**US Department of the Interior**

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**Carson City District**
**Resource Management Plan Revision**

# Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

## Report on the Application of the Relevance and Importance Criteria

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# Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
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March 2013

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Bureau of Land Management
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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | Full Phrase |
|---|---|
| ACEC | Area of Critical Environmental Concern |
| BLM | United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management |
| CCD | Carson City District |
| CFR | Code of Federal Regulations |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| ESA | Endangered Species Act |
| FLPMA | Federal Land Policy and Management Act |
| MFP | Master Framework Plan |
| NDOW | Nevada Department of Wildlife |
| NNHP | Nevada Natural Heritage Program |
| RMP | Resource Management Plan |
| USC | United States Code |
| USFWS | United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service |
| WWP | Western Watersheds Project |

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## SUMMARY

As part of the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Carson City District (CCD) Resource Management Plan (RMP) revision, the CCD Interdisciplinary Teams analyzed whether existing and proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) met the relevance and importance criteria set forth in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1610.7-2 and BLM Manual 1613, *Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*. The Interdisciplinary Team analyzed a total of 32 ACECs (6 existing ACECs [**Figure 1**, CCD RMP Existing ACECs] and 26 proposed ACECs [**Figure 2**, CCD RMP Proposed ACECs]) and found that 23 met the relevance and importance criteria, for a total of 782,044 acres (**Table 1**, Proposed ACECs Found to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria; **Figure 3**, ACECs Recommended for Analysis in the Draft RMP/EIS).

The areas found to meet both the relevance and importance criteria will be identified as potential ACECs and will be fully considered for designation and management in the RMP (BLM Manual 1613.21). See **Appendix A**, Maps of ACECs Recommended for Further Analysis in the Draft RMP, for maps of recommended ACECs. For the areas found not to meet the relevance and importance criteria, "the management prescriptions which are eventually established in the plan for such areas shall reflect consideration of the identified values" (BLM Manual 1613.21.D).

## I. INTRODUCTION

As part of the process for developing the Carson City RMP revision, the CCD Interdisciplinary Teams reviewed all BLM-managed lands in the planning area to determine whether any areas should be considered for designation as ACECs. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires that priority shall be given to the designation and protection of ACECs. ACECs are defined in FLPMA Section 103(a) (43 United States Code [USC] 1702) and in 43 CFR 1601.0-5(a) as "areas within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards." The following analysis and the resultant findings for ACEC relevance and importance criteria has been performed pursuant to FLPMA Section 202(c)(3) (43 USC 1712), 43 CFR 1610.7-2, and BLM Manual 1613, *Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*.

1 CCD RMP Existing ACECs

## 2 CCD RMP Proposed ACECs

## II. REQUIREMENTS FOR ACEC DESIGNATION

To be eligible for designation as an ACEC, an area must meet the relevance and importance criteria described in 43 CFR 1610.7-2 and BLM Manual 1613, and need special management. The determinations in this report deal strictly with the relevance and importance criteria, and not special management attention.

Relevance and importance are defined as follows:

> **Relevance:** There shall be present a significant historic, cultural, or scenic value, a fish or wildlife resource or other natural system or process, or natural hazard.
>
> **Importance:** The above described value, resource, system, process, or hazard shall have substantial significance and value, which generally requires qualities of more than local significance and special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern. A natural hazard can be important if it is a significant threat to life or property.

***Relevance***

An area meets the relevance criterion if it contains one or more of the following:

1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).
2. A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).
3. A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).
4. Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action might meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the resource management planning process to have become part of a natural process.

***Importance***

An area meets the importance criterion if it meets one or more of the following:

1. Has more than locally significant qualities that give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.

2. Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.
3. Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.
4. Has qualities that warrant highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.
5. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

**Table 1**
**Proposed ACECs Found to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| ACEC | Recommended Acres |
|---|---|
| Black Mountain/Pistone Archaeological District (internally proposed) | 3,414 |
| Carson Wandering Skipper (existing ACEC) | 323 |
| Churchill Narrows Buckwheat Botanical (externally proposed) | 6,428 |
| Clan Alpine Greater Sage-Grouse (externally proposed) | 98,428 |
| Desatoya Greater Sage-Grouse (internally and externally proposed) | 105,058 |
| Dixie Valley Toad (externally proposed) | 413 |
| Fox Peak Cultural (externally proposed) | 48,391 |
| Greater Sand Mountain (internally and externally proposed) | 17,066 |
| Grimes Point Archaeological (internally and externally proposed) | 15,877 |
| Incandescent Rocks Scenic (existing ACEC) | 1,103 |
| Lassen Red Rock Scenic (internally proposed) | 757 |
| Namazii Wunu Cultural (externally proposed) | 158,264 |
| Pah Rah High Basin Petroglyph (existing ACEC) | 5,260 |
| Pine Nut Bi-State Sage-Grouse (internally and externally proposed) | 100,415 |
| Pine Nut Mountains Williams Combleaf Botanical (internally proposed) | 317 |
| Ruhenstroth Paleontological (internally proposed) | 2,334 |
| Sand Springs Desert Study Area (internally proposed) | 55 |
| Steamboat Buckwheat Botanical (internally proposed) | 80 |
| Stewart Valley Paleontological (existing ACEC) | 15,930 |
| Tagɨm aša Cultural (externally proposed) | 81,753 |
| Virginia City National Landmark Historic District (externally proposed) | 14,700 |
| Virginia Mountains Greater Sage-Grouse (externally proposed) | 105,206 |
| Virginia Range Williams Combleaf Botanical (existing ACEC) | 473 |
| **Total** | **782,044** |

