U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
RED ROCK CANYON SLOAN FIELD OFFICE

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Harris Springs Recreation Area Management Plan and Draft Environmental Assessment

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

	Full Phrase
2005 RMP and ROD	Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision
ATV	all-terrain vehicle
BLM	United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DOI	US Department of the Interior
e-bike	electronic bike
EA	environmental assessment
EIS	environmental impact statement
EO	Executive Order
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
FO	Field Office
GIS	geographic information system
IDT	interdisciplinary team
IPaC	Information, Planning, and Conservation
MEA	management emphasis area
NCA	national conservation area
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NLCS	National Landscape Conservation System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
OHV	off-highway vehicle
RAMP	recreation area management plan
RMP	resource management plan
ROD	record of decision
RRCNCA	Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SRP	special recreation permit
TCP	traditional cultural property
US	United States
USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service

Chapter 1. Introduction and Background

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The United States (US) Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Red Rock/Sloan Field Office (FO) is preparing this recreation area management plan (RAMP) concurrently with an environmental assessment (EA) to enable the agency to identify the appropriate travel network, establish a restoration plan for disturbed areas, and address unauthorized routes and trails in the Harris Springs planning area within the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (RRCNCA). The combined RAMP/EA includes the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 identifies the project background, context, early planning, and issues for consideration.
- Chapter 2 is the proposed Harris Springs RAMP and management alternatives.
- Chapter 3 describes the monitoring, enforcement, and adaptive management associated with implementing the RAMP.
- Chapter 4 describes the affected environment and analyzes the environmental consequences.
- Chapter 5 documents the BLM's consultation and coordination relative to the RAMP and the associated EA.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PLANNING AREA

The 4,639-acre Harris Springs planning area is in the northern portion of the 201,617-acre congressionally designated RRCNCA. The area consists of BLM-administered lands adjacent to National Forest System lands to the west and private lands to the east (see **Figure 4-1**). Portions of the planning area were impacted by the 2013 Carpenter 1 Fire, which burned approximately 28,000 acres, mainly on National Forest System lands upslope of the planning area to the west. The fire impacted approximately 800 acres of the RRCNCA. Since the fire, there have been post-fire flooding and mass debris flows out of the burned area and into the Harris Springs planning area.

The BLM enacted a 5-year temporary public closure of the area from 2014 to 2020 to protect public health and safety and post-fire recovery. The closure included the upper section of the Harris Springs Road, which was gated, locked, and patrolled by Forest Service staff. Despite these closure efforts, illegal trespassing and motorized use occurred in the area on a weekly basis. The area now contains many unauthorized dirt roads and trails that receive regular use by motor vehicles, off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and motorized dirt bikes.

Management of BLM-administered roads and routes in the planning area is subject to the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (2005 RMP and ROD [BLM 2005a]) and the La Madre Mountain Wilderness and Rainbow Mountain Wilderness Final Wilderness Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (BLM and Forest Service 2013). Non-wilderness areas are managed under the "Roaded Natural Management Emphasis Area (MEA)" section in the resource management plan (RMP).

The BLM is preparing the Harris Springs RAMP concurrently with RAMPs for the Calico Basin and Cottonwood Valley areas in the RRCNCA. Collectively, these RAMPs will provide the specific direction needed to manage for growing recreation demand, while conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural resources in the RRCNCA.

The Harris Springs planning area is at the interface of a rapidly growing urban area with growing demand for access through the planning area to adjacent National Forest System lands to the west. The Forest Service regularly publishes a motor vehicle use map, which identifies route designations for National Forest System roads (Forest Service 2014). The BLM is coordinating with the Forest Service regarding the connectivity of routes at the interface of BLM-administered and National Forest System lands.

1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED

This EA's purpose is to implement the RRCNCA's natural and cultural resource protection values while managing for growing recreation and access demand in the Harris Springs planning area. The RRCNCA RMP provides guidance regarding road designations and appropriate recreation use in the planning area by designating certain roads as open for motor vehicle use and recommending others for closure and restoration (BLM 1992, p. A-72–73; BLM 2005a, pp. 21–23).

