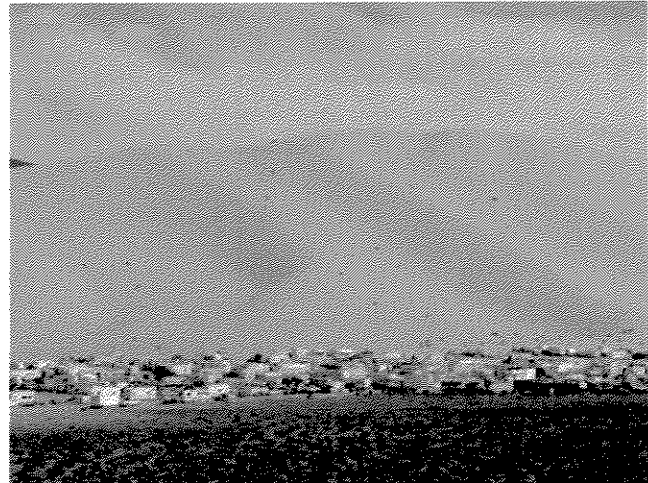


BLM-Carson City Field Office
Field Manager's Report
November 15, 2005

Sand Mountain Recreation Management Area

The Carson City Field Office has prepared an updated Business Plan for the Sand Mountain Recreation Area that analyzed the costs involved to manage the area. The primary change outlined in the plan is that starting October 1, 2005, BLM raised the user fees at Sand Mountain to \$90 for an annual pass and \$40 for a weekly pass. This is an increase from an annual pass cost of \$45 and \$20 for a weekly pass. A daily use fee will still not be available for sale, however, Tuesdays and Wednesdays will be free no-fee days. Other than visits on a Tuesday or Wednesday, a fee is required for all units entering the area staying longer than 30 minutes.



Memorial Day Weekend 2005

No fees are charged for the use of the Sand Springs Pony Express Station Area.

The BLM has been collecting fees at SMRA since March of 2003. In 2004, user fees generated \$170,000 in revenues which were applied exclusively toward the management of SMRA, while it cost approximately \$225,000 in 2004 to manage SMRA. In 2005 those costs increased to over \$300,000. With the anticipated signing of the Sand Mountain Blue Butterfly Conservation Agreement, we estimate that costs at Sand Mountain will rise to over \$800,000 in FY06. **No fee collections will be used for wildlife species monitoring or mitigation, as required under the Recreation Fee Enhancement Act.** Fee monies and appropriated funds will both used for cleaning restrooms, trash disposal, pumping vault toilets, additional toilets during holidays, grading the entrance road, emergency medical services, law enforcement, fee collection, signing, brochures, and education.

An emergency closure notice will go into effect soon. Under this closure, **motorized vehicles will be allowed to travel only on the specified route system – all other areas within the vegetated portion of the dunes will be closed to motorized vehicles.** The specified route system is an amended version of the current voluntary route system. Maps will be available soon

and BLM will begin the process of signing and fencing the routes.

Because of direct impacts to the Sand Mountain Blue Butterfly and its host plant the Kearny Buckwheat, BLM instituted a voluntary route system throughout the vegetated portion of the dunes. Monitoring has shown that compliance with this voluntary system has been extremely poor. Currently, a working group of the Lahontan Valley Environmental Alliance (LVEA), which is made up of the Friends of Sand Mountain (an OHV enthusiast group), California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA), City of Fallon, Churchill County & BLM, is working on a Conservation Strategy which will conserve the Sand Mountain Blue Butterfly and hopefully preclude a listing by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act.

