

Environmental Assessment

Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

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Table of Contents

- 1. Pahrump Fire Station Well 1**
 - 1.1. Identifying Information: 1
 - 1.1.1. Title, EA number, and type of project: 1
 - 1.1.2. Location of Proposed Action: 1
 - 1.1.3. Name and Location of Preparing Office: 1
 - 1.1.4. Background Information 1
 - 1.2. Purpose and Need for Action: 1
 - 1.3. Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues: 2
- 2. Proposed Action and Alternatives 3**
 - 2.1. Description of the Proposed Action: 5
 - 2.2. Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail: 6
 - 2.3. Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail 6
 - 2.4. Conformance 6
- 3. Affected Environment: 7**
- 4. Environmental Effects: 13**
 - 4.1. Threatened, Endangered Species 15
 - 4.1.1. Proposed Action 15
 - 4.1.2. No Action 15
 - 4.2. Cumulative Effects 15
 - 4.3. Mitigation Measures 16
 - 4.3.1. Air Quality 16
 - 4.3.2. Invasive Species/ Noxious Weeds 16
 - 4.3.3. Threatened and Endangered Species 16
 - 4.3.4. Water Resources/Quality 16
- 5. Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted: 17**
- 6. List of Preparers 21**
- Appendix A. Appendix 25**

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List of Tables

Table 3.1. Affected Resources Form 9
Table 5.1. List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted 19
Table 6.1. List of Preparers 23

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Chapter 1. Pahrump Fire Station Well

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1.1. Identifying Information:

1.1.1. Title, EA number, and type of project:

Pahrump Fire Station Well

DOI-BLM-NV-S030-2013-0001

Date: 6/27/2013

1.1.2. Location of Proposed Action:

Mt. Diablo PM

Pahrump Fire Station Complex

7501 Chromium Blvd.

Pahrump NV 89061

T21S. R54E, Sec. 02 NW NW

1.1.3. Name and Location of Preparing Office:

Bureau of Land Management

Office of Fire and Aviation

Southern Nevada District Office

4701 North Torrey Pines Drive

Las Vegas NV 89130

1.1.4. Background Information

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Pahrump Fire Station Complex was constructed to provide vegetation, resource, and property protection for the Pahrump area, opening for service in 2004. The construction of the Fire Station Complex was intended to provide utilities to the Fire Station. Due to the complexity of connecting to utilities in the nearby community, the construction was not completed, leaving the Fire Station Complex without water. Since the completion of the Fire Station, water has been brought in by truck by the BLM.

1.2. Purpose and Need for Action:

The BLM Pahrump Fire Station Complex was constructed without connection to a self contained water system. The Fire Station supports as many as two engines, wildland fire fighters, Law Enforcement Rangers, and 11 room living quarters. Currently, water is supplied using a tanker truck. The distance from the Southern Nevada District Office (SNDO) to the Fire Station is 140

miles round trip. Multiple trips are made during fire season to maintain the water supply. A more stable water supply is needed to better serve and support staff at the Fire Station.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide a more reliable source of water to the Fire Station. The BLM has acquired water rights in the area amounting to 2 acre feet per year (AFY). The BLM's decision to be made is to approve or not approve the installation of a well system at the Fire Station.

1.3. Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues:

Internal scoping was performed to identify potential issues present with the Proposed Action. The only issue identified as present was Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species.

Chapter 2. Proposed Action and Alternatives

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2.1. Description of the Proposed Action:

Since the Fire Station went into operation in 2004, these facilities have been without a permanent water source and have relied on water to be trucked in from Las Vegas. To remedy this problem, the BLM SNDO has acquired the water rights to 2 AFY. A well system will be installed to access the water at the Fire Station.

Construction of the well system at the Fire Station would be located within the fenced area on the northern boundary, north of the engine barn and living quarters (see map in Appendix). A filtration system would be installed in an adjacent building and connected to the living quarters and engine barn. Once completed, the well would provide efficient potable water to the facility capable of supporting the fire sprinkler system. Construction will follow local, county, and state regulatory requirements and minimization measures. Construction of the well system would consist of but not limited to:

- Drilling and excavation of cemented soils, caliche and/or solid rock.
- Drilling a bore hole, casing and submersible pump.
- Placement of a 10,000 - 15,000 gallon underground tank.
- Placement of a 12 ft. by 12 ft. prefabricated control room.
- Control room will house: booster tanks, pressure tanks, and disinfectant system.
- System will tie into existing water lines to living quarters, engine bay, and offices.
- System will tie into fire sprinkler system in office(s) and living quarters.

