



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
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In Reply Refer To:  
8100/6300 (NV30.01)

## NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION IN WILDERNESS

**STATE:** Nevada

**COUNTY:** Humboldt  
Washoe  
Pershing

**OFFICE:** Winnemucca District  
5100 East Winnemucca Blvd.  
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

**WILDERNESS AREAS:** All Winnemucca District Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas

### **PROPOSED ACTION: Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) for Paleontological Inventory and Excavation of Fossils in Winnemucca District Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Winnemucca District Office (WDO) is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) that will analyze the potential impacts of paleontological inventory and excavation of fossils in Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas. The purpose of the proposed action is to inventory, excavate and remove fossilized vertebrate remains from the ten Wilderness Areas associated with the Black Rock NCA and the one Wilderness in the Humboldt River Field Office in addition to the 11 Wilderness Study Areas in Winnemucca District (See attached map).

The proposal is intended to be programmatic, i.e., to address unspecified applications for inventory and limited collection received over the next ten years. Because the amount of disturbance related to this type of permit is limited to a maximum of ten sq. m (ca. 100 sq. ft.), the environmental consequences are relatively few and can be predicted despite the programmatic/non-specific nature of the proposed actions.

The need for this action is two-fold. One is the collection and identification of the fossilized bones. The second, is the preservation of the fossils. Fossils are non-renewable resources and are rapidly destroyed by agents of erosion when they are exposed at the surface. Furthermore, they cannot be fully studied in a field setting. Excavation of fossils and proper storage in a climate-controlled facility is needed to insure its long-term preservation for study and public education and enjoyment. Other benefits include published reports, educational, and interpretive opportunities.

It is the intent of this document to outline the requirements for the issuance of permits under given circumstances that would include but not be limited to the preparation of a Notice of Proposed Action (NOPA) and Minimum Tools Analysis (MRDG) but would not require further review under NEPA. If the projects do not fall within the parameters specified in this Environmental Assessment, additional evaluation under NEPA would be required.

This document will analyze the permitting of two different types of projects.

Project Type A consists of pedestrian inventory in Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas to locate and record fossils on public lands and to collect a very limited quantity of fossils, the total disturbance area not to exceed one square meter (9 sq. ft.) total for a given project.

Project Type B consists of the excavation of fossils in Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas not to exceed a maximum area of 10 sq. meters (ca. 100 sq. ft.). Projects of this type would require prior archaeological and biological studies be completed.

The BLM's purpose for this NOPA is to allow the opportunity to provide input early in the process. The BLM will utilize and coordinate this National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process to help fulfill the public involvement process under the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C.306108) as provided in 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). The information about historic and cultural resources within the area potentially affected by the proposed action will assist the BLM in identifying and evaluating impacts to such resources in the context of both NEPA and the National Historic Preservation Act. The BLM will consult with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis in accordance with Executive Order 13175, Secretarial Order 3317, and other policies.

If you would like to be involved in this planning process or have input concerning this proposal, please mail or email your comments to:

Bureau of Land Management  
Attn: Kathryn Ataman  
5100 E Winnemucca Blvd  
Winnemucca, NV 89445  
Phone: 775 623-1589  
Email: [kataman@blm.gov](mailto:kataman@blm.gov)

We must receive your comments by Monday, August 1, 2017 to ensure consideration in the development of the EA. If you do not respond to this letter, we will not include you in follow-up

correspondence relating to this EA. You will however remain on our coordination list for future projects. If you are not interested in receiving information relating to BLM actions or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact us at the above address or email.

Public comments submitted for this project, including names and addresses of commenters will be available for public review at the WDO during regular business hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment -- including personal identifying information -- may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.