Current recreation use and travel within the planning area are resulting in user-created roads and trails, redundant and unnecessary travel options, excessive erosion in places, and conflicts with the resource protection direction provided in the RRCNCA RMP. There is a need to establish a plan for restoring disturbed areas and addressing unauthorized routes and trails, while maintaining motorized and nonmotorized access in the Harris Springs planning area and connectivity with adjacent National Forest System lands. Establishing recreation and travel management direction for the area would improve the success of post-fire ecological recovery of soils and vegetation communities, recover the lost and protect the remaining natural and cultural resources, improve visitor public safety and access to a popular dispersed recreation area, and reduce post-fire impacts on sensitive and endangered species as well as downstream rural and urban private communities and infrastructure in the Las Vegas metropolitan area.

1.4 DECISIONS TO BE MADE

The BLM Red Rock/Sloan Canyon FO manager will make the decision whether to adopt an alternative or whether to modify the action based on the environmental analysis and any other factors identified during public review of this RAMP/EA and unsigned finding of no significant impact. The decision-maker will make the decision based on the analysis of the issues and how well the alternatives respond to the project's purpose and need.

1.4.1 Decision Factors

When considering an alternative, the decision-maker would consider how the alternatives meet the purpose of and need for the project. Additionally, the decision-maker would:

- Consider how the alternatives contribute to the economics of the regional area and the BLM Red Rock/Sloan Canyon FO; and
- Decide whether the analysis reveals a likelihood of significant adverse effects from the selected alternative that cannot be mitigated and whether an environmental impact statement (EIS) would be needed.

1.5 RELATIONSHIP TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS, AND OTHER PLANS

1.5.1 Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan

The proposed RAMP/EA is consistent with the management direction in Appendix A of the record of decision (ROD) and approved RMP (April 20, 2005) for the entire RRCNCA. The goals and objectives for the RRCNCA are described in greater detail below. The proposed RAMP/EA also conforms to the regulations and guidance listed below.

The RRCNCA RMP, also referred to as the general management plan, provides management guidance for biodiversity, recreation, commercial uses, cultural resources and Native American concerns, air quality, and vegetation. The primary direction for the 2005 RMP and ROD is to conserve, protect, and enhance the RRCNCA's natural resources. Environmental safeguards adopted in the 2005 RMP and ROD are designed to provide recreation opportunities, which allow the public to enjoy and appreciate Red Rock Canyon's unique natural setting.

1.5.2 Other Laws, Regulations, Policies, and Plans

The BLM considered various laws, regulations, policies, and plans (described below) and how they could potentially apply to the proposed RAMP. As appropriate and if relevant to the proposed RAMP, further consideration of these laws, regulations, policies, and plans is provided in Chapter 4, Affected Environment and Environmental Effects.

Laws and Regulations

American Religious Freedom Act—This act protects the rights of Native Americans to exercise their traditional religions by ensuring access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rites.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979—This act protects archaeological resources and sites on federally administered lands. It imposes criminal and civil penalties for removing archaeological items from federal lands without a permit.

Clean Air Act of 1990—This act provides the framework for national, state, and local efforts to protect air quality.

Clean Water Act of 1987—This act establishes objectives to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's water.

Endangered Species Act of 1973—This act directs federal agencies to ensure their actions do not jeopardize threatened and endangered species.

Executive Order (EO) 13175—This EO establishes regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of federal policies that have tribal implications. The EO also strengthens the US government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes.

Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA)—This act provides the basic policy guidance for the BLM's management of public lands.

Federal Noxious Weed Act (Public Law 93-629, November 28, 1990)—This act provides for the management of undesirable plants on federal lands.

Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act of 1978—This act authorizes the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce to establish, conduct, and assist with national training programs for state fish and wildlife law enforcement personnel. It also authorizes funding for research and development of new or improved methods to support fish and wildlife law enforcement.

Migratory Bird Act of 1918—This act implements the convention for the protection of migratory birds between the US and Great Britain (acting on behalf of Canada). The statute makes it unlawful without a waiver to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, or sell birds listed as migratory birds.

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)—This act requires the preparation of EAs or EISs for federal actions. These documents describe the environmental effects of federal actions and determine whether the actions have a significant effect on the human environment.

National Historic Preservation Act 1966 (NHPA), as amended—This act provides for the management, protection, and enhancement of historic properties (those districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places [NRHP]), as well as consultation procedures with the local State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, tribes, consulting parties, and the public.