The Draft Conservation Strategy calls for BLM to undertake a number of actions that include:

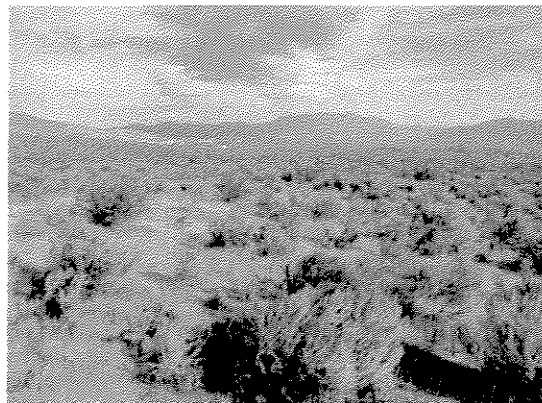
- Make the current voluntary route system mandatory
- Fence and sign the route system (BLM is currently working on cultural surveys of the vehicle routes that are to be designated as opened and maintained, and we are in consultation with the Fallon Piute-Shoshone Tribe on these routes)
- Provide additional education and outreach to users
- Regularly grade or maintain the route system

The LVEA hopes to have the Draft Strategy completed by December 31, 2005.

Plans to initiate a land-use RMP Amendment for Sand Mountain and the rest of the Churchill County Plan have been delayed due to budgetary shortfalls.

North Douglas II Land Sale

The BLM-Carson City Field Office auctioned off two public land parcels at the old Douglas County Courthouse on October 27th, collecting \$24.5 million in less than 15 minutes. The parcels are located in northern Douglas County, south of the Wal-Mart Supercenter, Clear Creek Plaza and Carson Valley Plazas, near the Carson City border.



The first parcel of 106.25 acres, appraised for \$6.4 million, sold for \$8.4 million. The land was purchased by Carson City developer John Serpa. The land is zoned both commercial and residential.

The second parcel of 100 acres, appraised at \$10 million dollars, sold for \$16.1 million. It was purchased by Raymond Sidney of Stateline, Nevada. This parcel is zoned residential.

Both successful bidders were required to make a 20% deposit with the remainder of the deposit due within 180 days.

The auction was conducted under the authority of the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act. Not less than eighty-percent of the proceeds must be spent in the state of Nevada to purchase lands with exceptional resource values in accordance with regulations in the Federal Lands Transaction Facilitation Act of 2000. Four-percent of the proceeds from this land sale will go into a state of Nevada education fund.

The two land parcels had been identified in BLM's resource management plan as appropriate for disposal because they are isolated tracts needed for community expansion, and they would be difficult for the BLM to manage.

Fire & Emergency Operations

As of October 12th, there had been 57 fires (55% lightning and 45% human-caused) on BLM-Carson City Field Office lands, burning 3,439 acres. We shared our personnel & equipment with other Nevada units since the vast majority of BLM fires in Nevada this season occurred in the Elko, Ely and Las Vegas Field Offices (total of over 870,000 acres). Stead and Minden Airtanker Bases are closed for the season; however, they can be reopened with 24-hour notice through the middle of November.

Nationally, there have been approximately 54,716 fires, burning 8,219,000 acres (180% greater than the 10-year average).

The office has also sent numerous personnel & equipment to assist in recovery effort for Hurricanes Katrina & Rita. These costs are reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Wild Horse Gathers

<u>HMA</u>	<u>Current Est.</u> <u>Population</u>	<u>AML</u>	<u>Est. # to be</u> <u>Removed</u>	<u>Status</u>
<u>FY2006</u>				
Dogskins	100	10-15	85	Scheduled for 11/05.
Pilot-Table Mt.	340	227	100	Scheduled for 9/06.
(This will be a 2006 resumption of the 2005 gather that was suspended due to bad weather).				

The Snows holding facility in Fallon currently has approximately 1,300 horses.

Pine Nut Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment

The Pine Nut RMP Amendment planning area boundary has been expanded to include the Prison Hill Recreation Area (east side of Carson City and the Silver Saddle Ranch), primarily because new management decisions may be needed, and Hoyer Canyon properties that have been acquired by BLM in the past year. The BLM Interdisciplinary Team will examine existing decisions for both areas and make recommendations to management on prospective new decisions, such as land disposal, route management, resource use and balance, and community needs.

An administrative draft should be ready by January, with a public review draft expected to be published in early 2006.

