversight or advisory group. The advisory function will remain where it currently is and where it belongs: solely within the authority and purpose of the parent Resource Advisory Councils. The subgroup will be a collaborative group and as such will be an invaluable asset to BLM, the RACs and the general public.

This general interest group may be supplemented by smaller focused workgroups established by the RACs to provide recommendations on short-term projects and technical issues of limited interest to such broadly based group.

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## 3.7 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The RMP will be implemented using adaptive management processes. Under adaptive management, decisions, plans and proposed activities are treated as working hypotheses rather than final solutions to management of resources and uses. For the purposes of this plan, adaptive management represents a process that tests, evaluates and adjusts the assumptions, objectives, actions, and subsequent on-the-ground results from the implementation of RMP decisions. Used effectively, adaptive management provides resource managers with the flexibility to respond quickly and effectively to changing resource and user conditions. Changes in management actions are based on site-specific resource monitoring and evaluation.

The intent of adaptive management is to allow future management actions, as applied through resource management guidelines, to fully incorporate the knowledge and experience gained up to that time from monitoring, evaluation and experimentation. However, adaptive management does not relieve managers of their responsibilities to consider the affects to the human environment of actions proposed under the guise of adaptive management. Manager would still be required to comply with the provisions of NEPA and other applicable laws, regulations and policies before such actions are applied. Certain actions proposed to apply adaptive management techniques may require amendment to the RMP before they could be employed.

Guidelines assure that constraints established in the RMP are consistently applied when management methods and practices are used to meet plan objectives. Examples of guidelines are the livestock grazing guidelines required by CFR 43 §4180, Land Health Standards. Guidelines will be developed for all programs and uses. Guidelines that already exist for many programs and uses will be adopted as is when reviews show them to be applicable to the Planning Area. New site-specific guidelines will also be developed as necessary.

The adaptive management process is a continuous cycle that includes the following four phases:

- **Planning:** Management guidelines, actions, and objectives are developed. Monitoring techniques and adjustment thresholds are designed based upon available information, past monitoring information and current scientific information.
- **Implementation:** Objectives, guidelines, actions and constraints developed and identified during planning processes at all scales are applied as on-the-ground management.
- **Monitoring:** Monitoring includes all efforts to document the current state of implementation, the resulting resource conditions as measured through indicators, and the effectiveness of the implementation. Monitoring is designed to tier from existing data and techniques, be outcome based, technically feasible, affordable, and operationally attainable. Two types of monitoring occur:

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- **Implementation monitoring:** Determines whether the decisions and proposed actions developed during planning are actually being implemented.
- **Effectiveness monitoring:** Determines whether implemented decisions and actions have changed resource condition indicators. If so, determines whether the changes in the indicators are consistent with meeting the objectives.

When additional monitoring is required to fill information gaps, standardized monitoring techniques will be used where available before new techniques are developed. The BLM staff associated with the NCA and supported by technical experts in the Winnemucca and Surprise Field Offices will be responsible for developing monitoring and adaptive management protocols and ensuring that documentation is sufficient to facilitate feedback into the adaptive management process. Additional information on monitoring is discussed in section 3.8.

- **Evaluation:**

- **Modification Evaluation:** The part of the process through which specific objectives, actions, monitoring thresholds, and even resource condition indicators may be modified to better meet the goals of the plan.
- **Timing Evaluation:** determines the needs for and time frames during which changes to planning, implementation and monitoring should occur.

The BLM staff will also be responsible for ensuring that monitoring results and other new information is compiled and evaluated in accordance with the two evaluation phases discussed above. Additional information on evaluation is discussed in section 3.9.

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## 3.8 MONITORING

Monitoring will determine whether or not planning objectives are being met and ensure that BLM meets the commitments made in the plan. The information developed through monitoring will feed the evaluation process that may alter decisions or the timing of decisions, change implementation or maintain current management direction.

The key step in developing a monitoring strategy is to define the questions that must be answered to evaluate the attainment of broad-scale management goals and objectives in the RMP. These questions will be used to focus monitoring on appropriate issues and avoid gathering irrelevant information. Focused monitoring also helps to keep costs within agency budgets.

The first step is to select key monitoring elements and indicators that can be effectively sampled and can provide desired data at a reasonable cost. An example of such indicators is provided in Table 3-1. A standard set of core data elements will be collected. Core data, including data necessary to evaluate achievement of the applicable Land Health Standards, are the minimum set of variables to be collected at all scales. Standardized measurement and reporting protocols will be determined because the need for consistency is essential. Where possible, monitoring protocols will be designed to integrate existing monitoring efforts and will address multiple questions. Also, the design will have the flexibility to add data elements required to answer new questions raised during subsequent site-specific planning.

