

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

FEBRUARY 2016

for  
Mojave Southern Resource Advisory Council

Southern Nevada District Office



## District Wide

### Las Vegas and Pahrump Field Offices Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement:

In 2008, the Southern Nevada District Office completed an evaluation of the 1998 Las Vegas Resource Management Plan (RMP) that revealed there were a number of areas where the RMP needed to be improved for both content and readability. Public scoping began January 5, 2010, and ended February 28, 2010. Seven public scoping meetings were held and 263 individuals provided comments, which resulted in identification of 540 comments.

In May 2013, the Las Vegas and Pahrump Field Offices began writing the Draft RMP/EIS document in-house. The Notice of Availability for the Draft RMP/EIS was published in the Federal Register on October 10, 2014, which started the public comment period. The comment period closed on March 9, 2015 for a total of 150 days (including two 30-day extensions). Four

public meetings were held during the public comment period to provide information regarding the Draft RMP/EIS and allow the public an opportunity to provide comments. In addition, BLM met with county, city, and state agencies.

of Availability for the Proposed RMP/Final EIS by Summer 2016. Some of the more controversial items in the plan cover travel management, renewable energy, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, land disposals, lands with wilderness characteristics, and utility corridors.

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***The SNDO anticipates publishing a  
Notice of Availability for the Proposed  
RMP/Final EIS by Summer 2016.***

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SNDO is in the process of developing the Proposed RMP/Final and organizing, reviewing, and responding to approximately 1,700 cooperating agency and several thousand public comments for the Draft RMP/EIS. The SNDO anticipates publishing a Notice

### Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone:

SNDO held an auction on June 30, 2014 to determine who would be the applicant (s) for the Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone, located approximately 15 miles north of Las Vegas. The successful bidders were First Solar, Invenergy, and NV Energy and the proposed output from the three applicants is about 480 Megawatts of renewable energy for the Nevada utility market.

Environmental Assessments (EA) were completed in January 2015 and decision records were signed May 27, 2015. All measures to avoid or minimize environmental impacts presented in the Final EA's have been considered and adopted in the Decision Record and will be carried forward as stipulations to the right-of-way grants issued for the projects. Additional mitigation measures have been added and incorporated in the Decision Record in response to the Dry Lake Mitigation Strategy.

SNDO has kept true to the spirit of the Solar PEIS for rapid permitting; however, an item beyond BLM control is the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). One applicant, First Solar, was able to secure a 174MW PPA. This grant holder plans to start construction May of 2016 with an in-service date of 2017. The others, Invenergy and NV Energy are still competing for future PPA opportunities. The Tax Credit was extended thus allowing renewable energy projects time to build their project and collect the tax credit.

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***Additional  
mitigation  
measures have  
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Lake Mitigation  
Strategy.***

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Existing Transmission Lines, Northeast Side of Playa Solar, LLC Development

### **Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone Off-Site Mitigation Implementation Plan:**

In 2012, the BLM and the U.S. Department of Energy published the “Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for Solar Energy Development in Six Southwestern States” (Final Solar PEIS).

The Regional Mitigation Strategy for the Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone Technical Note 444 (BLM Technical Note 444), is the product of a BLM pilot project based on the Mitigation Framework created by the Solar PEIS. The final strategy and project report recommended the BLM develop a plan of action to compensate for unavoidable impacts associated with development of the Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone (Dry Lake SEZ). The Dry Lake SEZ Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan) is a step down of the Regional Mitigation Strategy for the Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone Technical Note 444 and describes how the BLM Las Vegas Field Office (LVFO) will allocate and apply the funding it receives from the three solar projects authorized to construct within the Dry Lake SEZ.

On June 16, 2015, the LVFO held a one-day stakeholder workshop to receive feedback on how to implement BLM Technical Note 444. This workshop was structured such that stakeholders were provided background on current BLM LVFO issues, conservation actions, and programs. Participants worked in four small groups with each group developing their own plan for implementing the mitigation funds. The BLM took the information gathered during the workshop and developed the Implementation Plan. A final conference call was held with the stakeholders on December 2, 2015. Additional comments were received and incorporated into the plan. The Implementation Plan has been reviewed by the BLM Washington Office and will be released by the end of January 2016.

### ***The plan will implement the following:***

- The Piute-Eldorado Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) will be the recipient site for the off-site mitigation funds from the development of the Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone.
- A project manager will be hired to write an ACEC management plan, update the current travel plan, and complete the analysis under NEPA. The management plan will outline specific mitigation actions to be completed in the ACEC.
- A park ranger will be hired to complete route monitoring, establish visitor use patterns and conduct public outreach.
- BLM will hire a third-party contractor to develop community outreach, restoration and protection actions. On the ground work will be completed by the contractor.
- Law Enforcement will be used for targeted patrols in the area. The patrols will be based on input from the park ranger and the third-party contractor.



