

N-92966 Air Force Munitions Gate, Access Road, Fence, Bladed Area and Frontage Road

Compliance

Las Vegas Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (RMP), and the Record of Decision for the Approved RMP dated October 5, 1998.

Selected Action

The BLM will grant the request for a munitions gate, which includes an access road, fence, bladed area and frontage road to the US Air Force in Indian Springs, Nevada for 30 years on public lands.

Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, E. (16): "Acquisition of easements for an existing road or issuance of leases, permits, or rights-of-way for the use of existing facilities, improvements, or sites for the same or similar purposes."

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment.

Public Involvement:

There was no public scoping conducted for this application.

Rationale:

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision:

ROWs Management RW-1. "Meet public demand and reduce impacts to sensitive resources by providing an orderly system of development for transportation, including legal access to private inholdings, communications, flood control, major utility transmission lines, and related facilities."

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions) :

ROWs Management RW-1-h. "All public land within the planning area, except as stated in RW-1-c through RW-1-g, are available at the discretion of the agency for rights-of-way under the authority of the Federal Land Policy Management Act."

Appeal or Protest Opportunities:

This decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the Authorized Officer and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior Board of Land Appeals issues a stay. Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at 4701 Torrey Pines Dr., Las Vegas, Nevada 89130. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

If you wish to file a petition for stay pursuant to 43 CFR Part 4.21(b), the petition for stay should accompany your notice of appeal and shall 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 appellant's success on the merits,
3. The likelihood of irreparable harm to the appellant or resources if the stay is not granted, and
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

If a petition for stay is submitted with the notice of appeal, a copy of the notice of appeal and petition for stay must be served on each party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken, and with the IBLA at the same time it is filed with the Authorized Officer. A copy of the notice of appeal, any statement of reasons, and all pertinent documents must be served on each adverse party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken and on the Office of the Regional Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, Pacific Southwest Region, 2800 Cottage Way, Room E-1712, Sacramento, California 95825-1820, not later than 15 days after filing the document with the Authorized Officer and/or IBLA.

Authorizing Official:


Deborah J. MacNeill
Pahrump Field Manager


Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this Finding, contact.

Erica Pionke, Realty Specialist
Pahrump Field Office
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130
epionke@blm.gov; (702) 515-5059

Categorical Exclusion (CX)
N-92966 Air Force Munitions Gate, Access Road, Fence, Bladed Area and Frontage Road

Background

NEPA NUMBER: DOI-BLM-NV-S030-2015-0006-CX

In 1976, under the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) Title V, the BLM was given the obligation to respond to right-of-way requests for facilities such as roads, powerlines, and water facilities on public lands (43 USC 1701 et seq.). This is a request for a munitions gate, which includes an access road, fence, bladed area and frontage road on public lands.

BLM Office:

Bureau of Land Management
Pahrump Field Office
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130

LLNVS03000

Lease/Serial/Case File No.:

N-92966

Proposed Action Title/Type:

This is a right—of—way request for a munitions gate, which includes an access road, fence, bladed area and frontage road on public lands.

Location of Proposed Action:

LOCATION AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

The site is located in Indian Springs, Nevada in Nye County, situated on the north side of US-95 on the west end of the Creech Air Force Base fenceline.

The Legal Description is:

Mount Diablo Meridian, Nevada

T. 16 S., R. 56 E.,

sec. 7, N2NWNE, N2NENW, N2NWNW;

containing approximately 28.5 acres.

Description of Proposed Action:

This is a request for a munitions gate, which includes an access road, fence, bladed area and frontage road on public lands. The Air Force would like the access road through their gate so they can access their munitions area without traveling through the businesses and barracks at Creech Air Force Base. There are 28 acres of existing disturbance and one half acre of new disturbance for the access road. The site is located in Indian Springs, Nevada, situated on the

north side of US-95 on the west end of the Creech Air Force Base fenceline. The total disturbance is approximately 28.5 acres.

Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name:

Las Vegas Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (RMP), and the Record of Decision for the Approved Las Vegas Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Date Approved/Amended:

RMP dated October 5, 1998.

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions) :

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable RMP because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s):

ROWs Management RW-1-h. "All public land within the planning area, except as stated in RW-1-c through RW-1-g, are available at the discretion of the agency for rights-of-way under the authority of the Federal Land Policy Management Act."

ROWs Management RW-1. "Meet public demand and reduce impacts to sensitive resources by providing an orderly system of development for transportation, including legal access to private inholdings, communications, flood control, major utility transmission lines, and related facilities."

Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, E (16): "Acquisition of easements for an existing road or issuance of leases, permits, or rights-of-way for the use of existing facilities, improvements, or sites for the same or similar purposes."

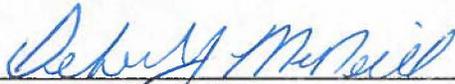
This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment.

Comments providing substantive new information relevant to the analysis and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Exhibit A stipulations which are attached to this document.

I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required.

Approval and Contact Information

Authorizing Official:



Deborah J. MacNeill
Pahrump Field Manager
Pahrump Field Office

7/16/2015
Date

Contact Person

Erica Pionke, Realty Specialist

Las Vegas Field Office
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130
phone: 702-515-5000

Exhibit A
Stipulations for N-92966

1.0 General Stipulations

- 1.1. The right-of-way (ROW) is issued subject to all valid existing rights.
- 1.2. No signs of advertising devices shall be placed on the premises or on adjacent public lands, except those posted by or at the direction of the authorized officer.
- 1.3. The ROW shall be maintained in a sanitary condition at all times. Waste materials at those sites shall be disposed of promptly at an approved waste disposal site. "Waste", as used in this paragraph, shall mean all discarded matter of any kind.
- 1.4. Holder shall mark the exterior boundaries of the ROW with stake and/or lath at 100 to 200 foot intervals. The intervals may be varied at the time of staking at the discretion of the Authorized Officer. The tops of the stakes and/or laths will be painted and the laths flagged in a distinctive color as determined by the Holder. Holder shall maintain all boundary stakes and/or laths in place until final cleanup and restoration is completed.
- 1.5. Holder shall conduct all activities associated with construction, operation, maintenance and termination of this ROW within its authorized limits.
- 1.6. Holder shall maintain the ROW in a safe, useable condition, as directed by the Authorized Officer. A regular maintenance program shall include, but is not limited to, soil stabilization.
- 1.7. Holder shall maintain copy of the authorization along with stipulations on construction site at all times. In the event that the public land underlying this ROW, encompassed in this grant, or a portion thereof, is conveyed out of Federal ownership and administration of the ROW or the land underlying the ROW is not being reserved to the United States in the patent/deed and/or the ROW is not within a ROW corridor being reserved to the United States in the patent/deed, the United States waives any right it has to administer the ROW, or portion thereof, within the conveyed land under Federal laws, statutes, and regulations, including the regulations at 43 CFR Part 2800, including any rights to have the holder apply to BLM for amendments, modifications, or assignments and for BLM to approve or recognize such amendments, modifications, or assignments. At the time of conveyance, the patentee/grantee, and their successors and assigns, shall succeed to the interests of the United States in all matters relating to the ROW, or portion thereof, within the conveyed land and shall be subject to applicable State and local government laws, statutes, and ordinances. After conveyance, any disputes concerning compliance with the use and the terms and conditions of the ROW shall be considered a civil matter between the patentee/grantee and the ROW Holder.
- 1.8. Within 90 days of construction completion, the Holder shall provide the Authorized Officer with data in a format compatible with the Bureau's Arc-Info Geographic Information System to accurately locate and identify the ROW:

Acceptable data formats are:

Corrected Global Positioning System files with sub-meter accuracy or better, in UTM NAD 83; Zone 11;

ARCGIS export files on a CD ROM, shapefile, geodatabase.

