



United States Department of the Interior



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In Reply Refer To:
NOPA-040-15-01

NOV 19 2014

NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION LANDS IN WILDERNESS

STATE: Nevada

COUNTIES: Lincoln, Nye and White Pine

FIELD OFFICE(S): Caliente, Egan and Schell

WILDERNESS AREAS:

Becky Peak	Government Peak	South Egan Range
Big Rocks	Highland Ridge	South Pahroc Range
Bristlecone	Meadow Valley Range	Tunnel Spring
Clover Mountains	Mormon Mountains	Weepah Spring
Delamar Mountains	Mount Grafton	White Rock Range
Far South Egans	Mt. Irish	Worthington Mountains
Fortification Range	Mt. Moriah	
Goshute Canyon	Parsnip Peak	

PROPOSED ACTION: Ely District Range Development Maintenance in Wilderness

Description of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is to authorize maintenance on existing range developments within the Ely District's 22 wilderness areas. In compliance with the 1964 Wilderness Act, the Congressional Grazing Guidelines and BLM Wilderness policy (Manual 6340), the BLM is developing an environmental assessment to analyze impacts to wilderness character for maintenance actions on existing range developments. The decision would include terms and conditions for the permittee and would be issued under a Grazing Decision.

The need for the action is allow compliance with the Wilderness Act, which states "Where grazing of livestock has been authorized by a grazing permit or grazing lease for land within a wilderness, and the use was established before Congress established the wilderness area, under Section 4(d)(4)(2) of the Act it "shall be permitted to continue subject to such reasonable regulations as are deemed necessary by the [administering agency]." The continuation of

existing grazing may apply to not only the utilization of the forage resource, but also the use and maintenance of livestock management developments and facilities that were associated with the grazing activity at the time of designation and have been authorized by the BLM. Grazing management activities, including the construction, use, and maintenance of livestock management developments, must comply with the BLM grazing regulations 43 CFR 4100, as well as Manual 6340 — Management of Designated Wilderness Areas.

As stated in BLM Manual 6340: "Structures and installations used for livestock management existing at the time of designation may be maintained. Maintenance may be done by the occasional use of motorized equipment where:

- A. practical non-motorized alternatives do not exist; and
- B. the motorized use is expressly authorized in the grazing permit and advanced written permission for each maintenance activity is granted by the BLM; and
- C. the motorized use was allowed prior to wilderness designation.

In most situations, authorization for motorized use would be considered on a case-by-case basis—for example, to remove sediment from a stock reservoir. In some cases, a schedule could be established—for example, hauling water to fill a tank. In all cases, authorization should be for no more than is practically necessary to support the livestock grazing program and for actions that would not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment. The use of an existing route and mode of travel also must cause the least impact on wilderness character and be similar to what was allowed prior to wilderness designation. These decisions are made during the grazing permitting process with the use of a Minimum Requirements Analysis, completed in conjunction with the associated NEPA analysis, through which alternatives are analyzed to determine the method that least impacts wilderness character while remaining consistent with the rule of practical necessity and reasonableness in supporting the livestock grazing program."

Ideally, all maintenance activities would be determined and analyzed in the Environmental Assessment associated the Term Permit Renewal (TPR). The schedule for TPR's may not coincide with the maintenance needs, however. Without an up-to-date TPR, which analyzes and describes the maintenance activity in wilderness, the authorized grazing permittee would be delayed in addressing their maintenance needs as a site-specific EA is written for each maintenance activity. The intention in drafting this EA is to address standard, regular maintenance needs in designated wilderness in lieu of a revised TPR to allow the permittee to address their maintenance needs.

This EA would not eliminate the need for the BLM to complete a Minimum Requirements Analysis (MRA) for the specific maintenance needs, and the permittee is required to obtain — in advance — a letter of authorization for each maintenance activity. Once the TPR for an allotment within wilderness is completed the maintenance actions would be in conformance with that document.

This also fulfills the need for the permittees to comply with 43 CFR 4120. 3-1 (a), which states "Range improvements shall be installed, used, maintained, and/or modified on the public lands, or removed from these lands, in a manner consistent with multiple-use management."

Affected Allotments by Wilderness

<u>Wilderness</u>	<u>Grazing Allotments</u>	<u>Wilderness</u>	<u>Grazing Allotments</u>
Becky Peak	Becky Creek Becky Springs Cherry Creek Chin Creek North Steptoe Tippett	Goshute Canyon	Cherry Creek Goshute Basin Indian Creek McDermitt Creek Medicine Butte
Big Rocks	Mustang Pahroc Oak Springs	Government Peak	Devils Gate Indian George Muncy Creek
Bristlecone	Goat Ranch Heusser Mountain Steptoe Thirty Mile Spring	Highland Ridge	Baker Creek Hamblin Valley Murphy Wash North Chokecherry South Spring Valley
Clover Mountains	Boulder Spring Cottonwood Garden Springs Henrie Complex Pennsylvania Schlarman Sheep Flat	Meadow Valley Range	Boulder Spring Breedlove Delamar Grapevine Henrie Complex Lower Riggs
Delamar Mountains	Buckhorn Delamar Grapevine Lower Lake East	Mormon Mountains	Breedlove Gourd Spring Henrie Complex Mormon Peak Rox-Tule White Rock
Far South Egans	Shingle Pass Sunnyside	Mount Grafton	Cattle Camp/Cave Valley Cave Valley Ranch Geyser Ranch
Fortification Range	Cottonwood Geyser Ranch South Spring Valley Wilson Creek	Mt. Irish	Bald Mountain Crescent N-4 Irish Mountain Pahranagat West Pine Cone Wildhorse

Wilderness
Mt. Moriah

Grazing Allotments

Devils Gate
Muncy Creek
Rye Grass
Silver Creek
Smith Creek

Wilderness
Tunnel Spring

Grazing Allotments

Barclay
Enterprise

Parsnip Peak

Wilson Creek

Weepah Spring

Coal Valley Lake
Needles
Sunnyside
Timber Mountain
Wilson Creek

South Egan
Range

Brown Knoll
Chimney Rock
Hardy Spring
Rock Canyon
Sheep Pass
Shingle Pass
Six Mile Ranch
Sunnyside

White Rock
Range

U4
Wilson Creek

South Pahroc
Range

Buckhorn
Pahroc
Six Mile

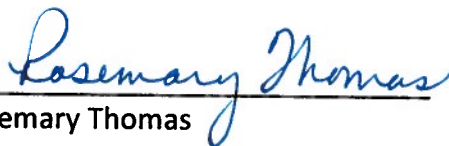
Worthington
Mountains

McCutcheon Springs
Sand Springs
Shadow Wells
Worthington Mountain

Expected Decision

Provide your comments on this proposed action to Emily Simpson, Wilderness Planner, at esimpson@blm.gov, or in writing to address above. If you do not have comments at this time, but wish to be notified when the EA is available for review, please respond to Emily Simpson via email to be included on future mailings regarding this topic.

The 30-day scoping period concludes Wednesday, December 19, 2014.



Rosemary Thomas
District Manager
Ely District


Date