

Southern Nevada District Office

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 17 - In March 2017, the Southern Nevada District Office opened Round 17 with a call for nominations for the seven categories eligible to compete for approximately \$70 million in funding through the SNPLMA. The seven categories are: Capital Improvements; Conservation Initiatives; Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas; Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisitions; Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Projects; Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention; and Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan. At the close of the nomination period in May 2017, the SNPLMA Division received 57 nominations requesting \$120,940,639.

In August 2017, the Partners Working Group (PWG), consisting of federal, state, and local government representatives, met to develop a Preliminary Recommendation for funding. The PWG has the responsibility to narrow the requests totaling \$120 million down to the target of \$70 million for Round 17. The resulting Preliminary Recommendation will be available for a 45-day public comment period beginning in September and ending in November 2017.

In December 2017, the Executive Committee (EC), consisting of federal managers representing the BLM, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will meet to develop the Final Recommendation. At the conclusion of the EC meeting the Final Recommendation will go to the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture for a decision.

A unique piece of legislation, the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act was enacted in 1998 and authorizes the sale of public lands within a designated boundary in the Las Vegas Valley. Land sales within this designated boundary require 85 percent of the proceeds from the sale of public lands to be deposited into the SNPLMA Special Account for use on projects to fund Federal, state, and local projects and conservation efforts, including the preservation of Lake Tahoe.

Southern Nevada Fire Restrictions Announced: On June 1, the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Mt. Charleston Fire Prevention District, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service are implementing fire restrictions in Southern Nevada. Interagency fire restrictions prohibit:

- building and/or using a campfire or charcoal stove (using portable stove using gas, jellied petroleum or pressurized liquid fuel OK)
- welding or operating an acetylene torch with open flames (except by permit)
- using any explosive (except by permit)
- using fireworks or firing a tracer
- operating an off-road vehicle without a spark arrestor

In addition, Bureau of Land Management prohibits steel core ammunition and explosive targets as they are known fire starters. Smoking is allowed in an enclosed vehicle only.

Endangered Species Day: The Southern Nevada District Office hosted Endangered Species Day on May 19, 2017. Endangered Species Day provides an opportunity for people of all ages to learn about the importance of protecting endangered species and everyday actions they can take to help protect them.

Against the backdrop of the breathtaking red sandstone cliffs of Red Rock Canyon, visitors were invited to learn about endangered species of Southern Nevada. Children and adults alike were encouraged to visit different stations to learn about these different species while being able to see and touch displays that included desert tortoise shells, Gila monster specimens and pictures of the Mt. Charleston blue butterfly specimens; all are species that are afforded protections under state and/or federal regulations.

In addition to the displays, visitors were given the opportunity to create their own animals at the crafts table, participate in the Endangered Species Day Passport activity, speak to wildlife biologists and embark on an endangered species focused hike.

With the participation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Friends of Red Rock and the Southern Nevada Conservancy, several hundred visitors were treated to the opportunity to learn about the great diversity of the Mojave Desert and how its wildlife residents are affected by the different factors that influence their environments and lives.

Pahrump Field Office

Wheeler Pass Gather Helps Prevent Horse/Vehicle Collisions: Wheeler Pass Herd Management Area lies a short 30 minute drive from Las Vegas, NV and is located within the Southern Nevada District. Cold Creek Road is a popular destination for both visitors and locals to go see wild horses and burros while enjoying cooler temperatures and beautiful mountain vistas. While well meaning, many of these visitors like to bring treats or food for the horses to eat while they take pictures and try to interact with them.

There have been multiple vehicle collisions within the district and a few of them have occurred on Cold Creek Road. A small band of horses were being fed near the end of Cold Creek Road, close to the state prisons, by both workers and visitors and the horses became habituated to the area. Irrigation located at one of the facilities provided a constant source of water and this led to a two-year-old stud colt being struck in December and a pregnant mare being struck in April. A request was made by the wardens of each facility for the removal of the horses for public safety reasons and the BLM was able to set up a bait trap near the facilities in May.

A big bag of carrots, hard work, and some luck paid off and after a very long day the group was able to safely load the horses and get them to Oliver Ranch to await their transport to the Ridgecrest Holding Facility. An adopter has already been found for the stud and the mare and foal will remain together until the foal is weaned, after which they will both be prepared for adoption. This gather event, while small, was an example of how invaluable volunteer members can be for the BLM.