## 3 ACECs Recommended for Analysis in the Draft RMP/EIS

## III. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT ATTENTION

Special management attention refers to "management prescriptions developed during preparation of an RMP or amendment expressly to protect the important and relevant values of an area from the potential effects of actions permitted by the RMP, including proposed actions deemed to be in conformance with the terms, conditions, and decisions of the RMP" (BLM Manual 1613.12). Thus, these are management measures that would not be necessary and prescribed if the relevant and important values were not present.

A management prescription is considered to be special if it is unique to the area involved and includes terms and conditions specifically to protect the values occurring within the area. BLM Manual 1613 includes the following guidance on incorporating management prescriptions for potential ACECs into appropriate alternatives:

> *During the formulation of alternatives, management prescriptions for potential ACECs are fully developed. Management prescriptions will generally vary across the plan alternatives. If there is no controversy or issues raised regarding the management of a potential ACEC, it may not be necessary to develop a range of management alternatives. In other words, management prescriptions may not vary significantly across alternatives. A potential ACEC (or portion thereof) must be shown as recommended for designation in any or all alternatives in the Draft RMP in which special management attention is prescribed to protect the resource or to minimize hazard to human life and safety. Because special management attention must be prescribed in at least one plan alternative, each potential ACEC will appear as a recommended ACEC in at least one plan alternative.* (BLM Manual 1613.22.B)

> *Designation is based on whether or not a potential ACEC requires special management attention in the selected plan alternative [i.e. proposed RMP].* BLM Manual 1613.23)

## IV. EVALUATION PROCESS

In compiling a list of areas to be analyzed in this report, the BLM Interdisciplinary Team followed the guidance set forth in BLM Manual 1613 and considered:

1. Existing ACECs
2. Areas recommended for ACEC consideration (internal and external nominations)
3. Areas with administrative special designations from previous land use plans that were not official BLM designation categories (e.g., Natural Areas and Nature Area)
4. Areas identified through inventory and monitoring

5. Adjacent designations of other federal and state agencies

ACECs may be nominated by BLM staff, other agencies, or members of the public at any time. During the RMP revision scoping process, the CCD solicited nominations and comments from the public and other agencies. A map of special designation areas was distributed at the scoping meetings and was made available on the RMP website: *http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/carson_city_field.html*.

The BLM staff also reviewed information on areas with out-of-date designations to ensure that all potentially relevant and important values within the planning areas were considered.

The maps of ACECs recommended for analysis in the Draft RMP are included in **Appendix A** and are for those areas that were found to meet the relevance and importance criteria. The size and management prescriptions for each ACEC may vary by alternative to reflect a balance between the goals and objectives of the alternative and values being protected (BLM Manual 1613.22.B.1-2). **Table 2**, Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria, summarizes the proposed ACECs evaluated, the values assessed, and whether the criteria were met (including supporting information).