For Michael Toombs  
Winnemucca District Office Manager (Acting)

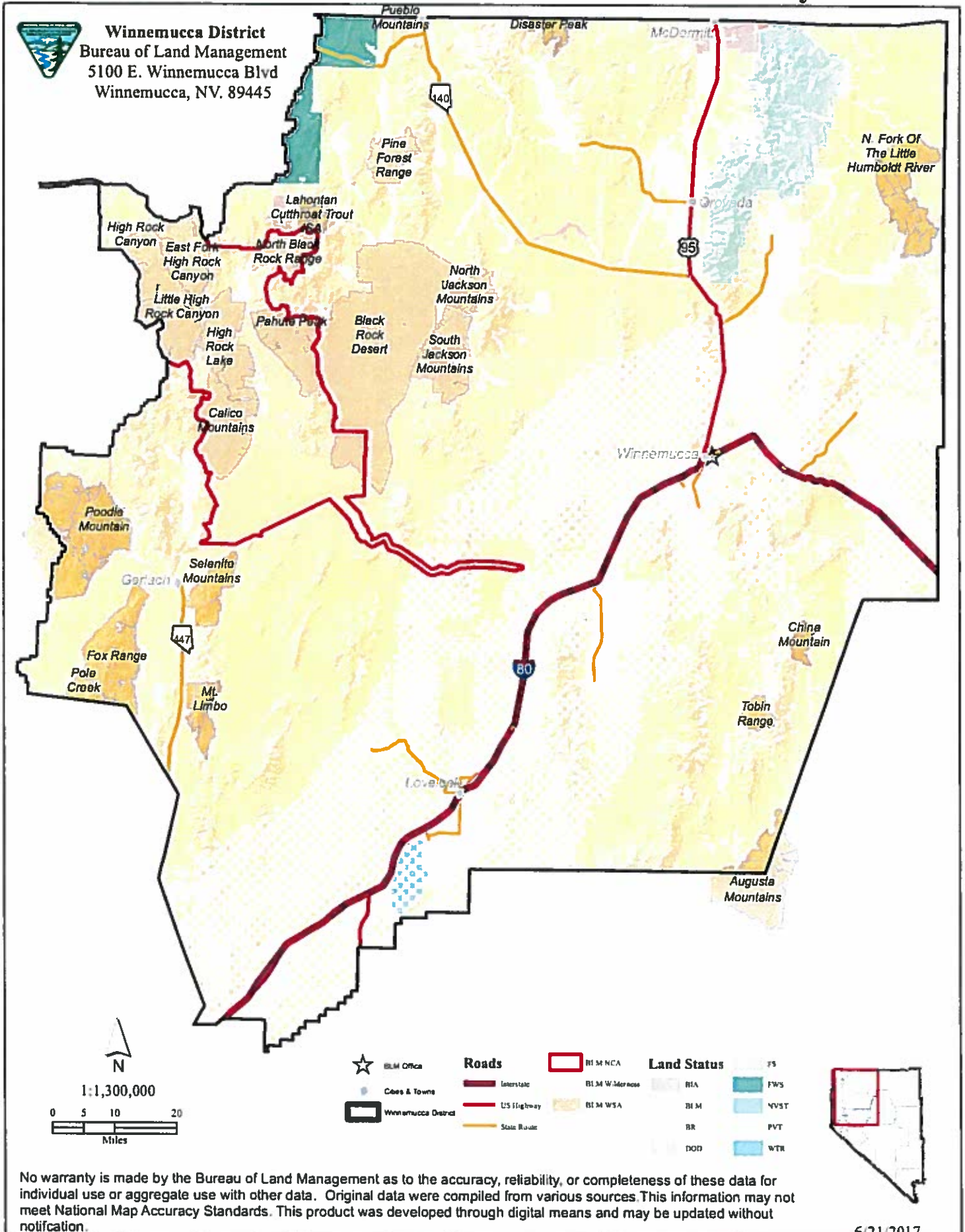
Date: 6/26/2017

Enclosure

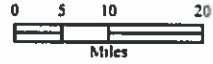
# Winnemucca District Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas



**Winnemucca District**  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 5100 E. Winnemucca Blvd  
 Winnemucca, NV. 89445



1:1,300,000



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|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------|--------|
| ★ BLM Office          | <b>Roads</b>  | □ BLM NCA        | <b>Land Status</b> | □ FS   |
| ● Cities & Towns      | — Interstate  | □ BLM Wilderness | □ BIA              | □ FWS  |
| □ Winnemucca District | — US Highway  | □ BLM WSA        | □ BLM              | □ NVST |
|                       | — State Route |                  | □ BR               | □ PVT  |
|                       |               |                  | □ DOD              | □ WTR  |



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