



BLM-Battle Mountain

District Manager's Report

The Battle Mountain District Office (BMD) manages approximately 10.5 million acres of public land within Eureka, Esmeralda, Lander and Nye Counties. In addition to historic mining and ranching, mountain ranges and wide open valleys in the BMD support wildlife, livestock and wild horses and burros and dispersed and developed recreation.

“The BMD is committed to providing efficient, effective and environmentally responsible management of your public lands,” Doug Furtado, District Manager.

Minerals Management

Mount Lewis Field Office

American Vanadium Gibellini Project —This Project is located 20 miles south of Eureka and includes an open pit with water and power line right-of-ways (ROWS). The plan boundary includes 730 acres with 539 acres of surface disturbance. On-site power generation using a photovoltaic array and vanadium battery demonstration is part of the project. A revised Plan of Operation (PoO) is being evaluated by the BLM. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared.

Klondex Gold and Silver Mining Fire Creek Project —Klondex’s Fire Creek Project is located about 20 miles east of Battle Mountain. A PoO has been submitted for about a 135 acre plan area where underground exploration is currently taking place. This completion date for this project is expected to fall in the beginning of 2016.

Newmont Mule Canyon Long-Term Closure Project - This Project is located about 15 miles southeast of Battle Mountain. Results from the Mule Canyon Action Plan and water quality monitoring have been designed and incorporated into the project



BLM employees on a tour of Barrick Gold’s underground mining operations

Barrick Cortez Gold Mines — BLM is reviewing one amendment to the PoO for this project located about 35 miles southeast of Battle Mountain. The amendment proposes changes and adjustments to activities, operations, and ore shipment, including two additional declines that support underground mining activity within the plan boundary of 16,700 acres. It also proposes to increase the plan boundary to 17,394 acres, expand underground mining, reconfigure facilities, and infiltration galleries. BLM anticipates that the Amendment will be analyzed under an EIS.

Mount Lewis Field Office (continued)

Eureka Moly, LLC Mount Hope Mine — This Project is located about 20 miles north of Eureka. An Amendment to the PoO was authorized in April 2015 which increases the plan boundary from 22,888 acres to 23,065 acres with a total surface disturbance of 8,618 acres.

Barrick Horse Canyon/Cortez Unified Exploration Plan —The Project is located about 45 miles southeast of Battle Mountain and includes 549 acres of surface disturbance. The project is currently active and open. BLM is reviewing small portions of the land for possible release.

National Oilwell Varco, L. P. Shasta Project—This Project is located 50 miles southeast of Battle Mountain where baseline data is being collected to support a PoO that would propose open-pit barite mining with 210 acres of surface disturbance.

McEwen Mining Gold Bar — The PoO for this project located 28 miles northwest of Eureka has been accepted and all baseline reports are completed. An EIS will be prepared for the Project covering approximately 5,071 acres and 1,300 acres of surface disturbance.

McEwen Mining Tonkin Springs —BLM has accepted the closure plan and has completed the EA for this Project. The Project is located 57 miles south of Battle Mountain and includes 482 acres of surface disturbance.

Montezuma Mines Red Canyon Exploration Project —Ongoing exploration is occurring approximately 30 miles northwest of Eureka in anticipation of a possible mining operation to include 1,556 acres within the planning boundary and 125 acres of anticipated disturbance.



Ruby Hill Mining Co.—Open Pit near Eureka

Ruby Hill —This Project is located two miles north of Eureka. The mine is still authorized and the new owner is Ruby Hill Mining, LLC.

Baker-Hughes Scruffy Oz Project —Baseline reports for the project 13 miles southeast of Battle Mountain were provided in August 2014 and supplemental baseline data needs are being sought. This project proposes surface extraction of barite to include 2,180 acres within the planning boundary and 155 acres of surface disturbance.

NuLegacy Gold Corporation CMZ Exploration Project —This project is located in Eureka County and covers 1,200 acres within the planning boundary and 200 acres of surface disturbance. An EA was completed and the project was approved in February 2015.

Halliburton Pleasant View Mine Project—This project is located about 14 miles southeast of Battle Mountain where baseline data is being collected to support a PoO that would propose open-pit barite mining within a plan boundary of 1,031 acres with 306 acres of surface disturbance.

Golden Oasis Toiyabe Exploration Project —This project is located 39 miles south of Battle Mountain. Approximately 100 acres of disturbance within the plan boundary of 802 acres was authorized by a decision that was completed.

