WHITE PINE COUNTY PUBLIC LAND USERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, May 12, 2020

6:00 p.m.

White Pine County Library Conference Room

950 Campton Street, Ely, NV 89301

AGENDA

I. **Call to Order**

II. **Pledge of Allegiance and Introductions**

III. **Public Comment**

IV. ***Discussion/for Possible Action** - Approval of March 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes

V. **Liaison Report**

VI. ***Discussion/for Possible Action**

A. *Update/Discussion/for Possible Action – Bureau of Land Management

B. *Update/Discussion/for Possible Action – U.S. Forest Service

C. *Update/Discussion/for Possible Action – National Park Service

D. *Update/Discussion/for Possible Action – Nevada State Parks

VII. ***Discussion/for Possible Action** – Review The White Pine County Public Lands Management Plan, OHV Section, to establish a County-Wide OHV Policy, using the CRM process.

VIII. ***Discussion/Action** – Updates, Issues Contained in White Pine County's Public Land Use Policies Including OHV Use, Energy, Minerals, Water, Land Sales, Greater Sage-Grouse, and Wild Horse and Burros.

IX. ***Discussion/Action** – Committee Vacancies, Resignations, Appointments

XI. **Next Meeting Time and Date Announcement**

XII. **Public Comment**

XII. ***Adjournment**

Asterisks (*) Denotes possible action items of the White Pine County Public Land Users Advisory Committee

Public Commentary: A period devoted to comments by the public, if any, and discussion of those comments. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this item of the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action will be taken. (NRS 241.020(2) (c) (3).)

Public Comment: Public Comment during the White Pine County Public Land Users Advisory Committee meeting on May 12, 2020 will be for all matters both on and off the agenda and be limited to three minutes per person. Additionally, public comment of three minutes per person will be heard during the individual action items. The Board reserves the right to reduce the time or limit the total time allowed for public comment. The Board may prohibit comment if the content of the comments is willfully disruptive of the meeting by being slanderous, offensive, inflammatory, irrational, or amounting to personal attacks or interfering with the rights of other speakers. Persons are invited to submit comments in writing on the agenda items and/or attend and make comment on the item at the White Pine County Public Land Users Advisory Committee meeting.

Note: All times are approximate except for items agendized at a specific time. Action may be taken on all items except where otherwise indicated. Items not scheduled for a specific time may be considered at any time and in any order to promote efficiency. The Board may combine two or more agenda items for consideration and may remove an item from the agenda or delay discussion at any time. Sponsorship of an Agenda Item by a member of the White Pine County Public Land Users Advisory Committee may not signify agreement with the requested action.

Notice to persons with disabilities: Members of the public who are disabled and require special assistance or accommodation at the meeting are requested to notify the W.P. County Clerk's Office at 801 Clark Street, Suite #4, Ely, NV 89301 or by calling (775) 293-6509 at least two (2) days in advance.

I, Elanie Calderwood, did on the 6th day of May, 2020 post four (4) notices of the White Pine County Public Land Users Advisory Committee Agenda in the County of White Pine, to-wit: At the White Pine County Library, White Pine County Courthouse, White Pine County Administration Offices, and Ely City Hall. The meeting notice is also posted to the White Pine County website at http://whitepinecounty.net and on the State of Nevada Public Notices website at http://notice.nv.gov. An additional copy of the Agenda along with supporting material, if any, are on display and available at the front counter of the White Pine County Clerk's Office at 801 Clark Street, Suite #4, Ely, NV 89301.

Elanie Calderwood

WHITE PINE COUNTY PUBLIC LAND USERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, March 10, 2020

6:00 p.m.

White Pine County Library Conference Room

950 Campton Street, Ely, NV 89301

MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jacob Carter, Craig Baker, Bill Wilson, Mark Tefft

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dana Johnson, Mary Kerner

PUBLIC PRESENT: Bill Miller, Laurie Carson, White Pine County Commission Elanie Calderwood, Bert Potwin, BLM

I. **Call to Order** Jacob Carter called the meeting to order @ 6:01 pm

II. **Pledge of Allegiance and Introductions**

III. **Public Comment** Bill Miller talked about that State of Nevada Wildlife Commission adopted 2011 policy regarding Wild Horses and Burros, he handed out the Policy #67 which is in the meeting minutes back-up for information purposes.