Determining the specific monitoring approach for any question requires knowledge of detailed information on existing conditions. For example, trend assessment first requires gathering baseline or status information. Just a few of the projects that have occurred or will be anticipated during implementation of the RMP include: Landscape scale vegetation assessments; overviews for paleontology, history and archaeology; NCA-wide surveys for special status species; collection of meteorological data at weather stations; and visitor use inventories. Data from these projects will be vital to monitoring trends. A monitoring strategy must also identify the techniques needed to acquire a complete picture of the structure and pattern of a resource (i.e., remote sensing, sample-based studies, modeling).

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A monitoring system requires the development and use of indicators and thresholds based on guidelines. Thresholds are measurable indicators of when a change in management needs to be made. For example, the specific amount of resource impacts that would be tolerated before a campsite would be closed to public use and rehabilitated is a threshold. The development of indicators and thresholds will occur during the early part of plan implementation. Until these measures are in place, evaluations may not be completed. Indicators and thresholds will be periodically evaluated to assure that they remain appropriate for the Planning Area.

Table 3-1 Monitoring Indicators

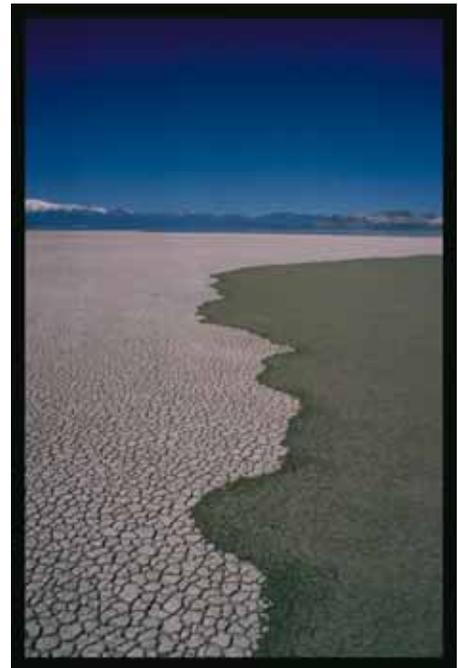
<b>Major Uses and Resources</b>	<b>Indicators to be Monitored</b>
<b>Land Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amount of Ground Cover</li> <li>- Evidence of Erosion</li> <li>- Vegetation Composition, Vigor and Structure</li> <li>- Riparian Functional Condition</li> <li>- Achievement of Water Quality Standards</li> <li>- Population and Habitat Diversity and Viability</li> <li>- Special Status Species Viability</li> <li>- Levels of Invasive Species</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Road Condition</li> <li>- Numbers of Vehicle Accidents</li> <li>- Numbers of Search and Rescue Incidents</li> <li>- Erosion/Resource Damage Associated with Roads</li> </ul>
<b>OHV Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Occurrences of New Tracks</li> <li>- Condition of Playa Surface</li> <li>- Changes in Dune Formation and Condition</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of Looting/Vandalism</li> <li>- Changes in Site Integrity</li> <li>- Erosion of Trail Traces</li> <li>- Unauthorized Use of Trails</li> </ul>
<b>Paleontological</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of Looting/Vandalism</li> <li>- Changes in Site Integrity</li> </ul>
<b>Wilderness Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See Land Health Indicators</li> <li>- Changes in Naturalness</li> <li>- Numbers of Encounters with Other Visitors</li> <li>- Motorized Trespass</li> <li>- Boundary Marking</li> <li>- Number of Wilderness Violations</li> </ul>
<b>ACECs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See Land Health Indicators</li> <li>- See Cultural Resources Indicators</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See Land Health Indicators</li> </ul>
<b>Livestock Grazing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See Land Health Indicators</li> </ul>
<b>Wild Horses &amp; Burros</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See Land Health Indicators</li> <li>- Population Levels</li> <li>- Demographics</li> <li>- Herd Health</li> </ul>
<b>Wildland Fire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fuel Characteristics</li> <li>- Burn Area Recovery</li> <li>- Rehabilitation Success</li> </ul>
<b>Fish &amp; Wildlife</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population Numbers/Trends</li> </ul>

