

Southern Nevada District Office
District Manager's Report
July 2016

Agencies Seek Public Comment on Proposed SNPLMA Round 16 Expenditures: On July 13, the public had the opportunity to review and comment on the preliminary recommendations for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 16 expenditures. Written comments were accepted for 15 days with a deadline of July 28, 2016.

The SNPLMA funds are generated from the sale of public land in the Las Vegas Valley. The preliminary recommendations include expenditures of approximately \$104.8 million for a variety of conservation, restoration, and improvement projects throughout Nevada, and a set aside for a SNPLMA Special Account Reserve.

- Parks, Trails and Natural Areas - \$20,898,722
- Capital Improvements - \$22,306,848
- Conservation Initiatives - \$9,189,762
- Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisitions - \$12,419,000
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention - \$29,499,942
- Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project - \$3,343,030
- Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Implementation - \$5,218,000
- Special Account Reserve - \$2,000,000

The preliminary recommendations also include a "Secondary List" of six projects prioritized across categories for funding if additional funds become available during the remainder of the recommendation and approval process.

The SNPLMA Executive Committee will review the comments, and forward its final recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior for approval, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture. The Executive Committee is composed of the regional directors of the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service Regional Forester, and the BLM Nevada State Director.

Bids to Open on Phase 2 of 13-Mile Scenic Drive Improvements at Red Rock: On August 16, Federal Highway Administration will open bids for proposed improvements to the 13-Mile Scenic Drive in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. The bid solicitation is packaged into two schedules and one option. Notice to Proceed is expected in late summer and once a contract has been awarded, BLM and Federal Highway Administration will announce which bid schedule and option was awarded along with the timeline for construction.

Work on the first phase was completed in February 2016 and was funded by Federal Highway Administration and the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act. Phase one included construction of two new bridges that replaced low water crossings at the Sandstone and Red Rock washes which have improved visitor safety and reduced maintenance during flash flood events. The Phase One project also included improvements to the visitor center parking lot.

The potential improvements for phase two include rehabilitating the pavement along the 13-Mile Scenic Drive and improving parking at the following parking lots: Calico 1, Calico 2, Sandstone Quarry, White Rock, Willow Springs, Ice Box Canyon, Red Rock Wash, and Pine Creek Canyon; improving a section of the road from the visitor center to Sandstone Quarry to two-way traffic; and constructing a one-way return route from Sandstone Quarry to the visitor center. Construction of the proposed improvements will be determined based on the results of the bidding process and the availability of funds to award the largest amount of work possible.

Options for improvement include:

- Schedule A: Pavement rehabilitation of the entire 13-Mile Scenic Drive, along 0.5 miles of Rocky Gap Road and Calico 1 Parking Lot Expansion.
- Schedule B: Schedule A as well as 11 additional parking areas
- Option X: A new alignment for a return route from Sandstone Quarry to the visitor center

Public meetings were held in 2014 and the project received wide-spread support.

Red Rock Canyon Calling Artists for Fall Residencies: With summer in full swing, it's time for artists to warm up their creativity and shed some sunlight on one of Southern Nevada's icons by applying for fall residencies at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. Applications will be accepted until August 13.

Selected artists will schedule residencies for two weeks in September, October or November 2016. They will be required to create at least one piece of artwork inspired by Red Rock that will be featured in an exhibition from December 2016 through January 2017. Artists will receive a \$1,000 stipend from Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association for developing their work.

The Red Rock Canyon Artist-in-Residence program is open to artists working in two-dimensional fields (including but not limited to painters, photographers, poets and printmakers) who are over 18 years of age and United States residents who meet the application criteria.

The artist-in-residence program promotes awareness through art of the exceptional places within the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System. The program provides an opportunity for learning and dialogue with the public about the value of preserving public lands.

Application submissions should include a resume, proposal for community engagement project, samples of artwork, and a response to the application questionnaire. Application proposals should reflect the artist's unique perspective of the cultural and natural resources within Red Rock Canyon. Winning proposals will promote public appreciation of the landscape, raise awareness of its unique and fragile nature, and inspire conduct that helps to preserve its resources. BLM staff and advising artists will judge the applicant pool. Selected applicants will be notified by August 31.

