

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**Environmental Assessment**

**Carpenter 1 Fire Temporary Closure in  
Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area  
DOI-BLM-NV-S020-2013-0012-EA**

**PREPARING OFFICE**

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Red Rock - Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Field Office  
1000 Scenic Loop Drive Las Vegas, NV 89161





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**Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area**  
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Prepared by  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

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# **Chapter 1. Introduction**

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## **1.1. Identifying Information:**

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

Carpenter 1 Fire Temporary Closure in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (RRCNCA)  
DOI-BLM-NV-S020-2013-0012-EA

### **1.1.2. Location of Proposed Action:**

RRCNCA, north and south of State Route 157 (map attached in Appendix A)

Legal Description:

T19S, R58E, S 20, 22, 23, 26–29, 32, 33

T20S, R58E, S 4, 5, 8, 9, 18, 19

T20S, R57E, S24

### **1.1.3. Name and Location of Preparing Office:**

Red Rock/Sloan Field Office  
1000 Scenic Loop Drive  
Las Vegas, NV 89161

### **1.1.4. Applicant Name:**

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

## **1.2. Purpose and Need for Action:**

The BLM is enacting a temporary closure (5 years) to the public (vehicles, hiking, equestrian and all other uses) of about 4,656 acres on the RRCNCA due to the Carpenter 1 Fire, which occurred in July 2013. Heavy rains, flooding, wash-outs, soil loss, and debris flow on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and BLM public land occurred after the fire generating more extensive damage to the area. The potential for future downstream flooding from loss of vegetation and top soil has become a public safety and property issue and the protection of natural resources are at risk. Closing public access to Harris Springs Road will also curtail illegal off-road use in the Red Rock NCA, which further contributes to erosion and soil loss.

The temporary closure is needed to prevent further surface damage, soil erosion, loss of habitat/vegetation, reduce the threat to public safety, and implement the stabilization/rehabilitation plan as soon as possible. Delaying the closure poses a significant public safety and resource protection issue of a NCA.

The temporary restriction and closure of the described public use will be in effect for 5 years. Pursuant to 43 CFR 8364.1, the time frame for the 5 year temporary closure is needed due to the extensive burn area of the Carpenter 1 Fire and subsequent heavy flooding, soil erosion, and loss

of habitat and vegetation. The duration of the closure is also consistent with the USFS' temporary closure, which is for 5 years.

### **1.3. Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues:**

This proposal has been reviewed internally by BLM resource specialist to ensure that all natural and cultural resources are being responded to sensitively and appropriately. Their comments and evaluations are included in this environmental assessment (EA).

A summary of the proposed action was published to the BLM NEPA register on November 13, 2013 and was available for review by the public on the internet under NEPA # DOI-BLM-NV-S020-2013-0012-EA.

# **Chapter 2. Proposed Action and Alternatives**

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## 2.1. Description of the Proposed Action:

The BLM is enacting a temporary closure (5 years) to the public (vehicles, hiking, equestrian and all other uses) of about 4,656 acres on the RRCNCA due to the Carpenter 1 Fire, which occurred in July 2013. This temporary closure includes closing Harris Springs Road to the general public beginning at the intersection of State Route 157 proceeding northward to the USFS boundary.

Heavy rains, flooding, wash-outs, soil loss, and debris flow on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and BLM public land occurred after the fire generating more extensive damage to the area. The potential for future downstream flooding from loss of vegetation and top soil has become a public safety and property issue and the protection of natural resources are at risk. Closing public access to Harris Springs Road will also curtail illegal off-road use in the RRCNCA, which further contributes to erosion and soil loss.

The temporary closure is needed to prevent further surface damage, soil erosion, loss of habitat/vegetation, reduce the threat to public safety, and implement the stabilization/rehabilitation plan as soon as possible. Delaying the closure poses a significant public safety and resource protection issue of a NCA.