Data may be submitted in any of the following formats:

ARCGIS interchange, shapefile or geodatabase format.

CD ROM in compressed or uncompressed format.

All data shall include metadata for each coverage, and conform to the Content Standards for Digital Geospatial Metadata Federal Geographic Data Committee standards. Contact the GIS Department at (702) 515-5000.

2.0 Air Quality

- 2.1. The Holder shall not violate applicable air standards or related facility siting standards established by or pursuant to applicable federal, state, or local laws or regulations. The Holder shall be responsible for dust abatement within the limits of the ROW and is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits from appropriate authorities for acceptable dust abatement and control methods (e.g., water, chemicals). The Holder shall be solely responsible for all violations of any air quality permit, law or regulation, as a result of its action, inaction, use or occupancy of the ROW.

Notwithstanding whether a violation of any air quality permit, law or regulation results, the Holder will cooperate with the Authorized Officer in implementing and maintaining reasonable and appropriate dust control methods in conformance with law and appropriate to the circumstances at the sole cost of the Holder.

- 2.2. Ensure a dust control permit is obtained through Department of Air Quality (DAQ) for all soil disturbing activity of .25 acres or greater, in the aggregate, and permit stipulations are in compliance for the duration of the activity.
- 2.3. Prior to relinquishment, abandonment, or termination of this ROW, the Holder shall apply reasonable and appropriate dust abatement and control measures to all disturbed areas. The abatement and measures shall be designed to be effective over the long-term (e.g., rock mulch or other means) and acceptable to the Authorized Officer.
- 2.4. During excavation, backfilling, and contouring, the disturbed soil should be wetted sufficiently in order to effectively reduce airborne dust and reduce soil erosion.

3.0 Cultural

- 3.1. Any cultural and/or paleontological resources (historic or prehistoric site or object) discovered by the Holder, or any person working on his behalf on public or Federal lands shall be immediately reported to the Authorized Officer. Holder shall suspend all operations in the immediate area of such discovery until written authorization to proceed is issued by the Authorized Officer. An evaluation of the discovery will be made by the Authorized Officer to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values. The Holder will be responsible for the cost of evaluation. Any decision regarding suitable mitigation measures will be made by the Authorized Officer after consulting with the Holder. Holder shall be responsible for the resultant mitigation costs.

4.0 Hazardous Material/Pesticides/Liability

- 4.1. No hazardous material, substance, or hazardous waste, (as these terms are defined in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, 42 U.S.C. 9601, *et seq.*, or the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. 6901, *et seq.*) shall be used, produced, transported, released, disposed of, or stored within the ROW area at any time by the Holder. The Holder shall immediately report any release of hazardous substances (leaks, spills, etc.) caused by the Holder or third parties in excess of the reportable quantity as required by federal, state, or local laws and regulations. A copy of any report required or requested by any federal, state or local government agency as a result of a reportable release or spill of any hazardous substances shall be furnished to the Authorized Officer concurrent with the filing of the reports to the involved federal, state or local government agency.
- 4.2. The Holder shall immediately notify the Authorized Officer of any release of hazardous substances, toxic substances, or hazardous waste on or near the ROW potentially affecting the ROW of which the Holder is aware.

- 4.3. As required by law, Holder shall have responsibility for and shall take all action(s) necessary to fully remediate and address the hazardous substance(s) on or emanating from the ROW.
- 4.4. Use of pesticides shall comply with the applicable Federal and state laws. Pesticides shall be used only in accordance with their registered uses and within limitations imposed by the Secretary of the Interior. Prior to the use of pesticides, the Holder shall obtain from the Authorized Officer written approval of a plan showing the type and quantity of material to be used, pest(s) to be controlled, method of application, location of storage and disposal of containers and any other information deemed necessary by the Authorized Officer. The plan shall be submitted no later than December 1 of any calendar year that covers the proposed activities for the next fiscal year. Pesticides shall not be permanently stored on public lands authorized for use under this ROW.
- 4.5. The Holder shall comply with all applicable local, state, and federal air, water, hazardous substance, solid waste, or other environmental laws and regulations, existing or hereafter enacted or promulgated. To the full extent permissible by law, the Holder agrees to indemnify and hold harmless, within the limits, if any, established by state law (as state law exists on the effective date of the ROW), the United States against any liability arising from the Holder's use or occupancy of the right-of way, regardless of whether the Holder has actually developed or caused development to occur on the ROW, from the time of the issuance of this ROW to the Holder, and during the term of this ROW. This agreement to indemnify and hold harmless the United States against any liability shall apply without regard to whether the liability is caused by the Holder, its agents, contractors, or third parties. If the liability is caused by third parties, the Holder will pursue legal remedies against such third parties as if the Holder were the fee owner of the ROW.

Notwithstanding any limits to the Holder's ability to indemnify and hold harmless the United States which may exist under state law, the Holder agrees to bear all responsibility (financial or other) for any and all liability or responsibility of any kind or nature assessed against the United States arising from the Holder's use or occupancy of the right-of way regardless of whether the Holder has actually developed or caused development to occur on the ROW from the time of the issuance of this ROW to the Holder and during the term of this ROW.

- 4.6. Mineral material generated, and not needed for the development of the proposed action within the ROW site, requires a specific BLM use authorization in accordance with regulations at 43 CFR 3600 prior to the removal of the excess mineral material.

5.0 Survey Monuments

- 5.1. Holder shall protect all survey monuments found within the authorization area. Survey monuments include, but are not limited to, General Land Office and Bureau of Land Management Cadastral Survey Corners, reference corners, witness points, U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey benchmarks and triangulation stations, military control monuments, and recognizable civil (both public and private) survey monuments. If any of the above are to be disturbed during operations, the holder shall secure the services of a Professional Land Surveyor or Bureau cadastral surveyor to perpetuate the disturbed monuments and references using surveying procedures found in the Manual of Instructions for the Survey of the Public Lands of the United States and Nevada Revised Statutes, Chapter 329, Perpetuation of Corners. The holder shall record such survey in the appropriate county and send a copy to the authorized officer. If the Bureau cadastral surveyors or other Federal surveyors are used to restore the disturbed survey monuments, the holder shall be responsible for the survey cost.

6.0 Vegetation/Noxious Weeds/Land surface/Soil/Water/Riparian/Woodland/Forestry

- 6.1. Woodland /Forestry: The Holder must hire a botanist approved by the BLM to develop an estimate of the number of cactus and yucca that were impacted by the unauthorized use of the frontage road, bladed area and fence, as well as the 0.5 acres that will be impacted by the new construction. The consultant must coordinate with the BLM botanist to ensure appropriate data are collected to ensure an accurate estimate. Once the estimate is made and proved by the BLM, the Holder must coordinate with the BLM botanist to pay the salvage price for plants removed by the unauthorized use of the frontage road, bladed area and fence.

