

**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

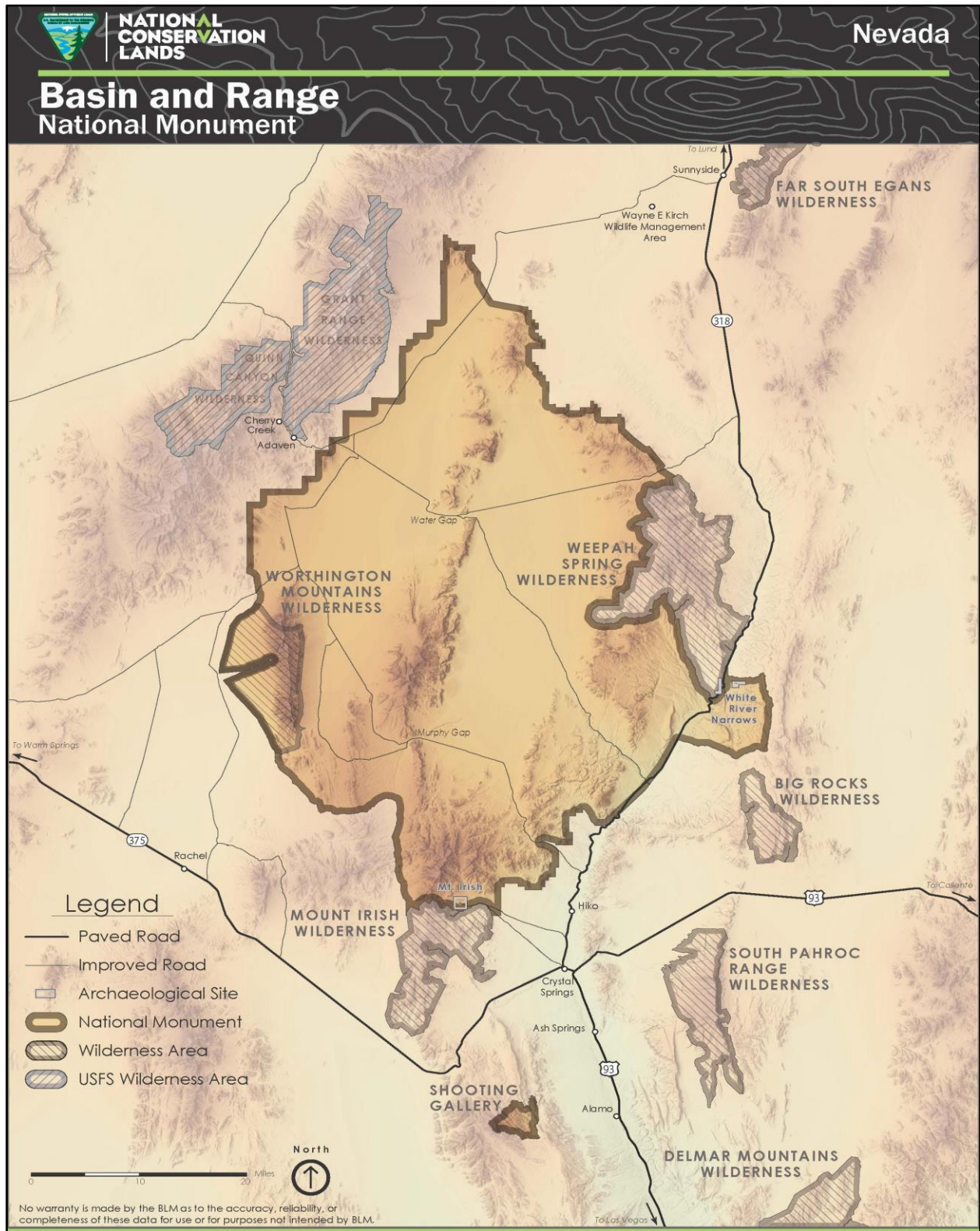
Nevada
2023: Annual Manager's Report

Basin and Range

National Monument



Map



Accomplishments

The year 2023 was noteworthy and full of achievements in Basin and Range National Monument. Construction was completed on the Mt. Irish cultural resource protection and visitor amenities project in September 2023. At National Public Lands Day, volunteers installed trail signs in the Mt. Irish area. A citizen science BioBlitz was held in early June in the northwestern portion of the monument. At the BioBlitz, volunteers and staff from partner agencies and organizations recorded observations of plants and animals, such as the reptile inventory team pictured below. Outcome Based Grazing Land Health Assessments were completed for seven allotments in 2023. Below, a researcher holds a lizard in his hand while a group of people take pictures and record data about the lizard.