The temporary restriction and closure of the described public use will be in effect for 5 years. Pursuant to 43 CFR 8364.1, the time frame for the 5 year temporary closure is needed due to the extensive burn area of the Carpenter 1 Fire and subsequent heavy flooding, soil erosion, and loss of habitat and vegetation. The duration of the closure is also consistent with the USFS' temporary closure, which is for 5 years.

A gate will be installed on Harris Springs Road where it intersects with Route 157. Additional gates maybe installed on other existing roads within the closure area as needed. Some roads may simply have boulders placed across them to block access which will require the use of a bobcat or similar equipment. In addition to gates and boulders, appropriate signage will be installed to inform the public of the closure. Additionally t-post and wire strand fencing may be installed on both sides of gate(s) for short distances to discourage vehicles from simply driving around gates to access the area.

There are a number of existing illegally created roads within the closure area. To further discourage continued use of these roads portions in view from the point of access may be somewhat restored (de-compacted with hand tools, vertical mulch placed throughout and possible seeding).

All activities will be carried out within existing disturbed areas. Areas that will have a gate installed or boulders placed across roads to block access are identified on the map in Appendix A.

Primary users of the affected area include the property owners who have inholdings on USFS managed public land. They have been contacted and will be provided keys to open the gate so they may access their property via the southern end of Harris Springs Road. However, the owners normally use the north end of the road to access their properties, which is in better condition and located on USFS public land.

Off-road vehicle users may have concerns about the temporary closure on BLM land, however off-road vehicle use is prohibited on the RRCNCA (except for on Harris Spring Road) and the northern terminus of Harris Springs Road has already been closed by the USFS.

**Connected action which will be analyzed under its own Environmental Assessment (EA) as it is not ready for review at this time:**

Post-fire efforts proposed by the BLM over the 5 year period will optimize stabilization of soils and rehabilitation. *The BLM Nevada Post-Fire Recovery Plan, Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation* (September 2013) identifies emergency stabilization and burned area issues that will be addressed by a number of treatments and monitoring actions during the closure period. The BLM will coordinate stabilization and rehabilitation efforts with the USFS, the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), and the Clark County Department of Public Works.

## **2.2. Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail:**

### **No Action**

The BLM would not enact the closure; motorized vehicle use and other public access would not be limited. This would result in adverse effects to soil and vegetative resources as a result of continued vehicle used in the burned lands, continued public safety and property issues that may result from future downstream flooding and, continued illegal off-road use in the RRCNCA, which further contributes to erosion and soil loss.

## **2.3. Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail**

No other alternative were considered.

## **2.4. Conformance**

The EA is in conformance with the Nevada - RRCNCA Resource Management Plan (RMP) approved May 20, 2005.

## **Chapter 3. Affected Environment:**

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A detailed description of the of the affected environment is contained in the 2005 RRCNCA RMP.

The table below (Table 1) summarizes the environmental attributes that have been reviewed, whether they may be affected by the proposed action, and the rationale for that determination. Elements that would not be affected will not be discussed further in this environmental assessment.

**Table 3.1. Supplemental Authority**

Supplemental Authority	Not Present	Present/ Not Affected	Present/ Affected	Rationale
Air Quality		X		No issues.
Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)	X			The proposed project area is not within any wildlife ACECs or any critical desert tortoise habitat.
BLM Natural Areas	X			No BLM Natural Areas occur within the impacted area.
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.
Cultural Resources		X		There have not been any previously identified cultural remains in the vicinity of the undertaking that will be adversely affected by the undertaking. Any material such as boulders, rocky materials, etc. necessary for the implementation of the action shall be obtained within existing disturbed areas. Per the current BLM/SHPO protocol Agreement, no additional section 106 review is required.
Environmental Justice	X			It is unlikely that minority or low-income communities are present or near the proposed project area.
Farmlands (Prime or Unique)	X			There are no prime or unique farmland designations in the District.
Invasive Species/ Noxious Weeds		X		Closure will benefit weeds by reducing the amount of vehicle traffic and OHV trespass that is occurring in this area. For closure activities, vehicles must be free of plant parts, mud, and seeds (including undercarriages) prior to entering BLM land for each event. Vehicles must also be washed if they travel through a weed infested area prior to moving to a new area. Do not stage or park in weed infested areas. Weed infestations located on or near the courses or staging areas should be flagged and avoided.

