FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND DECISION RECORD

Carson City Aiport Authority, Right-of-Way for Landing Approach Obstruction Beacons – Carson City County, Nevada

DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2015-0015-EA

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

Sierra Front Field Office, Nevada

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

On September 16, 2014, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Nevada, Sierra Front Field Office, received an application from the Carson City Airport Authority for a Right-of-Way (ROW) to construct, operate, and maintain two landing approach obstacle beacons on public lands. The installation of these lights would improve the safety of night airplane approaches at the airport.

Key elements of the Proposed Action include:

- Installation of two solar-powered LED Obstacle Lights; and
- Trimming of adjacent tree tops to a height of approximately six feet.

In order to evaluate this proposal, the BLM has prepared this final environmental assessment (EA) to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

1.1 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the action is to respond to an application submitted by the Carson City Airport Authority to install two solar-powered light emitting diode (LED) Obstacle Lights on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and located in Township 15 North, Range 21 East, SW ¼ of SE ¼ of Section 5 (North Beacon), and SE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 17 (South Beacon).

The need for the Proposed Action is established by the BLM's responsibility under Title V of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, to respond to requests for a Right-of-Way (ROW) grant for two solar-powered LED Obstacle Lights on public lands to improve the safety of night airplane approaches at the airport.

1.2 Scoping and Issues Identification

This Project was discussed by an interdisciplinary group and a site visit was completed on December 9, 2014. During this visit a class III cultural resources inventory was completed; no historic properties were determined to be present.

1.3 Decision to be Made

The BLM has received an application (DOI Standard Form 299) for a ROW from the Carson City Airport Authority. Based on this environmental documentation, the BLM Authorized Officer would decide whether to grant or deny the ROW. If the BLM grants the proposed ROW, the Authorized Officer would decide whether to add terms and conditions (stipulations) to the final ROW grant.

1.4 Land Use Plan Conformance Statement

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan (CRMP 2001). The applicable section of the CRMP includes LND 7 #6:

- "Exchanges and minor non-Bureau initiated realty proposals will be considered where analysis indicates they are beneficial to the public."

1.5 Relationships to Statutes, Regulations, and Other Plans

The Proposed Action and Alternative comply with the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. § 4321 *et seq.*);
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. § 1701 *et seq.*);
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 470f); and
- Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (E.O. 13175).

2.0 ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Description of Alternatives

2.1.1 Alternative A: Proposed Action

The Carson City Airport is proposing to install two solar-powered LED Obstacle Lights on hilltops approximately four miles east of the Carson City Airport (Figure 1).

The light beacons are about 15 inches high 10 inches in diameter, and would be mounted on a 12-foot-high steel pole anchored into the ground by a 24-inch diameter concrete base. The two sites would be accessed, constructed, and maintained by helicopter from the Carson City Airport. A helicopter would be used to airlift the poles, lights, and concrete, as well as personnel to prepare the sites. The holes for the concrete anchors would be dug using a portable jackhammer and concrete would be poured on the site using a concrete bucket airlifted from the Carson City Airport. The lights would be maintained in the future by helicopter to transport any personnel or equipment and supplies, and therefore avoiding the need to construct access roads or travel overland in vehicles.

Installation of the obstacle lights would take approximately five days and would be completed by mid-2015.

2.1.1.2 Resource Commitments

The Project area is located within Visual Resource Management Class III and IV areas. This classification allows for moderate changes to the visual character of the landscape. A solar-powered LED Obstacle Light is consistent with this classification if the paint color used conforms to the color of the surrounding environment. As a stipulation to the ROW grant, the BLM would require the Carson City Airport Authority to apply a color that blends with the surrounding environment to minimize visual contrast.

2.1.2 Alternative B: No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the BLM would not grant the ROW. As a result, the Proposed Action would not be authorized and the applicant would need to seek an alternate approach to install obstacle lighting. This alternative would not meet the purpose and need described in Section 1.1.

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This chapter identifies and describes the current condition and trend of elements or resources in the human environment, which may be affected by the No Action Alternative and Proposed Action. The Affected Environment is the same for all alternatives.

3.1 Setting

The Project area is located approximately four miles east of the Carson City Airport on two prominent mountain peaks. The North Beacon is located at approximately 5,628 feet above sea level and the South Beacon is located at approximately 5,803 feet above sea level. The surrounding vegetation is a mix of pinyon pine (*Pinus edulis*), Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*), and sagebrush (*Artemisia* sp.). The terrain is steep and rocky with deep draws leading to the Carson River to the north of the Project area. There are no roads or trails leading to or adjacent to either beacon site.