IV. ***Discussion/for Possible Action - Approval of February 11, 2020 Meeting Minutes** Bill Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes, Mark Tefft seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. **Liaison Report** Laurie Carson reported on the CRM meeting, Dana Johnson was voted in to represent PLUAC, she referenced the email that was sent out from Dana Johnson which is in the meeting minutes back-up. She also reported that on tomorrow's commission meeting is the approval of the contract with Resource Concept for natural resources issues for White Pine County in place of a Natural Resource Director.

VI. ***Discussion/for Possible Action**

A. ***Update/Discussion/for Possible Action – Bureau of Land Management** Bert Potwin introduced himself, he shared the most recent district managers update which was published the week earlier. This is also included with the meeting minutes.

B. ***Update/Discussion/for Possible Action – U.S. Forest Service** No one was present

C. ***Update/Discussion/for Possible Action – National Park Service** No one was present

D. ***Update/Discussion/for Possible Action – Nevada State Parks** No one was present

VII. ***Discussion/for Possible Action – EIS regarding New Grazing Regulations Comments to the BLM.** This item was on the agenda if there was further discussion on the comments that were sent to the BLM. There were no further comments.

VIII. ***Discussion/for Possible Action – Review The White Pine County Public Lands Management Plan, OHV Section, to establish a County-Wide OHV Policy, using the CRM process.** This item was discussed in the liaison report. There were no further comments

IX. ***Discussion/Action – Updates, Issues Contained in White Pine County's Public Land Use Policies Including OHV Use, Energy, Minerals, Water, Land Sales, and Greater Sage-Grouse** There was not further discussion on these items.

X. ***Discussion/Action – Committee Vacancies, Resignations, Appointments** There currently is one vacancy which represents Tourism

XI. **Next Meeting Time and Date Announcement** The next meeting is April 14, 2020 @ 6:00 pm.

XII. **Public Comment** There were no additional comments.

XII. ***Adjournment** The meeting was adjourned @ 7:25 pm.

Asterisks (*) Denotes possible action items of the White Pine County Public Land Users Advisory Committee

STATE OF NEVADA
BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS

Commission Policy Number 67

Title: Federal Horses and Burros

References: NRS 561.025, 561.218, 569.008, 504.030, 533.367, 533.695, 533.460, NRS 321, Presidential Executive Order: 12630, Public Law 92-195 (1971).

Effective Date: May 14, 2011

BACKGROUND

The Board of Wildlife Commissioners shall establish policies necessary for the preservation, protection, management and restoration of wildlife and its habitat and shall utilize its land management authority to carry out a program for conserving, protecting and propagating wildlife and their habitats. To that end the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners established the "Feral Horse Committee" and asked that committee to provide background and action recommendations relative to the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros found within Nevada.

The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195) gave federal protection to feral horses that went unclaimed on the federally administered lands. The Act of 1971 protects multiple use, wildlife, wildlife habitat, jurisdiction and authority of State Law, and consultation or coordination with State agencies such as the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners (PL92-195 Section 1333(a)). Federal assumption of ownership of the WFRHB places them in a category that is neither wildlife nor livestock. The Act of 1971 instructs each federal agency to resolve any conflicts between wildlife and these feral horses and burros that have been redefined with special status under federal law.

Congress declared that Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros (WFRHB) would be kept at the level of "*thriving natural ecological balance*" within the areas in which they would exist. "*Thriving natural ecological balance*" is specified numerous times throughout The Act of 1971. Federal agencies are required to "*...protect the natural ecological balance of all wildlife species which inhabit such lands, particularly endangered wildlife species.*" Failure to limit WFRHB numbers to thriving natural ecological balance will trigger specific actions to reduce herd numbers in accordance with the law (PL92-195 Section 1332(f)(2)).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction and guidance for the Nevada Department of Wildlife regarding Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros, the recognition of any impediments to natural ecological balance, and the fulfillment of coordination to resolve inconsistencies between federal actions and this official policy.