Challenges

Drought conditions in 2022 were followed by a wet winter. This precipitation led to noxious and invasive plant species being a challenge in 2023. Wet conditions promoted growth of undesirable non-native plant species, like Russian Thistle (dark brown plant in the photo below, fall 2023) and Halogeton. This photo point monitoring location in 2021 contained little to no Russian thistle plants. Conditions remained wet through 2023, so wildland fires were not an issue, however, the fuel loading still present from the wet year could be a challenge in the monument in future years. Additionally, the rainfall events led to significant damage to public roads and trails in the monument that have proven challenging to repair.



Visitors

The estimated visitation for Basin and Range National Monument in 2023 was 7,843 visits and 3,837 visitor days. These numbers are slightly higher but similar to the previous two years. More than half of monument visitors in 2023 spent time at public cultural sites, such as White River Narrows, Shooting Gallery, and Mt. Irish. Four primitive campsites (pictured below) and a vault toilet were constructed in late 2023 in the Mt. Irish area to protect cultural resources and encourage camping in a designated location. Visitor response to the new amenities has been very positive. Adjustments to traffic counter placement and visitor registers in this area will help estimate future visitors to this location.



Partnerships

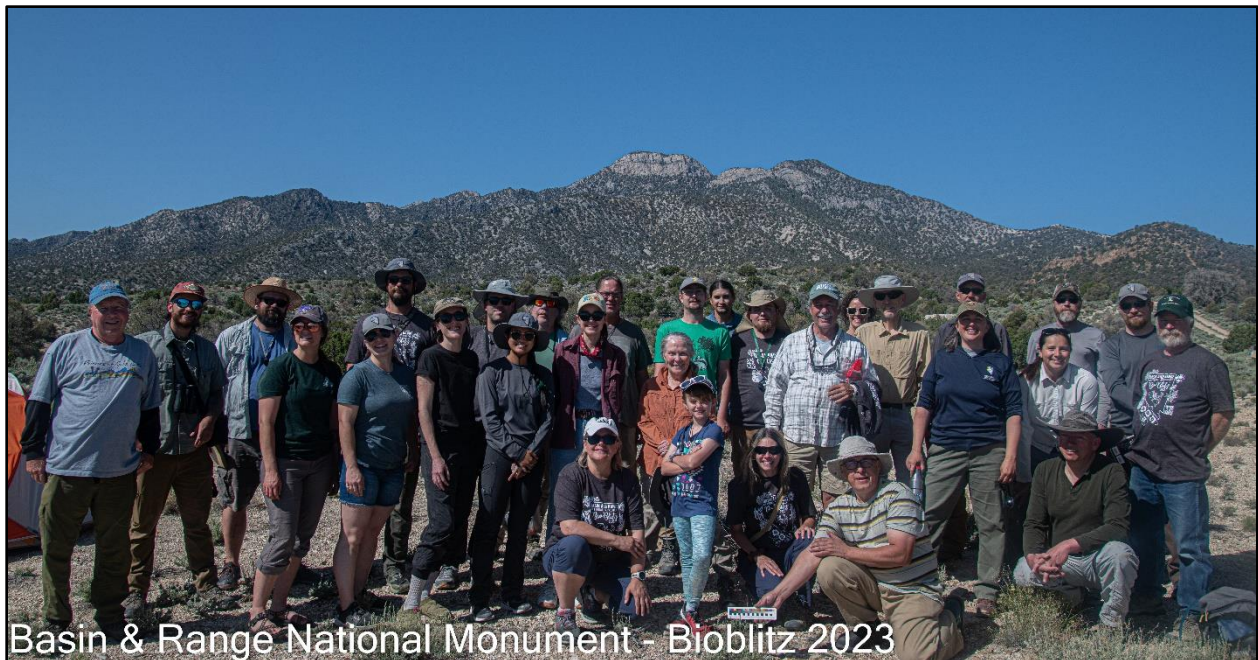
The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) partnered with Friends of Basin and Range, U.S. Geological Survey, Nevada Department of Wildlife, College of Southern Nevada, Nevada Division of Natural Heritage, National Park Service, Conservation Lands Foundation, Desert Research Institute, and Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition in Fiscal Year 2023. Volunteer hours totaled approximately 1,450 hours from 71 volunteers. Volunteers participated in the BioBlitz, a National Public Lands Day Mt. Irish trail project (pictured below), monitored cultural sites through the Nevada Site Steward Program, monitored wilderness and recreation sites, and removed graffiti.