Secretarial Order 3376 on Electronic Bicycles (e-bikes)—On August 29, 2019, the Secretary of the Interior issued Secretarial Order 3376, which states, "This Order is intended to increase recreational opportunities for all Americans, especially those with physical limitations, and to encourage the enjoyment of lands and waters managed by the Department of the Interior (Department). This Order simplifies and unifies regulation of electric bicycles (e-bikes) on Federal lands managed by the Department and decreases regulatory burden."

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act—This act provides for the orderly disposal of certain federal lands in Clark County, Nevada, and the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands in Nevada.

Wilderness Act of 1964—This act preserves and protects certain lands "in their natural condition" to "secure for present and future generations the benefits of wilderness." It recognizes the value of preserving "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002—This act establishes wilderness areas, promotes conservation, improves public land, and provides for high-quality development in Clark County, Nevada, and for other purposes.

Policies

BLM Handbook H-2930-1 (Recreation Permit and Fee Administration)—This handbook provides policy and guidance for administering key elements of the BLM Recreation Fee Program, including special recreation permits (SRPs) and recreation-use permits; the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass Program; and recreational commercial services.

BLM Manual 6220 (National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, and Similar Designations)—This manual provides guidance for BLM management of public lands that are components of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) and that have been designated by Congress or the president as national monuments, national conservation areas (NCAs), and similar designations. The NLCS was established to "conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations."

BLM Manual 6340 (Management of Designated Wilderness Areas)—This manual provides guidance for BLM management of BLM-administered lands that have been designated by Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The BLM's objectives for implementing the policy are to manage BLM wilderness areas to preserve wilderness character, while providing for recreation, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historic uses, and managing permitted uses under Sections 4c and 4d of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

BLM Manual 8320 (Planning for Recreation and Visitor Services)—This manual provides policy, direction, and guidance for planning for recreation resources as part of the land use planning process required under BLM Manual 1601 (Land Use Planning). The BLM's recreation planning process is an outcomes-focused management approach that stresses the management of recreation settings to provide opportunities that allow visitors and local communities to achieve a desired set of individual, social, economic, and environmental benefits. Planning for recreation resources focuses on fulfilling the BLM's mission to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. While the Harris Springs RAMP does not apply an outcomes-focused management approach, it incorporates many of the recreation planning concepts from this manual.

BLM Handbook H-8320-1 (Planning for Recreation and Visitor Services)—This handbook aids in the planning and management of recreation and visitor services on public lands and adjacent waters. This handbook provides planning guidance at the land use plan and implementation level, and also supports the policies in BLM Manual 8320 (Planning for Recreation and Visitor Services). While the Harris Springs RAMP does not apply an outcomes-focused management approach, it incorporates many of the recreation planning concepts from this handbook.

Plans

Clark County Comprehensive Master Plan—This plan is the long-term, general policy plan for the physical development of unincorporated Clark County, satisfying the requirements of Nevada Revised Statutes 278.160. The plan is a living document, and its elements are updated according to the planning process.

La Madre Mountain Wilderness and Rainbow Mountain Wilderness Management Plan—This plan provides specific, updated, and consistent management direction for the La Madre Mountain and Rainbow Mountain Wildernesses, situated on federal public lands managed by the Forest Service and BLM.

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Project Work Plan—This work plan includes developing the Harris Springs RAMP/EA and implementing long-term restoration actions in the Harris

Springs Canyon watershed. The plan requires that the initial restoration to obscure unauthorized routes be completed by October 2022.

1.6 EARLY PLANNING AND INFORMATION GATHERING

The BLM completed a variety of early planning and information gathering—both internal and external—for the Harris Springs RAMP/EA. This included a meeting with the Harris Springs BLM interdisciplinary team (IDT) on October 7, 2021, wherein the IDT was briefed on the proposed action, purpose and need, and overall goals for the RAMP/EA. Based on this meeting, the BLM IDT developed preliminary issues of concern and relevant data needs that helped inform the RAMP/EA and public outreach.

The BLM completed public outreach as part of the early planning and information gathering comment period that ran from November 1, 2021, to December 1, 2021. The BLM hosted a virtual public information gathering meeting on November 10, 2021, to solicit input from the public on the proposed planning process. The BLM conducted this public comment period and meeting to identify issues to be addressed and to help determine the appropriate scope of the NEPA analyses.

