



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Ely District Office
HC33 Box 33500 (702 N. Industrial Way)
Ely, Nevada 89301-9408
http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office.html

In Reply Refer To:
8560 (NVL00000)

Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Ely District has developed an environmental assessment (EA) for *Maintenance of Range Developments in Wilderness* (DOI-BLM-NV-L000-2014-0006-EA). This document analyzes the impacts of performing minor maintenance on existing range developments found throughout 21 wilderness areas on the Ely District, for allotments that do not have current, fully processed permits that previously analyzed these actions. There are 22 designated wilderness areas on the Ely District, however, the White Rock Range Wilderness does not contain range developments and is not included in this EA.

The need for this action is to authorize appropriate minor maintenance of range improvements to be in compliance with the Wilderness Act. The Act states where grazing of livestock has been authorized by a grazing permit or grazing lease for land within a wilderness, and the use was established before Congress established the wilderness area, under Section 4(d)(4)(2) of the Act it "shall be permitted to continue subject to such reasonable regulations as are deemed necessary by the [administering agency]." The continuation of existing grazing applies to utilization of the forage resources, and also the use and maintenance of BLM-authorized livestock management developments and facilities associated with grazing allotment use at the time of designation. Grazing management activities, including the construction, use, and maintenance of livestock management developments, must comply with the BLM grazing regulations 43 CFR 4100, as well as Manual 6340 — Management of Designated Wilderness Areas. This EA does not cover new project construction, reconstruction, or major maintenance of range developments, or maintenance that will result in new ground disturbance.

The purpose for this document will allow BLM to promptly respond to permittees' requests to conduct minor maintenance of existing range developments in wilderness, while eliminating the need to do National Environmental Policy Act analysis for each request.

The EA analyzes three alternatives: 1) the Proposed Action, which includes motorized equipment, vehicles, and mechanized tools, 2) a non-motorized alternative, and 3) a no-action alternative. The first two alternatives describe typical maintenance actions for existing range developments: fences and corrals, developed springs, pipelines, and reservoirs. The document also outlines information on permittee access in wilderness in both emergency and non-emergency situations, and the authorization process for requesting use of motorized equipment or vehicles in wilderness.

Maintenance of Range Developments in Wilderness (DOI-BLM-NV-L000-2014-0006-EA) can be found online at <http://on.doi.gov/1t2SCQk>. Interested individuals may mail written comments to the address above, Attn: Emily Simpson, Wilderness Planner. Alternatively, comments may be faxed to (775) 289-1910, emailed to blm_nv_range_wild@blm.gov, or added in the NEPA Register. All comments must be received no later than **March 1, 2016**. If you have any questions, please contact Emily Simpson, Wilderness Planner, at esimpson@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Herder". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Michael J. Herder
District Manager
Ely District Office