Science

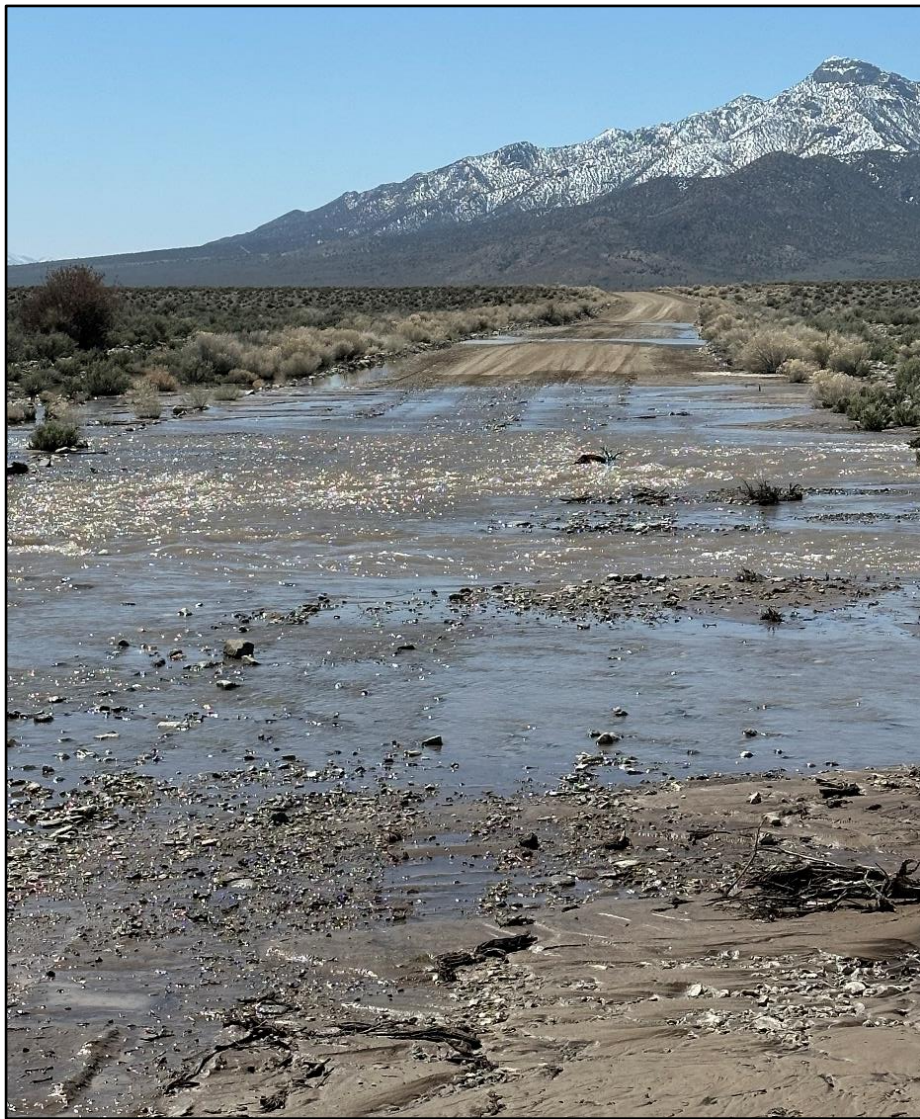
More than 50 volunteers, and agency and organization representatives fanned out across eastern Nevada's 704,000-acre monument on June 2-3, 2023, to observe and record plants, insects, small mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians using the iNaturalist application. During the event, 430 observations and 172 species were recorded. Collaborating with the Bureau of Land Management on the two-day BioBlitz were the U.S. Geological Survey, Nevada Department of Wildlife, and Nevada Division of Natural Heritage. Other participants were the College of Southern Nevada, Conservation Lands Foundation, Friends of Basin and Range, and the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition (ENLC). The ENLC is also actively collaborating with the BLM, Nevada Department of Wildlife, and Bat Conservation International on a five-year project to inventory bat species within the monument.