Minerals Management

Tonopah Field Office

Corvus Gold Nevada North Bullfrog Exploration Project – The project is located six miles northwest of Beatty. Preliminary results from exploration indicate favorable values and Corvus Gold Nevada has presented conceptual plans for a Mining PoO. Baseline studies in support of this proposed plan are on-going.

Metallic Goldfield Gemfield Project —Metallic Goldfield has completed the majority of the required baseline studies for the proposed open pit mine about 1.5 miles north of Goldfield. A PoO has been accepted for a plan boundary of 1,918 acres and surface disturbance of 1,098 acres. A public scoping meeting for this project was conducted on January 10, 2014. Chapters One, Two and Three of the EIS are being drafted. We are currently waiting on the completion of the Ground Water Model to move forward in the EIS process.

Kings Valley Minerals LLC — Kings Valley Minerals LLC is proposing to conduct exploration operations for potassium in the Clayton Valley area on approximately 25,440 acres. There will be 12 drill holes. Surface disturbance is estimated to be about 120 acres. The NEPA kick off meeting took place June 9, 2015.

Round Mountain Gold Corp., Plan of Operations Amendment —Round Mtn. has proposed a modification to their current Plan of Operations that would include the expansion of the open pit. Baselines for the proposal are currently being conducted.

Barrick, Bullfrog Mining Project—Barrick is proposing a modification to the closure plan for the Bullfrog Mining Project West of Beatty. To avoid surface expressions of groundwater, Barrick is proposing to conduct a partial backfill. Baseline studies are ongoing. It is anticipated the Amendment will be processed in 2015.

West Kirkland Mining Inc., Three Hills Mine — West Kirkland Mining Inc. is proposing to conduct mining operations two miles west of Tonopah. Estimated surface disturbance is 492 acres. This project is currently in the NEPA process and an Administrative Draft is expected to be submitted to the office sometime near the end of September.



Gold Pour

Nevada Sunrise Gold Corp, Golden Arrow Exploration- The proposal is to explore for recoverable gold deposits by drilling reverse circulation and/or core holes, geophysical mapping, and construction of roads and drill sites five miles south of Tonopah within a 1,473 acre plan boundary. Administrative Draft EA is currently being reviewed by the IDT.

Lands and Realty

Mount Lewis Field Office

Communication Sites —Right-of-Ways (ROWs) are currently being processed to construct additional communication sites in more rural areas, adding improved cellular and emergency services. A small communication site on Mt. Callaghan, located just north of Austin, NV will be constructed in the spring of 2016 and will improve services along route 50, SR 305 and Grass Valley. An additional site is proposed and is being analyzed that will be located on Tonkin Summit to improve cellular services along SR 278. An EA will be completed for this Project. Two Communication Site Plans are being revised for Mount Lewis and the Argenta Rim in northern Lander County. Both mountain tops combined have 20+ communication operators.

McEwen Mining: Gold Bar Project —This Project involves obtaining ROWs for two access points known as 3 Bars Road and Roberts Creek Road located west of Eureka in support of the anticipated Gold Bar Project. A water pipeline from a private well would be constructed along the northern part of Roberts Creek Road.

The Yomba Shoshone Indian Tribe Project —An EA will be developed to construct a new water tank, water service lines and additional fire hydrants to service the Yomba Indian Reservation southwest of Austin. Baseline surveys are currently being completed. A complete EA for public comment is anticipated in the summer of 2016.

Barrick Gold Corp: Fiber Optic Line —In the summer / fall of 2015 Barrick Gold Corp. was authorized to install a fiber optic line along Grass Valley road and JD Ranch road to support their employee residences and improve communication capabilities in the area.



Communication site facility on Mount Lewis



Communication site facility on Argenta Rim

Mt. Wheeler Power —A ROW was granted to Mt. Wheeler power to replace and repair their power line in NY Canyon in support of the communications sites on Prospect Peak, south of Eureka, NV.

Additional Lands & Realty Updates —Numerous other ROW requests ranging from new applications to amendments and renewals are being processed. Trespasses on BLM managed lands are also being pursued in accordance with CFR regulations.

Lands and Realty

Tonopah Field Office

Nevada Hospital Association dba Optica —This ROW is a multiple District (Battle Mountain, Carson City, and Las Vegas) funded project consisting of a fiber optic cable overhead and underground to be attached to existing power line poles. The underground portion of the line from Goldfield to Beatty has been completed

Manhattan Road ROW —The office is currently waiting on the SF-299 from the county. We are currently awaiting the completion of the Cultural Report.

Silver Peak Road ROW — The office has issued a ROW to Esmeralda County for the Silver Peak Road from Highway 95 to Silver Peak.

Gold Point—Esmeralda County has shown an interest in the purchase of the town of Gold Point. The sale of the Land is currently under the internal review process.