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Major Uses and Resources	Indicators to be Monitored
	- Impacts to Habitat
<b>Special Status Species</b>	- See Land Health Indicators
<b>Visual Resources</b>	- Changes in Visual Quality - Changes to Visual Intrusions/Contrast - Uses comply with VRM Class
<b>Water Resources</b>	- See Land Health Indicators
<b>Lands &amp; Realty</b>	- Compliance with Stipulations - Numbers of Trespass Incidents - Access to Public Lands
<b>Mineral Resource Uses</b>	- Compliance with Stipulations
<b>Soils</b>	- See Land Health Indicators
<b>Recreation</b>	- Site and Trail Encounters - Surface Permeability - Evidence of Human Waste - Vandalism - Area of Impact - SRP Stipulation Requirements
<b>Public Information/ Visitor Services</b>	- Brochure Distribution - Adequacy of Information - Visitor Satisfaction - Demand for Facilities - Numbers of Search and Rescue Incidents - Numbers of Law Enforcement Incidents

### **3.9 RMP EVALUATION**

Evaluations are the mechanism that reviews implementation of the RMP at several levels to see whether management goals and objectives are being met and determine whether management direction is sound. Evaluation examines management actions to determine whether they are consistent with thresholds established for the achievement of the objectives. If they are not, evaluation identifies the reasons. The conclusions are then used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management guidelines, to make changes in management practices to meet plan goals and objectives, or to amend the plan objectives or decision to better meet the capabilities of the land and the intent of the legislation.



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Reviews of the evaluation process will be periodically scheduled to ensure that:

- Monitoring data is gathered sufficiently in advance to be used effectively in the evaluation process.
- Evaluations are conducted at intervals that allow for adjustments to be made in management direction before crises develop.

RMP Evaluations made too frequently will not detect changes in ecosystems because cost-effective monitoring systems cannot detect changes at this scale. On the other hand, if plan evaluations are delayed for too long or are not conducted at all, irreversible changes may take place without detection. RMP evaluations will be conducted every five years to assess the progress toward achieving broad-scale objectives and desired future conditions.

The evaluation process will review progress toward RMP implementation as well as new, scientific research, monitoring data, and other information on changed resource or social circumstances that that needs to be considered in future management. The evaluation may conclude:

- Management actions are moving resources toward the desired objectives. In this case, management actions are affirmed and may not need to be adjusted.
- Further research needs to be initiated or that actions must be adjusted to more efficiently achieve objectives of the Plan. If new information or research demonstrates better ways to achieve plan objectives, changes in activity planning and project implementation may be made.
- The objectives should be altered based on the new information. If the new information indicates that plan objectives should be reconsidered, a plan amendment may be required that will reexamine desired future conditions and ways to reach those conditions.

The credibility of an adaptive management process rests in part on the routine application of an outside check on the use of technical and scientific information, including monitoring. Independent reviews can provide verification that plans, evaluations and changes in management strategy are consistent with current scientific concepts. The Nevada and California BLM state offices and the community of scientific experts available outside the Bureau will conduct these reviews.

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## 3.10 CHANGING THE RMP

This RMP is expected to remain in place for up to 20 years. During that period, it is anticipated that occasional changes to the RMP will be needed because of new information, changes in resource uses, new legislation or other factors. All changes to the RMP will be documented in a manner that allows future tracking of any changes to the plan. Changes to the RMP fall into two categories:

- **RMP maintenance:** The process of modifying the text or maps of the RMP to correct clerical and technical errors or implement minor changes in wording or mapping. Maintenance actions will not change the intent of goals, objectives or decisions. Maintenance will be limited to minor corrections to improve clarity of the text, update textual or map information that changes over time or eliminate errors. Maintenance actions are not subject to the requirements of NEPA and do not require public involvement.
- **RMP Amendment:** Changes to the RMP that modify the intent of goals, objectives or decisions or add new decisions require amending the plan. Amendments may be the result of periodic evaluations that recommend changes to the plan, external factors including new legislation, or proposals from external parties. The amendment process includes public involvement, coordination and environmental analysis similar to that used in the preparation of the original RMP. The level of environmental analysis would be appropriate to the level of potential impacts expected to be caused by the proposed amendment and could include preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

## **3.11 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER AGENCY PLANS**

Local, State, other federal agencies, and Indian Tribes in the immediate region routinely prepare plans that establish goals and direction for land use, economic development or resource management within their jurisdictions. Many of these plans bear directly on or are significantly affected by BLM plans for managing public lands. During implementation of the RMP, BLM will coordinate and consult with such agencies and Tribes to assure consistency with other approved plans to the extent these other plans are in compliance with federal laws, regulations and policies. The principles of community-based planning will be employed where timing, mutual interest and the availability of resources are appropriate to address economic, ecologic and land use issues of mutual concern.