

**Bureau of Land Management
Ely District
District Manager's Update
March 2025**



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ENERGY

Electrical Transmission Development

TransCanyon Cross-Tie Project

The BLM and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest on Sept. 20, 2024 released the Final Environmental Impact Statement, U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Draft Record of Decision, and pre-decisional objection review for the Cross-Tie 500-kilovolt Transmission Project, beginning a 45-day public comment period. Also on September 20, a Cultural Programmatic Agreement was sent to cooperating agencies for a final 30-day review. The project proposes to connect PacifiCorp's existing 500-kilovolt Clover Substation in Juab County, Utah, with NV Energy's 500-kilovolt Robinson Summit Substation in White Pine County, Nev. Planning documents, including maps, are available at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2018636/510>

SWIP North Project

The BLM Elko District is the designated lead for an authorized 1,500 MW 500 kV transmission line connecting the Midpoint substation north of Twin Falls, Idaho, to the Robinson substation northwest of Ely, where the line would connect with SWIP South. The LS Power line would extend 257 miles on BLM-administered lands in the Twin Falls, Elko, and Ely districts. The project is awaiting a notice to proceed pending cultural inventories, sage grouse mitigation, and ethnographic studies. The review of Terracon's Geotech Cultural Report is complete. The BLM completed review of the main cultural report. The final report addressing comments was sent to the State Historic Preservation Office in late October 2024. The BLM has responded to the Bio Characterization report.

Robinson Substation Expansion

The BLM is reviewing a preliminary environmental assessment prepared by third-party contractor POWER Engineers. The preliminary EA analyzes a proposed 1.3-mile transmission line connecting SWIP North to the Robinson substation west of Ely, Nev., and expansion of the substation by 55 acres to accommodate future electrical transmission.

LS Power applied for the 1.3-mile transmission line in January 2023. In June 2023, LS Power subsidiary Great Basin Transmission, LLC applied to expand the substation. The BLM in September 2023 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Great Basin Transmission for the Robinson Summit Expansion / Interconnect Project. Cooperating agency invitation letters were sent in March 2024. POWER Engineers has completed a cultural resource inventory that is now under BLM review. Raptor Nest Inventory Results and Habitat Characterization Report have been submitted to the BLM. Acoustic monitoring was completed in July, and dark and pale kangaroo mouse surveys are on-going. A BLM Interdisciplinary Team is reviewing the project to provide any additional baselines studies needed for the project.

Burnt Springs Distribution Service Line

The BLM in August 2024 received an application and revised proposed Plan of Development from Great Basin Transmission for a 500 kV Fixed Series Capacitor and a half-mile long 7.2kV

distribution service line on approximately 15 acres of federally managed land, about 18 miles west of Panaca, Nev. The project proponent is submitting wildlife surveys for BLM review.

Green Link North



The BLM on Sept. 10, 2024 published the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Resource Management Plan Amendment for the Greenlink North Transmission Project opening a 90-day public review and comment period that concluded Dec. 11, 2024.

More information is available at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2017033/510>.

Renewable Energy Development

Jakes Valley Solar (BRP Sandstone)

BRP Sandstone in September 2024 submitted an application proposing a 1000MW solar facility with a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) on 9,515 acres in Jakes Valley.

Lonely Road Solar Project

The BLM in mid-August received an application from Engie Energy for the proposed Lonely Road Solar Project to be constructed on 7,854 acres of the public lands in White River Valley. The Project proposes a fenced 600MW solar facility with BESS, substation, and O&M building and a 17.5-mile 345kV Gen-Tie line.

White Pine Pumped Storage

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on September 23 accepted rPlus Hydro subsidiary White Pine Waterpower, LLC's final license application and began the NEPA process for a closed-loop pumped storage hydropower facility. The proposed facility that would be constructed in White Pine County north of Ely received FAST 41 authority from FERC in March 2023. The White Pine Pumped Storage facility would provide up to 1,000 megawatts (MW) of electrical generating capability with an overall energy storage capacity of 8,000 megawatt-hours (MWh) per day by moving water between an upper and a lower reservoir to store the energy for later use. A new 25-mile, 345-kV single-circuit transmission line would extend from the project to the Robinson Summit substation.

White Pine Pumped Storage Hydrogeologic Evaluation

The 15-day public review and comment period on the preliminary environmental assessment analyzing the proposed White Pine Pumped Storage Hydrogeologic Evaluation Project concluded February 24. If approved, White Pine Waterpower, LLC, would be authorized to drill two test and three monitoring wells. The wells would track groundwater response to pumping and estimate discharge and optimal pumping rates, hydrogeologic parameters, hydraulic boundaries, and approximate operating conditions for proposed production wells. Testing would take about nine days at each well after which the drill pads would be restored and reclaimed.

