

**Mojave Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council**  
***Southern Nevada District Manager's Report***  
**Mary Jo Rugwell, District Manager**  
**January 21, 2011**

**National BLM/DOI:**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Western Area Power Administration (Western) are seeking public comment on an environmental impact statement (EIS) that will evaluate the potential impacts of constructing the TransWest Express 600-kilovolt (kV) direct current (DC) transmission line project, which is proposed to cross portions of Colorado, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. The project is proposed by TransWest Express, LLC a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Anschutz Corporation. The BLM and Western are jointly leading the project. The announcement was published in the *Federal Register* on Jan. 4, and initiates a 90-day public scoping period.

TransWest Express, LLC, proposes to construct an extra-high-voltage overhead transmission line from south-central Wyoming through Utah and northwestern Colorado terminating at the Marketplace Hub in southern Nevada – a distance of about 725 miles. The project would also include two AC/DC converter stations, a fiber optic network communications system, and two ground electrode facilities. The proposed line would transmit up to 3,000 megawatts per year of electricity generated primarily from planned renewable energy facilities in Wyoming to respond to anticipated load growth in the southwestern United States. Alternative routes identified so far would affect federal, state, and private lands. Authorization of this proposal may result in the amendment of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and BLM land and resource management plans.

The BLM and Western expect to host 23 open-house meetings at various locations. The Nevada meetings will be held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the following dates and locations:

- Mon., February 28: Caliente Elementary School, 300 Lincoln Street, Caliente
- Tues., March 1: Clark County Community Center, 320 N. Moapa Valley Blvd., Overton (Moapa Valley)
- Wed., March 2: Heritage Park Senior Facility, 300 S. Racetrack Road, Henderson
- Thurs., March 3: Desert Breeze Community Center, 8275 Spring Mountain, Las Vegas (Spring Valley)

Comments may be made to the BLM and Western during the open house meetings, via the project e-mail address ([TransWest\\_WYMail@blm.gov](mailto:TransWest_WYMail@blm.gov)) or in writing to Bureau of Land Management, Attention Sharon Knowlton, Project Manager, TransWest Express Project, P.O. Box 20678, 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82003. Facsimile comments will not be accepted. Project information and documents will be available on the project web site:

[www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/HighDesert/transwest.html](http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/HighDesert/transwest.html). To ensure that written comments and information are fully considered during the preparation of the Draft EIS, the BLM must receive them by close of business on April 4. All comments and submissions will be considered in the environmental analysis process.

## **Southern Nevada District Office (SNDO):**

### ***Law Enforcement***

- **Camping 101**-In the Fall Southern Nevada District Office Law Enforcement Officers Jarrod Vigness and Victoria Worfolk (along with other Southern Nevada Agency Partnership rangers and environmental education team members) taught nearly 500 freshmen at Desert Oasis High School how to camp. During one hour presentations, they talked about how to set-up a campsite, where to put up a tent, areas that are available to camp on public lands as well as what to essentials to bring camping. A vast majority of the kids had never set-up a tent before this opportunity.
- **Another Banner Year for SNDO Desert Clean-Ups** - In FY 2010 the Desert Clean up Team removed trash and debris from 1,050 acres of public land during 78 clean-ups, posted 480 no dumping signs, replaced almost 200 no dumping signs, installed almost 6,480 feet of barrier to prevent future dumping and facilitated 1,608 volunteers in donating 8,204 hours of service.
- **Law Enforcement Hosts Cross-Designation Seminar** -In November, Southern Nevada District Office Law Enforcement Officers joined their counterparts in the Southern Nevada Agency Partnership for their annual meeting regarding cross delegation. Rangers met with the Special Assistant to the U.S. Attorney for the Las Vegas region to discuss recent cases and case law as well as discuss agency specific regulations, new jail process and the Nevada Counter Terrorism Center.
- **West Career Tech Academy Partners with BLM**

In December, BLM helped judge marketing campaigns for *Don't Trash Nevada* created by students in West Career & Technical Academy. The sophomores from the Clark County magnet school which specialize in Biotechnology, Veterinary and Medical Sciences, Business Management, Health Care Administration, Nursing, Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine, Environmental and Natural Resources Studies, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Computer Animation, Management Information Systems showcased their semester long project of developing marketing materials including selecting two target audiences and creating a flyer, brochure, 30 second commercial, infomercial and display board. Funding for the West Career Technical Academy partnership was made possible through the youth initiative program.