North Valleys Right-of-Ways Projects EIS

Staff has completed work on the EIS analyzing separate water supply and transmission rights-of-way applications from the Fish Springs Ranch LLC and Intermountain Water Supply LTD, two independent water companies, proposing projects in Washoe County. Each company is proposing to construct and operate water supply and transmission projects to meet present and future water demands of the Stead/Silver Lake/Lemmon Valley areas (North Valleys) in Washoe County.

The Fish Springs Ranch LLC proposed pipeline (carrying approximately 8000 acre-feet per year) would begin at the Fish Springs Ranch, and proceed south approximately 33 miles to the North Valleys. The Intermountain Water Supply LTD proposed pipeline (carrying approximately 3500 acre-feet per year) would begin in Dry Valley, proceed east a short distance before tying into the same general route south to the North Valleys, a total of approximately 24 miles.

The Draft EIS was released for public comment on May 20 2005, with the comment period (including five public presentations) ending on July 20. Twenty-six comment letters were received. The Final EIS was released on November 10, 2005. After a 30-day review period for the Final EIS, the Record of Decision will be issued after completion of Section 106 consultation and completion of consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Carson City Field Office Energy Plan Amendment & EIS

In September 2002 the BLM Carson City Field Office (CCFO) completed an environmental assessment (EA) to analyze all geothermal lease applications pending up to May 2002. Through the environmental analysis process it became clear that the decisions in the existing Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan 2001 (CRMP) did not adequately address or analyze energy resources on a site-specific basis.

The CCFO Energy Plan Amendment & EIS addresses: areas open to leasing (geothermal, oil & gas) or right-of-way (wind & solar), subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form or right-of-way standard stipulations; areas open to leasing or right-of-way, subject to minor constraints; areas open to leasing or right-of-way, subject to major constraints; and areas closed to leasing or right-of-way. At the present time the CCFO is working with the US Forest Service, US Bureau of Reclamation, BIA, Tribes, Navy, and other agencies to incorporate appropriate stipulations and constraints for activities on those lands. The contractor is assembling the last iteration for all agency reviews.

The CCFO Draft Energy Plan Amendment & DEIS will be released to the public by January 2006 (90-day comment period). It is anticipated that the Proposed Energy Plan

Amendment & Final EIS will be ready to be released in May 2006, with the Record of Decision by July 2006.

Denton-Rawhide Mine Plan Amendment/Sale

The BLM-Carson City Field Office is seeking public comment on a Resource Management Plan (RMP) amendment to identify certain public land parcels for disposal via public sales within Mineral County, Nevada. Kennecott Rawhide Mining Company (KRMC) has proposed a direct sale of approximately 450 acres of public lands located in and around the open pit of the Denton-Rawhide Mine to facilitate reclamation of the disturbed acreage and broaden the potential of opportunities for post mine use. KRMC currently owns 760 acres of land in the mine area and holds mining claims on all proposed sale land. A private company is pursuing state permits for use of the Denton-Rawhide Mine as a landfill. Public lands within the mine operation are currently not identified in the Carson City Consolidated Resource Management Plan for disposal. The proposed land sale would consist of isolated slivers and small acreages (partial claim blocks) either entirely surrounded by or contiguous to KMRC private lands.

A public meeting before the Mineral County Board of Commissioners was held on November 2, 2005. Public comments were accepted through November 14, 2005.

Yerington Mine

Craig Smith of the BLM-Nevada State Office continues to coordinate with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) on-site characterization studies. The BLM-Carson City Field Office (CCFO) is coordinating site security. Field Office personnel have conducted fence survey/repair and posted additional warning/emergency closure signs of public lands within the mine boundary (approximately 1,492 acres) under the authority of 43 CFR 8364.1. There are physical hazards around the mine site that make it potentially dangerous for the general public. Until testing is completed and hazards are removed it is necessary to close the entire site to public use.

Atlantic Richfield Company has agreed to fence the waste rock dump on the south end of the property which will effectively close off the entire site with a perimeter fence. Fencing will be completed by December 2, 2005. Some sections of the fence and several gates have been upgraded to address security issues.

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