Mint 400 Time Trials

#### Recreation Program Review:

Recreational use of the public lands in Southern Nevada continues to expand, with requests for permitted events becoming more diverse and complex. The SNDO must be able to meet the demands of the public and provide a spectrum of opportunities for recreation, including education, special recreation permits and casual use. To help achieve results, a Recreation Program Review was conducted in November. A national BLM team of experienced recreation planners conducted a detailed survey with the outdoor recreation planners and managers in the Las Vegas, Pahrump, and Red Rock/Sloan Field Offices; spent time in the field observing recreation sites and commercial events; and reviewed the recreation permit practices and protocols. The results of this Recreation Program Review will inform staffing needs, seek ways to increase employee retention, and expand recreation opportunities. Ultimately, the SNDO will need to creatively address recreation capacity, within budget and staffing constraints.

# SNDO and Field Office Updates

## Fire and Aviation

### 2015 Season Update:

In FY 2015, Southern Nevada District Fire and Aviation experienced a fire season that was significantly below average (101 fires with 75.3 acres burned) which allowed the division to support the sage grouse effort in northern Nevada by sending two engines on each of the four Nevada Task Force rotations, sending the Vegas Valley Handcrew to support fires on Ely District, and having Las Vegas Helitack support both Carson City District and the Desert Basin Zone. Southern Nevada was also able to provide personnel to support the Great Basin Incident Management Teams and Nevada Type 3 Teams. In addition, fire response protocols with California Desert District were improved and collaboration with the Department of Energy continued. Coordination with Las Vegas Metro for East district responses was a continued success and is ongoing.



Pine Creek Prescribed Fire

The division staffed five BLM engines and one National Park Service engine which responded to 76 fires with 158 days on fires, 1,639 engine hours, and 157 pump hours. Las Vegas Helitack was staffed for 90 days with 47 days on fires and 21 initial attacks during 208.9 hours of flight time.

Vegas Valley Handcrew was available 166 days with 67 days assigned to incidents in addition to assisting in training the military battalion that was activated for fire suppression.

The division was active in fire education and prevention by hosting the Red Rock Half Marathon and 5K during fire prevention month for approximately 300 participants and other spectators, participating in numerous school, community, military, and other events as well as hosting media events to discuss the 2015 fire season and the need for fire restrictions.

The SNPLMA-funded Red Rock Hazardous Fuels multi-year hazardous fuels reduction project was completed for a total of 4,460 acres, the weeds program successfully treated 330 acres and inventoried approximately 300,000 acres for invasive and weedy plant species, the Pine Creek prescribed fire was successfully implemented within the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation work is ongoing on BLM managed portions of the Carpenter 1 Fire.

## Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA)

### Round 15 Funding Approved:

On January 6, 2016, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell approved 43 projects funded under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act to encourage environmental sustainability, community collaboration and wildlife connectivity. The Act allows proceeds from sales of U.S. public land in the Greater Las Vegas area (Clark County) to fund a range of conservation, restoration, capital improvement, and public improvement projects throughout the state. The revenue derived from land sales is divided among the State of Nevada General Education Fund (5%), the Southern Nevada Water Authority (10%), and the remainder (85%) is made available to fund projects. Since the law's enactment in 1998, the program has raised \$3.5 billion for more than 1,200 projects that benefit public places in Nevada.

The funding announced today includes \$39.1 million for projects in the following categories:

- Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention - \$5,740,970
- Parks, Trails & Natural Areas - \$4,753,487
- Capital Improvements - \$5,193,251
- Conservation Initiatives - \$5,737,540
- Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisitions - \$12,230,400
- Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project - \$4,155,412
- Multi-Species Habitat Conservation - \$1,291,523

The Round 15 package also includes \$3 million in a special account reserve for emergency or unexpected project expenditures.



Secretary Jewell Round 15 Signing



Volunteer Desert Cleanup

## Law Enforcement

### Desert Clean-Up Update:

In FY 2015, 936 cubic yards of trash were removed and 329 tires were recycled. SNDO engaged 156 volunteers in more than six cleanup events for the year, which contributed 126 yards to the total removed from public lands. The remainder was removed by clean-up crew staff, fire crews, and Nevada Conservation Corps.