Native American Religious Concerns		X		There are not any Native Americans concerns that have been previously identified ; e.g as a result of any native American consultation / coordination relevant to the area or type of action. No issues.
Floodplains		X		FEMA designated floodplains are present in closure area. However, action is proposed to protect floodplain as well as people and property downstream.
Riparian/Wetlands Zones	X			No permanent surface waters or wetlands exist in or near the project area.
Socioeconomics		X		Social and economic opportunities of recreation, tourism and environmental appreciation in and around the affected environment may be temporarily reduced while the restoration closure is in affect. However, social and economic benefits yielding from the efforts of returning the area to a stabilized and restored environment would provide inhabited areas protection from erosion and flooding as well as an increased appreciation for the environment. These effects are likely to be present with the Proposed Action, but not to a degree that detailed analysis would be required.
Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species		X		<p>The above proposed action has a no effect determination on the threatened desert tortoise (<i>Gopherus agassizii</i>). This project will have no effect on any other federally listed species or designated critical habitat.</p> <p>This project lies within low density tortoise habitat. <b>All activities will take place in existing roads, turnouts and disturbed areas. The use of a small bobcat may be used only within existing disturbed areas to place boulders across roads to be closed. All other activities including de-compaction of roads, will take place using hand tools only.</b> Installation of the post and cable fence will take place within an existing disturbance along the road shoulder for Kyle Canyon Road. As the goal for construction of the fence is to reduce vehicle use in the area to allow for restoration of burned areas, the project as a whole will be beneficial to adjacent tortoise habitat and any individuals in the area.</p> <p>No impacts to desert tortoises or their habitat are expected. Additionally, compliance with the special stipulations below will help to ensure that no effect to desert tortoises occurs.</p>

			<p>1) A speed limit of 25 miles per hour shall be required for all vehicles travelling on the existing access roads.</p> <p>2) Should a desert tortoise enter the area of activity, all activity shall cease until such time as the animal has left the area on its own accord.</p> <p>3) Workers will be instructed to check underneath all vehicles and equipment before moving them as tortoises often take cover underneath parked vehicles during the active season.</p> <p>4) Workers will be provided educational information on the desert tortoise which includes the legal protection and consequences for the violation of the Endangered Species Act.</p> <p>This notice will serve as the Section 7 Determination and no additional paperwork will be provided (Sec 7 Log # NV-052-14-011).</p>
Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Plant Species	X		Threatened and endangered plant species are not present.
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 desert bighorn sheep, western burrowing owl, chuckwalla, banded gila monster, Mojave shovel-nosed snake, desert glossy snake, 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 project area. The primary direct impacts of the proposed action on wildlife would be mortality resulting from vehicle and equipment activities. Desert bighorn may be disturbed by vehicles operating in their habitat; however, these impacts will be minimal due to the limited number of vehicles associated with this action and will be temporary in nature. Animals may seek cover on steep slopes and ridges to avoid vehicular activity and associated noise pollution. 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. Impacts to BLM Sensitive Species are not anticipated to lead to further decline of the species</p>