Disturbance

The previous total disturbance of the Fire Station Complex was 4.15 acres. Placement of the well system is expected to be within the existing Fire Station Complex footprint with no new disturbance and will be in compliance with existing visual resource requirements for the Fire Station.

Maintenance

Upon completion of the Proposed Action, maintenance of the water system may be needed on an ongoing basis. The pump houses and well would be monitored monthly and repairs to the system would be conducted on an as-needed basis.

Vegetation

Construction is expected in the existing disturbance area and in the fenced footprint of Fire Station. In the event vegetation is removed, all vegetation would be cleared on the construction site within the approved construction disturbance limits or requirements. Yucca and cactus would be salvaged prior to construction and replanted in temporarily disturbed areas.

Scheduling

The Proposed Action would take place once all applicable contracting steps are completed and the appropriate minimization measures are completed.

2.2. Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail:

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, the Proposed Action would not take place. If no action is taken, the Fire Station would continue to receive water transported in by tanker truck.

2.3. Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail

Original plans for the Fire Station called for the connection to existing municipal water lines in the City of Pahrump but were determined unfeasible due to cost and coordination.

2.4. Conformance

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Las Vegas Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (October, 1998), which provide a framework for indicating the management intent for evaluating the appropriateness of future actions and proposals. The Proposed Action will support BLM staff associated with providing resource protection and public safety.

Chapter 3. Affected Environment:

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The table below summarizes the environmental attributes that have been reviewed, whether they will be affected by the Proposed Action, and rationale for that determination. Elements that will not be affected will not be discussed further, with the exception of Threatened and Endangered Species. These elements are discussed even though they are not affected to reiterate the need to follow mitigation measures. Any present and affected elements will also be carried forward for analysis.

Table 3.1. Affected Resources Form

Supplemental Authority	Not Present	Present/ Not Affected	Present May be Affected	Rationale for Determination
Air Resources		X		Present but not impacted, as the Proposed Action includes air quality resource design features as minimization measures.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	X			The Proposed Action area is not within an ACEC or designated critical habitat for the desert tortoise.
BLM Natural Areas	X			There are no such designations within the Field Office.
Cultural Resources	X			The BLM Archaeologist conducted a cultural review of the area of potential effect (APE) for this well drilling. The well and associated infrastructure would be placed within the fence line surrounding the already existing and ground disturbed Fire Station parcel and as such is exempt from Section 106 review as per Appendix C. 13 of the 2012 State Programmatic Agreement between the BLM and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office. No historic properties would be affected by this undertaking; no further evaluation is required.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions		X		Currently there are no emission limits for suspected Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, and no technically defensible methodology for predicting potential climate changes from GHG emissions. However, there are, and will continue to be, several efforts to address GHG emissions from federal activities, including BLM authorized uses.
Environmental Justice	X			No minority or low-income communities are present in the Proposed Action area.
Farmlands (Prime or Unique)	X			There are no prime or unique farmland designations in the District.

Fish and Wildlife Excluding Federally Listed Species		X		<p>Wildlife species in the general area include small mammals, rodents, birds and reptiles. Additionally, the BLM sensitive species including the western burrowing owl, banded gila monster, Mojave shovel-nosed snake, desert glossy snake, and the Mojave desert sidewinder may be present in the general area.</p> <p>These species may be found on the adjacent undisturbed lands and could wander into the Proposed Action area. The primary direct impact of the Proposed Action on wildlife would be mortality resulting from vehicular traffic on existing roads within the project area. Wildlife species in the general area are common and widely distributed throughout the area and the loss of some individuals and/or their habitat would have a negligible impact on populations of the species throughout the region.</p> <p>Impacts to BLM Sensitive Species are not anticipated to lead to further decline of the species range wide as there is no new disturbance and impacts for this project is relatively small. Minimization measures provided for the desert tortoise will also further minimize impacts to other wildlife species.</p>
Floodplains	X			The Proposed Action does not occur in a floodplain and will not impact downstream flooding.
Fuels/Fire Management		X		Construction will take place in a previously developed area. The fuels and fire management environment are unlikely to be impacted.
Geology / Mineral Resources/Energy Production	X			No issues with mineral resources, geology, or energy production
Hydrologic Conditions		X		Project location and size will not impact hydrologic conditions of the area.
Invasive Species/ Noxious Weeds		X		The construction of a potable well and water system at the Fire Station will occur within the existing fire station footprint, therefore no new disturbance is expected. The threat of introduction and/or spread of invasive and noxious weeds adjacent to the site can be avoided as the Proposed Action would include Invasive Species/Noxious Weeds resource design features as minimization measures.
Lands/Access	X			The proposed well-site is located wholly within the existing withdrawal for the Fire Station. There are no access issues pertaining to this project.
Livestock Grazing	X			The Proposed Action area is not located in any authorized grazing allotments.
Migratory Birds		X		As there will be no new surface disturbance associated with the Proposed Action, there will be no impact on migratory birds.