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or External | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *(see Section II for relevance and importance criterion)* | | |
| **Black Mountain /Pistone Archaeological District**<br><br>Proposed:<br>3,414 acres<br><br>Recommend:<br>3,414 acres | Internal | Cultural | 1 | 1, 2 | The Black Mountain/Pistone Archaeological District encompasses significant petroglyph sites and numerous cultural artifacts including projectile points, rock features such as corals and hunting blinds, and habitation sites. The site is important to the Walker River and Yerington Paiute Tribes as well as other northern Paiute bands. No immediate threats to this resource have been identified; however, the cumulative impacts from development in the Yerington area and increase use of OHVs greatly increase the potential for the loss of integrity of this site. |
| **Carson Wandering Skipper**<br><br>Existing ACEC:<br>243 acres | Existing | Biological | 3 | 1, 2, 3 | The exisiting Carson Wandering Skipper ACEC is a 240 acre site consisting of two separate parcels located approximately 25 miles north of the Reno-Sparks area along Winnemucca Ranch Road. The ACEC |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Proposed:<br>240 acres*<br><br>Recommended:<br>323 acres | | | | | was designated (January 2001) to protect the Carson Wandering Skipper habitat prior to its listing as an endangered species by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in November 2001. The Carson Wandering Skipper is a small butterfly that occupies grassland habitat on alkaline substrate in California and Nevada. Threats to the habitat include agricultural use and the expanding residential and commercial development. Private lands containing core habitat for the Skipper adjacent to the ACEC have been acquired since the ACEC designation and are included in the recommended ACEC through boundary adjustments. **Reduction in ACEC acreage is due to corrected GIS boundary information.* |
| **Churchill Narrows Buckwheat Botanical** | External (USFWS) | Botanical | 3 | 1, 2, 3 | The Churchill Narrows area is the only known habitat for the Churchill Narrows buckwheat *(Eriogonum diatomaceum)*, an endemic plant identified as a candidate species by the |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Proposed: 6,429 acres *(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended: 6,428 acres *(BLM acres only)* | | | | | USFWS, listed by the State of Nevada, and a BLM sensitive species. This species of buckwheat is only found in this location. The right balance of soil type, soil moisture and elements within the soil are critical for the survival of this endemic species. Threats to this plant include mining and OHV use. |
| **Clan Alpine Greater Sage-Grouse**<br><br>Proposed: 500,149 acres (*includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended: 98,428 acres (*BLM acres only)* | External (Western Watershed Project [WWP]) | Biological | 2 | 2 | The Greater Sage-Grouse *(Centrocercus urophasianus)* is a candidate species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Protecting habitat is key to preventing listing as a threatened or endangered species. Habitat is occupied and there is the potential to enhance habitat and reduce fragmentation. The Cherry Valley area of the Population Management Unit (PMU) is a crucial summer brood rearing area containing multiple wet meadow complexes. Threats include conifer encroachment, wildfire, grazing, and invasive species, in particular, summer grazing in the Cherry Valley wet meadow areas. |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Desatoya Greater Sage-Grouse**<br><br>Proposed:<br>508,611 acres *(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended:<br>105,058 acres *(BLM acres only)* | External (WWP) | Biological | 2 | 2 | The Greater Sage-Grouse *(Centrocercus urophasianus)* is a candidate species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Protecting habitat is key to preventing listing as a threatened or endangered species. Habitat is occupied and there is the potential to enhance habitat and reduce fragmentation. Threats to the species include conifer encroachment, wildfire, grazing, and the spread of invasive species. |
| **Dixie Valley Toad**<br><br>Proposed:<br>953 acres *(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended:<br>413 acres *(BLM acres only)* | External (Nevada Dept. of Wildlife [NDOW]) | Biological | 2, 3 | 1, 2 | The name of the "Dixie Valley Toad" is a common name for the subspecies of western toad (*Bufo boreas boreas* ) found in the Dixie Meadows area (*Anaxyrus* is the new genus name but most literature refers to the genus *Bufo*). Monitoring data does not indicate that the subspecies is undergoing any population or habitat stresses that would threaten the subspecies. All indications of recent NDOW, Navy, BLM and USFWS |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | surveys over the last 3-4 years indicate a thriving and healthy population. As long as the spring sources remain and the breeding areas are intact, the population should remain viable. The toad found in Dixie Valley has been suggested by Professor Dick Tracy of University of Nevada, Reno that a new taxonomic designation is warranted. However no peer reviewed research has been published. The spring supplying water to the meadow is located on land under Navy ownership adjacent to the meadows and the breeding habitat occurs on BLM-administered lands. The ponds in the northern part of the area are not natural since they were created by placing dykes, but the springs represent a rare perennial water source on a desert playa. The toad breeds in the northern and southern part of the proposed ACEC. The breeding habitat is created from the springs not the |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | ponds. Egg masses are laid in shallow ( a few inches) of water covering up salt grass. Challenges presented for managing the area include mixed land ownership, existing rights-of-way, patented lands, and mineral rights. |
| **Fox Peak Cultural**<br><br>Proposed: 325,123 acres *(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended: 48,391 acres (*BLM acres only)* | External (Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe) | Cultural | 1 | 1 | The originally proposed Stillwater Mountain ACEC included the entire mountain range. However, only the portion around Fox Peak meets relevance and importance criteria. Parts of the range have significance for Shoshone/Paiute Tribes, mainly Job Peak, also known as Fox Peak, and the Table Mountain areas. These areas are tied to local creation stories. Sand dunes are habitation sites and may result in the identification of burials due to the proximity these site types. *In the Shadow of Fox Peak*, an ethnography of the Toidɨkadɨ Northern Paiute band provides historical use of the Fox Peak and Stillwater Marsh area. The range and adjacent Stillwater marsh have been |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | used by the Toidɨkadɨ and other bands of Northern Paiute for the procurement of a variety of resources including animals and plants for food, medicine , and basketry. The Job Peak and Stillwater Wilderness Study Areas fall within the boundaries of the originally proposed Stillwater Mountain ACEC. |
| **Greater Sand Mountain**<br><br>Proposed: 34,052 acres<br><br>Recommended: 17,066 acres | Internal & External (Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe) | Unique Feature, Historical, Cultural, Biological | 1, 3 | 1, 2 | The Sand Mountain dune ecosystem is a complex ecological system that represents a rare, sensitive and fragile environment of dune flora and fauna. There are 28 rare and endemic species unique to Sand Mountain. The sand dunes at the site are known as one of the "Singing Sand Dunes" due to the unique characteristics of the sand. The sand dunes provide habitat for the Kearny buckwheat *(Eriogonum nummulare)*, which is the host plant for the Sand Mountain blue butterfly (*Euphilotes pallescens arenamontana*), a BLM sensitive species endemic to Sand |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Mountain. The cultural significance of the area is found in both historic and prehistoric components. Within the proposed ACEC, approximately 104 archaeological sites have been recorded. Of these 104 sites, approximately 60 have been evaluated as eligible for inclusion into the National Register of Historic Places. Historic use of the Sand Mountain area include Sand Springs Pony Express Station, an Overland Stage stop, an ore processing mill and a post office.<br><br>The Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe considers Sand Mountain as a sacred site. Ethnographic and archaeological data shows that the area just south of Sand Mountain was an important prehistoric route that was utilized by people from the Stillwater and Carson Lake areas. The dune and surrounding area are currently designated as a BLM recreation area. |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grimes Point Archaeological**<br><br>Proposed: 22,283 acres *(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended: 15,877 acres *(BLM acres only)* | Internal & External (Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe) | Cultural | 1 | 1, 2 | Significant Native American cultural and historical resources exist at this site. The area has been used for many years by Native Americans and others. Caves provide significant paleoclimatological records. The Grimes Point area includes a National Recreation Trail, numerous burials, caves, petroglyphs, and lithic scatters as well. A toll bridge/road and freight line existed in the area across Highway 50, the old Fallon town dump and the Grimes Point Ranch are evidence of historic use of the area. Mineral activity includes an existing permitted mine and a gravel pit. A section of the proposed ACEC was designated as an Archaeological Area in 2001. |
| **Incandescent Rocks Scenic**<br><br>Exising ACEC: 1,075 acres | Existing | Scenic | 1, 2 | 1, 2 | The Incandescent Rocks Scenic ACEC (originally called *Incandescent Rocks Natural Scenic ACEC*) is a 1,103 acre site located in southern Washoe County roughly 25 miles north of the Reno-Sparks area and five miles east of |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Proposed:<br>1,103 acres*<br><br>Recommended:<br>1,103 acres* | | | | | Pyramid Lake. The significance of the site centers on the rhyolitic outcrops and ridges that are characterized by red, yellow, orange and purple hues that appear to fluoresce or glow as light reflects off the walls. The ACEC was designated through the Reno MFP in 1984. An ACEC Management Plan was completed in 1988 with the objective of preserving and protecting the natural integrity and scenic resources of the area. Potential threats to the resource were identified as being OHV use and mineral exploration and extraction.<br>**Increase in ACEC acreage is to due corrected GIS boundary information.* |