- 6.2. To avoid spreading noxious and/or invasive weeds, project activities shall include the following stipulations:
1. The project proponent shall 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.
 2. The project proponent shall limit ground disturbance to the absolute minimum necessary to safely construct and operate the proposed project. The applicant will avoid creating soil conditions that promote weed germination and establishment.
 3. 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. If you have questions, consult with the Southern Nevada BLM Noxious Weed Coordinator.
- 6.3. Land surface treatment for areas previously disturbed: Following excavation, trenches will be backfilled with the excavated soil. The soil will be distributed and contoured evenly over the surface of the disturbed area. The soil surface will be left rough to help reduce potential wind erosion.
- 6.4. Land surface treatment for areas previously undisturbed: Strip the top three to six inches of soil material with associated plant material over all surfaces to be disturbed by construction. Stockpile this material along the course of construction will be salvaged and transplanted out of harm's way but still within the right of way. At the conclusion, including trench backfilling and compaction, replace the stockpiled soil with plant debris uniformly back on the surface of the disturbed area.
- 6.5. If drilling boreholes, holder needs to follow Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) protocols for drilling. Consult with ACOE to make sure you do not need a 404 permit. All holes should be drilled according to the Nevada Regulations for Water Well and Related Drilling, per NRS Statutes 534. All holes should be reclaimed according to NRS and NAC regulations and reclaimed immediately after drilling. If groundwater is intercepted, holes will need to be reclaimed appropriately. Additionally, applicant is responsible for obtaining any CWA permits from NDEP that may be necessary.

7.0 Migratory Birds

- 7.1. The Holder must comply with the Migratory Bird Treat Act (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. 703 *et. seq.*) and avoid potential impacts to protected birds within the project area and habitat-altering projects should be scheduled outside the bird breeding season, which generally occurs from February 15th through August 31st. If a project has to occur during the breeding season, then a qualified biologist must survey the area for nests immediately prior to commencement of construction activities. This shall include burrowing and ground nesting species in addition those nesting in vegetation. If any active nests are found, an appropriately-sized buffer area must be established and maintained until the young birds fledge. This buffer must connect to other suitable undisturbed habitat. As the above dates are a general guideline, if active nests are observed outside this range they are to be avoided as described above.
- 7.2. To prevent undue harm, habitat-altering projects or portions of projects should be scheduled outside bird breeding season. In upland desert habitats and ephemeral washes containing upland species, the season generally occurs between (Use ARF language) **March 15th - July 30th.**

If a project that may alter any breeding habitat has to occur during the breeding season, then a qualified biologist must survey the area for nests prior to commencement of construction activities. This shall include burrowing and ground nesting species in addition to those nesting in vegetation. If any active nests (containing eggs or young) are found, an appropriately-sized buffer area must be avoided until the young birds fledge.

8.0 Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species

- 8.1. Section 7 Consultation for this project is covered under the Programmatic Biological Opinion (84320-2010-F-0365.R003) contingent on compliance with the terms and conditions attached below. This project has previously disturbed 28 acres of tortoise habitat and is proposing to disturb an additional 0.5 acres for a total of 28.5 acres removed. The BLM has no documentation that the project was covered under the Holder's biological opinion or if fees have previously been paid. The Holder will be required to pay remuneration fees of \$23,826 based on the current year's rate of \$836/acre of disturbance. Terms and conditions and minimizations measures in the above Biological Opinion contain measures to avoid and minimize further potential impacts, including take, to desert tortoise. A copy of the terms and conditions has been attached below (Sec. 7 Log #NV-052-15-081)

Case Number: N-92966
NEPA Project #: DOI-BLM-NV-S030-2015-0006-CX
Sec. 7 Log #: NV-052-15-081

TERMS AND CONDITIONS for ROWs: BO File No. 84320-2010-F-0365. R003

In order to be exempt from the prohibitions of section 9 of the Act, the Bureau must comply with the following terms and conditions and minimization measures, which implement the reasonable and prudent measures described above. These terms and conditions are non-discretionary.

RPM 1: **Applies towards lands and realty, ROWs, and mining actions and other activities that involve vehicle and equipment use, excavations, or blasting. BLM, and other jurisdictional Federal agencies as appropriate, shall implement or ensure implementation of measures to minimize injury or mortality of desert tortoises due to project construction, operation and maintenance; and most actions involving habitat disturbance.**

Terms and Conditions:

1.a. *Field Contact Representative*—BLM shall ensure a Field Contact Representative (FCR) (also called a Compliance Inspection Contractor) is generally designated for each contiguous stretch of construction activity for linear projects or isolated work areas for non-linear projects. The FCR will serve as an agent of BLM and the Service to ensure that all instances of non-compliance or incidental take are reported. BLM has discretion over approval of potential FCRs; however, those who also may be acting as authorized desert tortoise biologists, and must also be approved by the Service (see Term and Condition 1.c). All FCRs will report **directly** to BLM and the Service.

The FCR, authorized desert tortoise biologist, and monitors (see Term and Condition 1.c.) shall have a copy of all stipulations when work is being conducted on the site and will be responsible for overseeing compliance with terms and conditions of the ROW grant, including those for listed species. BLM shall ensure the FCR and authorized desert tortoise biologists have authority to halt any activity that is in violation of the stipulations. The FCR shall be on site year-round during all project activities.

Within 3 days of employment or assignment, the project proponent and BLM shall provide the Service with the names of the FCR.

1.b. *Authorized desert tortoise biologist*—**Required to be onsite to relocated any tortoises that enter the work area during clearance survey.**

All authorized desert tortoise biologists (and monitors) are agents of BLM and the Service and shall report directed to BLM and the proponent concurrently regarding all compliance issues and take of desert tortoises; this includes all draft and final reports of non-compliance or take. The initial draft report shall be provided to BLM and Service within 24 hours of the observation of take or non-compliance.

An authorized desert tortoise biologist will be assigned to each piece/group of large equipment engaged in activities that may result in take of desert tortoise (*e.g.*, clearing, blasting, grading,

lowering in pipe, hydrostatic testing, backfilling, recontouring, and reclamation activities) and other work areas that pose a risk to tortoises. BLM may use their discretion to require a monitor instead of an authorized desert tortoise biologist to monitor equipment that is low risk to tortoises.

1. c. Authorized desert tortoise biologists, monitors, and the FCR (see Term and Condition 1.a.) shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with all conservation measures for the project. This responsibility includes: (1) enforcing the litter-control program; (2) ensuring that desert tortoise habitat disturbance is restricted to authorized areas; (3) ensuring that all equipment and materials are stored within the boundaries of the construction zone or within the boundaries of previously-disturbed areas or designated areas; (4) ensuring that all vehicles associated with construction activities remain within the proposed construction zones; (5) ensuring that no tortoises are underneath project vehicles and equipment prior to use or movement; (6) ensuring that all monitors (including the authorized desert tortoise biologist) have a copy of the required measures in their possession, have read them, and they are readily available to the monitor when on the project site.