To summarize the comments received during the 30-day comment period, the BLM developed a comment summary for help with early planning and information gathering. The comment summary identified preliminary issues that the BLM used to help formulate a reasonable range of alternatives and the scope of analyses for the EA, which are discussed in **Section 1.6.1**, below.

1.6.1 Preliminary Issues Identified during Early Planning

Topic 1—Compatible Activities

- Ensure recreational activities are compatible with the resource protection values of the RRCNCA or other regulations, such as the Wilderness Act.
- Determine which currently unauthorized roads and routes would be viable to keep open, and which should be closed and restored.
- Recognize that there are rock climbing opportunities in and near the Harris Springs planning area.

Topic 2—Signage and Interpretation

- Provide visitor information and guidance regarding appropriate uses within the planning area, including in the La Madre Mountain Wilderness portion of the planning area.

Topic 3—Travel Management and Connectivity

- Formally designate routes identified in the 2005 RMP and ROD and reduce the proliferation of redundant or user-created routes.
- Provide for connectivity with adjacent routes on National Forest System lands that are identified on the Forest Service's Motor Vehicle Use Map.

Topic 4—Resource Protection

- Determine how changes to recreation management would affect biological and cultural resources.
- Identify whether limiting visitor use in the area would affect the outdoor recreation industry.

- Understand the contributions of increasing visitor use on human-caused wildfires and the associated post-fire invasive annual grass propagation.
- Consider whether increased enforcement may be needed to prevent future fires and subsequent natural resource impacts.

1.7 INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM AND REFINED RAMP ISSUES

Following the early planning and information gathering process, the BLM IDT conducted an internal process to identify management considerations and potential goals or strategies for the RAMP. This process resulted in a further refinement of the preliminary issues for the RAMP that synthesized input from the public, stakeholders, and the IDT. The BLM is using the two issues below to structure the proposed RAMP (**Section 2.1**) and focus the analyses of environmental consequences in **Section 4.3**.

- **Issue 1**: How will the proposed RAMP meet the RRCNCA's primary management objective of protecting and enhancing natural and cultural resources?
- **Issue 2**: How will the proposed RAMP address recreation opportunities and access for current and future visitors?

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Chapter 2. Recreation Area Management Plan

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Harris Springs RAMP (Chapters 2 and 3 of this RAMP/EA) identifies the goals, strategies, and decisions for the BLM's management of recreation and travel in the Harris Springs planning area, and identifies processes for monitoring, enforcement, and adaptive management. The BLM prepared this RAMP to establish management direction that is specific to the Harris Springs planning area. This direction will assist the BLM to implement the overarching directives in the RRCNCA RMP. It also will prioritize government resources to manage recreation and restore disturbed areas consistent with the overarching need to conserve and enhance the area's natural and cultural resources.

2.2 BLM RECREATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 RRCNCA RMP

The 2005 RRCNCA RMP guides the BLM's management of the Harris Springs planning area and the broader RRCNCA. The RMP's primary direction for the RRCNCA is to conserve and enhance the RRCNCA's natural resources. The RMP also identifies the need to designate travel routes, so the public can access recreation opportunities in the RRCNCA; however, providing motorized recreation opportunities is not identified as a management priority in the RRCNCA RMP.

Management Emphasis Areas

The ROD for the RRCNCA RMP states "Management Emphasis Areas were incorporated that assigned a land classification value, which in the future, determines what actions/changes are appropriate and in which areas of the NCA they may occur" (BLM 2005a). The RRCNCA was divided into MEAs as a planning tool for establishing desired conditions for proposed and future actions (see the management emphasis map on page 26 in the RRCNCA RMP [BLM 2005a]).

The RRCNCA RMP identifies the standards for desired future conditions and notes that proposed management actions that are not consistent with these standards will not be permitted (BLM 2005a). The BLM, therefore, evaluates proposed actions for consistency with the RRCNCA RMP's desired future conditions for resources and the standards for the MEA in which the actions are proposed. In this manner, the RRCNCA RMP guides future recreation actions.

The Harris Springs planning area is in the Roaded Natural MEA. The RRCNCA specifies that management for Roaded Natural areas can include recreation improvements, such as roads and trails, but that developments should be limited to improved access and those consistent with the natural environment. Any on-site controls should be subtle, and the frequency of human interactions should by low. These overarching management directives guide the proposed management decisions in the Harris Springs RAMP, including for monitoring and adaptive management.