Native American Religious Concerns		X		No Native American religious concerns would be affected by this undertaking.
Paleontology	X			No fossil strata would be affected by this undertaking.
Rangeland Health Standards	X			The Proposed Action does not include any additional surface disturbance; therefore there will be no impacts to rangeland health.
Recreation	X			Recreation is not present in the area impacted by the Proposed Action.
Socio-Economics		X		The Proposed Action may provide social and economic benefit by providing water to the BLM support staff who work to protect the resources on public lands managed by the Pahrump Field Office, but not to a degree that analysis would be required.
Soils		X		Project location and size will not impact local soils of the area.
Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Plant Species	X			Not present.
Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species			X	Carried forward for analysis.
Vegetation Excluding Federally Listed Species	X			As the Proposed Action is restricted to existing roads and disturbed areas, no new impacts to BLM special status plants are expected. There will be no surface disturbance.
Visual Resources		X		The Proposed Action is in VRM Class III, which aims to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. Levels of change to the landscape can be moderate, but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. This project is not expected to dominate the view of the casual observer. Ensure that any change, as a result of this action, repeats the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the natural landscape to the extent practical.
Wastes (hazardous or solid)	X			Not present. Standard Hazardous Material stipulations are in plan of operations.
Water Resources/ Quality (drinking/ surface/ground)		X		Present but not impacted, as the Proposed Action includes water resource design features as minimization measures.
Wetlands/ Riparian Zones	X			Proposed Action does not occur in a wetland/riparian zone.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X			No such designations exist in the Southern Nevada District.
Wilderness/WSA	X			The Proposed Action is not located within or adjacent to WSAs, ISAs, or designated Wilderness.

Woodland / Forestry	X			Cactus and yucca are considered government property and regulated under the BLM Nevada forestry program. Because the Proposed Action is limited to existing roads and disturbed areas, no new impacts to cactus and yucca, acacia trees and other forestry products are expected. The Proposed Action includes Woodland/Forestry resource design features as minimization measures.
Wild Horses and Burros		X		This project is located in the Johnnie HMA, however due to the small amount of disturbance and location and the proposed project including design features as minimization measures, there should be no impacts to wild horses or burros.
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics		X		The Proposed Action is located in areas which underwent an initial wilderness inventory and were determined not to meet the elements of wilderness characteristics. This area was not nominated for wilderness characteristics as part of the Las Vegas RMP Revision and therefore the BLM did not consider a re-inventory in this area. The Proposed Action is in conformance with the existing LUP as it relates to management of LWCs.

Threatened, Endangered Species

Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species are placed on a federal list by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and receive protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The only T&E species known to occur in the vicinity of the project area is the threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*).

In the Mojave region, the desert tortoise occurs primarily on flats and bajadas with soils ranging from sand to sandy-gravel characterized by scattered shrubs and abundant inter-shrub space for herbaceous plant growth. They are also found on rocky terrain and slopes.

The Proposed Action will occur within the existing disturbed areas within the fenced Fire Station which is surrounded by moderate density tortoise habitat. A site visit in 2010 by Great Basin Institute Natural Resource Specialist confirmed that the desert tortoise exclusion fence was properly constructed, had no damage and that there was zero clearance between the entrance gate and the ground.

Chapter 4. Environmental Effects:

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4.1. Threatened, Endangered Species

4.1.1. Proposed Action

The project site falls within moderate density tortoise habitat. Impacts to tortoises are possible since tortoises have been found in the vicinity and undisturbed habitat is located adjacent to the project site. There is potential for tortoises to wander into the project area if the tortoise fence is damaged or not properly maintained. If not noticed and avoided during construction operations, desert tortoises could be either killed (by crushing) or harassed (being moved out of harm's way).