Southern Nevada Fire Restrictions Announced: On June 6, the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, Nevada Division of Forestry, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service are implementing fire restrictions in Southern Nevada.

Interagency fire restrictions prohibit:

- building and/or using a campfire or charcoal stove (using portable stove using gas, jellied petroleum or pressurized liquid fuel OK)
- welding or operating an acetylene torch with open flames (except by permit)
- using any explosive (except by permit)
- using fireworks or firing a tracer
- operating an off-road vehicle without a spark arrestor

Agency specific exceptions and additional restrictions are also in place:

- Bureau of Land Management – steel jacket ammunition and explosive targets prohibited as they are known fire starters. Smoking is allowed in an enclosed vehicle only.
- Lake Mead National Recreation Area - wood or charcoal fires allowed in grills of developed picnic areas and campgrounds where a host is present; wood or charcoal burning devices allowed on the shoreline where natural vegetation is at least 100 feet from the shoreline; barbecue grills allowed on private boats outside the harbors of Lake Mead and Lake Mohave; rental boats are authorized to use barbecues attached to vessel if allowed under rental boat agreement; all vessel barbecue fires must be at least 100 feet away from shoreline vegetation. Smoking is allowed outside of an enclosed vehicle in areas that are cleared of all flammable material for at least three feet. Cigarettes must be discarded in a car ashtray or an ashtray in a developed area.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - campfires allowed in fire rings at Desert Pass Campground on Desert National Wildlife Refuge; grills in day use area of Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge may be used.
- U.S. Forest Service - campfires are allowed within the approved fire pits or grills provided in developed recreation sites. Smoking is allowed if persons are stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is clear of all flammable materials.

Paved Road and Contact Station Now Open at Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area:

On May 19 Today, BLM Southern Nevada District announced the grand opening of Nawghaw Poa Road and the visitor contact station at Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area.

The contact station will be staffed by BLM and Friends of Sloan Canyon volunteers Friday – Sunday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through summer. On October 1, the contact station will be open daily.

The next phase of improvement projects from the Sloan Canyon’s implementation plan include: permanent visitor contact station building; permanent restroom; picnic shelters and tables; interpretative signs/exhibits; and restoration and trail improvements; Loop Trail; overlook pavilion; amphitheater and outdoor exhibits; additional indoor exhibits as well as Dutchman Pass Trailhead; Dutchman Pass road improvements; Hidden Valley Trailhead; and Quo Vadis Trailhead; additional trails and road improvements between Dutchman Pass and Quo Vadis.

Sloan Canyon was designated as a National Conservation Area in 2002 and its 48,438 acres provide peace and solitude for those who visit the unique scenic and geologic features and extraordinary cultural resources. Surroundings can vary from lowland dry lake beds to volcanic rock peaks reaching more than 5,000 feet.

The centerpiece of the area is the Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site, one of the most significant cultural resources in Southern Nevada. Archeologists believe the more than 300 rock art panels with 1,700 individual design elements were created by native cultures from the Archaic to historic era.

Contact Station Damaged at Sloan Canyon, Tips Sought: The Bureau of Land Management visitor contact station at the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area was vandalized on the night of June 13. Windows were shattered, siding damaged by rocks and a temporary restroom was overturned.

Although plywood covers the broken panels in the front door and an additional window, the restroom has been righted and the visitor contact station reopened for use on June 17 at 8 a.m.

A conviction for violating 18 USC 1361 (willfull depredation against any property of the United States) may lead to a fine in excess of \$500 and 10 years in jail.

BLM Law Enforcement is actively investigating the crime and a tipline was established 1-800-521-6501. No tips have been received.

Red Rock Canyon Campground to Close Until Labor Day Weekend: Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area's developed campground -- Red Rock Campground is temporarily closed from May 31 to September 2, 2016 during this low-usage period.