| **Lassen Red Rock Scenic**<br><br>Proposed:<br>757 acres*<br><br>Recommended:<br>757 acres* | Internal | Scenic | 1 | 1, 2 | The Lassen Red Rock Scenic area is an 804 acre site located in Lassen County, CA and Washoe County, NV off of Highway 395 on the northwest edge of Petersen Mountain. The scenic area designation applied in the Reno MFP was attributed to the unique and colorful geological features including |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | bright red, white and grey pillars, pinnacles, crags and canyons. Management objectives were to develop a day use/picnic area, limit OHV use to roads and trails, and protect the geologic features. The designation was finalized with Federal Register Notice Vol. 49, No 213 on November 1, 1984. In 1986, due to an error in the public land description, a correction was made to the boundary of the area that changed the acreage from 700 acres to 804 acres. **Reduction in ACEC acreage is to due corrected GIS boundary information.* |
| **Namazii Wunu Cultural**<br><br>Proposed:<br>184,794 acres<br>*(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended: | External (Yerington Paiute Tribe) | Cultural | 1 | 1, 2, 3 | The Pine Nut Mountains have been identified by the Yerington Paiute Tribe as a traditional use area including traditional gathering of pine nut. Pinyon pines are slow growing and seed production is unpredictable so large areas are required to ensure a reliable source of production. The area is also central to religious belief and customs. |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 158,264 acres<br>*(BLM acres only)* | | | | | The area is used for the collection of native plants for food, medicine and basket making. The traditional use of the plants and trees and the cultural values placed on them make them irreplaceable. Threats include wildfire, OHV use, grazing, and mining. |
| **Pah Rah High Basin Petroglyph**<br><br>Existing ACEC:<br>3,881 acres<br><br>Proposed:<br>4,861 acres*<br><br>Recommended:<br>5,260 acres* | Existing | Cultural | 1 | 1, 2, 3 | The Pah Rah High Basin Petroglyph ACEC (originally called *Pah Rah High Basin (Dry Lakes) Petroglyph District ACEC*) is a 3,881 acre site located north of Highway 80 East and approximately 6 miles northeast of Sparks, Nevada. The significance and relevance of this site is primarily cultural but also includes historical and scenic values. Evidence indicating the site was used by Native Americans for over 3,500 years includes petroglyphs, rock rings, stone artifacts, as well as seasonal and residential camps. This site is culturally significant to both the Southern Washoe and Northern Paiute Tribes. The objective of the ACEC, which was established by |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | the Southern Washoe County Plan Amendment in 2001, was to protect the site from urban expansion, increased recreational use of OHVs, theft of artifacts and acts of vandalism. **The boundary is proposed to be adjusted in order to be legally described and more accurately encompass the resource.* |
| **Pine Nut Bi-State Sage-Grouse**<br><br>Proposed:<br>574,373 acres<br>*(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended:<br>100,415 acres<br>(*BLM acres only*) | Internal and External (WWP) | Biological | 2 | 2 | The Bi-State Greater Sage-Grouse is a Distinct Population Segment and is a candidate species under the ESA. Protecting habitat is key to preventing listing as a threatened or endangered species. Habitat is occupied and there is potential to enhance habitat and reduce fragmentation. Threats include conifer encroachment, wildfire, OHV, and invasive species. |
| **Pine Nut Mountains Williams Combleaf** | Internal | Botanical | 3 | 1, 2, 3 | The Pine Nut Mountains contains 12 small playa lakes which are the habitat for Williams combleaf *(Polyctenium williamsiae* Rollins), a BLM sensitive plant |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Botanical**<br><br>Proposed:<br>570 acres *(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended:<br>317 acres (*BLM acres only*) | | | | | species and State of Nevada critically endangered species. The required habitat consists of the narrow margins around the playa lakes. The primary threat to the Williams combleaf is any alteration to the hydrology or wet and dry cycle of the playa lakes, which is crucial for maintaining the habitat for the species. In the past, the BLM has excavated portions of the playa lake bed, as part of a grazing project, resulting in reduced saturation of the soil surface along the margins of the lake. The result has been a reduction in plant densities and in some areas extirpation. The playa lakes are also important strutting grounds adjacent to nesting areas for the Bi-State Sage Grouse. The area is threatended by OHV and grazing. |
| **Ruhenstroth Paleontological**<br><br>Proposed: | Internal | Paleontological | 1 | 1, 2, 3 | Vertebrate fossils are abundant in the Sunrise Pass geologic formation. The Keck Mastodon (on display at the Keck Museum at the University of Nevada- |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2,346 acres *(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended: 2,334 acres (*BLM acres only*) | | | | | Reno) was excavated here in 2002 after user-created OHV trail erosion exposed portions of the fossils. Unauthorized recreational activities threaten the area. |
| **Sand Springs Desert Study Area**<br><br>Proposed: 55 acres<br><br>Recommended: 55 acres | Internal | Historic | 1, 3 | 1, 2 | The Sand Springs Desert Study Area is a fenced forty acre tract located just south of the Sand Mountain Recreation Area that preserves a remnant of the land the way it was during the days of the Pony Express. The area is closed to OHV travel and open to hiking. There is a one-half mile self-guiding interpretive trail that winds through the study area. Along this trail visitors will find more than a dozen signs which provide information on the wildlife, plants, history, and geology of the Sand Mountain area. The Sand Springs Pony Express Station, one of the few remaining rock walled structures, is located within the study area. The |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | station was buried under sand for close to 100 years prior to being excavated by University of Nevada, Reno in 1977. |
| **Steamboat Buckwheat Botanical**<br><br>Proposed:<br>80 acres<br><br>Recommended:<br>80 acres | Internal | Botanical | 3 | 1, 2, 3 | The Steamboat buckwheat *(Eriogonum ovalifolium* var. *williamsiae)* is federally listed as an endangered species and is listed by the State of Nevada as critically endangered. The habitat for the Steamboat buckwheat was created from a unique natural process in which the sinter soils were created from hydrothermally altered bedrock. While the natural process has diminished with urbanization of the area, it continues to occur. The right balance of soil type, soil moisture, and elements within the soil are critical for the survival of this endemic species.<br><br>The Steamboat area is also habitat for the altered andesite buckwheat *(Eriogonum robustum)*, a BLM sensitive species. The plant species is limited to soils which have been altered by |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | hydrothermal processes. The soils are a nonrenewable resource and are crucial to the survival of this species. Threats include OHV and invasive species. |
| **Stewart Valley Paleontological**<br><br>Existing ACEC:<br>16,000 acres<br><br>Proposed:<br>15,967 acres*<br>*(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended:<br>15,930 acres (*BLM acres only*) | Existing | Paleontological | 1, 3 | 1, 2 | The Stewart Valley ACEC is a 15,967 acre paleontological site located in the east central part of Mineral County. The ACEC was officially designated as a Research Natural Area ACEC in the land use planning process through the BLM Walker Resource Management Plan in 1986. The site is situated within a basin formed by the uplifted fault-block system typical of the Basin and Range physiographic province. The ancient lake bed that was formed by the uplifting is filled with sediments from the Miocene age and includes fossil specimens of mammals, clams, snails, fish, insects, pollen and leaves. An ACEC Management Plan was completed in September 1990 with the objective of protecting fossil resources while allowing the continuation of authorized |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | scientific study. The plan restricted recreational activities, limited vehicles to designated roads and trails, prohibited the hobby or commercial collection of fossils, and provided for a mineral entry withdrawal of 1,420 acres for the most sensitive portion of the ACEC. **Reduction in ACEC acreage is due to corrected GIS boundary information.* |
| **Tagim aša Cultural**<br><br>Proposed:<br>145,802 acres *(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended:<br>81,753 acres (*BLM acres only)* | External (Washoe Tribe) | Cultural | 1 | 1, 2, 3 | The Pine Nut Mountains have been identified by the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California as an important source of spiritual renewal and subsistence, which includes the collection of a variety of resources including plant (food, medicine and basketry) and animal resources. The area is utilized by its tribal members for traditional gathering of the pine nuts. Threats include wildfire, OHV use, grazing, wood cutting and mining. |
| **Virginia City National Landmark** | External (Private Citizen) | Historical | 1 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Virginia City was designated by the National Park Service as a National Historic Landmark in 1961 and it is also |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Historic District**<br><br>Proposed:<br>33,751 acres<br>*(includes BLM and non-BLM land)*<br><br>Recommended:<br>14,700 acres *(BLM acres only)* | | | | | listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Virginia City is recognized as nationally significant for its role in the Civil War, and the creation of the state of Nevada, as well as for the many significant developments in mining and milling technology and water systems that occurred here. The area is also significant for its association with famous (and infamous) persons including Mark Twain and William Sharon and the Bank of California. Virginia City is still popular as a tourist destination, and this currently represents the majority of the economic activity for the town. More than a century of mining and milling has led to a landscape riddled with abandoned mine workings, deep shafts, and ground instability. Early milling processes have left the soils and watershed of Virginia City contaminated with mercury, arsenic, and other EPA- |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | listed contaminants. |
| **Virginia Mountains Greater Sage-Grouse**<br><br>Proposed:<br>329,976 acres<br>*(includes BLM and non-BLM lands)*<br><br>Recommended:<br>105,206 acres | External (WWP) | Biological | 2 | 2 | The Greater Sage-Grouse is a candidate species under the ESA. Protecting habitat is key to preventing listing as a threatened or endangered species. Habitat is occupied and there is potential to enhance habitat and reduce fragmentation. Threats to the species include conifer encroachment, wildfire, grazing, infrastructure, geothermal, urbanization and invasive species. The Pah Rah Range portion of the proposed ACEC has limited scattered occupiable habitat on BLM-managed land and due to the mixed ownership in the area, this portion of the proposed ACEC does not meet relevance or importance criteria. It is affected by development, wildfire, and poor habitat conditions. |
| **Virginia Range Williams Combleaf Botanical** | Existing | Botanical | 3 | 1, 2, 3 | The Virginia Range Williams Combleaf Botanical ACEC (originally called *Virginia Range Williams Combleaf Habitat ACEC)* is a 473 acre site located northeast of Washoe Lake two miles east of |