Section 7 Consultation for this project is covered under the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Multiple Use Activities (1-5-97-F-251) contingent on compliance with the terms and conditions for Area B.

In addition to the attached terms and conditions, the Proposed Action must be carried out in compliance with the following measures:

1. Trenches shall be backfilled or covered at the end of each day during hours of inactivity or the trenches shall be dug in such a manner that the side and/or end walls are contoured to allow any animals that inadvertently fall in, a means to climb out.
2. Existing desert tortoise exclusion fence will continue to be maintained and monitored by BLM Fire personnel, ensuring there are no breaches in the fence especially after heavy rain storms and to ensure zero clearance between entrance gate and ground is maintained.
3. During work, ensure entrance gate is kept closed to prevent tortoise entry into the site.
4. If a breach in the existing tortoise exclusion fence is discovered, it must be immediately repaired. Notify BLM Wildlife Biologist to determine if further action is required.

4.1.2. No Action

In the event this action is not undertaken, there will be no impacts to T&E Species.

4.2. Cumulative Effects

Cumulative impacts are defined in the BLM (1988) NEPA Handbook as impacts on the environment that result from the incremental impact of the Proposed Action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over a period of time.

Past Actions

The Fire Station was constructed in 2003 to support the wildland fire management mission of the Southern Nevada District.

Present Actions

The installation of a well system at the Fire Station is the only improvement currently planned for the facility by the BLM. The area surrounding Fire Station is not currently being developed.

Reasonable Foreseeable Future Actions

Community plans adjacent to the Fire Station call for the construction of a Great Basin Community College campus. Planning and development are in the initial stages with development planned to occur over a ten year period. There is a possibility that Pahrump may grow in size and spread toward the Fire Station. Long term cumulative effects are not expected as a result of this project though future development in the area may take place.

4.3. Mitigation Measures

4.3.1. Air Quality

- Ensure all local, county, and state regulatory requirements are met during construction.

4.3.2. Invasive Species/ Noxious Weeds

- Avoid or minimize all types of travel through weed- infested areas. If a problem is identified and avoidance or removal is not possible, the project proponent shall set up inspection and equipment cleaning sites to prevent the spread of weeds upon departure.
- Limit ground disturbance to the minimum necessary to safely construct and operate the Proposed Project. The Applicant would avoid creating soil conditions that promote weed germination and establishment.
- Project related equipment (i.e. undercarriages and wheel wells) will be cleaned of all mud, dirt and plant parts before each tour. Project workers shall inspect, remove, and dispose of weed seed and plant parts found on their clothing and personal equipment, bag the product and dispose of in a dumpster. Disposal methods may vary depending on the project.

4.3.3. Threatened and Endangered Species

- All minimization measure identified in the Biological Opinion must be adhered to.

4.3.4. Water Resources/Quality

- Ensure regulatory requirements are met during construction.

Chapter 5. Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted:

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This project is part of ongoing maintenance and improvement at the Fire Station and limited consultation was necessary.

Table 5.1. List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted

Name	Purpose & Authorities for Consultation or Coordination	Findings & Conclusions
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Consultation was completed concerning the Biological Opinion in reference to Desert Tortoise.	Comply with the terms and conditions, which implement reasonable and prudent measures.

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Chapter 6. List of Preparers

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Table 6.1. List of Preparers

Name	Title
Lisa Christianson	Air Quality Specialist
Kathleen Sprowl	Archeologist
Susan Farkas	Planning and Environmental Coordinator
David Fanning	Geologist
Troy Ezell	Realty Specialist
Marc Sanchez	Recreation Planner
Boris Poff	Hydrologist
Fred Edwards	Botanist
Katherine Kleinick	Biologist
Billy Williams	Weed Specialist
Krystal Johnson	Wild Horse and Burro Specialist
Sendi Kalcic	Wilderness Planner
Jessie Stegmeier	Wildlife Biologist
Lucas Rhea	Fuels Technician
Sean McEldery	Supervisory Fire Management Specialist

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Appendix A. Appendix

- Fire Station Image
- Map
- Biological Opinion

Image. Pahrump Fire Station: Looking northeast (buildings left to right-Engine Bay and Office/Barracks).