2.2.2 BLM National Recreation Planning Policy

In developing the Harris Springs RAMP, the BLM incorporated concepts from BLM Manual 8320, Planning for Recreation and Visitor Services (BLM 2011), and BLM Handbook H-8320-1, Planning for Recreation and Visitor Services (BLM 2014a). These national-level policy documents guide the BLM's recreation planning process, particularly when the agency identifies recreation management areas through the resource management planning process. When developing RMP-level management or a RAMP for a specific recreation management area, the manual and handbook direct the BLM to incorporate management that considers the beneficial outcomes gained from engaging in recreation experiences. This outcomes-focused management approach relies on an understanding of the desired experiences and opportunities of those visiting the area. It also considers the physical, social, and managerial settings within which visitors recreate.

The 2005 RMP and ROD does not specifically identify the Harris Springs planning area as a recreation management area. As a result, this RAMP/EA does not discuss recreation setting characteristics or outcomes-focused management; instead, it uses the terms and characteristics described in the RRCNCA RMP. In particular, the BLM considered the Roaded Natural MEA setting and associated management focus, the need to provide access to areas within and surrounding the Harris Springs planning area, the associated recreation opportunities and experiences, and the BLM's mandate through the NCA designation to protect and enhance the area's natural and cultural resources.

2.2.3 Guiding Principles

Guiding principles provide overarching direction for the BLM in implementing the BLM's mission for the Harris Springs planning area, consistent with the RRCNCA's values. The BLM will consider the fundamental principles outlined in the RRCNCA RMP—protection of resources and values—in managing visitor use. The following principles will guide the BLM's visitor use management in the Harris Springs planning area:

1. **Resource Protection and Restoration**—Protect and restore the ecologic, scenic, cultural, and other natural resources; wilderness; and recreation resources for present and future generations by closing and restoring unauthorized disturbances and identifying the allowed locations and types of recreation and travel.
2. **Sustainable Recreation and Access Opportunities**—Consistent with the Roaded Natural MEA direction and the RRCNCA RMP's resource protection goals, provide sustainable recreation and access opportunities for current and future visitors.

2.3 ALTERNATIVES

The BLM conducted an early information gathering process (see **Section 1.6**), which included a public meeting and a 30-day public comment period, to help identify issues associated with this planning effort (see **Section 1.7**). These issues frame the analysis of potential environmental effects associated with the proposed RAMP and aid in the BLM's decision-making process. The alternatives analyzed in this EA are the no-action alternative (Alternative A) and three action alternatives (Alternatives B–D). Collectively, these alternatives present a range of approaches for managing inventoried routes, implementing recreation management, and applying restoration strategies on closed routes.

Table 2-1 summarizes the mileage of routes proposed as open and closed for each alternative; **Table 2-2**, **Table 2-3**, and **Table 2-4**, respectively, provide the management proposed for each route, single-track trail, and recreation infrastructure (signage). Proposed route decisions and new infrastructure are in **Figure 2-1**, **Figure 2-2**, **Figure 2-3**, and **Figure 2-4**. Proposed restoration locations are in **Figure 2-5**, **Figure 2-6**, and **Figure 2-7**. The Proposed Plan (Alternative B) includes goals, strategies, and decisions, which would also apply to Alternatives C and D, with the exception of the route-specific management, infrastructure improvements, and restoration decisions that would be unique to those alternatives.

Table 2-1. Mileage of Proposed Route Alternatives in the Harris Springs Planning Area

Route Management/Restoration	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Roads and Trails	**37.7**	**37.7**	**37.7**	**37.7**
Open	*37.7*	*21.8*	*13.0*	*27.4*
Open, already designated for motor vehicle use	N/A	6.0	6.0	6.0
Open, designate for motor vehicle use	N/A	7.8	5.8	20.2
Open, designate for motorized and other uses with rerouting on a portion bisecting wilderness	N/A	0	0	1.2
Open, designate for nonmotorized and nonmechanized use only	N/A	8.0	1.2	0
Closed	*0*	*15.9*	*24. 8*	*10.3*
No restoration	N/A	0.2	0.2	0.2
Passive restoration	N/A	7.8	9.9	6.2
Passive restoration and line of sight at access points	N/A	0	0.4	0
Passive and active restoration	N/A	7.9	14.3	3.9
Single-Track Trails	**16.9**	**16.9**	**16.9**	**16.9**
Open	16.9	16.1	16.1	16.1
Closed (passive restoration)	0	0.8	0.8	0.8
Grand Total	**54.6**	**54.6**	**54.6**	**54.6**