POLICY

The Board of Wildlife Commissioners does hereby establish the following policy to provide for the preservation, protection, management and restoration of wildlife and its habitat:

A. When the Board of Wildlife Commissioners or the Nevada Department of Wildlife determine a conflict exists between any wildlife of Nevada and WFRHB, written notification should be sent describing such conflict to the responsible federal agency and officials. Such determination of a conflict may be the result of direct observations by Wildlife Commissioners, NDOW personnel, reports by other state or local officials, or reports by members of the public.

B. Strict compliance with the Act of 1971 is the minimal acceptable level of management of Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros (WFRHB) in Nevada. In particular "*thriving natural ecological balance*" is to be maintained at all times.

Thriving ecological balance of Nevada wildlife is violated when WFRHB directly compete for any attribute of wildlife habitat. Such violations include but are not limited to: competition for food or forage, competition for space that disturbs the movement or distribution of wildlife, competition for water, interference with wildlife access to water, use of water reserved for wildlife under Nevada Law by WFRHB that do not have lawful beneficial use designation for that water, etc.

Thriving natural ecological balance is defined in part by the Secretary of Interior in Section 4.1.5 (page 17) of the BLM Wild Horses and Burros Management Handbook dated July 7, 2010.

Wild Horses and Burros "*...shall be managed in balance with other uses and the productive capacity of their habitat (i.e., WH&B will be managed to achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance (TNEB) and multiple use relationships on the public lands). ...To achieve a TNEB on the public lands, WH&B should be managed in a manner that assures significant progress is made toward achieving the Land Health Standards for upland vegetation and riparian plant communities, watershed function, and habitat quality for animal populations, as well as other site-specific or landscape-level objectives, including those necessary to protect and manage Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species (TES)*"

C. When it is found that WFRHB are not within "thriving natural ecological balance" NDOW should request in writing to the responsible Federal Agency they immediately remove the offending animals in accordance with the Act of 1971.

D. When WFRHB are found outside of designated Herd Management Areas (HMA) NDOW should request in writing to the responsible Federal Agency that those horses or burros be removed immediately in accordance with the Act of 1971.

E. When it is found that WFRHB within an HMA are above the set Appropriate Management Levels (AML) NDOW should request in writing to the responsible Federal Agency that all excess animals be removed in accordance with the Act of 1971.

F. When it is found that the wild horses and burros are in direct competition for limited resources with wildlife this should be a trigger mechanism for the NDOW to request in writing to the responsible Federal Agency that the horses or burros be immediately removed in accordance with the Act of 1971 and that the AML be revised so as to achieve and maintain thriving natural ecological condition.

G. When a member of the public, local or county officials, or officials of other state agency notifies NDOW that they have identified a violation, this notification should be a trigger for NDOW to investigate and take appropriate action in accordance with this policy.

H. This policy shall be submitted to the federal agencies operating who may have responsibilities for managing WFRHB and will serve to enable those agencies to fully comply with federal law requiring federal actions be coordinated with state policy and any conflicts be resolved.

This policy shall remain in effect until amended, repealed, or superseded by the Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS IN REGULAR SESSION, May 14, 2011

Chairman, Board of Wildlife Commissioners
Scott Raine

Public Law 92-195

AN ACT

December 15, 1971
[S. 1116]

To require the protection, management, and control of wild free-roaming horses and burros on public lands.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress finds and declares that wild free-roaming horses and burros are living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West; that they contribute to the diversity of life forms within the Nation and enrich the lives of the American people; and that these horses and burros are fast disappearing from the American scene. It is the policy of Congress that wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death; and to accomplish this they are to be considered in the area where presently found, as an integral part of the natural system of the public lands.

Wild horses and burros. Protection.

SEC. 2. As used in this Act—

Definitions.