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal or | Values Assessed | Relevance Criteria Supported | Importance Criteria Supported | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Existing ACEC:<br>473 acres<br><br>Proposed:<br>473 acres<br><br>Recommended:<br>473 acres | | | | | Highway 395 between Carson City and Reno. The ACEC was established for the Williams combleaf, a plant of the mustard family that has the potential to be listed as an endangered species. Essential habitat encompasses barren sandy or clay soils at the bottoms of seasonal pools or lakes. The objective of the ACEC designation was to preserve the habitat from indiscriminant OHV use, livestock grazing and water diversions. A conservation agreement was entered into between the BLM and USFWS signed in 1997 to provide long-term protection for Williams combleaf as an action to preclude listing the species as a threatened or endangered species under the ESA. This site was designated an ACEC by the 2001 Southern Washoe County Plan Amendment. |

**Table 3**
**Summary of the Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined Not to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal vs. External | Values Assessed | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Ambrose Carson River Natural Area**<br>Proposed:<br>188 acres | Internal | Natural System | The Ambrose Carson River Natural Area is located along the east side of Carson City along the banks of the Carson River. Facilities at this passive recreation site consist of a parking area and trail system that is jointly managed by the BLM and Carson City. The Ambrose Carson River Natural Area is in the process of being conveyed to Carson City under Section 2601 of the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009 so further consideration is not warranted. |
| **East Walker Scenic Area**<br>Proposed:<br>53 acres | Internal | Scenic | This 3,889 acre scenic area was expanded to 4,300 acres through the Walker Resource Area Management Plan of 1985. Under the Forest Enhancement Act of 1989, most of the lands within the scenic area were transferred to the Forest Service, but four parcels consisting of approximately 53 acres within the scenic area remain as public lands. These remaining lands are located west of Hawthorne along the California and Nevada border and are surrounded by National Forest and private lands. The Walker Resource Area Management Plan calls for management of the East Walker River Scenic Area as Visual Resource Management Class II to preserve the scenic quality of the area. This area does not meet the relevance and importance criteria to be designated as an ACEC in the RMP revision. |
| **Mount Grant Bi-State Sage-** | External (WWP) | Biological | Nevada BLM-administered lands in the Mt. Grant PMU that support Bi-State Sage-Grouse are very limited. Two leks occur; Nine Mile Flat and Baldwin Canyon. Lek surveys in 2010 counted 25 birds at Nine Mile |