3.1.1 Resources Considered for Analysis

The BLM is required to address specific elements of the environment that are subject to requirements in statute or regulation or by executive order (BLM 2008). Table 1 lists the elements that must be addressed in all environmental analysis and indicates whether the Proposed Action and Alternatives affect those elements. Other resources of the human environment that have been considered for analysis are listed in Table 2.

Table 1. Supplemental Authorities*.

Resource	Present Yes/No	Affected Yes/No	Rationale
Air Quality	Y	N	The Project area is located within an attainment air basin. Although the Project would create emissions from equipment during construction, and the amount emitted would not result in a change to the air basin status and best management practices would be implemented to limit fugitive dust.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	N		Resource not present.
Cultural Resources	N		The Proposed Action would have no effect on sites eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
Environmental Justice	N		Resource not present.
Farm Lands (prime or unique)	N		Resource not present.
Floodplains	N		Resource not present.
Invasive, Non-Native Plant Species	N		Resource not present.
Migratory Birds	Y	N	Nesting and foraging habitat may occur in the Project area, however this Project would result in less than ¼ acre of permanent disturbance. During installation of the obstacle lighting, any migratory birds present in the Project area would be temporarily displaced.
Native American Religious Concerns	N		Resource not present.
Threatened or Endangered Species	N		Resource not present.
Wastes, Hazardous or	Y	N	Best management practices would be implemented to minimize

Solid			potential for spills from equipment.
Water Quality (Surface/Ground)	N		Resource not present.
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	N		Resource not present.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	N		Resource not present.
Wilderness/WSA	N		Resource not present.

**See H-1790-1 (January 2008) Appendix 1 Supplemental Authorities to be Considered.*
Supplemental Authorities determined to be Not Present or Present/Not Affected need not be carried forward or discussed further in the document.
Supplemental Authorities determined to be Present/May Be Affected may be carried forward in the document.

Table 2. Resources or Uses Other Than Supplemental Authorities.

Resource or Issue**	Present Yes/No	Affected Yes/No	Rationale
BLM Sensitive Species	Y	N	Based on a review of existing GIS data there are no known active raptor nests within a one-mile radius of the Project area. The Project area is not located within preliminary or general priority habitat for the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). During installation of the obstacle lighting, any sensitive species present in the Project area would be temporarily displaced.
Fire Management	N		Resource not present.
Forest Resources	N		Resource not present.
General Wildlife	Y	N	The Project area involves less than ¼ acre of habitat. Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) may infrequently forage in the Project area. Because of permanent disturbance there would be a loss of ¼ acre of habitat; however, this type of wildlife habitat is common regionally. During installation of the obstacle lighting, any wildlife species present in the Project area would be temporarily displaced.
Global Climate Change	Y	N	Although there is public and scientific debate about human-caused global climate change, no methodology currently exists to analyze to what extent the negligible contributions of greenhouse gases (GHG) would contribute to climate change from implementation of the Proposed Action.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Y	N	Although under the Proposed Action there would be negligible contribution of GHG from equipment emissions, no methodology exists to assess resource impacts within the Project area from such contributions of GHG.
Land and Realty	Y	Y	Carried forward for analysis.
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	N		Pursuant to Sections 101, 201 and 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, GIS spatial imagery was reviewed by the BLM. No LWCs were identified within the Project area.
Livestock Grazing	Y	N	Although this Project is located within the Buckeye Grazing Allotment, implementation of this Project would have no effect on grazing operations.
Minerals	N		Resource not present.
Paleontological	N		Resource not present.
Public Safety	Y	Y	Carried forward for analysis.
Recreation	N		Resource not present.
Socioeconomics	N		Resource not present.
Soils	Y	N	Best management practices would be implemented to minimize

			potential for increased soil erosion from the Proposed Action.
Travel Management	N		Resource not present.
Vegetation	Y	N	The vegetative community is dominated by annual grasses and some low-density sagebrush. New disturbance result in ¼ acre of permanent disturbance to vegetation. The vegetative community is common regionally. No trees would be removed, although several trees may be trimmed to allow for clear line of sight to the beacons.
Visual Resources	Y	N	The Project area is within Visual Resource Management Class III and IV, which allows for moderate to major changes to the visual character of the Project area. The Proposed Action is consistent with VRM III and IV.
Wild Horses and Burros	Y	N	The Project area is within the Pine Nut Herd Management Area, however implementation of this Project would have no effect on wild horses. If wild horses are present during implementation, they would be temporarily displaced.

***Resources or uses determined to be Not Present or Present/Not Affected need not be carried forward or discussed further in the document.*
Resources or uses determined to be Present/May Be Affected may be carried forward in the document.