				<p>range-wide as there is no new disturbance for this project.</p> <p>As the goal for construction of the gates and fences is to reduce vehicle use in the area to allow for restoration of burned areas, the project as a whole will be beneficial to all wildlife inhabiting the area.</p>
Vegetation Excluding Federally Listed Species		X		There is a number of BLM Sensitive plant species throughout the area requested. As the proposed project will not result in any new surface or vegetation disturbance and all vehicles will remain within existing designated roads, no impacts BLM Special status plants or their habitat are anticipated.
Migratory Birds		X		All activities are restricted to existing disturbed areas. As there will be no new surface disturbance associated with the proposed action, there will be no impact to migratory birds.
Wastes (hazardous or solid)	X			Resource not present, no issues.
Water Resources/ Quality (drinking/ surface/ground)		X		Action is proposed to protect water resources, namely natural drainages.
Geology /Mineral Resources/Energy Production	X			No mining claims or mining operations present
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X			Wild and Scenic Rivers are not present within the proposed project area.
Wilderness/Wilderness Study Areas			X	<p>The proposed action will have a direct, negative effect on the La Madre Mountain Wilderness and is carried forward for detailed analysis.</p> <p>The proposed action is not located within WSAs/ISAs.</p>
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	X			No Lands with Wilderness Characteristics use allocation exists within the current RMP.
Woodland /Forestry		X		Cactus and yucca are considered government property and are regulated under the BLM Nevada forestry program. Because the proposed action is limited to existing roads, disturbed areas, and spring habitat, no new impacts to cactus and yucca or other forestry products are expected.
Visual Resources		X		The proposed action is within VRM Management Class II and III. Visual contrast will be reduced from discontinued illegal OHV uses combined with implementation of proposed action.
Wild Horses and Burros		X		The closure is part of the Wheeler Pass Herd Management Area, however due to the nature and location of this closure there should be no direct impacts to wild horses and burros.
Soils		X		Action is proposed to protect soil resources.

Livestock Grazing	X			The proposed action area is not located in any authorized grazing allotments.
Recreation			X	Carried forward for analysis.
Fuels/Fire Management		X		Fire restrictions are generally enacted between May 1 and October 15. Compliance with fire restrictions is mandatory while fire restrictions are in place.

**Table 3.2. Other Resources Reviewed (Not Supplemental Authorities):**

Supplemental Authority	Not Present	Present/ Not Affected	Present/ Affected	Rationale
Hydrologic Conditions		X		Action is proposed to protect and restore hydrologic conditions
Lands/Access		X		Per IM 2013-035, a closure order is only effective upon publication in the Federal Register. The order must also be posted on the BLM Website and at the SNDO pursuant to 43 CFR 8364.1. Ensure that private land owners have ingress/egress to inholdings (providing a key to installed gates is acceptable).
Paleontology		X		After a review of the relevant maps, there have not any “significant” (under the applicable Act) paleontological resources identified in the area – no issues. Any material such as boulders, rocky materials, etc. necessary for the implementation of the action shall be obtained within existing disturbed areas.
Rangeland Health Standards		X		The proposed action does not include any additional surface disturbance; therefore there will be no impacts to rangeland health.

### 3.1. Wilderness

The proposed closure area includes a portion of the LaMadre Mountain Wilderness.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 provides criteria for determining suitability and establishes restrictions on activities that can be undertaken in a designated area. Criteria set by Congress within this act states that wilderness has the following characteristics: 1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of humankind’s work substantially unnoticeable; 2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and confined types of recreation; 3) has at least 5,000 acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and 4) may also contain ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. The Wilderness Act also sets the accepted and prohibited uses of designated wilderness. It sets special provisions for an agency’s continuing management of existing or grandfathered rights such as mining and grazing and other agency mission-related activities.

Wilderness is managed to preserve the area in its natural state, to keep it undeveloped and untrammelled by human actions, and to provide opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of

recreation. Travel in wilderness is limited to foot or equestrian conveyance. Motorized vehicles, bicycles, and any other form of mechanized equipment are prohibited in these areas to protect the solitude, primitive nature, and biological values of these special places.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 states that each agency administering any area designated as wilderness shall be responsible for preserving the wilderness character of the area and shall so administer the area for such other purposes for which it may have been established. Although wilderness character is a complex idea and is not explicitly defined in the Wilderness Act, wilderness characteristics are commonly described as:

- *Untrammeled* – area is unhindered and free from modern human control or manipulation
- *Natural* – area appears to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature
- *Undeveloped* – area is essentially without permanent improvements or human occupation and retains its primeval character
- *Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation* – area provides outstanding opportunities for people to experience solitude or primeval and unrestricted recreation, including the values associated with physical and mental inspiration and challenge
- *Unique/Supplemental* – may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. Though not required of any wilderness, where they are present they are part of that area’s wilderness character, and must be protected as rigorously as any of the other four required qualities.