**Table 3**
**Summary of the Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined Not to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal vs. External | Values Assessed | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grouse**<br>Proposed:<br>1,048,708 acres | | | Flat and no birds at Baldwin Canyon. Nesting habitat and water is extremely limited adjacent to these leks. The best habitat in the Mt. Grant PMU is on Department of Defense lands to the east/northeast of these leks. While relevance is met for Bi-State Sage-Grouse, importance is not met. The few birds that BLM lands support do not have substantial significance or more than local significance due to the fact that the habitat is not capable of supporting a large population of sage-grouse that are crucial to the long-term viability of the entire Bi-State sage-grouse population. Therefore, it will not be carried forward for further analysis. |
| **Pah Rah Greater Sage-Grouse**<br>Proposed:<br>178,095 acres | External (WWP) | Biological | The area has been significantly affected by human development, wildlife, and porr habitat conditions. While relevance is met for sage-grouse, importance is not met. The few birds that BLM lands support do not have substantial significance or more than local significance due to the fact that the habitat is not capable of supporting a large population of sage-grouse that are crucial to the long-term viability of the entire sage-grouse population. Therefore, it will not be carried forward for further analysis. |
| **Peterson Mountain Natural Area**<br>Proposed:<br>8,715 acres | Internal | Geological | The Petersen Mountain Natural Area is a 8,715 acre tract of high desert located along the California and Nevada state line north of Reno and southwest of Pyramid Lake. To preserve the naturalness, the area is managed for semi-primitive non-motorized recreation including hiking, biking and equestrian use. There is a trailhead and parking /staging lot located on the east side of the area. In September of 1988, |