Red Rock/Sloan Field Office

Public Input Sought for Red Rock Fee Increase: The Bureau of Land Management requests public input on a proposed increase to amenity fees at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

The core basis of an adjustment in amenity fees is to ensure BLM meets its preservation, recreation, public enjoyment and visitor experience management goals identified in the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision. The standard amenity fee charged at the 13-Mile Scenic Drive has not increased since 2011. Since that time, BLM has added numerous amenities, activities and services to improve visitor experiences.

Members of the public provided input via email, comment cards available at the Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center, mail and three public meetings held in early September.

Every Kid in Park Passes: Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Park Ranger Kate Sorom set a goal to go into schools during the 2016-2017 school year and distribute 500 Every Kid in a Park (EKIP) passes to fourth graders. Kate contacted individual fourth grade teachers that had taken the Explore the Great Outdoor teacher workshops she facilitates.

Between January and May, Kate visited 11 individual schools and gave short presentations on the Nevada State Mammal, the Bighorn Sheep. After the presentations, Kate talked about what "Every Kid in a Park" pass is and that, as fourth graders, they were getting a special pass just for them. This pass would allow them free access places they were familiar with, like Red Rock Canyon NCA and Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

Eventually Kate distributed 1,368 passes -- more than doubling her goal of 500.

Many of the students receiving passes had heard about Red Rock Canyon NCA, but had never visited. This was a great incentive to get them and their families out to Red Rock Canyon. During the year, the Red Rock Canyon Fee Station also distributes the Every Kid in a Park pass; this year they were able to distribute 248 passes. With the amount from the fee station added to the amount that Ranger Kate issued, a total of 1,616 EKIP passes were put into the hands of fourth graders to enjoy the summer on public lands.

Partners Help Clean Graffiti at Red Rock: It was a warm early Friday morning just before the Memorial Day Holiday when several partners gathered together to eliminate five of 18 areas scarred by recent graffiti at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

Due to a report from a concerned citizen, the Friends of Red Rock Canyon trail monitor, found and documented more than 18 sites along the Middle Oak Creek Trail scarred by painted graffiti. The call went out to partners from the Friends of Red Rock Graffiti Removal Committee to help remove the unsightly panels. The FORRC graffiti removal coordinator, and other committee

members contacted the Bristlecone Chapter Back Country Horsemen of Nevada and the MGM Resorts International volunteer group to assist.

After some initial scouting by both FORRC and the Back Country Horsemen, it was decided to have the Friday before the busy holiday weekend, and the beginning of the hot season, for the removal day. The Back Country Horsemen, led by "Big" Jim Sage with five other Back Country Horsemen members, provided six horses and three mules to carry more than 500 pounds of water and graffiti-removal equipment to sites scattered over 3.5 miles along the Southern Oak Creek Canyon trail. Together with 21 other volunteers from the Friends of Red Rock Canyon's Graffiti team, headed by Peter Sbraccia, and 10 Volunteers from MGM Resorts International, headed by Jeremy Goard, the multicolored panels were eliminated over four hours on May 26.

Sloan Contact Station to Open Seven Days a week on October 1: Starting October 1, the Sloan Canyon contact station will be open 7 days a week.

Red Rock Canyon Campground Reopens: Red Rock Campground reopened September 1, after being seasonally closed since May 31. Red Rock Campground is located within Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area approximately two miles east of the visitor center on State Route 159 (West Charleston Boulevard) and is the only developed campground within the conservation area.

Phase 2 of 13-Mile Scenic Drive Improvements at Red Rock: Red Rock Canyon has completed nearly all the improvements for Phase 2 of the 13-Mile Scenic Drive. Those improvements include repaving of the 13-mile Scenic byway, enhancement of 4 parking areas within the area, which has resulted in over 200 additional parking spaces, along with new and improved signage. Final completion of the work will be done at the end of September. A formal grand opening of Phase 2 is planned for early October. In addition, The 13-Mile Scenic Drive project *Phases 1 and 2) was recently recognized and honored with two awards including the *Federal Highway Administration, Environmental Excellence Award* and 3rd place in the *Roads and Bridges* publication contest for the improvements to the roads, parking areas, and low-water crossings.

Red Rock Canyon Business Plan

Red Rock Canyon solicited public comment and input for the proposed amenity fee increase during public meetings held on Sept. 5, 6 and 7. The comments have been incorporated into the final business plan and SNDO has completed all necessary fee increase steps. Formal approval of the final business plan is pending.

National Public Lands Day for Red Rock and Sloan National Conservation Areas: On September 23, Red Rock Canyon partnered with the Friends of Red Rock Canyon and the Southern Nevada Conservancy Fence and assisted with installing fence at Calico I and Sandstone Quarry parking lots. The work also included digging holes and installing posts and rails as well as trail maintenance and trash cleanup near the parking lots.