Pantheon Solar Development Project

The Bristlecone Field office is leading a Technical Working Group for wildlife that consists of representatives from the BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Nevada Department of Wildlife. The BLM is reviewing wildlife survey reports and has issued a fieldwork authorization to conduct a paleontological survey.



The project proposes the use of 2,751.5 acres of field office-managed lands south of U.S. Highway 50 in Jakes Valley, about 15 miles west of Ely, Nev. If approved, the project could generate up to 400 megawatts of solar energy.

The BLM in October 2023 segregated public lands proposed for use by the Pantheon Solar Development Project for two-years, preventing the land from being sold or subject to new mining claims while BLM processes the application. The Ely District in September 2024 received variance concurrence from Director Tracy Stone-Manning. The project proponent in October 2024 applied for and received FAST-41 status. Information is available on the Permitting Dashboard: <https://www.permits.performance.gov/permitting-project/fast-41-covered-projects/pantheon-solar-project>.



Pantheon 2 Solar Development Project

Arevia Power in August 2024 submitted an application proposing a fenced 200-megawatt solar facility across two sites with an O&M building, MET tower, five-mile road, and 230kV or 500kV Gen-tie line to the proposed Pantheon Solar substation. The Project proposed on 1,293 acres in Jakes Valley is adjacent to the Pantheon Solar Development Project (see above).

Pantheon 3 Solar Development Project

In September 2024, Arevia Power submitted an application proposing a 600MW solar facility with BESS on 5,205 acres in Jakes Valley with an 18-mile long 230 or 500 kV gen-tie line to Robinson substation.

Stagecoach Wind LLC Type 3

The BLM has paused processing the application per request of Arevia Power. In September 2023, the BLM set aside lands for Arevia Power's proposed Stagecoach Wind Project, a planned 600-megawatt installation that would be located in south Newark Valley, about 40 miles west of Ely or 18 miles east of Eureka, Nev. The announcement set aside nearly 70,000 acres in the project area for two years from appropriation under the public land laws, including location under the Mining Law, but not the Mineral Leasing Act or the Materials Act, to prevent new mining claims from interfering with project review or development. Existing claims are not affected. More at <https://www.permits.performance.gov/permitting-project/fast-41-covered-projects/stagecoach-wind>

Samantha Solar (Balanced Rock)

The BLM in July 2024 segregated for two-years public lands proposed for use by the Samantha Solar Development Project, preventing the land from being sold or subject to new mining claims while BLM processes the application. The project proposes the use of 2,893.30 acres of

Bristlecone Field Office-managed lands south of U.S. Highway 50 in Jakes Valley, about 15 miles west of Ely, Nev. If approved, the project could generate up to 600 megawatts of solar energy. The Bristlecone Field office is leading a Technical Working Group for wildlife that consists of representatives from the BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Nevada Department of Wildlife. In November 2024, the project applied for and received FAST-41 status. Information is available on the Permitting Dashboard:

<https://www.permits.performance.gov/permitting-project/fast-41-covered-projects/samantha-solar>

LANDS & REALTY

Lincoln County Water District Rights-of-Way

The Caliente Field Office in FY24 made significant strides on the Lincoln County Water District Plan of Development for a main pipeline and delivery lines to transport groundwater to land disposed of near Mesquite under the Lincoln County Lands Act. The Lincoln County Power District has also proposed access roads and a power line to support the water project. The field office will conduct public scoping for an environmental assessment to amend existing or issue new rights-of-way, in accordance with the Lincoln County Lands Act Groundwater and Utility Development Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (2008).

CalTech DSA-2000 Radio Telescope Array Project

The Bristlecone Field Office is in the pre-NEPA planning phase, coordinating timelines and requirements with the California Institute of Technology (CalTech). CalTech proposes to erect a Radio Telescope Array Project (DSA-2000) on approximately 63,250 acres of the public lands in north Spring Valley, about 15 miles north of the proposed Bahsahwahbee National Monument boundary.

CalTech submitted the Right-of-Way application in September 2023. An amendment to the Plan of Development was submitted in January 2024. The BLM conducted formal Tribal Consultation with the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe and the Ely Shoshone Tribe during a site visit in May 2024.