"We're excited to work with the agencies to provide baseline data, including species present in the monument and their temporal use of these public lands. With threats such as habitat loss and white-nose syndrome, these data will help us to better understand and conserve bats in the monument," said Susi Algrim, ENLC Executive Director.



Climate Impacts

Flooding due to heavy precipitation events in spring, summer, and fall washed out roads and created climate impact challenges in 2023. Cherry Creek, which is typically a dry desert ephemeral wash, damaged and destroyed sections of the road in northern Garden Valley (pictured below). Tropical storm Hilary hit the monument and caused localized heavy precipitation in late August 2023. With approximately 900 miles of dirt roads, the road conditions within the monument were muddy, full of run-off, impassable, and destroyed in some locations due to extreme precipitation events and wet conditions.



Climate Resiliency

Land Health Assessments were completed for seven livestock grazing allotments in the monument in 2023. These assessments look at allotments in relation to Standards of Rangeland Health, which are established by the Resource Advisory Council for this part of Nevada. The standards are expressions of the level of physical and biological condition, or degree of function, required for healthy, sustainable rangelands. Rangelands should be meeting or making significant progress toward meeting the standards through proper cycling of nutrients and hydrologic components and energy flow as determined by reviewing information on a suite of qualitative and quantitative indicators for each standard. Vegetation, soils, riparian area, and wildlife habitat data were some of the rangeland health indicators collected and interpreted for these assessments within the allotments, like Worthington Mountain Allotment (pictured below).



Social and Environmental Justice

Archaeologists at the Desert Research Institute created a middle school Archaeological Resources Exploration green box now available for teachers in Nevada to use in their classrooms. The development of this green box (contents pictured below) was funded through the Lincoln County Archaeological Initiative (LCAI) managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Green boxes are teaching kits with a focus on applied science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) topic areas. The box meets Next Generation Science Standards. Teachers and students engage in the practices of archaeological science to inspire youth in underserved communities within schools and tribes in rural Nevada to pursue and explore STEM topics. This green box helps BLM meet its priority to cultivate community-based conservation, citizen-centered stewardship, and partnership through consultation, cooperation, and communication. BLM hopes middle school teachers will utilize this great resource to engage local students.



Events

In addition to the National Public Lands Day volunteer event in September and the citizen science BioBlitz in June, staff from the Basin and Range National Monument conducted outreach programs throughout the year. Outreach programs were presented at local elementary, middle, and high schools as well as at Labor Day in the local community of Pioche. Outreach programs included topics such as cultural resources, paleontology, the mining history of the area, natural resources, geology, and pollinators. Staff from the monument also presented at local career day activities and trained cultural site stewards at cultural monitoring locations across the monument.



Words from the staff

There are so many exciting accomplishments and events to celebrate in 2023 within Basin and Range National Monument. From the new cultural resource protection and visitor amenities project at Mt. Irish to the citizen science BioBlitz, it was a busy year of projects and events. Land health assessments for rangelands, impacts from precipitation events, and cultural resource projects were also main areas of focus. Monument staff are looking forward to a new visitor brochure, a wildlife habitat improvement project, and completion of a geological inventory for the Monument next year. Assistance and unwavering support for the monument from partners, volunteers, and researchers were critical to these successful endeavors. Below, a mariposa lily wildflower in a native desert shrub community in the Mt. Irish area.





NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

Basin and Range National Monument

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<https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/nevada/basin-and-range-national-monument>
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