Beatty Bike Trails —The master plan is currently under development and cultural surveys may start in the near future for phase one.

Tonopah Solar Energy, LLC Crescent Dunes — The 653 foot tall power tower receiver, mirrors , power generation blocks, and hot and cold storage tanks have been constructed. When completed, the project will produce 110 megawatts of power. Testing has commenced and it is anticipated that the power plant will be in operation in the summer of 2015. An informational kiosk with picnic tables, appropriate signage for the project, and surrounding public lands is expected to be constructed in 2015.



Crescent Dunes Aerial View



Crescent Dunes Power Tower Receiver

Rangeland Management

Mount Lewis Field Office

Three-Bars Restoration Project —This project focuses on landscape level restoration in the Three-Bars/Roberts Mountain area northwest of Eureka. This area contains high value resources for greater sage-grouse, Lahontan cutthroat trout, mule deer and other wildlife species. This area also boasts largely intact native or perennial plant communities and is at high risk of catastrophic

wildfire largely due to pinyon-juniper encroachment. The BMD initiated an EIS analyzing numerous restoration and fuels treatments within a 750,000 acre footprint. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) as well as Eureka County are cooperating agencies with BLM on this project.

The Decision is expected in 2016. Upon the signing of the decision, the BLM will seek formalized partnerships to leverage funding and support for multi-year implementation of this important project.

Mule Canyon Spring Mitigation —The BLM worked with Newmont to complete the analysis and issue a decision authorizing the development of two spring sites within the Argenta Allotment. This project is currently in the implementation stage.

Argenta Allotment —The BMD, with assistance from the National Riparian Service Team, worked collaboratively with the permittees to successfully reach a grazing management agreement. In June, the Office of Hearings and Appeals approved the settlement agreement which replaces temporary closure with livestock management. As requested, an EA was completed and sent out for public comment in the first quarter of 2016

Rangeland - Tonopah Field Office

Spring /Stream Fencing— The BLM worked with local permittees and others with water rights around nine spring sources within the Tonopah Field Office that are being heavily impacted by wild horses and burros. This project will protect spring heads while allow water to be available for use of wildlife and livestock. This will help these areas recover and continue to provide water.

Beatty Springs—Five springs were approved during 2011 and three of the springs will be under construction during 2016.

Range Land Health Assessments—Francisco, Smoky, Ralston, Stone Cabin, and Monitor allotments are being developed.

Battle Mountain District Partnerships

Noxious Weed Control — In 2015, the BMD has inventoried 30,780 acres for the presence of Invasive Plants and/or Noxious Weeds, applied treatments on 682 acres and evaluated 8,000 acres of weed treatments.

The Southern Nye County Conservation District continues to complete Tamarisk control in support of the Amargosa Toad Habitat Conservation Plan Agreement throughout Oasis Valley and within Beatty town proper.

The Tonopah Conservation District, in cooperation with Tri-County Weed District, has currently treated over 2,000 acres of noxious weeds throughout the District.

The Diamond Valley Weed District has treated approximately 100 acres of noxious weeds throughout Eureka County.

Additional Update:

Finally, the BMD continues to work on Tamarisk control in the Fish Creek drainage in Lander County. Cheat-grass also continues to be chemically (Plateau®) and biologically (livestock) treated on about 1,000 acres per year primarily in Eureka and Lander counties. Cheat-grass treatments are a priority in maintaining and achieving healthy rangelands.

Drought Response

Battle Mountain District

Since 2012, much of Nevada has experienced record drought conditions in which limited forage production occurred and water sources began drying up.

In response to the drought, the BMD prepared a District Drought Management Plan and analyzed it in an EA. The Finding of No Significant Impact was signed in June 2013. The main purpose of the Drought Plan was to position the BLM to authorize appropriate drought response actions in a timely manner to prevent resource damage or adverse drought related impacts. The Plan consists of a broad suite of drought response actions to address and mitigate livestock and wild horse and burro related impacts during drought.

The BMD has made drought monitoring and implementing appropriate drought response actions a priority since 2012. Priority areas are: Herd Management Areas, Priority Greater Sage- Grouse Habitat, Wetland and Riparian Habitats, and Intact Native Plant Communities.

Monitoring indicated limited forage production across much of the BMD in 2012 and 2013. In 2014 there was a small increase in limited spring precipitation. Although this moisture led to more forage production in many areas in comparison to 2012 and 2013, drought impacted rangelands still dominated the majority of the BMD. Hydrologic and vegetative drought have been present since 2012 in much of the District and monitoring indicated conditions are worsening.