An authorized desert tortoise biologist will serve as a mentor to train desert tortoise monitors and will approve monitors if required. An authorized desert tortoise biologist is responsible for errors committed by desert tortoise monitors.

An authorized desert tortoise biologist shall record each observation of desert tortoise handled in the tortoise monitoring reports. Information will include the following: location (GPS), date and time of observation, whether the desert tortoise was handled, general health and whether it voided its bladder, location desert tortoise was moved from and location moved to, unique physical characteristics of each tortoise, and effectiveness and compliance with the desert tortoise protection measures. This information will be provided **directly** to BLM and the Service.

An authorized desert tortoise biologist should possess a bachelor's degree in biology, ecology, wildlife biology, herpetology, or closely related field. The biologist must have demonstrated prior field experience using accepted resource agency techniques. As a guideline, Service approval of an authorized biologist requires that the applicant have at least 60 days project experience as a desert tortoise monitor. In addition, the biologist shall have the ability to recognize and accurately record survey results and must be familiar with the terms and conditions of the biological opinion that resulted from project-level consultation between BLM and the Service. All tortoise biologists shall be familiar with the field manual (Service 2009).

Potential authorized desert tortoise biologists must submit their statement of qualifications to the Service's Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office in Las Vegas for approval, allowing a minimum of 30 days for Service response. The statement form is available on the internet at:

http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert_tortoise/auth_dt_form.htm.

Prior to final approval to begin work on the project, the authorized desert tortoise biologists will have read the required measures (terms and conditions and other stipulations) and have a copy of the measures available at all times while on the project site. BLM shall provide the appropriate agency contact for the project to the Service and the Service will include the forms with approval

letters. Biologists and monitors should be visibly identifiable on the project site, which may include use of a uniquely designated hardhat or safety vest color.

1. d. ***Desert tortoise monitor***— required to be onsite for construction and maintenance activities utilizing heavy equipment March through October when desert tortoise are most active. The monitor is to escort and clear in front of the equipment during use of grader or any other heavy equipment. The speed/pace will be determined by the desert tortoise monitor and shall be slow enough to ensure adequate inspection. If a desert tortoise is observed in the road, all activities will cease until the desert tortoise has moved to a safe area on its own. A monitor is also required to be onsite during all fence construction and repairs requiring heavy equipment.

Desert tortoise monitors assist an authorized desert tortoise biologist during surveys and serve as apprentices to acquire experience. Desert tortoise monitors ensure proper implementation of protective measures, and record and report desert tortoises and sign observations in accordance with Term and Condition 1.c. They will report incidents of noncompliance to the authorized desert tortoise biologist or FCR. No monitors shall be on the project site unless supervised by an authorized desert tortoise biologist or approved by the BLM.

If a desert tortoise is immediately in harm's way (*e.g.*, certain to immediately be crushed by equipment), desert tortoise monitors may move the desert tortoise then place it in a designated safe area until an authorized desert tortoise biologist assumes care of the animal.

Desert tortoise monitors may not conduct field or clearance surveys or other specialized duties of an authorized desert tortoise biologist unless directly supervised by an authorized desert tortoise biologist or approved to do so by the Service; "directly supervised" means an authorized desert tortoise biologist has direct sight and voice contact with the desert tortoise monitor (*i.e.*, within approximately 200 ft of each other).

Within 3 days of employment or assignment, the project proponent and BLM shall provide the Service with the names of desert tortoise monitors who would assist an authorized desert tortoise biologist.

- 1.e. ***Desert tortoise education program***—A desert tortoise education program shall be presented to all personnel on site during construction activities by an agency or authorized desert tortoise biologist. The Service, BLM, and appropriate state agencies shall approve the program. At a minimum, the program shall cover desert-specific Leave-No-Trace guidelines, the distribution of desert tortoises, general behavior and ecology of this species, sensitivity to human activities, threats including introduction of exotic plants and animals, legal protection (the definition of "take" will also be explained), penalties for violation of State and Federal laws, reporting requirements, and project measures in this biological opinion. All field workers shall be instructed that activities must be confined to locations within the approved areas and their obligation to walk around and check underneath and vehicles and equipment before moving them (or be cleared by an authorized desert tortoise biologist). Workers and project associates will be encouraged to carpool to and from the project sites. In addition, the program shall include fire prevention measures to be implemented by employees during project activities. The program shall instruct participants to report all observations of desert tortoise and their sign

during construction activities to the FCR and authorized desert tortoise biologist.

- 1.f. *Vehicle travel***— Project personnel shall exercise vigilance when commuting to the project area to minimize risk for inadvertent injury or mortality of all wildlife species encountered on paved and unpaved roads leading to and from the project site. Speed limits will be clearly marked, and all workers will be made aware of these limits. On-site, personnel shall carpool to the greatest extent possible.

During the desert tortoise less-active season (generally November through February), vehicle speed on project-related access roads and in the work area will not exceed 25 mph. All vehicles and construction equipment will be tightly grouped.

During the more-active season (generally March through October), and if temperatures are above 60 but below 95 °F for more than 7 consecutive days, vehicle speed on project-related access roads and in the work area will not exceed 15 mph. All vehicles and construction equipment will operate in groups of no more than three vehicles. An authorized desert tortoise biologist and desert tortoise monitor will escort or clear ahead of vehicles and equipment for ROW travel. The escort will be on foot and clear the area of tortoises in front of each traveling construction equipment group (see *Desert tortoise clearance*). The escort will use a recreational vehicle with ground visibility (e.g., UTV); however, at least one authorized desert tortoise biologist and one desert tortoise monitor must ride together and survey both sides of the vehicle. The speed/pace will be determined by an authorized desert tortoise biologist and shall be slow enough to ensure adequate inspection.

New access and spur road locations will be sited to avoid potentially active tortoise burrows to the maximum extent practicable.

- 1.g. *Unauthorized access***—BLM shall ensure that unauthorized personnel, including the public and off-duty project personnel, do not travel on project-related temporary access roads, to the greatest extent practicable.

During the more-active season (generally March through October), and if temperatures are above 60 but below 95 °F for more than 7 consecutive days, project- and non-project-related activities on all access roads that intersect the ROW will be monitored and logged. During construction, the ROW will be fenced at public roads that intersect the ROW. Signs will say that access on the ROW is strictly prohibited except by authorized personnel and that violators will be prosecuted.

- 1.h. *Desert tortoise clearance—Required for new disturbance for this project.***

Prior to surface-disturbing activities, authorized desert tortoise biologists potentially assisted by desert tortoise monitors, shall conduct a clearance survey to locate and remove all desert tortoises from harm's way including areas to be disturbed using techniques that provide full coverage of all areas (Service 2009). During the more-active season, clearance surveys will be conducted either the day prior to, or the day of, any surface-disturbing activity. During the less-active season, clearance surveys will be conducted within 7 days prior to any surface-disturbing activity. No surface-disturbing activities shall begin until two consecutive surveys yield no individuals.