### ***SNPLMA Division***

- **Hutchinson Property Acquired** – Last fall, the Southern Nevada District Office completed the purchase of the 2.36-acre land acquisition known as the Hutchinson property. The property is located in Calico Basin within Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. The Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture respectively approved funds to complete this acquisition pursuant to the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA). Acquisition of the Hutchinson property is a valuable asset in continuing to help BLM meet the increasing recreational and educational needs of Red Rock Canyon. Acquisition also provides habitat for one threatened and endangered species and several sensitive species.
- **SNPLMA Funding Helps Light Las Vegas' Bones** - The Las Vegas Neon Bone Yard Park was developed due in part to Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) funding. The city received funding for the neon park through the Parks Trails and Natural Areas category. Recently, the *Las Vegas Sun* featured the park, which sits next to the Bone Yard a museum of old Las Vegas signs from hotels and businesses. The Park opened in December. The City expects to break ground on a visitor center in the spring.

### ***Fire and Aviation Division***

- **Nevada Wildland Firefighters Join National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend** - Two wildland firefighters from BLM Southern Nevada attended the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend in Emmitsburg, Maryland last fall as members from the BLM Fire Honor Guard.

Southern Nevada District Office Engine Captain Vanessa Marquez and Southern Nevada District Office Assistant Fire Management Officer Chris Delaney assisted with the ceremony, which honored the 105 structure and wildland firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty in 2009. This year the ceremony remembered a fellow BLM employee, Brett Stearns, from the Northwest District Office in Colorado.

### **Las Vegas Field Office:**

- **Las Vegas Resource Management Plan Update:** The Las Vegas and Pahrump Field Offices are revising the Las Vegas Resource Management Plan Revision (RMP) and preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The scoping report was released June 7, 2010, and is available on the BLM website at [www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov). Copies of the report are also available at the Southern Nevada District Office.

The overall objective of the Las Vegas RMP planning effort is to provide a collaborative planning approach that assists the BLM in revising the management decisions of the current RMP. As such, early public input is crucial to identify various RMP-level issues that should be addressed in through the revision.

The RMP will establish consolidated guidance and updated objectives and management actions for the public lands in the decision area. It will be comprehensive in nature and

will address issue categories applicable within the decision area that have been identified through agency, interagency, and public scoping efforts. Preliminary issues for the planning area have been identified by BLM personnel, other State and Federal agencies, and other stakeholders.

- **Upper Las Vegas Wash (Conservation Transfer Area) Updates:** The Las Vegas Field Office is preparing a Notice of Availability, for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), for publication in the *Federal Register*. The FEIS should be available to the public by the summer. The Upper Las Vegas Wash is a deep drainage cut by thousands of years of flooding. The area contains significant paleontological, botanical, and cultural resources such as extinct mammoth and sloth fossils. The Las Vegas bearpoppy, Merriam's bearpoppy, and the Las Vegas buckwheat are three rare plant species found in the Upper Las Vegas Wash, and they are found only in the Mojave Desert.
- **Las Vegas Field Office Prepares EIS for Sloan Hills Mineral Materials Site:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Las Vegas Field Office is analyzing the potential impacts associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Sloan Hills Competitive Mineral Material Sales Project.

An Environmental Impact Statement is being prepared to address CEMEX and Service Rock Products' proposals to construct, operate and maintain mineral material mines in Sloan Hills. Upon completion of the EIS, a competitive sale would dispose of mineral materials; there is no guarantee that CEMEX and Service Rock Products would be winning bidders.

