

THE SOUTHERN NEVADA PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1998

The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (P.L. 105-263) (SNPLMA) was passed by Congress and signed into law in October 1998. The Act provides for the disposal of public land within a specific area in the Las Vegas Valley.

Some lands within the original boundary of the Santini-Burton Act of 1980 were included in this program. These lands had not been sold earlier because of their location near the Clark County Airport. The Act provided that these lands would be transferred to the Airport Authority, and made available for sale or lease. Funds generated from sale or lease of these lands are available for the continued acquisition of sensitive land in the Tahoe basin under the Santini-Burton Act.

The Act provided that proceeds from the sale of all other lands are divided between the State (5%), the Southern Nevada Water Authority (10%), and a SNLMA Special Account (85%).

The funds made available to the State are deposited in the Permanent School Fund, where they will be held as an endowment for Nevada's public schools. The interest from that fund is deposited in the Distributive School Fund for use by school districts statewide.

The Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to expend the revenue in the Special Account for:

- Acquisition of environmentally sensitive land in Nevada, with priority given to lands within Clark County;
- Capital Improvements at the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and other areas administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Clark County, and the Spring Mountain National Recreation Area;
- Development of a multi-species habitat conservation plan in Clark County;
- Development of parks, trails, and natural areas in Clark County pursuant to a cooperative agreement with units of local government; and
- Reimbursement of costs incurred by the BLM in arranging sales or exchanges under the Act. Language in Senate Report 106-99 (on S-192) provided clarification to this provision, noting that it was the intent of Congress that this *"shall include not only the direct costs for these sales and exchanges, but also other BLM administrative costs associated with implementing the provisions of the Act."*

- In November 2002, P.L.107-282 amended the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act to add an expenditure category which allows *“up to 10 percent of amounts available, to be used for conservation initiatives on Federal land in Clark County, Nevada, administered by the Department of Interior or the Department of Agriculture....”*
- Finally, the Interior Appropriations Act of 2003 (P.L. 103-108) amended the act to provide that \$300 million would be made available to implement the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act.

The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act requires the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate use of the Special Account with the Secretary of Agriculture, the State of Nevada, local governments, and interested parties. The State is represented on the SNPLMA Working Partners Group, which develops annual recommendations for expenditures of the funds in the Special Account.

SNPLMA LAND SALES

49,000 acres of land in the Las Vegas Valley have been designated for sale.

5,635 acres have been sold for \$690 million since 1998 at 15 public actions (nine oral auctions and six online auctions). Two oral auctions are held each year.

The BLM and local government decide the timing of lands offered for sale through a joint selection process.

ALLOCATION OF SNPLMA PROCEEDS

The \$690 million generated to date has been allocated as follows:

- Five percent to the State Permanent School Fund: \$29 million
- Ten percent to the Southern Nevada Water Authority: \$53 million
- 85 percent to the Special Account: \$473 million
 - \$44 million for the continuation of land acquisitions in the Tahoe basin under the Santini-Burton act
 - \$207 million approved for acquisition of environmentally sensitive land statewide
 - \$153 million for capital improvements at federal facilities in Clark County
 - \$155 million to local governments in Clark County for parks, trails and natural areas
 - \$36 million for conservation initiatives on federal land in Clark County
 - \$20 million for multi-species habitat conservation planning in Clark County