An authorized biologist shall excavate all burrows that have characteristics of potentially containing desert tortoises in the area to be disturbed with the goal of locating and removing all desert tortoises and desert tortoise eggs. During clearance surveys, all handling of desert tortoises and their eggs and excavation of burrows shall be conducted solely by an authorized desert tortoise biologist in accordance with the most current Service-approved guidance (currently Service 2009). If any tortoise active nests are encountered, the Service must be contacted immediately, prior to removal of any tortoises or eggs from those burrows, to determine the most appropriate course of action. Unoccupied burrows shall be collapsed or blocked to prevent desert tortoise entry. Outside construction work areas, all potential desert tortoise burrows and pallets within 50 ft of the edge of the construction work area shall be flagged. If the burrow is occupied by a desert tortoise during the less-active season, the tortoise shall be temporarily penned (see Term and Condition 1.k.). No stakes or flagging shall be placed on the berm or in the opening of a desert tortoise burrow. Desert tortoise burrows shall not be marked in a manner that facilitates poaching. Avoidance flagging shall be designed to be easily distinguished from access route or other flagging, and shall be designed in consultation with experienced construction personnel and authorized biologists. All flagging shall be removed following construction activities.

An authorized desert tortoise biologist will inspect areas to be backfilled immediately prior to backfilling.

- 1.i. *Desert tortoise in harm's way*—Any project-related activity that may endanger a desert tortoise shall cease if a desert tortoise is found on the project site. Project activities may resume after an authorized desert tortoise biologist or desert tortoise monitor (see restrictions in Term and Condition 1.d.) removes the desert tortoise from danger or after the desert tortoise has moved to a safe area on its own.

During the more-active season and if temperatures are above 60 but below 95 °F for more than 7 consecutive days, at least 1 monitor shall be assigned to observe spoil piles prior to excavation and covering.

- 1.j. *Handling of desert tortoises*—Desert tortoises shall only be moved by an authorized desert tortoise biologist or desert tortoise monitor (see restrictions in Term and Condition 1.d.) solely for the purpose of moving the tortoises out of harm's way. During construction, operation, and maintenance, an authorized desert tortoise biologist shall pen, capture, handle, and relocate desert tortoises from harm's way as appropriate and in accordance with the most current Service-approved guidance. No tortoise shall be handled by more than one person. Each tortoise handled will be given a unique number, photographed, and the biologist will record all relevant data on the Desert Tortoise Handling and Take Report (Appendix E) to be provided to BLM in accordance with the project reporting requirements.

Desert tortoises that occur aboveground and need to be moved from harm's way shall be placed in the shade of a shrub, 150 to 1,640 ft from the point of encounter. In situations where desert tortoises must be moved more than 1,640 ft (500 m), translocation procedures may be required. Translocation would likely result in a level of effect to the desert tortoise that would require the appended procedures.

If desert tortoises need to be moved at a time of day when ambient temperatures could harm them (less than 40 ° F or greater than 95° F), they shall be held overnight in a clean cardboard box. These desert tortoises shall be kept in the care of an authorized biologist under appropriate controlled temperatures and released the following day when temperatures are favorable. All cardboard boxes shall be discarded after one use and never hold more than one tortoise. If any tortoise active nests are encountered, the Service must be contacted immediately, prior to removal of any tortoises or eggs from those burrows, to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Desert tortoises located in the project area sheltering in a burrow during the less-active season may be temporarily penned in accordance with Term and Condition 1.k. at the discretion of an authorized desert tortoise biologist. Desert tortoises should not be penned in areas of moderate to heavy public use, rather they should be moved from harm's way in accordance with the most current Service-approved guidance (currently Service 2009).

Desert tortoises shall be handled in accordance with the Desert Tortoise Field Manual (Service 2009). Equipment or materials that contact desert tortoises (including shirts and pants) shall be sterilized, disposed of, or changed before contacting another tortoise to prevent the spread of disease. All tortoises shall be handled using disposable surgical gloves and the gloves shall be disposed of after handling each tortoise. An authorized desert tortoise biologist shall document each tortoise handling by completing the Desert Tortoise Handling and Take Report (Appendix E).

1.k. *Penning—Not required for this project.*

Penning shall be accomplished by installing a circular fence, approximately 20 ft in diameter to enclose and surround the tortoise burrow. The pen should be constructed with 1-inch horizontal by 2-in vertical, galvanized welded wire. Steel T-posts or rebar should be placed every 5 to 6 ft to support the pen material. Pen material will extend 18 to 24 in aboveground. The bottom of the enclosure will be buried 6 to 12 in or bent towards the burrow, have soil mounded along the base, and other measures implemented to ensure zero ground clearance. Care shall be taken to minimize visibility of the pen by the public. An authorized desert tortoise biologist or desert tortoise monitor shall check the pen at a frequency to ensure that the desert tortoise is secure and not stressed. No desert tortoise shall be penned for more than 48 hours without written approval by the Service. Because this is a new technique, all instances of penning or issues associated with penning shall be reported to the Service within 3 days (see Appendix E).

1.l. *Temporary tortoise-proof fencing—Not required for this project.*

All construction areas, including open pipeline trenches, hydrostatic testing locations, and tie-in work shall be fenced with temporary tortoise-proof fencing (*e.g.*, silt fencing) or inspected by an authorized desert tortoise biologist periodically throughout and at the end of the day and immediately the next morning. BLM and the Service will determine the appropriate length of open trench that will be allowed on the project.

Fencing will be designed in a manner that reduces the potential for desert tortoises and hatchlings to access the construction areas. Thus, the lower 6 to 12 in of fencing will be folded outward (*i.e.*, away from the construction area and towards the direction a tortoise would

approach the work area), and covered with sufficient amount of soil, rocks, and staking to maintain zero ground clearance and secure the bottom section of material. An authorized desert tortoise biologist will check the integrity of the fencing every 2 hours and ensure that there are no breaches in the fencing and no desert tortoises pacing the fence. After the fencing is erected and secure, the inside will be cleared by an authorized desert tortoise biologist. The fencing must remain closed during any construction activities.

- 1.m. *Permanent tortoise-proof fencing—installation of tortoise fencing on the security fence is required within the project area due to adjacent undisturbed habitat and connectivity via culverts. This fence should be attached to the existing security fence and follow the below inspection schedule.***

Tortoise-proof fencing shall be installed around the boundary of permanent aboveground facilities that require regular monitoring and maintenance and other areas as directed by the BLM or Service. Fence specifications will be consistent with those approved by the Service (Service 2009). Tortoise guards shall be placed at all road access points where desert tortoise-proof fencing is interrupted, to exclude desert tortoises from the facility. **Gates shall provide minimal ground clearance and deter ingress by desert tortoises.** Permanent tortoise-proof fencing along the project area shall be appropriately constructed, monitored, and maintained. Fencing shall be inspected in accordance with Table 15 and reports prepared in accordance with Term and Condition 7.c. unless modified by the Service. Monitoring and maintenance shall include regular removal of trash and sediment accumulation and restoration of zero ground clearance between the ground and the bottom of the fence, including re-covering the bent portion of the fence if not buried.