The BMD has worked extensively with permittees to reach appropriate management actions each year by first seeking voluntary adjustments within the terms and conditions of current grazing permits. In limited instances where no voluntary agreement could be reached, or after drought response triggers were exceeded and voluntary movement or removal of livestock was not possible, the BMD issued Decisions temporarily closing grazing allotments or portions of them,

to livestock use. Other Decisions were issued that implemented agreements with permittees where grazing use occurred outside of the permit terms and conditions.

In 2014, permittees applied for and were approved for over 150,000 AUMs of voluntary non-use during the grazing year. We appreciate all of the collaboration that has occurred between BLM and livestock permittees and leases to proactively address drought conditions.

In 2015, voluntary non-use was achieved on 73 grazing allotments totaling 165,173 AUMs.

To date, seven drought decisions on the following allotments were issued:

- Battle Mountain Complex
- Shannon Station Allotment
- Diamond Springs Allotment
- Grass Valley, Simpson Park, and Dry Creek Allotment
- Roberts Mountain Allotment
- Argenta Allotment (2 Decisions)

Riparian Monitoring has occurred on 13 Allotments:

- 43 Drought monitoring sites
- 17 Stream channel Multiple Indicator Monitoring sites
- 21 Hydro sensors at eight sites
- 13 Water quality sampling sites and 29 Water quality samples.

CCC letters in preparation for change in season of use or range improvement Decision:

- Robert's Mountain
- Grass Valley

Wild Horse and Burro Program

Wild Horse and Burro Water Sources —In 2015, the BLM continued to maintain and supplement currently authorized range improvement water sources within the Fish Creek HMA at McCullough Spring, the Coils Creek Slough, Davis pipeline and the Brown Well. Inventory and monitoring of additional water sources used by wild horses was also completed within the New Pass/Ravenswood and South Shoshone HMAs.

Wild Horse and Burro Inventory Flights —MLFO completed helicopter inventory flights of about 2 million acres in September 2015 which included implementation of the current USGS protocol to increase the quality and accuracy of the data. Approximately 4,000 miles were flown to cover 8 HMAs north of U.S. Highway 50 in Lander and Eureka Counties. The TFO also conducted helicopter inventory flights of five HMA's in Esmeralda County, covering about 1.5 million acres that contained habitat important to the Bi-State Sage Crouse.

Fish Creek Gather and Fertility Control Program —A gather of the Fish Creek HMA in Eureka County was completed in February 2015, with 424 horses gathered. Eighty-two mares were treated with the fertility control vaccine PZP-22 and released back to the range with 80 studs on April 7, 2015. A total of 262 horses were removed from the range. Though the approved removal numbers did not allow for achievement of the Appropriate Management Level, the fertility control treatment and marking of mares with individual identifiers will allow for future treatment of the mares and expansion of the program in this HMA. The vaccine applied in 2015 will be effective in spring 2016, and most of the mares treated in 2015 will not have foals. The effectiveness of the vaccine drops off after the first year. The MLFO plans to continue the fertility control program via field darting with a one year PZP vaccine, in order to prolong and increase population growth suppression. More can be learned in the Fish Creek Gather EA, located here:

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/battle_mountain_field/blm_programs/wild_horse_and_burro/Fish_Creek_Wild_Horse_Gather.html

The MLFO held a special on-site adoption event in conjunction with the Fish Creek Gather at the BLM's Eureka Wildland Fire Station. After freezemarking, vaccinations, and deworming, six of the recently gathered yearlings were adopted to new families!



The Fish Creek on-site wild horse adoption was held at the BLM Wildland Fire Station in Eureka Nevada in late February 2015. Six yearlings were adopted.

Wild Horse & Burro: Looking ahead in 2016 —The BMD hopes to implement field darting programs to continue fertility control treatment using a one year PZP vaccine in several HMAs. The work will be facilitated by monitoring, use of trail cameras and documentation of wild horse distribution and movement patterns.

Inventory flights will be conducted in approximately 14 BLM HMAs and USFS Territories in February/March and September 2016. Flights will be completed in Eureka, Nye and Esmeralda Counties.

Monitoring of wild horse and burro habitat, movement, use patterns, and forage/water availability will begin in early spring 2016 and continuing throughout summer and fall.

The MLFO will be completing a wild horse Herd Management Plan on an HMA in Lander County that is within greater sage grouse PHMA.