## Las Vegas Field Office

### Split Estate Minerals issues in Las Vegas Valley:

Split estate parcels are parcels where the surface and mineral estates are owned by two separate entities. The cases of interest to the BLM are those in which the surface is privately owned while the mineral estate is reserved to the Federal Government. Though the regulations allow minimal use of mineral materials for personal use for the benefit of improving the surface without authorization from BLM; personal use does not include alteration of the minerals or use of the minerals in connection with any construction purpose even if the material is not altered or remains within the boundaries of the property.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires the reservation of the mineral estate when lands are patented. Lands in the Las Vegas Valley have been patented under the authority of a number of different acts,

most recently under the Southern Nevada Public Lands and Management Act of 2002. These sales have created many split estate parcels that are now being developed. Home developers in Las Vegas Valley have to come to BLM for a mineral sales contract before construction can begin. This is controversial as it increases the cost to develop property that was purchased from the federal government.

The LVFO is implementing BLM National guidance on split estate trespass issues, the Washington Office I.M. 2014-085 clarifying what types of activities on split estate lands required mineral material contracts. This I.M. was issued as a response to a finding by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit of the BLM Mineral Materials Program.

**Mine Marker Removal:** The Bureau of Land Management's Southern Nevada District is on track to complete a four-year project to pull down all standing hollow open pipe mine markers that have proven deadly for migratory birds and other wildlife. Since 2011, approximately 10,000 hollow markers have been pulled down on Southern Nevada District public land and the remaining mine markers are expected to be removed by spring.

The BLM has been partnering with the Nevada Department of Wildlife, Great Basin Institute, Nevada Conservation Corps, Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Friends of Gold Butte, and many other volunteers to pull up the hollow markers and lay them on the ground. The work complies with Nevada state law and provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The hollow plastic pipes have been used for many years to mark the boundaries of mining claims on public lands in western states because they are easy to see, lightweight, and inexpensive. Migratory birds, especially cavity nesters, and reptiles, and small mammals are drawn to the hollow pipes that look like suitable nesting or shelter sites. Once inside, animals are unable to crawl up the slick sides and birds cannot extend their wings to fly out. The end result is a slow death through dehydration and starvation.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife have found more than 8,000 dead birds inside mine markers since the project got underway in southern Nevada in late 2011. The uncapped PVC pipes have been illegal in Nevada since 1993, and in



Volunteer Jim Boone removes mine marker

2011 state law allowed for anyone to take down uncapped hollow mine markers and place them on the ground where found.

**Muddy River Riparian Restoration Update:** The Muddy River is an oasis of endemic wildlife including Moapa pebble snail, Moapa riffle beetle, a tiny predatory bug called *Limnocois moapensis* and the Moapa dace. Mosquito fish, mollies, and tilapia, a freshwater African fish, had been spreading into dace habitat for years, and by 2008 these exotic species had helped push the population of Moapa dace to less than 500. In coordination with a nearly a dozen federal, state and local partners, the SNDO has begun a multi-faceted project to restore the Muddy River. In 2012, SNDO built three fish barriers in cooler reaches downstream as backups for the upstream barriers protecting dace habitat, and to protect other native fish further downstream. Excluding tilapia and their alien brethren from the best habitat has helped Moapa dace numbers rebound dramatically to over 1,900 as of spring 2015.

SNDO is working with the National Park Service's Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT) to remove literally tons of exotic plants. In 2015 the EPMT cleared 12 additional acres of tamarisk, bringing the total to about 50 tamarisk-free acres. Nevada Conservation Corps have come in behind them to chip some of the slash to reduce hazardous fuels, and our fuels program is working on a burn plan to remove piles in a dense, 20-acre area cleared of tamarisk. Where tamarisk and other weeds have been removed, native trees are recovering—with a little help.



Muddy River Restoration

**Southern Nevada Wilderness Update:** In FY 2015, staff completed field work in support of a revised lands with wilderness characteristics inventory for Las Vegas Resource Management Plan. Areal monitoring of 100 percent of 11 Wilderness Areas and one Wilderness Study Area was also completed.

A Determination of NEPA Adequacy and Decision for the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) to complete big game monitoring activities in the Rainbow Mountain and La Madre Mountain Wilderness Areas was completed. Monitoring involved the capture of bighorn sheep (*Ovis Canadensis nelsoni*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and elk (*Cervus elaphus*) occurring near the State Route 160 corridor using a helicopter and aerial net-gun. The information obtained from this effort is being compiled, analyzed, and summarized by the NDOW to provide a basis and direction for recommendations to NDOT on the future design of SR160.