(a) "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior when used in connection with public lands administered by him through the Bureau of Land Management and the Secretary of Agriculture in connection with public lands administered by him through the Forest Service;

(b) "wild free-roaming horses and burros" means all unbranded and unclaimed horses and burros on public lands of the United States;

(c) "range" means the amount of land necessary to sustain an existing herd or herds of wild free-roaming horses and burros, which does not exceed their known territorial limits, and which is devoted principally but not necessarily exclusively to their welfare in keeping with the multiple-use management concept for the public lands;

(d) "herd" means one or more stallions and his mares; and

(e) "public lands" means any lands administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management or by the Secretary of Agriculture through the Forest Service.

SEC. 3. (a) All wild free-roaming horses and burros are hereby declared to be under the jurisdiction of the Secretary for the purpose of management and protection in accordance with the provisions of this Act. The Secretary is authorized and directed to protect and manage wild free-roaming horses and burros as components of the public lands, and he may designate and maintain specific ranges on public lands as sanctuaries for their protection and preservation, where the Secretary after consultation with the wildlife agency of the State wherein any such range is proposed and with the Advisory Board established in section 7 of this Act deems such action desirable. The Secretary shall manage wild free-roaming horses and burros in a manner that is designed to achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance on the public lands. He shall consider the recommendations of qualified scientists in the field of biology and ecology, some of whom shall be independent of both Federal and State agencies and may include members of the Advisory Board established in section 7 of this Act. All management activities shall be at the minimal feasible level and shall be carried out in consultation with the wildlife agency of the State wherein such lands are located in order to protect the natural ecological balance of all wildlife species which inhabit such lands, particularly endangered wildlife species. Any adjustments in forage allocations on any such lands shall take into consideration the needs of other wildlife species which inhabit such lands.

Jurisdiction; management.

Destruction or removal, authority.

(b) Where an area is found to be overpopulated, the Secretary, after consulting with the Advisory Board, may order old, sick, or lame animals to be destroyed in the most humane manner possible, and he may cause additional excess wild free-roaming horses and burros to be captured and removed for private maintenance under humane conditions and care.

(c) The Secretary may order wild free-roaming horses or burros to be destroyed in the most humane manner possible when he deems such action to be an act of mercy or when in his judgment such action is necessary to preserve and maintain the habitat in a suitable condition for continued use. No wild free-roaming horse or burro shall be ordered to be destroyed because of overpopulation unless in the judgment of the Secretary such action is the only practical way to remove excess animals from the area.

(d) Nothing in this Act shall preclude the customary disposal of the remains of a deceased wild free-roaming horse or burro, including those in the authorized possession of private parties, but in no event shall such remains, or any part thereof, be sold for any consideration, directly or indirectly.

Private maintenance.

SEC. 4. If wild free-roaming horses or burros stray from public lands onto privately owned land, the owners of such land may inform the nearest Federal marshall or agent of the Secretary, who shall arrange to have the animals removed. In no event shall such wild free-roaming horses and burros be destroyed except by the agents of the Secretary. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a private landowner from maintaining wild free-roaming horses or burros on his private lands, or lands leased from the Government, if he does so in a manner that protects them from harassment, and if the animals were not willfully removed or enticed from the public lands. Any individuals who maintain such wild free-roaming horses or burros on their private lands or lands leased from the Government shall notify the appropriate agent of the Secretary and supply him with a reasonable approximation of the number of animals so maintained.

Recovery rights.

SEC. 5. A person claiming ownership of a horse or burro on the public lands shall be entitled to recover it only if recovery is permissible under the branding and estray laws of the State in which the animal is found.

Agreements and regulations.

SEC. 6. The Secretary is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with other landowners and with the State and local governmental agencies and may issue such regulations as he deems necessary for the furtherance of the purposes of this Act.

Joint advisory board.

SEC. 7. The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture are authorized and directed to appoint a joint advisory board of not more than nine members to advise them on any matter relating to wild free-roaming horses and burros and their management and protection. They shall select as advisers persons who are not employees of the Federal or State Governments and whom they deem to have special knowledge about protection of horses and burros, management of wildlife, animal husbandry, or natural resources management. Members of the board shall not receive reimbursement except for travel and other expenditures necessary in connection with their services.