Red Rock Campground is located within Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area approximately two miles east of the visitor center on State Route 159 (West Charleston Boulevard) and is the only developed campground within the conservation area.

Visitors are encouraged to take advantage of the many other camping opportunities in the area. These include:

- Backcountry camping at Red Rock Canyon with permit, (702) 515-5050
- Valley of Fire State Park, (702) 397-2088
- Lake Mead National Recreation Area, (702) 293-8990 or (702) 293-8906
- Death Valley National Park, (760) 786-3200
- Mojave National Preserve, (760) 252-6100
- U.S. Forest Service Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest, (702) 515-5400
- Clark County Shooting Park, (702) 455-2000

Camping is allowed on BLM managed public land outside of the Las Vegas on public land for 14 days within a 28 day period without charge. Popular primitive (no facilities) sites include Bitter Spring Back Country Byway, Gold Butte Back Country Byway, Knob Hill, Virgin Mountains, Christmas Tree Pass and Logandale Trails System.

BLM Sought Public Comment on Lease to the State of Nevada for a Department of Motor Vehicles Facility in Las Vegas: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Las Vegas Field Office is seeking public comment on a proposal to lease and subsequently convey approximately 20 acres of public land to the State of Nevada to build a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

facility near the corner of West Silverado Ranch Boulevard and South Valley View Boulevard in Las Vegas, Nevada. Public comments were accepted until May 31.

The DMV facility will consist of a full service DMV building with related facilities. Related facilities include a drive test parking lot, motorcycle test course, Commercial Drivers' License test course, employee and visitor parking lots, landscaping, lighting, walkways, drainage, irrigation, restrooms, concessions, utilities, and ancillary improvements.

The Notice of Realty Action for a Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) Classification was published in the May 2, 2016, *Federal Register*. Interested parties may submit written comments regarding the proposed decision for the R&PP application and the plan of development, whether the BLM followed proper administrative procedures in reaching the decision to lease and convey under the Act, or any other factor not directly related to the suitability of the land for R&PP use.

Lights, Camera, Action – SNDO Stars in National Conservation Lands Sign Video

On June 15, two SNDO employees shined bright like diamonds while joining BLM Director Neil Kornze in filming interviews for an interview to promote new gateway signs for National Conservation Lands.

Josh Travers, Las Vegas Field Office Supervisory Outdoor Recreation Planner and Kathy August, Red Rock/Sloan Field Office Lead Outdoor Recreation Planner razzle dazzled as they were filmed in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area discussed recreation opportunities, why National Conservation Lands are special and safety messages.

Nationwide, BLM is in the process of installing the contemporary-look signs at 46 of these National Conservation Land sites and at other sites as needed. Each unit sign is unique to the site it depicts with strong design elements hinting of topographical maps provide a common theme.

After the video shoot was over, Neil also visited the contact station at Sloan Canyon. A new, more is coming to the Bureau of Land Management – from the signs at some of the sites it manages to the maps, brochures and other paper products available for public use. With the official unveiling of one of the distinctive gateway signs today at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA), the agency is taking the first steps toward introducing the new look that celebrates its conservation mission at the onset of the summer vacation season.

The update is part of the BLM's effort to better describe the agency and what it does through the many visual products that the public relies on for information, such as brochures, maps, and fliers. For many people, the first indicator of the change will be improved, more vibrant signs designating BLM National Conservation Areas and National Monuments.

Ice Box Canyon Trail Receives Help from Four-Legged Volunteers: On May 14 and 19, Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area's staff, volunteers and soon-to-be visitors were the beneficiary of a timeless Western tradition: pack mules.

Ice Box Canyon Trail had deteriorated so badly that the designated route was a trench 18 to 30 inches deep. In addition, the damage led to the creation of at least six social or braided trails.

Past restoration projects were primarily conducted by valiant volunteers packing supplies in and using existing material on location to repair the most impacted sections of trail.