Table 15. Desert tortoise fence inspection requirements

Condition	Minimum Requirements
First week following fence installation; tortoises active	Inspect fence perimeter, tortoise guards, and gates twice per day, timed to occur when tortoises may be pacing the fenceline.
First week following fence installation; tortoises inactive	Inspect fence perimeter, tortoise guards, and gates once per day.
Beginning the second week following fence construction, tortoises active	Inspect fence perimeter, tortoise guards, and gates once per day.
Beginning the second week following fence construction, tortoises inactive	Inspect fence perimeter, tortoise guards, and gates once per month.
Following major storm event, tortoises active	Inspect fence perimeter, tortoise guards, and gates within 48 hours.
Following major storm event, tortoises inactive	Inspect fence perimeter, tortoise guards,

	and gates within 72 hours.
Breach in fence observed, tortoise guard or gate requires maintenance, tortoises active	Repair within 48 hours of breach occurrence.
Breach in fence observed, tortoise guard or gate requires maintenance, tortoises inactive	Repair within 1 week of breach occurrence.

1.n. *Wildlife escape ramps*—Earthen plugs, with wildlife escape ramps on either side of the plug, will be provided in open trench segments at no greater than every 0.25 mi. These distances will be reduced if the FCR and authorized desert tortoise biologist determine that the plug/escape ramp spacing is insufficient to facilitate animal escape from the trench. Any tortoise that is found in a trench or excavation shall be promptly removed by an authorized desert tortoise biologist in accordance with the most current Service-approved guidance. If the authorized desert tortoise biologist is not allowed to enter the trench for safety reasons, the alternative method of removal must have prior approval by the Service.

1.o. *Dust control*—Water applied to for dust control shall not be allowed to pool outside desert-tortoise fenced areas, as this can attract desert tortoises. Similarly, leaks on water trucks and water tanks will be repaired to prevent pooling water. An authorized desert tortoise biologist/monitor will be assigned to patrol each area being watered immediately after the water is applied and at approximate 60-minute intervals until the ground is no longer wet enough to attract tortoises if conditions favor tortoise activity.

1.p. *Blasting*—*Not applicable to this project.*

If blasting is required in desert tortoise habitat, detonation shall only occur after the area has been surveyed and cleared by an authorized desert tortoise biologist. A 200-ft radius area around the blasting site shall be surveyed and all desert tortoises aboveground within this 200-ft radius of the blasting site shall be moved 500 ft from the blasting site, placed in unoccupied burrow, and temporarily penned (see Term and Condition 1.k.) to prevent tortoises that have been temporarily relocated from returning to the site. Tortoises in burrows would be left in their burrows. All burrows, regardless of occupied status, will be stuffed with newspapers, flagged, and location recorded using a GPS unit. Immediately after blasting, newspaper and flagging will be removed. If a burrow or coversite has collapsed which could be occupied, it shall be excavated to ensure that no tortoises have been buried and are in danger of suffocation.

1.q. *Power transmission projects*—*Not applicable to this project.*

Transmission line support structures and other facility structures shall be designed to discourage their use by raptors for perching or nesting (*e.g.*, by use of anti-perching devices) in accordance with the most current Avian Power Line Interaction Committee guidelines (see terms and conditions 2.b and 2.c.).

1.r. *Timing of construction*—The BLM shall ensure that when possible, the project proponent schedules and conducts construction, operation, and maintenance activities within desert tortoise

habitat during the less-active season (generally October 31 to March 1) and during periods of reduced desert tortoise activity (typically when ambient temperatures are less than 60 or greater than 95 °F).

All vehicles and equipment that are not in areas enclosed by desert tortoise exclusion fencing will stop activities in desert tortoise habitat during rainfall events in the more-active season (generally March 1 to October 31), and if temperatures are above 60 but below 95 °F for more than 7 consecutive days. The Field Contact Representative (FCR) or designee will determine, in coordination with the BLM and Service, when it is appropriate for project activities to continue.

RPM 2: Predator Control—Applies to all actions. *BLM, and other jurisdictional Federal agencies as appropriate, shall ensure their agency personnel, the project proponent, and their contractors implement the following measures to minimize injury to desert tortoises as a result of predators drawn to the project area from construction, operation, and minor maintenance activities:*

Terms and Conditions:

- 2.a. **Litter control, applies to all projects**—A litter control program shall be implemented to reduce the attractiveness of the area to opportunistic predators such as desert kit foxes, coyotes, and common ravens. Trash and food items will be disposed of properly in predator-proof containers with predator-proof lids. Trash containers will be emptied and construction waste will be removed daily from the project area and disposed of in an approved landfill. Vehicles hauling trash to the landfill or transfer facility must be secured to prevent litter from blowing out along the road.
- 2.b. **Deterrence**—The project proponent will implement measures to discourage the presence of predators on site (coyotes, ravens, etc.), including elimination of available water sources, designing structures to discourage potential nest sites, and use of hazing to discourage raven presence.
- 2.c. **Monitoring and predator control**—Not required for this action.
- 2.d. **Evaporation ponds and open water sources**—Not required for this action.

RPM 3: Impacts to Desert Tortoise Habitat—Applies towards all actions that involve habitat impacts. *BLM, and other jurisdictional Federal agencies as appropriate, shall ensure their agency personnel, the project proponent, and their contractors implement the following measures to minimize loss and long-term degradation and fragmentation of desert tortoise habitat, such as soil compaction, erosion, crushed vegetation, and introduction of weeds or contaminants from construction, operation, and minor maintenance activities:*

Terms and Conditions:

- 3.a. **Habitat protection plans**—As required by BLM Resource Specialist, BLM shall ensure that the applicants develop and implement an approved fire prevention and response plan, erosion control plan, and a weed management plan approved by BLM prior to surface disturbance.

- 3.b. **Restoration plan**—BLM shall ensure that the applicant develop and implement a restoration/reclamation plan if pit is no longer in use. The plan will describe objectives and methods to be used, species of native plants and/or seed mixture to be used, time of planting, success standards, actions to take if restoration efforts fail to achieve the success standards, and follow-up monitoring. The plan will be prepared and approved prior to the surface disturbance phase of the project. Reclamation will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.c. **Minimizing new disturbance**—Cross-country travel outside designated areas shall be prohibited. All equipment, vehicles, and construction materials shall be restricted to the designated areas and new disturbance will be restricted to the minimum necessary to complete the task (e.g., such as construction of one-lane access roads with passing turnouts every mile rather than a wider two-lane road).
- All work area boundaries shall be conspicuously staked, flagged, or otherwise marked to minimize surface disturbance activities.
- 3.d. **Weed prevention**—Vehicles and equipment shall be cleaned with a high pressure washer prior to arrival in desert tortoise habitat and prior to departure from areas of known invasive weed and nonnative grass infestations to prevent or at least minimize the introduction or spread these species.
- 3.e. **Chemical spills**—Hazardous and toxic materials such as fuels, solvents, lubricants, and acids used during construction will be controlled to prevent accidental spills. Any leak or accidental release of hazardous and toxic materials will be stopped immediately and cleaned up at the time of occurrence. Contaminated soils will be removed and disposed at an approved landfill site.
- 3.f. **Residual impacts from disturbance**—*Required for this project. As proposed, this project will disturb 28.5 acres of desert tortoise habitat; therefore, remuneration fees of \$23,826 are required as described below.*

BLM shall collect remuneration fees to offset residual impacts to desert tortoises from project-related disturbance to desert tortoise habitat.