Penalty.

SEC. 8. Any person who—

(1) willfully removes or attempts to remove a wild free-roaming horse or burro from the public lands, without authority from the Secretary, or

(2) converts a wild free-roaming horse or burro to private use, without authority from the Secretary, or

(3) maliciously causes the death or harassment of any wild free-roaming horse or burro, or

(4) processes or permits to be processed into commercial products the remains of a wild free-roaming horse or burro, or

(5) sells, directly or indirectly, a wild free-roaming horse or burro maintained on private or leased land pursuant to section 4 of this Act, or the remains thereof, or

(6) willfully violates a regulation issued pursuant to this Act, shall be subject to a fine of not more than $2,000, or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. Any person so charged with such violation by the Secretary may be tried and sentenced by any United States commissioner or magistrate designated for that purpose by the court by which he was appointed, in the same manner and subject to the same conditions as provided for in section 3401, title 18, United States Code.

82 Stat. 1115.

Power of arrest.

(b) Any employee designated by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture shall have power, without warrant, to arrest any person committing in the presence of such employee a violation of this Act or any regulation made pursuant thereto, and to take such person immediately for examination or trial before an officer or court of competent jurisdiction, and shall have power to execute any warrant or other process issued by an officer or court of competent jurisdiction to enforce the provisions of this Act or regulations made pursuant thereto. Any judge of a court established under the laws of the United States, or any United States magistrate may, within his respective jurisdiction, upon proper oath or affirmation showing probable cause, issue warrants in all such cases.

Limitation.

SEC. 9. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize the Secretary to relocate wild free-roaming horses or burros to areas of the public lands where they do not presently exist.

Report to Congress.

SEC. 10. After the expiration of thirty calendar months following the date of enactment of this Act, and every twenty-four calendar months thereafter, the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will submit to Congress a joint report on the administration of this Act, including a summary of enforcement and/or other actions taken thereunder, costs, and such recommendations for legislative or other actions as he might deem appropriate.

The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall consult with respect to the implementation and enforcement of this Act and to the maximum feasible extent coordinate the activities of their respective departments and in the implementation and enforcement of this Act. The Secretaries are authorized and directed to undertake those studies of the habits of wild free-roaming horses and burros that they may deem necessary in order to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Studies.

Approved December 15, 1971.

Public Law 92-196

AN ACT

To provide additional revenue for the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

December 15, 1971
[H. R. 11341]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "District of Columbia Revenue Act of 1971".

District of Columbia Revenue Act of 1971.

To: Craig Baker <cbaker1cz@hotmail.com>;

Cc: Natural Resources; Mary Kerner <mary@rndcnv.org>;
Mark Tefft <mthddriver@aol.com>;
Jacob Carter <jacobcarter.ccc@gmail.com>;
Bill Wilson <billandholly665@att.net>;
Laurie L. Carson <carson4me@aol.com>; Travis Godon;

All, A quick note from the CRM meeting today since I won't be able to make the PLUAC meeting next week.

Laurie can chime in and straighten me out in case I noted something incorrectly.

1) I requested a BLM representative attend our monthly PLUAC meetings to keep us informed on BLM related matters that affect WP County.

2) CRM officially accepted having a PLUAC seat (currently Dana) on the CRM. Would be good to have an alternate Any volunteers???

3) CRM created a TRT (technical review team) to begin the process of working on WP OHV Management plan development.

Right now the initial OHV TRT group is:
PLUAC (Dana) would be good to also have an alternate.
BLM person (tbd)
NDOW (Moira and Kody)
Forest (Aaron and Jose)
Bill Miller
WPCAB (tbd)
CD (Lauren Williams)
WP Commission (Laurie Carson)
Bruce Eldridge (local ohv business) pending since we still need to ask him.

The initial meeting will be announced in the near future and should be once a month or as needed but will be determined as the group moves forward.