The Proposed Action consists of two proposed competitive mineral material sales that would result in two open pit dolomite/limestone quarries that would merge in the future into one open pit. The proposed project may include facilities for mining limestone and dolomite from a series of rugged hills at Sloan, Nevada. This material would be used for construction aggregate in the Southern Nevada area. The draft EIS will be published in the *Federal Register* within the next few weeks.

For more information or to send comments, please e-mail [sloanhillseis@blm.gov](mailto:sloanhillseis@blm.gov).

- **LVFO Proposes to Lease Land for School Transportation** - The BLM Las Vegas Field Office is seeking public comment on a proposal to lease and/or subsequently convey approximately 40 acres of public land to Clark County to build a school bus transportation facility near Washburn and the 215 beltway. The facility will include an administration building and maintenance yard for parking, cleaning and fueling school buses. The facility is necessary to meet the public school transportation needs of the community. Public comments will be accepted for 45 days until Feb. 10.

Written comments may be mailed to the BLM Las Vegas Field Office Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89130, faxed to 775-515-5010, Attn: Dorothy Jean Dickey, or email to [Dorothy\\_Dickey@blm.gov](mailto:Dorothy_Dickey@blm.gov).

- **BLM LVFO Proposes to Lease Land for Park Near Lone Mountain** - The BLM Las Vegas Field Office is seeking public comment on a proposal to lease approximately 303 acres of public land to Clark County for a public park and related facilities. The park is proposed near the intersection of Lone Mountain Road and the 215 Beltway in the northwest area of the Las Vegas Valley, and would include a recreation center, swimming pool, library, ball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, playground, restrooms, picnic areas, trailhead facilities, walking and jogging trails, parking lot, turf establishment, landscaping, lighting, utilities and ancillary equipment.

The 45-day public comment period will begin Dec. 29, 2010 and close Feb. 14. Written comments may be mailed to the BLM Las Vegas Field Office Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89130, faxed to 775-515-5010, Attn: Brenda Warner, or email to [Brenda\\_Warner@blm.gov](mailto:Brenda_Warner@blm.gov).

- **All Spruced Up in Time for Holidays** - During November and December, Las Vegas Field Office's Minerals Division and Southern Nevada District Office's Desert Cleanup Team collaborated with R.A.M.M. Corporation to tackle a major eyesore in the Mountain's Edge community at the corner of Cactus and Durango. Though several large trash bins had previously been filled at this site during volunteer efforts, huge piles of dumped dirt had confounded complete cleanup possibilities. From these five acres of public land within the Las Vegas Valley, 22,000 cubic yards of this dumped dirt and debris were hauled away by R.A.M.M.'s loaders and trucks. Additionally, 90 cubic yards of trash were extracted and consolidated in trash bins provided by BLM. Efforts are now underway to rehabilitate and restore the parcel with native plants to stabilize the soil and berms to deter dumping and OHV use.

#### **National Landscape Conservation System:**

- The Red Rock Sloan field office is seeking public participation in developing two environmental assessments that will analyze Special Recreation Permits within Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area in Cottonwood Valley and the Core Area (within the 13-mile scenic drive.). The programmatic environmental assessments will analyze the number of commercial, competitive and organized group use in these two areas for Special Recreation Permit applications. Proposed number of events and participants are based on historical number of applications for Special Recreation Permits and projected increased use. Examples of Special Recreation Permits that are reviewed in the environmental assessments include weddings, running and mountain bike races, charity fundraising events and other large group gatherings.

The comment period on the environmental assessments began January 13 and ends February 11. Written comments may be addressed to Kathy August, BLM Southern

Nevada District Office, 4701 North Torrey Pines, Las Vegas, Nevada 89130, e-mailed to [RRCRecreationComments@blm.gov](mailto:RRCRecreationComments@blm.gov) or faxed to 702-363-6779.

To view the environmental assessments online, please visit [www.nv.blm.gov/vegas](http://www.nv.blm.gov/vegas) and select National NEPA Register Page under “Links of Interest.”

