



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Mount Lewis Field Office

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Battle Mountain, Nevada 89820

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http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/battle_mountain_field.html

In Reply Refer To:
4120 (NVB0100)

October 29, 2013

Dear Interested Public:

On January 30, 2013 the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Mount Lewis Field Office (MLFO) sent you a letter soliciting public scoping comments for the proposed Toiyabe West Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project. An Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-NV-B010-2013-0020-EA) has been prepared and is available for your review.

The proposed project would thin (reduce the density of) or substantially remove encroaching pinyon pine and juniper trees (expansion woodlands) from as much as 6,000 acres of important wildlife habitat on the western slope of the Toiyabe Mountain Range (see enclosed map). The proposed project area is located in central Nevada, approximately 20 miles north of the town of Austin, and lies within the Austin grazing allotment.

Pinyon and juniper woodlands are expanding throughout the Great Basin region at the expense of shrubs, grasses, and forbs. Increases in both density and distribution of pinyon and juniper trees are especially evident in the proposed project area, resulting in a decreased quantity and quality of habitat for several wildlife species. Removal of trees from selected portions of the project would reverse or retard the degradation of remaining high-value wildlife habitats, particularly habitat for greater sage-grouse.

Habitats that would be selected for treatment currently support healthy and diverse plant communities but are being encroached by pinyon and juniper trees. Usually these sites will be found above 6,000 feet in elevation, on gentle to moderate slopes, and have relatively deep, productive soils. Individual treatment sites would vary in size, but most would be smaller than 400 contiguous acres.

Potential treatment sites would be identified and prioritized in two ways. First, sage-grouse movements and habitat use are being monitored via satellite telemetry, which is providing site-specific information on key movement corridors as well as nesting and brood-rearing areas. Important sage-grouse habitats that are being encroached by pinyon and juniper trees would receive high priority for treatment. Secondly, areas associated with riparian resources (springs, seeps and especially wet meadows) that exhibit a pinyon-juniper encroachment problem would also be given a high priority for treatment.

The thinning/removal of pinyon and juniper trees in the project area would be accomplished by chainsaw crews, most likely from the Battle Mountain Bootstraps program. Felled trees normally

would be left on the ground without further treatment (lop and scatter) in order to minimize costs. However, harvest of downed trees by the public and/or commercial harvesters would be encouraged in order to reduce woody fuels. Operations could begin as early as summer 2014 and would continue on a seasonal basis for multiple years as priorities and funding allow.

The Environmental Assessment for the Toiyabe West Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project (DOI-BLM-NV-B010-2013-0020-EA) is available for public review and can be viewed on the BLM Battle Mountain District website at:

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/battle_mountain_field.html

Under Links of Interest, click on the link that reads "National NEPA Register Page". To navigate to the project, scroll down and select "Nevada" from the "State(s)" list, which will populate the "Office(s)" list, then select "NV - Mount Lewis FO." Under "Fiscal Year(s)" select "2013" and then click the "Search" button on the left side of the screen. This will take you to a list of projects; find and select this project (DOI-BLM-NV-B010-2013-0020-EA Toiyabe West Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project) to display the project webpage using the link on the left. A printed copy of the EA can be picked up at the Battle Mountain District Office, 50 Bastian Road, Battle Mountain, NV.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised, that your entire comment -- including your personal identifying information -- may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Questions and written comments should be mailed within 30 days of the date posted on this letter to Mike Stamm, Project Llead, 50 Bastian Road, Battle Mountain, NV 89820, or emailed to mstamm@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