Wilderness Trail Kiosk Installation

In coordination with volunteers from Friends of Nevada Wilderness and employees of the Las Vegas REI, trailhead kiosk for the Arch Trailhead at the Muddy Mountains Wilderness Area was installed. Volunteers from Friends of Nevada Wilderness also installed a trailhead kiosk at the Wee Thump Joshua Tree trailhead restored damage and removal of trash from the Ireteba Peaks Wilderness

**Affordable Housing:** In FY-2015, Southern Nevada District Office completed an affordable housing conveyance to the State of Nevada Housing Division for a five-acre newly constructed 188-unit affordable housing complex for seniors and seniors with special needs, with at least 10 percent of the units having a preference for qualifying Veteran

households. Four months after the land was transferred out of federal ownership, this affordable housing complex was 100 percent leased.

In May 2015, the Housing Division met with the SNDO to discuss future affordable housing proposals for both senior and multi-family housing. The Housing Division shared information from a report of an analysis of data collected through a 2014 affordable housing apartment survey finding that there is a decreased vacancy trend highlighting the need for more affordable housing. There is a great need for affordable senior housing throughout the state of Nevada, and units targeted to extremely and very low income families are in demand. Nine percent of Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties advertise specifically to veterans. More than half of all LIHTC properties have an active waitlist.



Ensemble Resident Oscar Rodriguez

Since 2007, SNDO has conveyed 25 acres of public land for affordable housing development federally-appraised at a fair market value of over \$15.3 million – pursuant to SNPLMA Sec. 7(b) this value was discounted at a lower purchase

price totaling \$815,000. The conveyed lands has provided affordable housing development for seniors, seniors with special needs, multi-family housing, and a preference for qualifying Veteran households.

Although, there are no active applications for affordable housing conveyances, in year 2016

the SNDO anticipates two proposals from the Housing Division - senior housing application in the Spring, and multi-family housing application in the Winter. Each conveyance proposal application could take 18-24 months to complete (convey lands out of federal ownership).

**Current status of pending transmission lines through the Rainbow Gardens ACEC:**

In December 2008, Great Basin Transmission, LLC through its subsidiary LS Power Development, applied for a ROW grant for a 500 kV transmission line from the Harry-Allen Substation to the Eldorado Valley through the former Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area (ISA.) Congress released a 500 foot corridor through the ISA for the State Sponsored Centennial Project (NV Energy). Interior solicitors have interpreted this legislation as restrictive to the specific project. Great Basin's application was rejected in 2012 and they appealed to IBLA. In January 2014, Rainbow Gardens study area removed from ISA status. BLM resumed processing Great Basin's application. FONSI/DR was signed November 2014 and right-of-way grant was issued April 1, 2015.



Existing Powerlines within the Sunrise Corridor

Two other transmission lines: TransWest Express (600 kV DC line from south-central Wyoming) & Silver State (230 kV AC line) are proposed for same area. In some instances all three proposed lines occupied the same space. BLM asked all three proponents to work together, to agree to alignments resolving potential alignment and

crossing conflicts allowing all three lines to be constructed. (Presently three lines already exist in this area, which the additional lines will parallel, two of which pre-date the establishment of the ISA, and the third being the State Sponsored Project.) The three proponents resolved their respective alignment conflicts, which also cross lands managed by the BOR, as well as private property.

California ISO issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a 500 kV transmission line to follow the alignment of the proposed Great Basin Intertie Project (SNIP). California ISO identified three entities as Qualified Project Sponsor Applicants. On January 11, 2016, California ISO Selected DesertLink LLC as the approved project sponsor to finance, construct, own, operate and maintain the Harry Allen to Eldorado 500 kV transmission line project. DesertLink LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of LS Power Associates, L.P. At least four other companies have contacted the LVFO with inquiries about this area and the current status. Only one of them has been identified, and the other three contacts have been made by environmental contractors.

Prior to the issuance of a Notice to Proceed, Great Basin has to meet all of the following conditions: payment of tortoise mitigation fees, proof of an acceptable bond, payment of \$600,000 for mitigation fees (plant, visual, cultural), and a final plan of development.

**Rights-of-Way in Apex Area Update:** The Apex industrial use area zone has become a focus of potential future development that could benefit the local and State economies. The Apex area has overlapping legislative direction allowing for the development of energy transmission, transportation, and utility facilities. Public Law 101-67 (Apex Legislation) provided for:

- the disposal of public lands to Clark County for the development of a heavy industrial use zone;
- the issuing of a right-of-way to Clark County for transportation and utility facilities; and
- the retention of right-of-way corridors for administration by the Secretary.