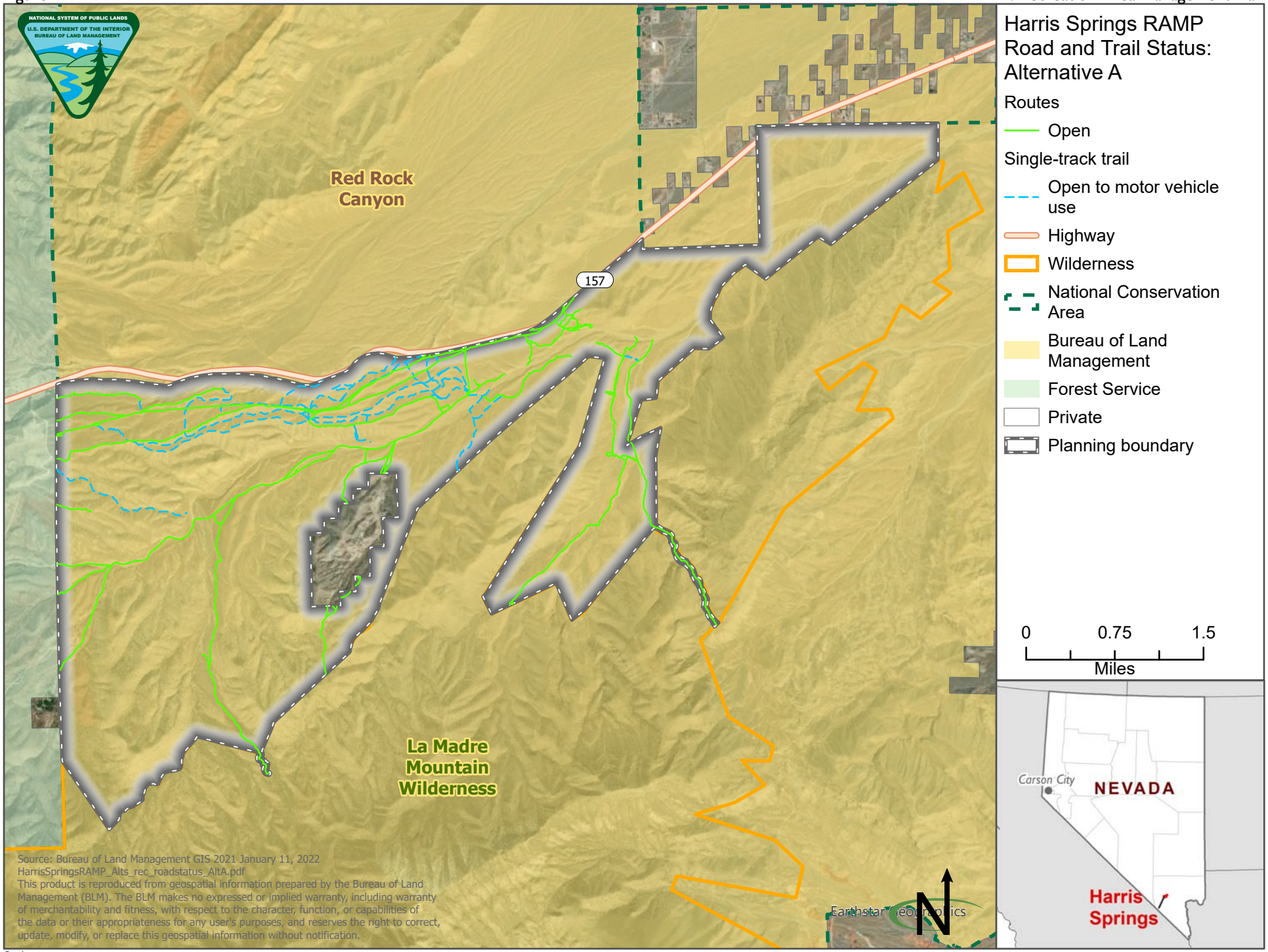
Sources: BLM GIS 2021

2.3.1 Alternative A (No Action)

Under the no-action alternative, the BLM would not adopt the Harris Springs RAMP and would continue to manage the Harris Springs planning area according to the overarching direction in the RRCNCA RMP (see **Figure 2-1**). No restoration actions or route designations would be implemented. The existing 37.7 miles of roads would remain open for motor vehicle use. Any future restoration of user-created roads and trails would occur on a case-by-case basis, subject to the overarching guidance in the RRCNCA RMP.