The OHV TRT will follow the CRM guidelines and report progress back to CRM but will still go through PLUAC to t WPC Commission for input and final approvals. It will be much like the WP County Elk Management Plan process anyone remembers that where all entities involved will ultimately sign off on the final plan.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks Dana

Bureau of Land Management Ely District Update

March 2020

BASIN AND RANGE NATIONAL MONUMENT

The BLM manages public lands within the monument in accordance with the 2015 Presidential Proclamation and Ely Resource Management Plan signed in 2008, as amended.

ELY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The November 2019 Greater Sage-Grouse Plan Approved Resource Management Plan has been placed under a preliminary injunction by the U.S. District Court for Idaho. Therefore, the September 2015 Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan, which amended the Ely District Resource Management Plan (RMP) signed in 2008, is now in effect.

The BLM has published for public review and comment a draft supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for management of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat on public lands in Nevada and Northeastern California. The comment period concludes April 6, 2020. The draft SEIS addresses issues identified in the order issued by the U.S. District Court for Idaho, which affects BLM sage-grouse plans in Colorado, Idaho, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming, as well as Nevada/Northeastern California. The BLM has likewise published for public review and comment draft SEIS' for Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Oregon. The public comment periods conclude April 6, 2020.

ENERGY

Electrical Transmission Development –

TransWest Express Project: The BLM is reviewing the Plan of Development before issuing a Notice to Proceed. The Record of Decision for the TransWest Express Transmission Project was published in the Federal Register in December 2016. The 60-day appeal period closed Feb. 15, 2017. The BLM Wyoming State Office is the project lead. The 730-mile transmission line project will extend from Wyoming, through Colorado and Utah, to southern Nevada through the southeast corner of Lincoln County and deliver up to 3,000 megawatts of electric power generated by wind energy to major load centers, including Las Vegas and San Diego, Calif.

Renewable Energy Development –

Invenergy LLC Solar Project: Following a December pre-application meeting with BLM Caliente Field Office staff, Invenergy, LLC submitted alternative locations for a proposed solar energy installation. One site is in Lincoln County and was relocated outside of and adjacent to the Beaver Dam Slope Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The second site is location is in Clark County.

hand thinned or masticated trees on about 5,700 acres of the public lands. Masticated acreage was seeded with assistance from the Nevada Department of Wildlife, which provided Heritage Fund Program dollars through the White Pine County Wildlife Advisory Board. When the multi-year project is complete, the BLM will have selectively thinned pinion-juniper on up to 7,000 acres of the public lands to improve Greater Sage-grouse habitat.

Douglas Canyon Habitat Improvement Project: The BLM is completing NEPA documentation to complete approximately 3,000 acres of mastication near Douglas Canyon, approximately 30 miles south of Ely, Nev. A decision is expected by mid-summer 2020, and implementation could begin as early as winter 2020. The project is a collaborative effort by the BLM, Nevada Department of Wildlife and private landowners in Douglas Canyon. The goal of the project is to improve habitat for wildlife while reducing the threat of catastrophic fire.

Duck Creek Basin Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project: Project implementation is scheduled to begin in fall 2020. When complete, the project will improve Greater Sage-grouse habitat and create fuels breaks within the urban interface in Duck Creek Basin, northeast of Ely, Nev. It will compliment already-completed work on neighboring Forest Service land and private property. The BLM issued the final decision on Aug. 23, 2019. The 30-day public review and comment period on the preliminary environmental assessment concluded July 23, 2019. The final EA and Decision Record are available online at https://go.usa.gov/xmqH6

Egan and Johnson Basins Restoration Project: The BLM in January 2020 finished hand thinning and masticating pinion-juniper in Egan and Johnson basins, about five miles west of Cherry Creek, Nev. Aerial seeding of the masticated areas was also completed in January 2020. In August 2020, the BLM and Nevada Department of Wildlife will hand thin pinion-juniper over approximately 1,093 acres of the Nine-mile chaining completed in 1998. The multi-year project aims to treat up to 24,375 acres of an 84,675-acre project area to reduce catastrophic wildfire risk and improve Greater Sage-grouse habitat through the u se of manual and mechanical tree thinning, invasive plant and noxious weed treatments, and prescribed fire use.