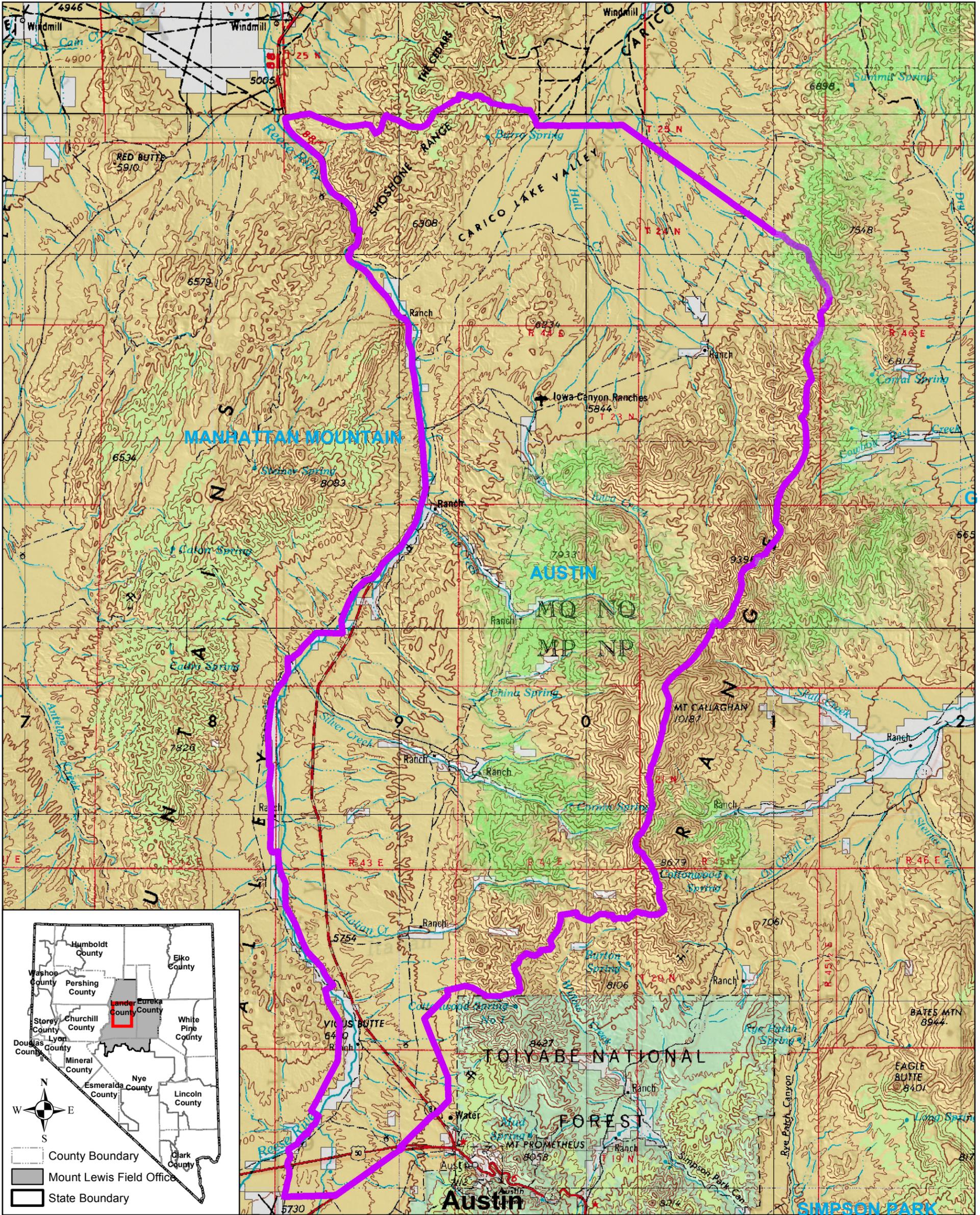
/s/ Christopher J. Cook

Christopher J. Cook
Field Manager
Mount Lewis Field Office

Enclosure

cc: Austin Allotment interested public
Tribal interest list

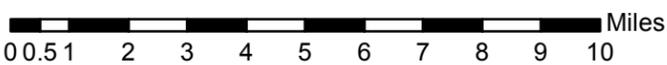
Toiyabe West Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project



2/07/13 ToiyabeMapf

Legend

-  Project Boundary
-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Private
-  Forest Service



No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

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 Bureau of Land Management
 Battle Mountain District Office
 50 Bastian Road
 Battle Mountain, NV 89820



Austin Allotment Interested Public List

Deniz Bolbol, American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign
Lori A Carpenter, 7Q10
Churchill County Commissioners
Lauryn Wachs, The Cloud Foundation
Bill Hall, Ellison Ranching Co.
Jake Tibbitts, Eureka County Department of Natural Resources
Dean Bullock, Chair, Lander Co Commission
Joy Brandt, Lander County PLUAC
Dan Tomera, Lander County PLUAC
Frank Whitman, Lander County PLUAC
Ray Williams Jr., Lander County PLUAC
Philip Williams, Lander County PLUAC
Dan Tomera, Lander County PLUAC
Walt Holland, Lander County PLUAC
Henry Filippini Jr., N-6 Grazing Board
June Sewing, National Mustang Association
Elmer Bull, Nevada Department of Wildlife
Steve Foree, Nevada Department of Wildlife
Jeremy Lutz, Nevada Department of Wildlife
Steven Siegel, Nevada Department of Wildlife
Susan Seidl, Nevada Livestock Association
Desire Seal, Nevada Cattleman's Association
Skip Canfield, Nevada State Clearing House
Skip Canfield, Nevada State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Jeff White, Newmont Mining Corporation
Lee Simpkins, NV Energy
Martha A. Rand, Rand Properties, LLC.
John McLain, Resource Concepts, Inc.
Paul Inchauspe, Silver Creek Ranch Inc.
Pamela Scutt, Snowball Ranch
Brenda Younkin, Teton Science Schools
Dan Gralian, TS Ranch
Steve Williams, USFS, Austin Ranger District
Katie Fite, Western Watersheds Project
Jim Baumann
Mark Bennett
Steven Carter
Ken Conley
Tom Connolly
Craig Downer
Martin Etcheverry
James Gallagher
Ellen Gardner

Joe McGloin
Mike McWilliams
Lorinda A. Wichman
Dave Woolfolk
Richard Orr, Sustainable Grazing Coalition
Shari Welsh
Pete Tomera
Edward Koch, Fish and Wildlife Service
Jack Alexander, Synergy Resource Solutions, Inc

Tribal Interest List

David Gonzales, Chair Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone
Joseph Holley, Chair Battle Mountain Band Council
Wayne Dyer, Chair Yomba Shoshone Tribe
Virginia Sanchez, Chair Duckwater Shoshone Tribe