2.3.2 Alternative B (Proposed Plan)

Alternative B would result in 21.8 miles of routes being managed as open—6.0 miles already designated for motor vehicle use, 7.8 miles to be designated for motor vehicle use, and 8.0 miles to be designated for nonmotorized and nonmechanized use (see **Figure 2-1**). Under Alternative B, 15.9 miles of inventoried routes would be closed. The BLM would have no restoration on 0.2 miles, implement passive restoration on 7.8 miles, and use a combination of passive and active restoration on 7.9 miles (see **Table 2-1** and **Table 2-2**, and **Figure 2-5**). All 16.9 miles of existing, inventoried single-track trails would be open, except for 0.8 miles that extend into the La Madre Wilderness (see **Table 2-3** and **Figure 2-1**). There would be a new informational and interpretive sign at the entrance to the area from Highway 157 and new wilderness markers (see **Table 2-3** and **Figure 2-1**).


Harris Springs RAMP
Road and Trail Status:
Alternative A
Routes
Open
Single-track trail
Open to motor vehicle use
Highway
Wilderness
National Conservation Area
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
Planning boundary
0
0.75
1.5
Miles
Red Rock Canyon
157
La Madre Mountain Wilderness
Carson City
NEVADA
Harris Springs
Earthstar Geographics
Source: Bureau of Land Management GIS 2021 January 11, 2022
HarrisSpringsRAMP_Alts_rec_roadstatus_AltA.pdf
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Management Goals, Strategies, and Decisions

Goals provide high-level direction for managing recreation in the Harris Springs planning area. They reflect the RRCNCA RMP's guiding principles but are more focused on the management issues and concerns in the Harris Springs planning area (BLM 2005a). Goals are aspirational in nature and describe the general conditions toward which the BLM intends to allocate resources during implementation.

Strategies are more detailed steps the BLM proposes in order to implement the goals. Decisions are specific actions the BLM would take to achieve the goals and strategies. Goals, strategies, and decisions align with the guiding principles and achieve the overarching management objectives in the RRCNCA RMP.

Alternative B (the Proposed Plan) incorporates themes from the outcomes-focused management approach in BLM Handbook H-8320-1, Planning for Recreation and Visitor Services (BLM 2014a). It also considers the MEA characteristics that contribute to positive recreation outcomes, visitor safety, and natural resource protection.

Goal 1.1 (Resource Protection)

Emphasize the protection of resources, while improving the quality and diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences in the Harris Springs planning area.

There is the potential for visitor use to impact natural resources, such as disturbing vegetation through the continued proliferation of social trails. Recreation use in the Harris Springs planning area would be balanced through the following strategies and decisions to protect resources.

Resource Protection Strategy 1

With adaptive management, prioritize rapid solutions to resource impacts from visitor use or other stressors.

Resource Protection Strategy 2

Restore areas with native plant materials that are appropriate for use in the Harris Springs planning area.

Resource Protection Strategy 3

Consistent with the following restoration strategies, restore burned areas, degraded habitats, and closed routes to improve wildlife habitat, soil stability, and visual resources.

- Passive Restoration Options
  - Physical barriers at road heads
    - Post and cable
    - Salvaged fence posts buried 2.5 feet deep, leaving 2.5 feet exposed
    - Boulders that are 2 x 2 x 2 feet or larger
  - Signage indicating the route is closed for restoration
  - Vertical mulching at road access points (endcaps) to the line of sight
  - Using salvaged dead plant material and substrate to disguise road access and encourage plant recolonization

  - Allowing roads to restore themselves
- Active Restoration Options
  - De-compaction and imprinting
    - Soil de-compacted to 10 inches using harrow and heavy machinery
    - Imprinting along de-compacted surface to create seed catches; encourages colonization
    - Manual reseeding or live planting
  - Recontouring
    - May be required if severe erosion is taking place
    - Typically used for rerouting a section of road to shed water more effectively
  - Rock stain
    - Natina reactive color treatment (https://www.natina.com/services/rock/)
    - Used to disguise disturbed or exposed native rock

Resource Protection Strategy 4

Consider acquiring undeveloped inholdings and edge-holdings within the NCA through exchange, donation, purchase, or transfer.