This time, staff and volunteers were assisted by strings of mules that did the heavy carrying. On the first day, volunteers prepped the site by transferring boulders and rocks as a base for the badly eroded trail on the first day. The second day, they filled the trail with sand and gravel material extracted from a nearby wash.

But nearby doesn't mean right by and that's where the mules lent their strength. Volunteers filled mules' panniers with about 100 pounds of material each. Once loaded, horseman led the string of mules up the trail to the restoration location where an additional crew of volunteers promptly released the panniers allowing the fill material to drop into place exactly where needed. With three mule teams, the Ice Box Canyon Trail project moved quickly with pack strings coming and going as fast as the teams could load and unload.

The project was a great success due to BLM permittee Jim Sage of Cowboy Trails who provided the mules, members of the local Backcountry Horseman Association and Future Farmers of America as well as Friends of Red Rock Canyon volunteers and BLM staff.

Opportunity Village: The local non-profit Opportunity Village requested a Recreation and Public Purpose patent for a Northwest Campus to include an arts enrichment and employee resource center and park for the intellectually disadvantaged children and adults. Opportunity Village was afforded 50 percent of Fair Market Value once the appraisal was received. BLM covered the cost of the Cadastral survey and the patent was officially conveyed on July 26.

Gold Butte Re-engagement: BLM continues to work with the communities, build trust and be transparent with actions. In June, BLM announced the re-engagement with a field trip with Metro Captain Larochelle, Commissioner Kirkpatrick, BLM Director, BLM State Director, District Manager and Field Manager. Since then, BLM has met with Partners in Conservation, Moapa Band of Paiutes, Brian Haviland, Friends of Gold Butte, City of Mesquite and Moapa Town Board. Upcoming meetings include Mesquite City Council, Moapa Valley and Bunkerville. Work in the areas has included repair of the Virgin Peak repeater; Virgin Valley Water District projects, partner with Clark County on Gold Butte Road repair and maintenance and land use authorizations.

Memorial for Fallen Firefighters: On July 19th a majority of the Southern Nevada District Fire Staff attended a memorial service for fallen BLM Firefighters Joacob O'Malley and Will Hawkins in Winnemucca, NV. Members of the fire staff participated in the vehicle procession with fire engines and command rigs. All staff who went to Winnemucca also attended the service and paid their respects to their fallen comrades. Much of the fire staff knew Jacob and Will both personally and professionally and were honored to be able to participate and attend the service. Several of the fire staff's overhead, engine crews, and helitiack crew were all in attendance. Unfortunately Vegas Valley was not able to attend the service due to them being assigned to a fire in Northern Utah.

National Test and Training Range: The BLM, SNDO, Tonopah Field Office and Caliente Field Office are working with Nellis Air Force Base and the National Test and Training Range (NTTR) to legislatively extend the land withdrawal that covers NTTR in Southern Nevada. The withdrawal workload to complete the legislative EIS will take approximately 3 years. To coordinate BLM's involvement with the Air Force, the SNDO recently hired Tom Seley (former Tonopah Field Office Manager) as a rehired annuitant as a project manager. To complete the legislative EIS the BLM and the Air Force have proposed the following milestones to:

Publish Federal Register Notice with Air Force Scoping	Aug 12, 2016
Publish DEIS	Fall 2016
Prepare Findings and Recommendations	Winter 2017/2018
Publish FEIS	Summer/Fall 2018
Congress passes NDAA	Fall/Winter 2019
	December 2020

House Committee on Natural Resources: On July 26, BLM Nevada Director John Ruhs testified at a Field Hearing on improving management and utilization of federal lands in and around North Las Vegas. Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT), Rep. Crescent Hardy (R-NV), Rep. Tom McClintock (R-CA), Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX) and a panel of expert witnesses gathered to discuss a path forward to better serve the local community. Witnesses also included David Jennings from Southern Nevada Home Builders Association, Marci Henson from Clark County, Steve Parrish from Clark County Regional Flood Control District, Alan Schlottmann from University of Nevada Las Vegas and Lucy Stewart from Opportunity Village.