### Untrammeled

Trammeling activities that have occurred include the control of wildfires, removal of vegetation along trails and at the base of climbing routes, and the reintroduction of native species. Trammels also include recent restoration activities at La Madre Spring and Willow Spring, along with three concreted dams and a spring development which existed prior to wilderness designation.

### Natural

The natural character of this wilderness is mostly preserved, however some changes in vegetation have occurred, most notably the introduction of non-native invasive plants and alterations in native vegetation species distribution and composition due to fires, old vehicle routes, and vehicle incursions.

### Undeveloped

The wilderness area is mostly undeveloped. There are currently 13.4 miles of designated trails, in addition to the aforementioned dams and spring development, a concrete trough and an interpretive sign in Brownstone Basin, a wooden bench at White Rock Spring, two mine adits and an associated rock structure above La Madre Spring, and three concrete building pads near La Madre Spring. Several of the peaks have summit registers and there are numerous geocache locations within the wilderness area. There is also approximately 7 miles of linear disturbances, mostly the result of decommissioned routes and incursions by motor vehicles.

Currently, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is authorized to conduct Search and Rescue training for its pilots and crew, utilizing a helicopter and subject to specific restrictions.

Use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, and/or mechanical transport have been used in response to emergencies involving the health and safety of individuals (e.g., rock climbing accidents). Additionally, helicopter tours and commercial airlines use the airspace above the wilderness; while these types of aircraft may be seen and heard from within the wilderness, the FAA manages airspace.

### Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Though formal research of visitor use has not been conducted within the wildernesses, informal monitoring reveals that visitor use in La Madre Mountain Wilderness it is higher in the portions of the wilderness nearest the Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive and Calico Basin. Casual horseback riding is limited due to the steep and rocky terrain and limited water availability. No guided horse rides are currently operating in the La Madre Mountain Wilderness. There are no current permits for commercial guided hikes in the wilderness areas but the Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association does occasionally lead hikes that go into the wilderness.

The quality of technical rock climbing available in the wilderness is considered to be outstanding and is a world renowned climbing destination, with climbing opportunities to meet a wide range of skill levels. Commercial climbing is allowed and provides visitors the opportunity to enlist professional climbing instruction/guiding. The number of commercial (outfitter and guide) rock climbing permits, authorizing full time year-round use for both La Madre Mountain Wilderness and Rainbow Mountain Wilderness is limited to no more than five at any one time while “guest permits” allow limited visitation within a calendar year. Furthermore only one group with a maximum of 12 individuals is allowed per climbing area.

The only agency provided facilities include five designated trails totaling approximately 13.4 miles. Current data shows there are numerous miles of user-created trails due in part to climber access trails for specific climbing routes and numerous books and websites identifying hiking opportunities and destinations within this wilderness. Other user-created recreation facilities include dispersed campsites.

Opportunities for solitude are outstanding throughout the majority of the La Madre Mountain Wilderness. This is due in part to the topographic variability of steep escarpments bisected in numerous places by major canyons, as well as the diversity of vegetation which enhances the visual screening. Due to the proximity of Las Vegas and McCarran International Airport, there can be substantial noise and light pollution in some portions of the wilderness. Visitor use levels are higher during the cooler months of the year, generally September through May. The wilderness also provides opportunities for a variety of primitive and unconfined types of recreation including hiking, hunting, exploration, photography, rock climbing, canyoneering, viewing scenery and wildlife. Horseback riding, both casual and commercial guided horse ride operations, is limited due to the extremely steep and rocky terrain.