On September 30, Sloan Canyon partnered with the Friends of Sloan Canyon to recruit volunteers to assist with the installation of trail markers and minor trail maintenance along the 601 trail.

Solar Eclipse at Red Rock Canyon: Red Rock Canyon partnering with the Friends of Red Rock Canyon and Southern Nevada Conservancy hosted the Solar Eclipse at our outdoor amphitheater. The viewing was spectacular and over 883 people were in attendance for the view.

Las Vegas Field Office

2017 Annual Customer Service Workshop: On October 18, 2017, the Southern Nevada District will hold the 8th Annual Customer Service Workshop. The Las Vegas Field Office, Division of Lands and Realty, and Division of Resources will host the workshop, which will be held at Texas Station. The workshop is an outreach to local BLM customers and stakeholders that provides an overview of BLM's lands and resources programs. The Customer Service Workshop objective is to enhance the understanding of the processing of land use authorization applications, increase communication, and strengthen customer relationships. The workshop agenda includes information regarding Rights-of-Way and Recreational and Public Purpose applications and process, the National Environment Policy Act, Renewable and Non-renewable Resources, Endangered Species identified within Southern Nevada, as well as policies and procedures that affect public lands within Southern Nevada. Attendees will be given helpful tools and tips to assist in a general understanding of BLM's administration of public lands, and upon request a CD with all presentations, handouts, copies of various applicable regulations, manuals and policies and other information about the Southern Nevada District Office.

Land Sale Generated almost \$15.4 Million for Projects: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on August 3 sold 63.75 acres in 13 parcels for \$15,397,200 during a competitive public land sale. The agency offered 81.25 acres, in 17 parcels, under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA). Parcels offered for sale varied in size from 1.25 to 17.5 acres and were located in the Las Vegas Valley.

All successful bidders paid the required 20 percent of the bid by 3 p.m. today. The remainder of the bid is due within 180 days (January 30, 2018.)

In accordance with the joint selection process, unsold parcels must be re-nominated for consideration at future land sales by the local government.

In accordance with the SNPLMA, funds generated from the sale of public land may be used for specific purposes including parks, trails, and natural areas; capital improvements, conservation initiatives; and for the purchase of environmentally sensitive lands. Additionally, 10 percent of the funds will go to the Southern Nevada Water Authority, and five percent will go to the Nevada State General Education Fund.

Gold Butte National Monument: The Secretary of the Interior submitted his review and recommendations for National Monuments to the President on August 24, 2017. The report has not been made public and no decisions from the President have been made at this time. The BLM has been attending the local town advisory boards to provide information regarding proposed projects in Gold Butte. Gold Butte received Round 16 SNPLMA funding to complete a Historic Properties Treatment Plan (HPTP) for Kirk's Grotto, Falling Man, and Whitney Pocket. The HPTP would provide for recording and protective treatments for these culturally sensitive areas. The BLM has contracted to have the existing fence surrounding Devil's Throat sinkhole removed and replaced for safety purposes. With the assistance of Friends of Gold Butte, the BLM is proposing to install interpretive kiosks at Devil's Throat sinkhole and Gold Butte Townsite and install new and replace existing directional signs along the Back Country Byway. The Friends of Gold Butte received a grant from REI to fund the purchase of the new kiosks and directional signs. The BLM is proposing to install a permanent portal sign, with base, and parking pullout area at the entrance of Gold Butte. The construction of the sign base and parking area would be led by the Army Corp of Engineers through an Interagency Agreement.

LVFO Participates in Earth Science Education Workshops: Fifty-three teachers from all over Southern Nevada gathered at Faith Lutheran Jr./Sr. High School (also a Recreation and Public Purpose lease) in Las Vegas for the 28th annual Nevada Mineral Teachers Workshop during Spring Break where they were promptly greeted by Las Vegas Field Office Geologist Lorri Dee Dukes and her love of geology.

The classes included a wide variety of offerings on Nevada mining and geology, presented by leading professionals in both fields. Classes included lectures, activities, and supplies that teachers can take back to their classroom and share with students.

Before departing, teachers met in age groups to discuss day one's activities and brainstorm ideas on how to implement them into classrooms, which included a group of elementary school teachers suggesting incorporating the popular video game, Minecraft, into a general lesson about mining in Nevada.

The second day allowed the educators a chance to see one of three mining operations in the area. Lorri Dee lead the tour to Simplot Silica located on public land near Overton. Renowned for its high quality granules that are all the same size and thus melt beautifully, glass produced from this site is sought after. If you've ever sought after a Dos Equis beer, you've enjoyed the quality of glass from Simplot Silica.