- **BLM Moves Forward to Restore Vandalized Rock Art at Red Rock** - In November, three prehistoric rock art panels were vandalized with graffiti at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. Both pictographs (paintings and drawings on rocks), and petroglyphs (drawings scraped and ground onto the surface of the rock) were severely damaged.

The Las Vegas community's outrage at the graffiti vandalism at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA) is translating into numerous offers for assistance to help restore the three prehistoric rock art panels damaged in the Lost Creek Children's Discovery area. NV Energy and the Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association have pledged \$5,000 each to restore the site.

It will be approximately mid-2011 before the damage to the area can be restored. The next steps include preparing a damage assessment and treatment plan, preparing an environmental assessment, which will include opportunities for public comment, and coordinating with the appropriate Native American Tribes and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office.

- **NAI National Workshop in Las Vegas** - The National Association of Interpretation held its national workshop in Las Vegas in November. Participants were offered an optional tour of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area. Attendees joined other member of the association, which is dedicated to advancing the profession of heritage interpretation, enjoyed sessions ranging from “Daytime Astronomy and Solar Science: Interpreting Our Nearest Star, the Sun” to “Build Your Interpretive Brand: Strategies Of Fortune 500 Firms That Work For Interpreters.”

#### **Pahrump Field Office:**

- **BLM Withdraws Land in Ash Meadows** - To protect and restore habitat for 12 Federally-listed wildlife and plant species known to occur only at the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued a Public Land Order 7755 to withdraw nearly 9,460 acres of public land and 5,570 acres of reserved Federal minerals within the Refuge in southern Nevada for 20 years from U.S. land entry and mining laws, subject to valid existing rights.

The PLO also transfers jurisdiction of the public lands within the Refuge to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The BLM and the Service have been managing the Refuge through

a joint agreement. The Service recently finalized a Comprehensive Conservation Plan under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act. The most effective and efficient manner to implement the Plan is for the Service to have jurisdiction of the public lands within the Refuge. Private lands within the Refuge boundary will not be affected by the withdrawal.

- **Nevada's First Large-Scale Solar Project Approved by Secretary Salazar** - Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar approved the First Solar, Inc. Silver State North Solar Project, the first large-scale solar energy project on U.S. public lands in Nevada. The 50-megawatt (MWAC) 60 (MWDC) solar facility and associated infrastructure will be built in the Ivanpah Valley, 40 miles south of Las Vegas.

Phase 1 of Silver State will consist of the construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic plant, including associated facilities, on 618 acres of public lands. The electricity generated from this plant is expected to supply power for about 15,000 homes; will be sold to the Nevada market via a Power Purchase Agreement with NV Energy; and will connect into NV Energy's existing electrical grid.

The 50 MW Silver State North Solar photovoltaic facility is the first project to be permitted by the BLM at the site. First Solar plans to construct up to an additional 350 MW at the site, which will require additional supplemental environmental review and analysis. First Solar is expected to break ground on the project by the summer.

- **Record of Decision for Solar Millennium Signed by Secretary Salazar** - The BLM published a notice in the November 22 *Federal Register*, announcing the availability of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Amargosa Farm Road Solar Project, located in Nye County, Nev.

The ROD, signed by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, approved the second large-scale solar energy project on U.S. public lands in Nevada. When completed, the project will consist of a 500-megawatt facility that provides electricity to about 150,000 homes and creates 1,500 jobs. The BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service worked closely with Solar Millennium to develop an innovative water mitigation plan that can serve as a model for future solar projects. The plan ensures the project will have a net neutral impact on the plant and animal species found at nearby Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and Devil's Hole.

Copies of the ROD are available from the BLM Southern Nevada District Office by calling 702-515-5173, or on the internet at

[www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/lvfo/blm\\_programs/energy.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/lvfo/blm_programs/energy.html). For more information, please call Gregory Helseth, at 702-515-5173.