While there is currently no final Wilderness Management Plan, the BLM, through its Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area RMP identifies the following restrictions on recreation: all camping is limited to a 14-day maximum stay; camping on the escarpment is by authorized permit only; within the wilderness, camping between the escarpment crest and eastward to the canyon floor (4,400-foot contour) requires a camping permit; no camping is allowed within 1/4 mile of springs and riparian areas; camping at the base of the escarpment is not allowed; campfires are not allowed, only camp stoves; alteration of the rock surfaces by gluing, chipping, or chiseling is not allowed; no climbing is allowed within 50 feet of rock art; areas may be closed to climbing due to the presence of nesting raptors; no permanent fixed ropes or cables for climbing or belaying

purposes are allowed; placement of new bolts is not allowed; collection of natural resources is not allowed; and target shooting is not allowed. Replacement of existing climbing bolts and hangers is allowed by permit with hand drill only and according to permit stipulations.

### Unique/Supplemental Value

Several special features supplement the wilderness values of this area. The sandstone escarpment and red and buff colored formations in the White Rock Hills and Brownstone Basin are of geological, ecological, and scenic interest. The cross-bedding of ancient sand dunes and the Keystone Thrust of older limestone over the younger sandstone is dramatically evident and is of geologic, paleontological, and scientific interest. This particular site is internationally regarded as the single finest example of a thrust fault. Weathering of the sandstone layers has created natural bridges, arches, and sloughs through which seasonal runoff cascades as waterfalls.

Canyons below the escarpments create micro-climates that sustain botanical resources dramatically different from those of the surrounding Mojave Desert. Natural water impoundments in the sandstone provide reliable water sources that sustain a variety of wildlife. A sizeable population of solitude-dependent bighorn sheep find crucial habitat within this area and it also supports a small herd of elk. The presence of kit fox, bobcat, mountain lion, and a variety of raptors also offers excellent opportunities for scientific observation and nature study.

A wide range of cultural resources are of special value in the reconstruction of regional history. Prehistoric sites in the wilderness include rock art, lithic scatters, rock shelters, campsites, milling stations, and agave roasting pits. Brownstone Basin has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of the concentration and diversity of cultural site types including the occurrence of rare polychrome pictographs.

## **3.2. Recreation**

The area which will be affected by the proposed action includes 16 miles of OHV designated roads. There are a sum total of 20.8 miles of dirt roads in the area north of La Madre which were to be open according to the RMP (Appendix 20:Table A-72 &Map M24). This amount of OHV designated roads to be closed represents a significant percentage of available legal OHV use within a short distance of the Las Vegas Area (70%). In the same vicinity, there are 22 miles of OHV roads, designated to be closed. The closed roads have not been successfully closed with the current signs and modifications and continue to require re-signing and attempts of physically blocking roads slated for permanent closure. There are few routine recreation staff patrols in the area due to increase demands in other areas of the Red Rock Canyon NCA. The prime parking area for equestrian and mountain bike use is located adjacent to the closure area as well. These two uses primarily utilize the trails available to the north of SR 157.

# **Chapter 4. Environmental Effects:**

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## 4.1. Wilderness

### Impacts of Proposed Action

The proposed action would result in adverse and beneficial impacts to wilderness character within portions of the La Madre Mountain Wilderness.

#### Untrammeled

The proposed action does not involve any direct or indirect trammeling activities or structures designed to manipulate or control ecological systems and would have no adverse or beneficial impacts on the untrammeled character of La Madre Mountain Wilderness.

#### Natural

The proposed action does not directly result in any impacts to the natural processes and the wilderness will continue to be affected primarily by the forces of nature. The proposed action may benefit the natural character of the wilderness area by decreasing the chances of non-native vegetation species being introduced into the burned area by recreation users.

#### Undeveloped

The proposed action will not result in any additional structures, installations, and/or developments within wilderness. Closure of the area described in the proposed action will limit vehicle access to portions of the wilderness area, decreasing the potential for illegal motor vehicle incursions. A reduction in vehicle incursions would have a beneficial impact on the undeveloped character.

#### Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive, Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the portions of the La Madre Mountain Wilderness within the burned area to all recreation use for up to five years would have a direct, short-term adverse impact on unconfined recreation. Portions of the wilderness that are typically accessed from Harris Springs Road, but are not impacted by the closure, would also have restricted access due to the overall closure area. While this may cause slight impacts on unconfined recreation, opportunities for solitude would be indirectly benefitted by moving access points for portions of the wilderness further away from the wilderness boundary. A reduction in wilderness visitation due to the fire closure in portions of the La Madre Mountain Wilderness and RRCNCA would also benefit solitude.

#### Unique/Supplemental Value

The proposed action would have no adverse or beneficial impacts on the unique/supplemental values of La Madre Mountain Wilderness.

### Impacts of No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, current conditions would continue within La Madre Mountain Wilderness.

#### Untrammeled

Impacts to the untrammeled character under the No Action Alternative would be similar to those under the Proposed Action.

### Natural

The natural character of the wilderness would continue under the No Action Alternative, however, the potential for introduction of non-native vegetation species into burned areas by recreational users may increase under the No Action Alternative.

### Undeveloped

The potential for motor vehicle incursions into portions of the wilderness impacted by the proposed closure would continue to exist under the No Action Alternative.

### Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive, Unconfined Recreation

There would be no impact to the existing opportunities for unconfined recreation and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would continue at present levels under the No Action Alternative.

### Unique/Supplemental Value

Impacts to unique and/or supplemental values under the No Action Alternative would be similar to those under the Proposed Action.

## **4.2. Recreation**

### **Impacts of Proposed Action**

Although this project will not create new surface disturbance, it is adjacent to undisturbed, contiguous habitat wherein potential corridors for Off-road vehicle entry exists. Since unauthorized OHV has been found in the vicinity and undisturbed habitat exists in the area, there is potential for recreational users to venture into the project area around gates as they seek previously available trails and routes.

Strategic fencing and gates would permit some recreational use to continue, provide areas for interpretation and education of fire areas, while protecting resources. This would also reduce the potential for recreational users to wander off designated roads.

Measures to deter cross country travel within the closure area and other parts of the RRCNCA are necessary and are detailed in Section 4.3 Mitigation Measures.

Information on local web sites, signs and other educational material of alternate open areas for the recreational uses effected by this closure would increase compliance of any closures.

Fencing could occur along the closure boundary on SR 157 and the Harris Springs road to the White Beauty Mine. This will clearly delineate the closure areas and would help to reduce illegal use. It would also assist in other enforcement of the closure. The fencing could include the wash area in Section 26 where the Harris Spring road turns to the west. This would allow for camping and other opportunities in areas not impacted by the fire. This tactic was successful in the Goodsprings Fire area of Cottonwood Valley in 2005. During the summer monsoon season additional gating of the area would be most effective to deter unauthorized use.

### **Impacts of No Action**

Under the No Action Alternative, current conditions would continue and the threat to public safety will remain. Unauthorized OHV use will continue on existing illegally created roads and new illegal roads may continue to proliferate. Public safety will be threatened by flooding downstream caused by future rain events which may carry large debris and cause wash-outs; the effects of flooding in this area are greatly amplified due to the loss of vegetation and soil from the fire and subsequent flood events.

### 4.3. Cumulative Effects

The purpose of the cumulative impacts analysis for the proposed action is to evaluate the combined, incremental effects of human activity within the scope of the project. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations define scope and state that connected actions, cumulative actions, and similar actions should be included in the impact analysis (40 CFR 1508.25). The Council on Environmental Quality formally defines cumulative impacts as follows:

...the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the 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 (40 CFR 1508.7).

Moreover, according to the 1997 CEQ Handbook *Guidelines for Assessing and Documenting Cumulative Impacts*, the cumulative impact analysis can be focused on those issues and resource values identified during scoping that are of major importance.