Since August 1984, the Nevada Division of Minerals and the Nevada Mining Association have co-sponsored annual Earth Science Education Workshops for teachers from all over Nevada. Teachers enrolled in the Earth Science Education Workshops can receive Nevada Department of Education recertification, Professional Development (PDE) (School District), or university (UNR or UNLV) credit.

SNDO Challenges Fellow Nevada Districts to Join in Saving Wildlife by Pulling Mine

Markers: Quite simply, SNDO throws down the gauntlet to other districts to join in the opportunity to celebrate Nevada's rich mining history while saving untold numbers of wildlife. About six and a half years ago, Southern Nevada District Office embarked on a mission to make the most of a Nevada law that encouraged PVC mine markers to be pulled and laid on their side.

Within a week, a crew was on the ground and pulled 638 markers in three days and in those pipes found the remains of 753 birds as well as 10 reptiles and 17 mammals. You see, animals fly or crawl into the pipes looking for a place to nest and are unable to climb out on the smooth surface or spread their wings in the tight space so they slowly die of thirst or starvation in the PVC pipe.

Since then, SNDO and its partners have worked diligently to pull more than 95 percent of the estimated PVC mine markers from the ground and lay them on their side (and estimates removal of the remaining 1,000 by 2019.)

Other than great progress, what does that mean? By knocking down 16,500 markers across more than 3.6 million acres SNDO manages, partners anticipate the effort will save the lives of more than 100,000 birds, millions of insects, thousands of lizards and hundreds of bats.

And that's where other districts and their partners come in. Currently there are more than 200,000 active claims and approximately 800,000 abandoned claims in Nevada. Each mine starts as a claim that is marked with some sort of marker, from wood lathes to metal poles. Before 1993, it was allowable to mark mining claims with hollow plastic PVC pipes, which later proved to be hazardous to migratory birds and other wildlife.

Overcome by the urgency to scour the terrain to prevent untimely demise of birds, mammals, reptiles and insects but not sure how to make the most difference? It's as simple as contacting Mark Slaughter, Las Vegas Field Office Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist for tips and lessons learned from SNDO's myriad of approaches through the years.

One thing that you shouldn't do is turn away. You can make a huge difference. John Kinder, a Supervisory Range Technician (Fire) has helped pull mine markers for more than three years and says it best. "Of the thousands of mine markers I pulled, I found from one to 24 dead birds inside each PVC pipe," said Kinder. "One thing in common with every mine marker is that something had perished inside."

Overview on Major Proposed Renewable Energy Projects:

- Dry Lake East Designated Leasing Area (DLA) – Located east of the Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone, and east of Interstate 15, 12 miles northwest of Las Vegas. The proposed site has been identified for possible DLA designation due to its proximity to existing infrastructure and current interest by multiple solar developers. The DLA is approximately 1800 acres and would have the capability to accommodate the production of 180-megawatts of photovoltaic solar power. The proposed site is currently awaiting

environmental analysis. If a decision to designate this area as a DLA is issued, the area would be parceled out for competitive auction. There are currently no foreseeable issues with the designation.

- Yellow Pine Solar- Located along the Tecopa Road, west of Nevada State Route 160, 25 miles southwest of Las Vegas between Las Vegas and Pahrump. The application area consists of 9,020 acres and within the application area, a project area no more than 3,000 acres would be constructed. The project would produce 250-megawatts of photovoltaic solar power. A complete plan of development has been received and a Notice of Intent to prepare a Project EIS and Notice of Segregation is under review. The project is within the vicinity of two tortoise translocation areas and may affect visual resources.
- Crescent Peak Wind Project_- Located 10 miles southwest of Searchlight, Nevada along the California/ Nevada Border, in between Nevada State Route 164 and U.S Route 95. The project area consists of approximately 32,000 acres with up to 127 wind turbines between 410 to 500 feet. The project is estimated to produce 175 to 500-megawatt wind generated power. A complete plan of development has been received and a Notice of Intent to prepare a Project EIS and Notice of Segregation is under review. Resources considered include biological resources, tribal and cultural resources, and visual resources.
- Gemini Solar Project- Located adjacent to the Moapa River Indian Reservation and east of Interstate 15, 18 miles northwest of Las Vegas. The application area consists of 44,000 acres and within the application area, a project area no more than 6,220 acres would be constructed. The application currently is incomplete, pending a Plan of Development. The project will produce 690-megawatts of photovoltaic solar power. Resources considered include biological resources, cultural resources, and visual resources.