Remuneration fees will be used for management actions expected to promote recovery of the desert tortoise over time, including management and recovery of desert tortoise in Nevada. Actions may involve habitat acquisition, population or habitat enhancement, increasing knowledge of the species' biological requirements, reducing loss of individual animals, documenting the species status and trend, and preserving distinct population attributes. Fees will be used to fund the highest priority recovery actions for desert tortoises in Nevada

The current rate is \$836 per acre of disturbance, as indexed for inflation, effective March 1, 2014. The next adjustment will become effective March 1, 2015. The fee rate will be indexed for inflation based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) on January 31st of each year, becoming effective March 1st. Fees assessed or collected for projects covered under this biological opinion will be adjusted based on the current CPI-U for the year they are collected. Information on the CPI-U can be found on the internet at: <http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nws.htm>.

RMP 7: Compliance and Reporting—Applies towards all actions. *BLM, and other jurisdictional Federal agencies as appropriate, shall ensure their agency personnel, the project proponent, and their contractors implement the following measures to comply with the reasonable and prudent measures, terms and conditions, reporting requirements, and reinitiation requirements contained in this biological opinion:*

Terms and Conditions:

- 7.a. Desert tortoise deaths**—The deaths and injuries of desert tortoises shall be investigated as thoroughly as possible to determine the cause. The Service (702/515-5230), BLM wildlife staff (702/515-5000) and appropriate state wildlife agency must be verbally informed immediately and within 5 business days in writing (electronic mail is sufficient). The Authorized Desert Tortoise Biologist shall complete the Desert Tortoise Handling and Take Report (Appendix E).
- 7.b. Non-compliance**—Any incident occurring during project activities that was considered by the FCR, authorized desert tortoise biologist, or biological monitor to be in non-compliance with this biological opinion shall be immediately documented by an authorized desert tortoise biologist. Documentation shall include photos, GPS coordinates, and details on the circumstances of the event. The incident will be included in the annual report and post-project report.
- 7.c. Fence inspection—required for this project.**

Quarterly reports (January-March, April-June, July-September, and October –December) for monitoring and repair of tortoise-proof fencing as specified in Table 15, shall be submitted to the Service's Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office in Las Vegas. Reports are due within the first 30 days following each quarter (e.g., the report for quarter January-March is due April 30).

- 7.d. Project reporting requirements**— Project proponents will provide BLM with compliance reports. Quarter (non-appended actions), annual, and comprehensive final project reports will be submitted to BLM and the Service's Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office in Las Vegas. Annual reports are required for all appended actions (except those completed and provided in a prior annual report). Annual reports will cover the calendar year and are due April 1st of the following year (e.g., the annual report for calendar year 2013 is due April 1, 2014). Quarterly reports for non-appended actions are due 15 calendar days following the quarter. Final project reports are due within 60 days following completion of the project or each phase of the project.

The Programmatic Biological Opinion Report to the Fish and Wildlife Service (Appendix G) will be used for quarterly, annual, and final project reports, and shall include all Desert Tortoise Handling and Take Reports (Appendix E). If available, GIS shape files will be included.

- 7.e. Operation and maintenance**—A written assessment report shall be submitted annually to the Service outlining the operation and maintenance activities that occurred over the past year.

Report to include: It will include frequency of implementation of minimization measures, biological observations, general success of each of the minimization measures. All deaths, injuries, and illnesses of endangered or threatened species within the project area, whether associated with project activities or not, will be summarized in the annual report. The report is due April 1 of each year.

- 7.f. *Restoration monitoring*—Vegetation restoration success shall be monitored by project proponent and reported to BLM and the Service. Monitoring will include both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Monitoring frequency and parameters for restoration success will be described in the required restoration/reclamation plan.

8: Minimization Measures

- 8.a. The project applicant shall notify BLM wildlife staff at 702-515-5000 at least 10 days before initiation of the project. Notification shall occur before any activities begin that will damage or remove vegetation, such as off-road vehicle travel for surveys, soil testing, and clearing vegetation off the project site. The purpose of the notification is to ensure that the proper education program is given and to review expectations for compliance with the terms and conditions of the biological opinion.
- 8.b. Overnight parking and storage of equipment and materials, including stockpiling, shall be in previously disturbed areas or areas cleared by a tortoise biologist. If not possible, areas for overnight parking and storage of equipment shall be designated by the tortoise biologist in coordination with BLM and project proponent, which will minimize habitat disturbance.
- 8.e. **Tortoise -proof fencing** – Projects will require desert tortoise exclusion fencing in Areas A and B unless BLM and the Service determine that the project should not be fenced (e.g., powerlines, pipelines, and some roads). The fence may be permanent or temporary, as determined on a case-by-case basis. Fenced projects will require an initial tortoise clearance of the fenceline prior to fence construction, and a tortoise clearance (removal) within the fenced area following fence construction as described in the Desert Tortoise Field Manual (Service 2009).

An authorized desert tortoise biologist shall be onsite during construction of the tortoise-proof fence to ensure that no tortoises are harmed unless determined unnecessary by BLM and the Service. Any desert tortoises or eggs found in the fenceline will be relocated offsite by an authorized desert tortoise biologist in accordance with approved protocol (Service 2009). Tortoise burrows that occur immediately outside the fence alignment that can be avoided by fence construction activities shall be clearly marked to prevent damage to the burrow.

Following fence construction and prior to start of project activities within the fenced area, all desert tortoises shall be removed from the site. An authorized desert tortoise biologist shall oversee the survey for and removal of tortoises using techniques providing 100-percent coverage of all areas. All desert tortoise burrows and other species burrows, which may be used by tortoises, will be examined to determine occupancy of each burrow by desert tortoises. Tortoise burrows shall be cleared of tortoises and eggs, and collapsed. Any desert tortoise or eggs in the fenced area will be removed under the supervision of an authorized desert tortoise biologist in accordance with Service protocol (Service 2009).

On phased development projects, the operator will have the option of initially fencing less than the total project acreage. The fenced area will be enlarged as the disturbance expands.

Inspection of exclusion fencing: The project proponent or operator shall be responsible for inspecting the fencing in accordance with Service requirements (Term and Condition 1.m.). Maintenance and repairs shall be performed promptly including removal of trash, sediment accumulation, tumbleweeds and other debris against the fence and restoration of zero ground clearance between the ground and the bottom of the fence, including recovering the bent or buried portion of the fence if not buried. A log shall be maintained to document dates of

inspections, condition and issues observed, and date issues were resolved. The log shall be provided to BLM with project reports.

Removal of exclusion fencing: Temporary fencing shall be removed at the end of the construction activity. Permanent fencing may be removed upon termination and reclamation of the project, or when it is determined by BLM and the Service that a fence is no longer necessary.

Exclusion fencing along highways: Fencing should be installed to allow tortoises to use adequately sized culverts to cross under the road. During project design, the proponent and BLM will identify: 1) culverts that may serve as movement corridors underneath the road; 2) modifications that will be needed for culvert use by desert tortoises; and 3) locations suitable for installation of culverts at a future date, should it be determined necessary, and provide to the Service in writing.