The field office is leading a Biological Working Group for wildlife consisting of representatives from the BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team, and CalTech. The BLM is reviewing biological study plans and wildlife survey reports, and a cultural resource inventory is underway.

MINERALS

Mining

Bald Mountain Mine, Sunrise Project

Kinross Gold Corporation has requested a minor modification approval for six different areas of the Bald Mountain North Operations Area Plan of Operations. The six areas are Poker, Casino, Saga, Bida, Top and Galaxy.

NevGold USA, Limousine Butte EA

The Ely District, Bristlecone Field Office on Oct. 31, 2024 released a Decision Record, Finding of No Significant Impact, and final Environmental Assessment for the Limo Butte Exploration Project. The 30-day appeal period concluded Dec. 2, 2024. The proposed project would be located on public land in White Pine County, about 65 miles north of Ely. NevGold USA is proposing a project area of 16,455 acres with 200 acres proposed for disturbance. The proposal calls for up to eight open exploration holes at any one time. The final Environmental Assessment is available online at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2033563/510>.

SPECIAL LEGISLATION

Lincoln-White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act Land Sales

- The Caliente Field Office is preparing an environmental assessment for a proposed multi-phase sale of 67 parcels of public land, totaling 5,445 acres in Lincoln County, Nev. The Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 directs the Ely District to dispose of up to 90,000 acres of public land within the county. Parcels identified by Lincoln County and BLM for rounds 5 through 11 may be offered for public sale annually through competitive auctions.
- The Bristlecone Field Office is preparing an environmental assessment for a proposed sale of three parcels of public land, totaling 1,535 acres in White Pine County, Nev. The White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006 directs the Ely District to dispose of up to 45,000 acres of public land within the county.

Illipah Watershed Restoration Project

The Bristlecone Field Office is partnering with the Forest Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Trout Unlimited and a private landowner to restore the watershed, which includes relocating the beaver, stabilizing streams, soils, and riparian areas and increasing recreational fishing and other opportunities. The project is funded through Round 19 of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Rangeland Monitoring/Term Permit Renewals

The Bristlecone Field Office has completed the proposed decision for the Indian George and is reviewing the protests received.



The Bristlecone Field Office and Basin and Range National Monument are preparing a term permit renewal for John Uhalde and Company's outcome-based grazing allotments. Invitation letters to cooperating agencies have been mailed. A preliminary environmental assessment is anticipated to be available for public comment in spring 2025.

The Caliente Field Office is completing NEPA for several range improvements, mostly to water availability and spring protection across field office administered lands, with some vegetation projects in the Clover Creek Watershed. Several of the improvements are funded in part by the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).




The BLM is conducting a Land Health Assessment for the Barclay, Clover Creek, Duckwater, Enterprise, Simpson and Wildhorse allotments. The assessments are being organized by Use Area and are to be used for the allotment's Term Permit Renewals. Coordination with the livestock grazing permit holders is ongoing.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Fuels Reduction and Habitat Restoration

Multi-year, landscape-scale fuels reduction projects restore watershed health and improve wildlife habitat while reducing catastrophic wildfire risk. Treatment methods include, but are not limited to, hand-thinning, chaining, mastication, and prescribed fire use followed by aerial and/or ground seeding. The District often partners with federal and state agencies, Native American tribes, and private landowners. Some projects receive Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act funding. Current projects are:

- **South Steptoe Valley Slash Pile Burns:** The Ely District will burn slash piles of pinyon-pine and juniper on public lands in south Steptoe Valley, about 25-30 miles south of Ely. The district is scheduled to burn piles on 402 acres near Cattle Camp, 270 acres near Horse Camp, 60 acres north of Basque Canyon and 506 acres in Monument Canyon. The piles are remnants of tree-thinning treatments that reduced pinyon-juniper expansion to improve watershed health and enhance wildlife habitat and reduce catastrophic fire risk. Area residents may occasionally see smoke.
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- **Milk Ranch Pile Burns:** The Ely District will burn slash piles of pinyon and juniper on public lands in Cave and Lake Valley south of Patterson Pass. The district is scheduled to burn piles on 85 acres in around Milk Ranch Canyon and Antelope Spring. The piles are remnants of tree-thinning treatments that reduced pinyon-juniper expansion to improve watershed health and enhance wildlife habitat and reduce catastrophic fire risk. Area residents and those traveling Highway 93 may occasionally see smoke.
 - **Mt Wilson WUI Pile Burns:** The Ely District will burn slash piles of pinyon and juniper on 150 acres of public lands within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) around the Mount Wilson Community. The piles are remnants of tree-thinning treatments that reduced hazardous fuels around the Mount Wilson Community. The removal of these fuels will increase the defensible space surrounding the private property, structures and

infrastructure in the event of wildfires. Area residents and those traveling Highway 93 may occasionally see smoke.