**The only resource identified in the EA that may be affected by the proposed action and therefore carried forward for analysis is Wilderness and Recreation resources.**

#### Wilderness

Cumulative effects to opportunities for unconfined recreation opportunities in the La Madre Mountain Wilderness would be short-term as the restriction would be in place for 5 years. This closure will not affect the majority of the La Madre Mountain Wilderness and throughout southern Nevada there are 14 other BLM managed Wilderness areas that would continue to provide for unconfined recreation opportunities.

#### Recreation

Cumulative effects to recreation would be short-term as the restriction will be in place for 5 years. BLM managed lands in the region would continue to provide for a wide variety of recreation opportunities.

### 4.4. Mitigation Measures

#### Recreation

1. To deter cross country travel public education and signs are needed to inform the public of the necessity of the closure and of alternative areas to utilize for recreational activities. Coordinate these efforts with the RRCNCA Recreation Specialist.

2. This closure may also create new user created trails in other locations of the RRCNCA as OHV users look for similar experiences nearby. It will be necessary to adequately sign these nearby areas, including the Grapevine route ( Dirt road # 5), Dirt road #14 and 15, #11, and #12 (map M24 RRCNCA RMP).

**Resources not carried forward for analysis (from Table 1 and 2)**

1. All activities vehicles and equipment are restricted to existing roads and disturbed areas.
2. Any material such as boulders, rocky materials, etc. necessary for the implementation of the action shall be obtained within existing disturbed areas.
3. For closure activities, vehicles must be free of plant parts, mud, and seeds (including undercarriages) prior to entering BLM land for each event. Vehicles must also be washed if they travel through a weed infested area prior to moving to a new area. Do not stage or park in weed infested areas. Weed infestations located on or near the courses or staging areas should be flagged and avoided.
4. All activities will take place in existing roads, turnouts and disturbed areas. The use of a small bobcat may be used only within existing disturbed areas to place boulders across roads to be closed. All other activities including de-compaction of roads, will take place using hand tools only.
5. A speed limit of 25 miles per hour shall be required for all vehicles travelling on the existing access roads.
6. Should a desert tortoise enter the area of activity, all activity shall cease until such time as the animal has left the area on its own accord.
7. Workers will be instructed to check underneath all vehicles and equipment before moving them as tortoises often take cover underneath parked vehicles during the active season.
8. Workers will be provided educational information on the desert tortoise with includes the legal protection and consequences for the violation of the Endangered Species Act.
9. Conformance with seasonal fire restrictions apply. Restrictions can be in effect any time between May 1<sup>st</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>
10. Ensure that private land owners have ingress/egress to inholdings (providing a key to installed gates is acceptable).

# **Chapter 5. List of Preparers**

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**Table 5.1. List of Preparers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Responsible for the Following Section(s) of this Document</b>
Katie Kleinick	Natural Resource Specialist (Great Basin Institute)	drafting EA and associated documents.
Randy Kyes	Wilderness Planner (Great Basin Institute)	Wilderness, WSA, BLM Natural Areas, Lands With Wilderness Characteristics
Kathy August	RRCNCA Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation

**Internal Review by Resource Specialists**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Resource / Specialty</b>
Lisa Christainson	Air Quality, Wastes
Katherine Kleinick	Botany, Vegetation, Forestry, Grazing, Rangeland Health
Mark Boatwright	Cultural Resources, Paleontology, Native American Religious Concerns
Boris Poff	Hydrology, Water Quality, Wetlands / Riparian, Soils
Susan Farkas	Environmental Justice, Socioeconomics, NEPA
Krystal Johnson	Wild Horse and Burro, Farmlands
Sean McEldery	Fuels and Fire Management
Evan Allen	Geology and Minerals
Sean McEldery	Noxious and Invasive Weeds
Kerri-Anne Thorpe	Lands and Access
Kathy August	Recreation
Brenda Warner	Visual Resources
Carla Wise	Wildlife and T&E species
Randy Kyes	Wilderness

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# Appendix A. Map

