

# Virginia City Grand Prix

## Decision Record

DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2012-0032-EA

January 2013



## **Introduction**

The Virginia City Motorcycle Club (VCMC) is a domestic non-profit corporation in the State of Nevada, as well as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The VCMC is comprised entirely of volunteer members who serve in various elected offices (as specified in club by-laws) and as workers on club events.

The VCMC was formed in 2001 for the primary purpose of organizing the Virginia City Grand Prix (VCGP) motorcycle race. This event was conducted for 30 years by the founding organization, Western State Racing Association, and now for the past 11 years by the VCMC.

The VCGP is a two-day competitive event that is tightly integrated with the small historic tourist town of Virginia City, Nevada. The event's registered participants, with a combined two-day count ranging from 800 to 1,100 racers, are predominantly from out of state and most stay in Virginia City for multiple days during the event by patronizing the local hotels or by camping through the use of personal recreational vehicles.

The event's spectators are not regulated or counted, but reasonable estimates are of 6,000 to 8,000 additional town visitors over each race weekend who arrive to view the event or to support the individual race participants. The event is scheduled for the last weekend of April, which provides a significant economic impact at the beginning of the town's annual tourist season. The races importance to the region and the tourist-based economy of Virginia City is underscored by the strong support the local business community and the municipal government have demonstrated each year.

The event utilizes a racecourse that begins/ends in the middle of town and loops through the nearby mountainous areas. A course is normally 20 to 30 miles in length, with the specific route altered each year to provide variety for the racers and to reduce impact to roads and trails by the rotating use.

The racecourse crosses a combination of public and private lands, as well as municipal streets and State highways. The most intensely utilized land during the event, including the start/finish line, pits and designated refueling area, vendor areas, and official spectator locations, are all located on private lands within Virginia City.

The VCMC has worked in close coordination with local municipal agencies, including law enforcement, fire, medical and emergency responders, and the public works department, to ensure the event is effectively integrated with critical local services.

## **Public Involvement**

On August 15, 2011 the Proposed Action was evaluated by the BLM's interdisciplinary team. Issued that were raised during the review included:

- Are their BLM sensitive plant species in the Project area? Can potential impacts to them be minimized?
- Are their active, nesting raptors in the Project area? Can potential impacts to them be minimized?

- To what extent do previously authorized routes need re-evaluation under the National Historic Preservation Act?

On June 26, 2012 the BLM initiated a 30-day scoping period. A news release was distributed to the Carson City and Reno media outlets providing the public with notification. The news release was posted in the *Nevada Appeal*, *Virginia City News*, Fox Reno, and KTNV on-line. The BLM received six comment letters from the public all in support of this Project. Comments in support of this Project were received from the Storey County Fire Department and Sheriff's Office, Tourism and Community Services, and from the offices of the Honorable Tom Grady, State of Nevada Assembly and Honorable Dean Heller, U.S. Senator. Comments of support were received from 27 downtown Virginia City businesses. These comments received noted the benefits of the events to the area's tourism-based economy. The BLM also received comments from the Nevada Natural Heritage Program concerning three rare and sensitive plant species. The scoping period closed on July 26, 2012.

On November 5, 2012 the BLM released the Draft EA for 30-days public review and comment. Notification of the documents availability was sent to the project's mailing list and to the Nevada State Clearinghouse. The comment period closed on December 5, 2012. All comments received were be reviewed and categorized. The BLM received one comment from Storey County in support of the event. A comment was received from the Nevada Department of Transportation regarding highway right-of-ways, and one comment was received from the State Historic Preservation Officer. No changes were made to the Draft EA as a result of these comments.

### **Land Use Conformance**

The Proposed Action and No Action Alternative are in conformance with the Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan dated May 2001. The applicable section is described below:

REC-2, Desired Outcome #1:

- "Provide a wide range of quality recreation opportunities on public lands under management by the Carson City Field Office."

### **Authority**

Implementation of the Proposed Action is under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and regulations found at 43 CFR 2930.

### **Environmental Commitments**

Migratory birds. As described in Section 3.2 of the Final EA, migratory birds may be present during the annual race event, as the proposed race would occur during the migratory bird nesting season (considered to be from March 1 to July 15). Existing raptor nest data would be reviewed annually and field surveys would be conducted by BLM within 10 days of the event where there is data for active nests within 350 feet of the race route (within one-half mile of the race route for the presence of active golden eagle nests). If an active nest is found, the race route may be modified to avoid disturbance. Based on data available to the BLM, there was one known active golden eagle nest within the defined buffer in 2011.

Rare and sensitive plants. The Virginia City area has unique soil conditions that provide habitat for rare and unique plant species. Several short portions of the race matrix have been identified with those soil conditions suitable for one BLM sensitive plant species. The BLM has removed one segment of the race matrix due to resource conflicts including the rare and unique plants that are adjacent to the segment. To prevent inadvertent impacts to these soils and plants, the BLM has included as a new stipulation in the Permit terms and conditions. The VCGP would be required to install additional flagging and marking short sections identified by the BLM to ensure that event participants do not go off the authorized routes.

### **Rationale**

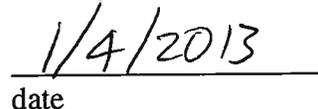
Under the Proposed Action, the Virginia City Grand Prix would continue under a BLM Special Recreation Permit for at least five years. The event is highly supported by the community which has a tourism-based economy and the event is non-controversial. The project would not have significant effects to the human environment and the Finding of No Significant Impact is hereby incorporated by reference. The annual event would be expected to bring in 5,000 spectators into the Virginia City area over the two-day period. The past track record of the Virginia City Motorcycle Club is that this is a well-managed event and coordinated with Storey County.

### **Decision**

It is my decision to select the Proposed Action to authorize a Special Recreation Permit for the Virginia City Grand Prix during the period of 2013 through 2017.



For  
Leon Thomas  
Field Manager  
Sierra Front Field Office



date

### **APPEAL PROCEDURES**

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with 43 CFR Part 4. If you appeal, your appeal must also be filed with the Bureau of Land Management at the following address:

Leon Thomas  
Field Manager  
Sierra Front Field Office  
5665 Morgan Mill Road  
Carson City, NV 89701

Your appeal must be filed within thirty (30) days from receipt or issuance of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 4.21 (58 FR 4942, January 19, 1993) for a stay (suspension) of the decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for stay must accompany your notice of appeal. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to:

Board of Land Appeals  
Dockets Attorney  
801 N. Quincy Street, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22203

A copy must also be sent to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor at the same time the original documents are filed with the above office.

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Office of the Regional Solicitor  
Pacific Southwest Region  
2800 Cottage Way, Room E-1712  
Sacramento, CA 95825

If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
2. The likelihood of the appellants' success on the merits.
3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted.
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

The Office of Hearings and Appeals regulations do not provide for electronic filing of appeals. Electronically filed appeals will therefore not be accepted.