

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND
MANAGEMENT

E-Gov for Planning and DOI-BLM-NV-L020-
NEPA (ePlanning) 2011-0021-EA

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Project Description

The Schell Field Office has undertaken the process of watershed analysis for the Cave Valley and Lake Valley Watersheds. The evaluation and determination phases have been completed and the BLM will now beginning the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process to determine an implementation strategy for restoration treatments. The BLM is seeking input regarding specific treatments that should be implemented to address the deficiencies documented in the Evaluation Report (available under the Documents link in the menu on the left) or any other concerns that have been observed.

Additionally, the BLM is considering incorporating a travel management plan into the overall watershed restoration strategy. A travel management plan would evaluate the network of existing routes located within the two watersheds to designate them as Open, Limited, or Closed to motorized travel. Due to this additional element, the BLM will be holding a second public scoping period that will end on June 23, 2011 to gather information about the usage and quality of roads within the area and any other general comments that should be considered throughout the NEPA process.

The BLM has scheduled two public meetings in Nevada from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. to provide information and receive input. Dates and locations are:

- Thursday, June 16, 2011, at the BLM Ely District Office, 702 N. Industrial Way, in Ely
- Tuesday, June 21, 2011, at the BLM Caliente Field Office, 1400 S. Front Street, in Caliente

Project Location

Cave and Lake Valleys are two of sixty-one total watershed management units on the Ely District. These watersheds are located southeast of Ely, Nevada. Cave Valley is flanked by the South Schell Creek Mountains on the East and the South Egan Mountains on the West. Lake Valley is flanked by the Fortification Mountains and the Wilson Creek on the East and the South Schell Creek Mountains and the Fairview Mountains on the West. The watersheds are characterized by generally north to south trending mountains, gently to steeply sloping benches and bajadas, and one valley bottom characterized by level to slightly rolling terrain. The watershed drains internally into alkali sinks in the center of the valley. Elevations in the watershed vary from about 5,900 feet in the valley bottom to 10,900 feet on top of the South Schell Creek Mountain Range. Precipitation varies from a yearly average of about 6 to 12 inches on the valley bottom to 14 to 20 inches or more on top of the South Schell Creek Mountains. Precipitation occurs as winter snow or spring/fall thundershowers and rains with the driest period occurring from midsummer

to mid-autumn. Average annual air temperature is from 40 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit, decreasing as elevation increases. The average frost-free season ranges from 100 to 120 days in the valley bottoms to 50 to 90 days in upper elevations.

Combined, the watersheds consist of approximately 583,832 acres. BLM administers about 96% of this area (339,560 acres) and about 4% (20190) are private land. BLM's mission is to manage the lands under their stewardship under a multiple use concept. Grazing is one of the multiple uses allowed on these public lands. Within the Cave Valley watershed are portions of eight allotments (Cave Valley Ranch, Haggerty Wash, Cave Valley Seeding, Sunnyside, and the Shingle Pass, Cattle Camp/Cave Valley, Sheep Pass, and Chimney Rock allotments. Those within the Lake Valley Watershed include portions of the Geysers Ranch, Atlanta, Pony Seeding, Brown Springs Use Area, and Fairview Allotments. Other uses that occur in this area are OHV use, hunting and fishing, camping, hiking and horse riding. There are four wilderness areas that lie (in part) in these watersheds (South Egan, Far South Egan, Mount Grafton and Fortification), which provide an opportunity for experiencing nature at its finest.

Vegetation communities within the watersheds include sagebrush communities (including basin big sagebrush, black sagebrush, low sagebrush, mountain big sagebrush, and Wyoming big sagebrush communities), greasewood and winterfat communities at the valley bottom and upland shrub, littleleaf mountain mahogany, and mountain mahogany communities at higher elevations. Woodland communities within the

watershed include pinyon and/or juniper communities and mixed conifer and aspen communities at higher elevations. Riparian areas are also located within the watershed. These areas provide important habitat for wildlife species.

There are many wildlife species that make their home in these watersheds. Some of the species that are found there are: sage grouse, elk, mule deer, antelope, golden eagles, peregrine falcons, various songbirds, rabbits, coyotes and many more.

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