Sage-Grouse Conservation

Battle Mountain

Bootstraps —2015 was the final year of the University of Reno (UNR) Bootstraps Program. Since 2005, UNR Bootstraps and BMD have employed over 150 at-risk youth predominantly from the local Sho-Pai Duck Valley Tribe and surrounding communities. The Bootstraps program thinned pinyon-juniper encroachment within Greater sage-grouse habitat at a rate of 1,200 acres per year for 11 successful years. Additionally, Bootstraps crews erected many small and large riparian area and spring enclosures, fixed boundary fence-lines and controlled noxious weeds.

We wish Rod Davis a happy retirement in Montana. Thank you for all your collaborative work with BMD to enhance the public lands and for being a positive influence for so many at-risk youth!



11th and final year of UNR Cooperative Extension– Lander County & BLM Battle Mountain District Bootstraps program. 2015 crew.

Fire and Invasive Assessment Team (FIAT) –FIAT was initiated in October of 2014 in an effort to address two of the biggest threats to sage-grouse habitat:

wildland fire and invasive annual grass. The FIAT effort also addressed expansion of pinyon-juniper into sagebrush habitats. The BMD has identified five priority areas as part of the FIAT

process. Within these five areas, priorities have been established for wildland fire suppression, hazardous fuels reduction, pinyon-juniper treatments, emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, and habitat restoration.

Secretarial Order 3336—In response to Secretarial Order 3336 the Desert Basin Fire Management Zone (DBZ) has implemented its “Step-up” plan and has ordered additional fire suppression resources for periods of predicted lightning and high fire danger. The DBZ also has two SEATS stationed at the Battle Mountain Tanker Base, and is prepositioning resources to high priority sage-grouse habitat for periods of predicted lightning and high fire danger.

Programmatic Roadside Fuel Break EA—The BMD is working on a programmatic EA for implementing roadside fuel breaks in priority areas across the District. Implementation would be done in cooperation with the Nevada Department of Transportation, counties, and private land owners as appropriate. Lander County has been approached and is eager to work cooperatively with the BLM on these fuel breaks as a “Pilot Project” to work out the details. Success with Lander County will make the process of working with the other counties more streamlined.

Other Projects —The BMD is working on a Toiyabe West EA for pinyon-juniper removal in sage-grouse habitat. This project has the potential to allow for many years of work and will address conifer encroachment in multiple areas of important sage-grouse habitat. The BMD also anticipates the FEIS for the 3 Bars project being issued within the next few months. This project has a suite of restoration treatments, with an emphasis on sage-grouse.



Forestry, Fuels, and Fire Programs

Battle Mountain District

Forestry

- 269 vegetative (fuel wood) permits sold.
- 874 tons of biomass utilized, and
- Four commercial woodcutting area established.



Seven Mile Project (left and right)

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

- 314 acres of mechanical treatment on the Eureka Project,
- 140 acres of mechanical treatment on the Lida Project,
- 45 acres of prescribed fire on the Manhattan Project,
- 2,221 acres of biological treatment on the Austin Project,
- 1,562 acres of seeding treatment on the Diamond Valley Project,
- 845 acres of chemical treatment on the Battle Mountain Project,
- 1,245 acres of seeding treatment on the Battle Mountain Project, and
- 5,000 acres of WUI projects monitored.
- 102 acres of prescribed fire on the Manhattan project
- 60 acres of prescribed fire on the Lida project
- 1142 acres of seeding treatment on the Yomba project

- 1142 acres of mechanical treatment on the Yomba project
- 50 acres of mechanical treatment on the Austin project

Non-Wildland Urban Interface

- 200 acres of prescribed fire treatment on the Seven Mile Project,
- 1,057 acres of seeding treatment on the Seven Mile Project,
- 50 acres of mechanical treatment on the Seven Mile Project,
- 1,000 acres of mechanical treatment on the Sulphur Springs Project, and
- 2,000 acres of non-WUI projects monitored.
- 390 acres of mechanical treatment on Fish Creek project.

Rehabilitation

- 1,025 acres of the 2013 Willow Creek Fire were aerial seeded in January 2015, and
- Monitoring treatment effectiveness is ongoing for the Fraizer, Willow Creek, and Goat Peak fires.
- 239 acres of aerial seeding on the 2015 Elephant Fire.

Preparedness

- We achieved 100% success in initial attack in Fiscal Year 2014 burning 63 acres in 20 different fires.
- We are staffing 5 engines, 1 dozer and a water tender for the 2015 fire season.
- We hosted a highly successful state wide Engine Academy to train up and coming fire fighters the ins and outs of wildland fire engine operations.

Aviation

- Battle Mountain Air Tanker Base is staffed and ready to service Northern Nevada with Heavy air tankers.
- Agreements and equipment are in place to open remote Single Engine Air Tanker bases in Eureka, Austin and Tonopah.