Kern Mountain Restoration Project: The BLM in December 2019 burned slash piles of pinyon-juniper in the Kern Mountains, about 80 miles northeast of Ely. The BLM and Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) in fall 2019 thinned pinion-juniper on approximately 1,000 acres of the project area. NDOW and BLM in summer 2020 will begin masticating pinion-juniper on approximately 400 acres and hand thinning on approximately 2,000 acres in the Kern Mountain area. Project goals are to reduce fuel loading and improve vegetation understory and big game habitat. The project has received Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) funding.

Long and Ruby Valley Watershed Restoration Project: The BLM is reviewing comments received on the preliminary environmental assessment. The public review and comment period concluded September 30. Pending the review, a decision and final EA is expected to be released by mid-March 2020.

Tule Desert Fuels Breaks: Project implementation will begin in fall 2020. The project goal is to protect desert tortoise habitat by establishing fuel breaks that would slow or stop a fire or provide anchor points for fire suppression forces to stop fire spread. The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act-funded project is designed to minimize the amount of desert tortoise habitat burned in the Mojave Desert area.

Ward Mountain Restoration Project: The BLM and Forest Service expect to begin implementation in 2020. The BLM issued the Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact in February 2019 following a decision issued by the Forest Service. The agencies are working with the Ely Shoshone Tribe to restore vegetative health and improve wildlife habitat, and reduce catastrophic wildfire risk on Ward Mountain, adjacent to Ely, Nev., through use of manual and mechanical treatments, and prescribed fire. When complete, the 10-year project will have treated approximately 42,670 acres of the 100,000-acre project area. Portions of the project have received Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act funding.

LANDS & REALTY

Lincoln County Public Land Sales: The BLM Ely District, Caliente Field Office is proposing to offer through a competitive sale six parcels, totaling approximately 248 acres, of public lands in Lincoln County, Nev. All parcels are located within five miles of the following communities: two parcels near Alamo, three parcels near Panaca, and one parcel near Rachel. The BLM approved the sale of these parcels in September 2019 and the Notice of Realty Action is expected to publish in the Federal Register this summer with a sale anticipated in August 2020.

Land Conveyances: The BLM Ely District, Bristlecone Field office has completed the conveyance to White Pine County for 152 acres of the White Pine Industrial Park. The patent was issued on Jan. 9, 2020.

Dingell Act (PL 116-9): The BLM Ely District is developing an implementation plan for the conveyance of approximately 400 acres to Lincoln County for a landfill as directed in the Dingell Act (PL 116-9). The BLM is also completing the process of issuing a patent correction to Coyote Springs LLC for transfer of conservation lands. Both projects are in Coyote Springs Valley, in southern Lincoln County.

Southwest Gas Pipeline: The BLM Ely District, Caliente Field Office has reviewed Southwest Gas' plan of development for a natural gas pipeline spur that would deliver natural gas from the Kern River Pipeline to Lincoln County Lands Act-disposed lands. The field office anticipates issuing the grant in March 2020. The gas would be delivered to Mesquite, Nev. Utility providers including Southwest Gas, Vidler Water Co., Lincoln County Water District, Lincoln County Telephone System and Lincoln County Power District #1 are coordinating efforts for their proposed utility installations in the Lincoln County Conservation Recreation and Development Act (LCCRDA) Utility Corridor in southeastern Lincoln County.

Mackie/Tenacity Perlite Mines: Active mining and processing of perlite is ongoing. The BLM is reviewing the mine plan of operations merging two plans into one for the Tenacity and Mackie Mines

Gold Rock Mine: The BLM is working with the Nevada Department of Wildlife and mine owner Fiore Gold on a Greater Sage-Grouse mitigation plan. The BLM Ely District, Bristlecone Field Manager issued the Record of Decision for then-GRP Gold Rock, LLC's Gold Rock Mine Project on Sept. 21, 2018. The Notice of Availability of the Gold Rock Mine Project Final Environmental Impact Statement was published in the Federal Register on July 27, 2018.