**Table 3**
**Summary of the Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined Not to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal vs. External | Values Assessed | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 5,120 acres of the area was closed to motorized use (Federal Register Notice Vol 53, No 179). It was recommended that this site be designated as the Petersen Ridge "Recreation Lands", however, at the time of designation, recreation lands was no longer a valid designation so the name was changed to the Petersen Mountain Natural Area through Federal Register Notice Vol 49, No. 213 in November 1984. The area could appropriately be designated as a Special Recreation Management Area which would allow for protection of the recreational values it has been managed for the last 30 years. This area does not meet the relevance and importance criteria to be designated as a natural area ACEC in the RMP revision. |
| **Steamboat Hot Springs Geyser Basin**<br>Proposed:<br>41 acres | Existing | Geologic | The Steamboat Hot Springs Geyser Basin ACEC is a 41 acre site originally designated in 1984 Reno Master Framework Plan. The ACEC was established to protect and interpret the unique geyser field and related thermal features found at Steamboat Hot Springs. At one time, the geysers were considered to be the third most active geyser area in the U.S. but the formerly active geysers have reportedly become inactive resulting in the cessation of hot water flowing upon the surface. No surface expression currently exists at this site. Therefore, the existing ACEC no longer meets the relevance and importance criteria. |
| **Stillwater Greater Sage-** | External | Biological | No leks have been identified, and there is no documented occupation of available habitat. Therefore, the area does not meet the relevance |