- 8.f. Within desert tortoise habitat, any construction pipe, culvert, or similar structure with a diameter greater than 3 inches stored less than 8 inches above the ground will be inspected for tortoises before the material is moved, buried, or capped.
- 8.g. **Trenches:** All trenches and holes will be covered, fenced or backfilled to ensure desert tortoises do not become trapped unless alternate measures are in place as agreed by BLM and the Service. If trenches or holes are to remain open during construction, they will be checked for tortoises at least four times a day, at the start of day, at mid-morning, early afternoon, and at the end of the work day. The trenches or holes will also be checked immediately before backfilling regardless of the season. Tortoises found in the trench will be reported and moved out of harm's way in accordance with handling protocols (Service 2009).

APPENDIX E. DESERT TORTOISE HANDLING AND TAKE REPORT

If a desert tortoise is killed or injured, immediately contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and BLM, by phone at the numbers below and complete Section 1 of the form.

Completed forms should be submitted to the BLM and Fish and Wildlife Service:

Bureau of Land Management
4701 North Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130
702-515-5000

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4701 North Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130
702-515-5230

Project Name: AF Munitions Gate, Access Road, South Creech Boundary Road, and Disturbance NEPA No.: DOI-BLM-NV-S030-2015-0006-CX Case File No./SRP No.: N-92966 BLM Section 7 log no.: NV-052-15-081	Report Date:
Fish and Wildlife Service Append File No.- 84320-2010-F-0365. R003	
Authorized Desert Tortoise Biologist: _____ Employed by:	
Section 1: Complete all information below if a desert tortoise is injured or killed in addition to initial contact described above.	
If tortoise was injured <input type="checkbox"/> or killed <input type="checkbox"/> (check appropriate box):	
Date and time found: _____ Found by: _____ GPS location (NAD 83): easting: _____ northing: _____ No. of photos taken: _____ Disposition: _____ _____ _____	
Attach report with photos that describe in detail, the circumstances and potential cause of injury or mortality. For injuries include name of veterinarian and detailed assessment of injuries.	

Section 2: Complete all information below for each desert tortoise handled.

All instances of desert tortoise handling must be reported in this section and be included in the quarterly, annual, and final project reports.

Desert tortoise number: _____

Date and time found: _____ Sex of tortoise: _____

Air temperature when found: _____ Air temperature when released: _____

Tortoise activity when found: _____

Handled by: _____ Approx. carapace length _____

GPS location (NAD 83) found: easting: _____ northing: _____

GPS location released: easting: _____ northing: _____

Approximate distance moved: _____

Did tortoise void bladder; if so state approximate volume and actions taken:

Post handling or movement monitoring and observations:

Section 3: Complete for each tortoise burrow penned.

All instances of desert tortoise penning must be reported in this section and be included in the quarterly, annual, and final project reports.

Date and time of pen construction:

Began: _____ Completed: _____

Date and time pen removed: _____

Pen constructed by: _____

Why was tortoise penned? _____

How frequently was pen monitored? _____

Observations of desert tortoise behavior including time and date of observation:

Include photos of pen and burrow with report.

Biological Opinion File Number: 84320-2010-F-0365.R003
Biological Opinion Issued By: Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office, Las Vegas, Nevada
Species: Mojave Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*)
Project Name: AF Munitions Gate, Access Road, South Creech Boundary Road, and Disturbance
NEPA No.: DOI-BLM-NV-S030-2015-0006-CX
Case File/Serial #: N-92966
BLM Sec 7 log: NV-052-15-081
Project Proponent: F2M and/or others
Phone Number: _____

Payment Calculations:

	Clark County		County		County	
	Critical habitat	Non-critical habitat	Critical habitat	Non-critical habitat	Critical habitat	Non-critical habitat
# acres anticipated to be disturbed on federal land		28.5				
Fee rate (per acre)		\$836.00				
Total cost/habitat type (per county)	\$ -	\$23,826	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total cost per county	\$	\$23,826	\$	-	\$	-

Total payment required (all counties): \$23,826

Amount paid: _____ **Date:** _____ **Check/Money Order #:** _____

Authorizing agencies: Bureau of Land Management, _____ Las Vegas, _____ Nevada

Make check payable to: Bureau of Land Management

Deliver check to: **Physical Address**
 Bureau of Land Management
 Attn: Information Access Ctr
 1340 Financial Blvd.
 Reno, NV 89502

Credit Card Payments: Contact BLM State Office Public room at 775-861-6500
 For BLM Public Room

Process check to:

Contributed Funds-All Other
 WBS: LVTFFX000800
 7122 FLPMA
 All other Res. Dev. Project and Management
 Remarks: LLNV934000 L71220000.JP0000 LVTFFX000800 Desert Tortoise Conservation Program

Please provide a copy of this completed payment form and the payment receipt to NV-930, Attn: T&E Program Lead

****T&E Program Lead will provide a copy to the appropriate District Office(s)**

APPENDIX G. PROGRAMMATIC BIOLOGICAL OPINION (FILE NO. 84320-2010-F-0365) REPORT TO THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The information below should be completed by BLM or the Authorized Desert Tortoise Biologist for the project/action. Reports for all appended actions are required annually (due March 1 of each year for prior calendar year activities) and upon completion of the project/action.

Project Name: AF Munitions Gate, Access Road, South Creech Boundary Road, and Disturbance

NEPA no.: DOI-BLM-NV-S030-2015-0006-CX

Case File no./SRP no.: N-92966

BLM Section 7 log no.: NV-052-15-081

Annual Report

Project Completion Report

1. Date:

2. Fish and Wildlife Service File No (for appended actions):

84320-

3. Species and critical habitat affected:

Desert tortoise

Desert tortoise critical habitat

Other (identify):

4. Project/action status:

Not begun

In progress*

Completed date

If in progress, state approximate percent complete: _____

5. Desert tortoise habitat disturbed:

Non-critical habitat		Critical habitat	
Proposed	Actual disturbance	Proposed	Actual disturbance

disturbance (ac)	(ac)	disturbance (ac)	(ac)

6. Habitat of other species disturbed (identify species, non-critical, and critical habitat affected below):

7. Summary of individual desert tortoises taken (appended action):

	Desert Tortoise:		
	Adults	Juveniles	Eggs
Exempted			
Actual			

Describe other individuals taken:

8. Name of authorized desert tortoise biologists and monitors on the project and the dates they were on the project.

9. Describe all non-compliance issues and events.

10. Desert tortoise burrow observed during activity/event:

Total number desert tortoises observed: _____

Total number desert tortoises burrows observed: _____

Attach a summary report detailing each desert tortoise and/or desert tortoise burrows observed during activity/event including tortoise activity when found, how the animal was avoided, what happened to the tortoise, the date and time encountered and GPS location (NAD 83 easting: _____ northing: _____)

11. Contact Information

Name _____ Company _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Send completed form to:

Bureau of Land Management
Attn: Wildlife Staff
4701 North Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130
702-515-5000
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4701 North Torrey Pines Drive