As provided for by the Apex Legislation the BLM issued right-of-way grant N-51809 to Clark County on October 26, 1989. This right-of-way grant provided the County with an authorization to develop transportation and utility facilities that would not exceed 200 feet in width. The right-of-way grant provided

general legal descriptions along with exhibits that also provided a general overview of the location and type of facilities that were planned. The terms and conditions of N-51809 allow for Clark County to permit other parties to use the lands within the right-of-way, and also reserved to the Secretary the right to permit other uses in the right-of-way compatible with the use provided for by N-51809.

In addition to N-51809, the BLM has also issued right-of-way grants to other local governments and utility companies within the right-of-way corridors in the Apex area. Currently, there are approximately 67 authorized rights-of-way within these corridors. Right-of-way grants issued by the BLM have authorized uses such as roads, communication lines, powerlines, waterlines, and gas pipelines.

As developers, city and county governments, and the State of Nevada continue working to bring businesses such as Faraday Future to the Apex area, there will be a heightened need for the BLM to work collaboratively on projects that would authorize developments on public lands. The BLM is engaging in partnerships that will shape an effective and efficient process and provide authorizations for needed facilities. Most recently, the BLM has met with the City of North Las Vegas to discuss the City's needs in the Apex area and has dedicated Lands and Realty staff to participate in stake holder and Apex planning meetings. As the BLM partners with these stake holders on specific developments, short, and long range planning it is our goal to provide for organized development on public lands that accommodates local, regional, and national needs.

**Three Kids Mine Update:** Public lands were identified for conveyance under special legislation, H.R. 697, P.L. 113-135, enacted on July 25, 2014. It is a Federal legislative action for the purpose of conveying Federal land to the City of Henderson (COH) for the environmental remediation of the site known as the "Three Kids Mine Project." This conveyance will allow the COH to work closely with a responsible party to reclaim and remediate the lands.



Aerial View of Three Kids Mine



Three Kids Mine in WW2

The public lands managed by the BLM, consists of approximately 941.26 acres. The proposed conveyance is located within the COH's jurisdiction, located across from Lake Las Vegas. The site consists of an assemblage of privately owned and federally owned lands. The proposed parcel is surrounded by existing patented mining claims. There are approximately 146 acres of Federal lands that contain mine residue and are contaminated. Approximately 250 acres of the Federal land is not contaminated and is needed for fill material to complete the reclamation and remediation project. This site was located on an "abandoned" manga-

nese mine and mill site, which was operational between 1917 through 1961, and was a storage area for Federal manganese reserves from the late 1950s through 2003.

The area has become a dumping ground and is utilized by off-road vehicle (OHV) users and others. The project site includes deep open pits, large volumes of potentially hazardous mine overburden/tailings, mill facility remnants, solid waste disposal areas, as well as other known and potential risks to public safety, human health and the environment, which is disseminated over hundreds of acres. In section 34, there is a 1,400' wide corridor known as the Rainbow Gardens Corridor. The site also has Bighorn Sheep habitat, a former River Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) between the BLM and BOR, and the historic mine from 1917. The area in section 36 is within the River Mountains ACEC boundary and consists of approximately 17.38 acres. The ACEC boundary has been adjusted by an approved and recorded survey to exclude any portion of the Three Kids Mine Project Site.

A surface and minerals evaluation appraisal through the Office of Valuation Services has been requested. A Geological Evaluation and Mineral Valuation for this Three Kids Mine site was received on August 11, 2015, with a \$0.00 per net mineral acre value. On December 16, 2015 a conference call with OVS was held, regarding the request for a Mineral Appraisal. OVS was unclear why the mineral appraisal request was needed. It was explained that legislation provides The surface appraisal is currently in review with the Office of Valuation Services and should be available within 30-90 days. A mineral appraisal is still needed to so that Las Vegas Field Office can accept it and can continue to proceed.

**Public Law 113-291 (Tule Springs) Update:** On December 19, 2014, bill H. R. 3979 was enacted as Public Law 113-291 (P. L. 113-291). The SNDO refers to this bill as the "Tule Springs Bill" since a part of the bill involves an area known as the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument is located northwest portion of the Las Vegas valley area. The following actions are those in public law, P. L. 113-291, sec. 3092, which involve the SNDO area:

- established the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument area (TSNM), which consists of approximately 22,650 acres of public lands located northwest of the Las Vegas valley area. The TSNM area was created in order to conserve and protect scientific and paleontological finds in the area for future generations. The bill transferred administrative jurisdiction of the TSNM area over from the Bureau of Land Management to the National Park Service. The bill also established a Renewable Energy Transmission Corridor and a Water Conveyance Facilities Corridor which each run west to east in two separate areas cutting through the southern portion of the TSNM area.
- the addition of a portion of land to the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (RRCNCA) which is located on the eastern edge of the RRCNCA.
- conveyance of a portion of land to the City of North Las Vegas for a Job Creation Zone to be used for non-residential purposes or in accordance with the R&PP Act.
- conveyance of a portion of land to the City of Las Vegas for a Job Creation Zone to be used for non-residential purposes or in accordance with the R&PP Act.
- conveyance of a portion of land to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department to be used as a Las Vegas Police Shooting Range.
- amendment to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (SNPLMA) which will change the SNPLMA disposal boundary which surrounds the Las Vegas area to coincide and agree with the new TSNM and other actions of the bill.
- conveyance of land to the Nevada System of Higher Education for three separate colleges; one to be located in Pahrump (Great Basin College), one in North Las Vegas (University of Las Vegas North Campus) and one in the central Las Vegas area (College of Southern Nevada).
- conveyance of land to Clark County for the Southern Nevada Supplemental Airport located in Jean, Nevada.



Mammoth Tusk at TSNM

- conveyance of land to Clark County for an Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Park and the creation of the Nellis Dunes Off-Highway Vehicle Area.
- withdrawal and reservation of a portion of public lands for Nellis Air Force Base.

BLM is implementing actions under the bill, including land surveys, land transfers, land tenure adjustments, resource inventories, records updating, and corridor identification. The land transfers/withdrawals (Tule Springs, SNPLMA addition, RRCNCA addition, Nellis AFB withdrawal), have all been completed. BLM is working on the land survey of the areas. Once the surveys are completed, BLM will update the Serial Register Pages with the corrected legal descriptions. The conveyance actions are all going through the NEPA process, except for two, UNLV and the City of North Las Vegas. (The UNLV and the City of North Las Vegas have not yet paid for the processing of the conveyance actions so we cannot process them.) Since the total acreage of the conveyance parcels in the bill exceed the threshold for the programmatic biological opinion (BO) for the desert tortoise, the BO has to be appended for all the conveyance actions. The Fish and Wildlife Service is working on appending the BO. Meanwhile, the BLM surveyors are surveying the parcel areas for the conveyance actions.

**Film Permits Accomplishments:** The Las Vegas Field Office realty staff processed 79 film permits in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 and 17 film permits within the first quarter of FY 2016. The majority of film permits are issued for Red Rock National Conservation Area, Jean Dry Lake, and Nellis Dunes. Permits range from authorizing small photos shoots to moderate sized filming for commercials, television shows, movies, and special recreation events. It is anticipated that demand for the filming permits will continue to increase with changes in technology and upward economic trends.



Filming at Nellis Dunes

**Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) Lease Accomplishments:** The Las Vegas Field Office realty staff processed a total of 16 R&PP lease applications in FY 2015 and has processed two lease applications within the first quarter of FY 2016. Three R&PP lease applications have been received in FY16, one for a renewal, one for an amendment, and one for a new lease. Two additional R&PP leases, one for a church and one for a Police Substation, will expire in FY 2016 and the BLM anticipates receiving renewal applications for both of these R&PP leases.

It is expected that a total of 15 R&PP lease applications will be processed in FY 2016. Among those lease applications, is a change of use to authorize the development of a park, Unemployment Resource Center, and Arts and Enrichment Center by Opportunity Village. The Notice of Realty Action (NORA) for this change of use is anticipated to be published in January. Absent any adverse comments the decision approving the change of use will become effective 60 days after the NORA is published. Other R&PP lease applications that are anticipated to be processed include applications for parks, schools, and a Department of Motor Vehicle office.

**Annual Customer Service Workshop:** On November 4, 2015, the Las Vegas Field Office held its sixth Annual Customer Service Workshop since year 2009. This year's workshop was presented by the Lands and Resources divisions.

The workshop is an exceptional outreach to BLM customers and stakeholders that provides an overview of BLM's lands program to increase knowledge and updates on regulations, policies, directives, and processes.

There were over 100 attendees that included representatives from state and local governments, utility companies and other interested parties. Topics presented by BLM specialists included land records interpretation; land records and database research; Recreation & Public Purpose (R&PP) leases; right-of-way (ROW); R&PP and ROW issuance and bonding; National Environmental Policy Act; endangered species and areas of critical environmental concern; biological assessments and biological opinions; cultural and native American consultation; vegetation and restoration; and mining and mineral material uses.