Abandoned Mine Lands -

Preliminary work to remove tailings from Antelope Canyon is underway as a potential time-critical removal action under CERCLA.

The BLM Ely District, Caliente Field Office has processed a categorical exclusion to close 44 mine hazards in the Pioche area.

Oil & Gas –

February-March Oil & Gas Lease Sales: BLM Nevada has postponed analysis and public comment for parcels within the Ely District in response to the U.S. District Court, District of Idaho Preliminary Injunction in W. Watersheds Project V. BLM (No. 1:16-cv-00083-BLW).

Applications for Permit to Drill: The public comment period for the Western Oil Exploration APD Scott Federal #25-1 and #35-1 Oil Wells Preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) concluded on Thursday, Feb. 7. The site-specific EA analyzes potential impacts that could result from a Western Oil Exploration Company proposal to drill two exploration oil wells on a valid existing lease on public lands in Newark Valley, about 40 miles west of Ely, Nev. The Ely District is developing a final EA, Finding of No Significant Impact, and Decision Record incorporating comments received during the public comment period.

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Wilson Creek Term Permit Renewal: The BLM is reviewing and finalizing the grazing decisions. The BLM continues to meet with the permittees to identify any unresolved issues. The BLM is evaluating three proposed alternatives.

Rangeland Monitoring/Term Permit Renewals: The Ely District in 2019/2020 expects to issue grazing decisions for the following allotments: Wilson Creek, South Hiko-Six Mile, Lewis allotments, and Uvada and Black Hills. The BLM will separate vegetation treatment options from the Cottonwood Allotment (Bob Lewis TPR) EA with a separate decision issued.

Significant Impact for Phase II of the project in April 2018. Phase II provides for construction of new hiking and mountain biking trails, and development of equestrian-friendly trailheads in areas around Caliente, Panaca and Pioche, in Lincoln County, Nev. SNPLMA Round 16 provided funding for the environmental assessment and planning and construction of the hiking and mountain biking trails.

ROADS

The BLM Ely District has finished grading roads in the Tule Desert and nearly finished grading roads in Coal and Garden valleys (Basin and Range National Monument).

SPECIAL LEGISLATION

Lincoln County Archaeological Initiative (LCAI) –

Round 12 Proposals: The Executive Committee has made the final recommendation to the BLM Nevada State Director for approval of approximately $1 million from the Lincoln County Land Act special account to fund the top Round 12 projects. Contracts/agreements are expected to be awarded in spring 2020.

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) –

On May 22, 2019, U.S. Secretary of the Interior David L. Bernhardt announced the commitment of more than $106.8 million to support 47 public lands projects throughout Nevada and California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin. These projects, which encompass a broad range of recreation improvements, wildlife habitat conservation, and hazardous fuels reduction and wildfire prevention projects, were nominated and are funded through the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 17. Eight of the projects are in Lincoln and White Pine Counties and provide the rural communities with new recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat conservation, and eastern Nevada landscape restoration projects. Project implementation is scheduled to begin in spring 2020. Details regarding each project are at https://snplma.blm.gov/snplma/home.do

SNPLMA Round 18 nomination period has not been announced.

WATERSHED ANALYSIS

The Ely District continues to develop and implement watershed-level planning to identify high priority habitat improvement projects for Greater Sage-grouse and other wildlife species, hazardous fuels reduction projects, and other actions needed to improve public land health. The district has completed the watershed analysis process for 27 of 61 priority watersheds. The district has completed implementation plans for nine watersheds. The district is currently conducting watershed planning for Long Valley / Ruby Marshes and Butte Valley.

Additional gather information is available on the BLM website at https://go.usa.gov/xpTmp

###

Chris Hanefeld, BLM Ely District public affairs specialist, last updated this report on ***Feb. 27, 2020****. Contact Chris at (775) 289-1842 or chanefel@blm.gov for more information on these and other projects/programs in the District.*