**Table 3**
**Summary of the Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined Not to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal vs. External | Values Assessed | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grouse**<br>Proposed:<br>249,316 acres | (WWP) | | and importance criteria to become an ACEC and will not be carried forward for further analysis. |
| **Swan Lake Nature Area**<br>Proposed:<br>1,023 acres | Internal | Biological | Records for the actual designation process or mechanism of the Swan Lake Nature Study Area has not been determined but it has been reported that the area was dedicated in April 1999. No evidence has been found that it is a natural study area as defined by FLPMA or 43 CFR 1610.7-2. The 160 acre area is a wetland in the midst of suburban housing and commercial development 14 miles northeast of Reno. The BLM-managed land that falls within the mixed ownership is almost exclusively found beneath the wetlands. Depending on annual precipitation, the wetland varies from 100 acres to 1,000 acres. This large, shallow lake has a marshy habitat on the west side and adjacent Stead sewage treatment facility on the east which contributes 490 acre feet of water annually Swan Lake Nature Study Area is a Nevada Important Bird Area with over 150 species of birds being recorded and is cooperatively managed with a memorandum of understanding between the BLM, City of Reno, Lahontan Audubon, NDOW, Nevada National Guard, Washoe County, and the Washoe County School District. While once a large vernal pool, Swan Lake Nature Study Area has been altered by adjacent residential and commercial development and augmentation of water creating unnatural conditions and does not meet relevance and importance criteria. |

**Table 3**
**Summary of the Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area Determined Not to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria**

| Name of Proposed ACEC | Proposed Internal vs. External | Values Assessed | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Herd Area Wild Horse and Burro**<br>Proposed: 2,563,618 acres | External (Private Citizen) | Biological | Herd areas do not meet relevance and importance criteria for designation as an ACEC and will not be carried forward for analysis. |

# V. LIST OF PREPARERS

**Table 4**
**List of Preparers**

| Name | Role/Responsibility |
|---|---|
| ***Bureau of Land Management – Carson City District*** | |
| Colleen Sievers | RMP/EIS Project Manager |
| Angelica Rose | Planning/Environmental Coordinator |
| Brian Buttazoni | Planning/Environmental Coordinator |
| Chip Kramer | Planning/Environmental Coordinator |
| Dan Westermeyer | Outdoor Recreation Specialist |
| Arthur Callan | Outdoor Recreation Specialist |
| John Wilson | Wildlife Biologist |
| Pilar Ziegler | Wildlife Biologist |
| Kelly Sterle | Hydrologist |
| Niki Cutler | Hydrologist |
| Ed Klimasauskas | Geologist |
| Jason Wright | Archaeologist |
| Jim Carter | Archaeologist |
| Rachel Crews | Archaeologist |
| Jill Devaurs | Rangeland Management Specialist |
| Kathryn Dyer | Rangeland Management Specialist |
| Erik Pignata | Lands and Realty Specialist |
| Coreen Francis | Forester |
| Dean Tonenna | Botanist |
| Cheryl Davis | GIS Specialist |
| Devin Welty | GIS Specialist |
| ***Contractor – Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, Inc.*** | |
| Jennifer Thies | Project Management |
| Kate Krebs | Technical Review, Document Production |
| Marcia Rickey | GIS Specialist |
| Jenna Jonker | GIS Specialist |

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# Appendix A

## Maps of ACECs Recommended for Further Analysis in the Draft RMP

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A-1 Black Mountain/Pistone Archaeological District

## A-2 Carson Wandering Skipper

A-3 Churchill Narrows Buckwheat Botanical

## A-4 Clan Alpine Greater Sage-Grouse

## A-5 Desatoya Greater Sage-Grouse

## A-6 Dixie Valley Toad

A-7 Fox Peak Cultural

## A-8 Greater Sand Mountain

A-9 Grimes Point Archaeological

A-10 Incandescent Rocks Scenic

A-11 Lassen Red Rock Scenic

A-12 Namazii Wunu Cultural

A-13 Pah Rah High Basin Petroglyph

## A-14 Pine Nut Bi-State Sage-Grouse

A-15 Pine Nut Mountains Willimas Combleaf Botanical

## A-16 Ruhenstroth Paleontological

A-17 Sand Springs Desert Study Area

A-18 Steamboat Buckwheat Botanical

A-19 Stewart Valley Paleontological

## A-20 Tagim aša Cultural

## A-21 Virginia City National Landmark Historic District

## A-22 Virginia Mountains Greater Sage-Grouse

## A-23 Virginia Range Williams Combleaf Botanical

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