Attendees were given helpful tools and tips to assist in a general understanding of BLM's administration of public lands, and to continue the good-working relationships with stakeholders and interested parties. Many favorable comments from attendees were received for BLM providing another successful and informative customer service workshop.



Lands Customer Service Workshop

**Land Sales:** On November 17, 2015, the 33-parcel competitive land sale was held at the North Las Vegas City Hall. The competitive land sale was held via oral auction. The total amount of acres offered in the land sale were 625.52 acres. Out of the 33 parcels offered in the land sale, 22 parcels sold totaling 260.93 acres which brought in \$32,608,500.00 to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

On April 26, 2016, the 39-parcel competitive land sale will be held at the Clark County Commission Chambers located at the Clark County Government Center. The total amount of acres offered in the land sale will be 608.57 acres. Fair Market Value will be available 30 days prior to the sale. Notice of Realty Action that will include more information about the sale will be published in the Federal Register January 7, 2016.

## Pahrump Field Office

**Wild Horse and Burro Management Highlights including Cold Creek gather and adoption:** As part of our management of SNDO's 2.1 million acres of Herd Management Areas (HMA), we conducted a very successful burro adoption in January. The burros were gathered because they posed a safety hazard along State Route 160, side roads in the Pahrump Valley and have caused private property damage in the valley.

Our District WH&B specialist continues to actively monitor our six HMA's, and has incorporated the new USGS counting methods during our helicopter overflights. We currently have more than 1,300 horses and 900 burros (over two and three times AML respectively), including our largest HMA, the Nevada Wild Horse Range on the Nevada Test and Training Range. We have also conducted several projects to improve our water developments and reduce the need for future water hauling.

Monthly events (seasonal) are held at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Visitor Center in conjunction with the Red Rock Interpretive Association to increase public awareness and support for adoption opportunities. Public interest is significant for Carson and Jackson, an adopted horse and burro, who even have their own Facebook pages.

We are working collaboratively with the U.S. Forest Service, activist groups, and the public

on the jointly-managed Spring Mountain Herd Management Area Environmental Assessment. This Forest Service-led assessment will establish consolidated Appropriate Management Levels which cross the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area and the Pahrump, Red Rock, and Las Vegas Field Offices. It will also incorporate an alternative proposed by the Spring Mountain Alliance, to assist FS/BLM with the gathering, treating, and monitoring of the Cold Creek area population, an area with significant urban interface and a somewhat domesticated herd.

**NTTR Withdrawal:** The Pahrump Field Office continues to coordinate with the Air Force on the renewal of their existing legislative withdrawal that encompasses Nellis Air Force Base, Creech Air Force Base, and the Nevada Test and Training Range, and currently spans over 2.9 million acres. BLM's responsibilities and challenges include cadastral surveys (unsurveyed and suspended), mining claims/validations, lands and realty, wild horse and burro management, fire support, and cooperating agency status for the legislative EIS. The current legislative withdrawal expires November 6, 2021. There are ongoing discussions between the agencies and Congress regarding the benefits of continuing with legislative withdrawals or patenting the land to Department of Defense. As the BLM's Nevada Military Liaison, the Field Manager also coordinates for BLM and attends the semi-annual Joint Military Affairs Committee meetings and the DOD/BLM semi-annual collaboration meetings.

A large portion of the Yucca Mountain tunnel lies under public land in the Pahrump Field Office, as the previous Department of Energy withdrawal expired in 2010.

In addition, a reservation/right-of-way that covered an additional acreage expired December 31, 2014. Pahrump Field Office is working with Department of Energy to place existing boreholes and other structures on now-public land under a new, separate right-of-way instrument.

BLM SNDO is responsible for wildland fire and fuels reduction when requested by the Air Force, and we are currently providing special expertise for fire and wild horse and burro on the Cedar Peak Fuels Reduction Environmental Assessment. Once finalized by the Air Force, SNDO fire crews will be clearing, thinning, and

ultimately burning the fuel on the Nevada Test and Training Range over several years in order to minimize the risk to critical military asset

## Red Rock/Sloan Field Office

**Red Rock Scenic Drive Improvements:** The Department of Transportation's Federal Land Highways Program awarded BLM a multi-million dollar grant for long-needed improvements on Red Rock Canyon's scenic drive. This is the first major BLM-DOT partnership for a roads-grant project and it is a district priority.