- **Pony Springs Mastication:** Masticating pinyon-juniper from 987 acres of the public lands south of Pony Springs along Highway 93, about 25 miles north of Pioche. Seeding with a grass and forb mixture will follow. The treatment is part of the Cave and Lake Valley Watershed Restoration Project that will ultimately treat up to 165,000 acres of a 583,832-acre project area.
- **Water Canyon Mastication:** Rangelands Restoration Services, LLC, a local contractor, is masticating pinyon-juniper from 1,413 acres of the public lands on the west slope of the Egan Range in the Ward Mountain area, about 20 miles south of Ely. Seeding with a grass and forb mixture will follow. The first phase of the treatment was completed in 2023 treating 710 acres leaving 703 acres to be treated in 2024. The treatment is part of the Ward Mountain Restoration Project that will ultimately treat up to 42,670 acres within a 100,000-acre project area.



The following treatment is part of the South Spring and Hamlin Watersheds Restoration Project that will ultimately treat up to 123,969 acres of a 637,140-acre project area.

- **Hub Basin Lop and Scatter:** Lop and scatter on 3,623 acres of the public lands near shingle creek, about 30 miles southeast of Ely.

RECREATION & TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Garnet Hill Recreation Area Management Plan

Contracts have been awarded for the Design of the Recreation Areas, as well as Design & Construction of motorized and non-motorized trail systems. Construction is scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2025.



The field office is improving both the Garnet Hill Recreation Area and Egan Crest trail systems west of Ely. The Plan addresses how the BLM will manage and maintain the new recreation area, and anticipated increase in public visitation. Improvements include upgrading roadways, enlarging existing trailheads, adding overnight campgrounds, and constructing signed motorized and non-motorized trails systems. All facilities and some trails will be ADA accessible. Funding for the capital improvement project is provided through Round 18 of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

The Bristlecone Field Office released a Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Garnet Hill Recreation Area Management Plan and final Environmental Assessment in

November 2023. The 30-day appeal period concluded in December 2023. The Decision Record, Finding of No Significant Impact, and Garnet Hill Recreation Area Management Plan and final Environmental Assessment are available online at <https://bit.ly/3VdC38R>.

Highland Range Non-Motorized Trail

An International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) design team has finished almost 10 miles of single-track hiking and mountain biking trails connecting Pioche with Cathedral Gorge State Park. Trail construction is scheduled to be completed by midyear 2025. Project funding is provided by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act through the Caliente Field Office.



Mount Irish Cultural Resource Protection and Visitor Enhancements Project

The BLM in coordination with Tribal interests is developing interpretive materials for camping areas and signed walking trails. Four primitive camp areas and a vault toilet were constructed in late 2023. Mount Irish's diverse collection of cultural resources have attracted visitors for decades. Increased visitation and lack of amenities have resulted in trash, rock campfire rings, and human refuse in close proximity to the rock art. Funded through the Lincoln County Archeological Initiative, the project enhances the visitor experience while protecting rock art areas.



Lincoln County Special Recreation Permits

The Caliente Field Office is coordinating with Lincoln County to plan and manage motorized recreation and competitive recreation events to reduce demand on local resources, including emergency management.

WILD HORSE MANAGEMENT

Antelope and Triple B Herd Management Area Plan



The Bristlecone Field Office is scheduled in spring 2025 to release for public review and comment a preliminary environmental assessment for the Antelope and Triple B Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP). The plan will identify and set objectives for wild horses and their habitat in future years in support the BLM mission to manage healthy wild horses on healthy public lands. The public input period concluded Nov. 14, 2024.

Pancake Complex Herd Management Area Plan

The BLM on March 4, 2025 approved the Final Pancake Complex Wild Horse Gather & Herd Management Plan for how wild horses will be managed within the Pancake Complex, which includes the Jakes Wash Herd Area, Monte Cristo Wild Horse Territory, and the Pancake and Sand Springs West Herd Management Areas. The areas are in central Nevada approximately 30 miles west of Ely and include nearly 1,228,739 acres of public and private lands. Planning

documents, including the environmental assessment, decision record, and finding of no significant impact are available at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2033135/510>

Contact Chris Hanefeld at (775) 289-1842 or chanefel@blm.gov for more information on these and other projects/programs in the district.