3.2 Land and Realty

The Project would occur on less than ¼ acre of public land located in the following:

Mount Diablo Meridian, Nevada
Township 15 North, Range 21 East,
sec. 5, SW ¼ of SE ¼ (North Beacon),
sec. 17, SE ¼ of the NE ¼ (South Beacon).

There are no existing land authorizations within the Project area.

3.3 Public Safety

The installation of the Obstacle Lights (Beacons) would facilitate the removal of night restrictions placed on the global position system (GPS) approaches at the Carson City Airport enabling aircraft to safely perform the approaches in inclement weather.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the potential direct, indirect, and residual effects to resources that may result from the Proposed Action or Alternatives, as well as identifies the potential monitoring needs associated with the specific resources. In this document, the terms "effect" and "impact" are used synonymously. In this document, the term "beneficial effect" refers to a positive effect on a resource. The terms "adverse" and "negligible" refer to detrimental effects to a resource.

4.2 Land and Realty

Alternative A: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would be located in Carson City County and approximately four miles east of the Carson City Airport. The Proposed Action would include the installation of two solar powered LED Obstacle Lights (Beacons) that would facilitate the removal of night landing restrictions placed on the GPS approaches at the Carson City Airport and enable aircraft to safely perform the approaches in inclement weather.

The LED Obstacle Lights would be mounted on 12-foot steel poles anchored into the ground by a 24-inch diameter concrete pier. The two sites would be accessed, constructed, and maintained by helicopter from the Carson City Airport. A helicopter would be used to airlift the poles, lights, and concrete, as well as personnel to prepare the sites. The holes for the concrete anchors would be dug using a portable jackhammer and concrete would be poured on the site using a concrete bucket airlifted from the Carson City Airport. The lights would be maintained in the future by helicopter to transport any personnel or equipment and supplies, and therefore avoiding the need to construct access roads or travel overland in vehicles.

Long-term impacts from ROW would mainly be a result from periodic maintenance of the proposed beacons and trimming of the adjacent trees.

Alternative B: No Action Alternative

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would reject the proposed Right-of-Way application and the installation of two solar powered LED Obstacle Lights (Beacons) would not be authorized on public lands.

4.3 Public Safety

Alternative A: Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the installation of the Obstacle Lights (Beacons) would facilitate the removal of night restrictions placed on the GPS approaches at the Carson City Airport enabling aircraft to safely perform the approaches in inclement weather.

Alternative B: No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Carson City Airport would have to maintain the existing night landing restrictions currently in place by Federal Aviation Administration.

5.0 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The timeframe for cumulative effects would be 10 years, although the ROW would be issued for 30 years.

Past, Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions.
The Project area is located in the Pine Nut Herd Management Area and within the Buckeye Grazing Allotment. The Project would have no effect on the management of either of these activities. Due to the difficult access in the Project area, dispersed recreational activities would be considered low intensity and this Project would have no effect on recreational access.

Effects Analysis. The Project area involves less than one ¼ acre of public land. The BLM would issue a ROW to the Carson City Airport Authority, a beneficial cumulative effect for land and realty. The Project would improve the safety of air traffic into and from the Carson City Airport, a beneficial cumulative effect to public safety.

6.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

6.1 Public Review and Comment

The *Carson City Airport Authority Right-of-Way for Obstruction Beacons, Draft Environmental Assessment* (DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2015-0015-EA) had been made available for public review from December 19 until January 2, 2015. The BLM did not receive any public comments.

6.2 List of Preparers

BLM staff that contributed to this document.

Name	Resource
Brian Buttazoni	NEPA Compliance
Perry Wickham	Land and Realty
Rachel Crews	Archeologist
Shaina Shippen	Land and Realty

7.0 REFERENCES

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) 2001. *Consolidated Resource Management Plan (CRMP).* Carson City District Office. May.

_____. 2008. *National Environmental Policy Act Handbook*, H-1790-1. Washington D.C. January.

8.0 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in this Final EA, and considering the significance criteria found in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the Proposed Action, will not have a significant effect on land use authorizations and on the human environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required.

Leon Thomas
Field Manager
Sierra Front Field Office

1-2-15
Date

9.0 DECISION

It is my Decision to approve the action as proposed and grant a right-of-way under the Federal Land Policy Management Act (43 U.S.C. § 1701 *et seq*) and regulations contained in 43 CFR 2800 *et seq*.

The Project would occur on less than ¼ acre of public land located in the following:

Mount Diablo Meridian, Nevada
Township 15 North, Range 21 East,
sec. 5, SW ¼ of SE ¼ (North Beacon),
sec. 17, SE ¼ of the NE ¼ (South Beacon).

Leon Thomas
Field Manager
Sierra Front Field Office

1-2-15
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
BLM, 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.