The core area of the national conservation area, which includes the 13-Mile Scenic Drive, associated parking lots and trail heads and visitor center, receives more than two million visitors a year. Visitor safety and reducing user conflicts is the major objective of the proposed road improvements. The first phase of the project includes construction of low water crossing bridges over two flash flood prone washes – construction of this project is projected to be completed by the Spring of 2016. The second phase of the project, the proposed improvements along the rest of the scenic drive (i.e. improved signage and ingress/egress, expanded parking lots, repaving.) The final design, Environmental Assessment and Decision Record are complete. The project is planned to commence after the finalization of Phase 1 and construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2016.



Red Rock Bridge Construction

**Walking Box Ranch:** Located south of Las Vegas near Searchlight, Nevada, Walking Box Ranch (WBR) is an historic property managed by the BLM. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the property was originally owned by silent film stars Rex Bell and Clara Bow, and was operated as a working ranch.

In 2005 the BLM purchased WBR with Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) funds. During the same year, the BLM entered into an agreement with the University of Las Vegas, Nevada (UNLV) to help develop, operate and manage WBR. Two financial assistance agreements with UNLV subsequently followed to further define the cooperative management of WBR, including the proposed restoration of the historic ranch house and adjoining buildings and construction of a university field station research center. After restoration and construction of the structures were to be completed, UNLV was going to continue to partner with the BLM to help manage WBR, because there were not any available federal funds to operate the complex.

In 2013 the partnership with UNLV ended for a number of reasons, one being that the BLM determined that UNLV could not manage and operate the research center component of WBR as an economically self-sustaining facility based on the university's business plan. (Note: The appropriateness of the expenditures made by UNLV under the financial assistance agreements are also currently under review by the BLM and Office of the Solicitor. The outcome of those findings may require UNLV to reimburse the BLM for certain expenditures.)



Windows Carefully Removed

Restoration of the historic buildings however has continued to be a priority and Senator Reid's office has made it clear that they want a

successful conclusion to this project. In 2014, the BLM contacted the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Training Center to inquire if they could provide the services to restore the historic buildings. They agreed and an interagency agreement was signed April 2015.

Since then, the NPS has been busy drafting solicitation documents for the various phases of work necessary to restore and protect the property. In October of 2015, on-the-ground restoration activities officially began when several members of the NPS team arrived and began removing the windows and doors from the ranch house and transported them to their workshop in Maryland for restoration. The following month, Moore Fence Construction, Inc. was awarded the contract to install the tortoise exclusion fence required by the findings in the environmental assessment. Fence installation, as well as clearing the 40-acre headquarters parcel of tortoises, was completed in January 2016. The contract for the remaining aspects of the property, including the ranch house, is scheduled to be awarded by February 2016 with a completion date of June 2016.

**Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area:** Sloan Canyon shares several miles of its boundary with fully built-out, high-density residential areas of the City of Henderson. The continued growth of the City, as well as an increase in public awareness of Sloan, has led to a noticeable increase in visitation. Visitors want to see more developed features and amenities for comfort and enjoyment, as well as appropriate infrastructure to manage use while protecting the resources. The BLM finalized the Sloan Canyon Implementation Management Strategy to address these concerns.

From the strategy, several key recommendations have either been finalized or will be completed in the near future. Those include:

- Develop partnerships and increase volunteerism—BLM has since entered a Cooperative Management Agreement with the Friends of Sloan Canyon. In FY 15, a total of 76 volunteers donated 706 hours of labor. So far in FY 16, 30 volunteers have donated 315 hours in labor. Sloan Canyon hosted a National Public Lands Day project as well as a Make A Difference Day project. These projects were made possible through the continued partnership with the City Henderson and funded by the Conservation

Lands Foundation by a grant from the NV Energy Foundation.

- Improve access to Petroglyph Canyon—BLM has since entered into a Financial Assistance Agreement with the Army Corp of Engineers to oversee construction of a ¾mile paved road (Nawghaw Poa Road) from Democracy to the location of a new paved parking area to access Sloan Canyon in the vicinity of Petroglyph Canyon. The road and parking area are scheduled for completion in April 2016.

- Improve access to information—In addition to constructing Nawghaw Poa Road and parking area, the BLM has also implemented plans to install a temporary visitor contact station in this location. Friends of Sloan Canyon are on board to provide volunteers to assist with staffing the facility. The contact station will also serve as a means to provide additional protection for Petroglyph Canyon by providing an increase in BLM presence in the area.

- Increase/improve signage—BLM has recently received new portal signs featuring a new graphic developed specifically for Sloan. These signs will be installed over the next few months and will be located at each major entry portal to the conservation area. Additional signage is also being installed along the 44 miles of recently completed hiking, biking and equestrian trails within Sloan.



Implementation Meeting