Resource Protection Decision 1

Develop a tiered programmatic NEPA analysis to address potential resource protection or mitigation needs that may arise in the Harris Springs planning area, such as basic route restoration, fencing, habitat restoration, and weed treatment.

Resource Protection Decision 2

With trail designation or creation, prioritize the avoidance of sensitive resources.

Resource Protection Decision 3

Develop a staffing plan as part of the RRCNCA business plan revision to provide adequate staffing for monitoring and management of resources, as described in the RAMP/EA.

Resource Protection Decision 4

Restore 15.7 miles of user-created disturbance using a combination of active and passive techniques (see **Figure 2-6**).

Resource Protection Decision 5

Ensure future recreation amenities and activities do not interfere with dark sky and astronomy viewing by minimizing light pollution.

Goal 1.2 (Recreation Use)

Facilitate visitor participation in uses that are compatible with the RRCNCA. Also, work with recreational user groups to minimize conflicts between recreational user groups and potential impacts from recreation on natural and cultural resources by minimizing, mitigating, or prohibiting non-compatible recreational activities in certain areas or at certain times.

Recreation Use Strategy 1

Address visitor health and safety, resource protection and use, and user conflicts by implementing management direction from the RRCNCA RMP for target shooting, which is not allowed anywhere in the RRCNCA, as well as allowable uses in the area.

Recreation Use Strategy 2

Maintain current management of climbing, bouldering, and slack lining per the RRCNCA RMP.

Recreation Use Strategy 3

By understanding that future recreation uses and demands cannot be predicted, increase ranger monitoring of the area as recreation trends develop, to make better-informed management decisions.

Recreation Use Decision 1

Continue managing the Harris Springs planning area for the following recreation uses:

- Hiking (on designated trails)
- Mountain biking (on designated trails)
- OHV use (on designated trails)
- Climbing (including roped climbing and bouldering)
- Horseback riding (on designated trails)
- Dispersed camping

Recreation Use Decision 2

Block access to the one known target shooting area using physical barriers and passive and active restoration techniques.

Recreation Use Decision 3

Install informational kiosks, signage, and maps indicating the allowed recreation uses and restoration efforts in the Harris Springs planning area.

Recreation Use Decision 4

Improve public awareness by actively engaging with partner organizations and leaders in the recreation community to coordinate stewardship projects and future trail planning.

Recreation Use Decision 5

Partner with the City of Las Vegas and Sky Canyon developers to ensure the recreation needs of a growing population are compatible with the RRCNCA's resource protection values.

Goal 1.3 (Special Recreation Permits)

Provide opportunities for commercial and noncommercial group events and filming that are compatible with the area's natural resources.

The BLM issues SRPs and recreation-use permits (for example, filming, weddings, or other activities) per the relevant BLM criteria at 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2930 and policy in BLM Manual 2930

(Recreation Permits and Fees; BLM 2007) and BLM Handbook H-2930-1 (Recreation Permit Administration; BLM 2014b). SRPs are authorizations that allow commercial, competitive, and group recreation uses of the public lands. The BLM issues SRPs to control visitor use, protect recreation and natural resources, and provide for the health and safety of visitors.

The BLM usually issues noncommercial group permits and SRPs in high-use areas or where recreation use requires special BLM management. It also issues SRPs as a mechanism to provide fair market value to the US for the recreational use of public lands. Applications for a SRP may be denied based on many factors, including nonconformance with land use plans or designations; a moratorium on permits issued as part of a planning process; state licensing requirements; the results of an environmental analysis; other resource values, including the environment and endangered species or antiquities; an allocation system; public health and safety concerns; the applicant's past performance, including previous convictions for violating federal or state laws or regulations concerning the conservation or protection of natural resources; or the inability of the managing office to issue, manage, and monitor the proposed use. If the FO is unable to fulfill or complete all the necessary steps of issuing and managing a SRP authorization, then the BLM will not issue a SRP.

SRP Strategy 1

Consider the setting of the recreation site when evaluating SRP applications. Other factors that may determine whether a SRP is issued include recreation conflicts in the proposed area of operations, the diversity of services provided to the public, the number of similar services already offered, and whether the public land area available is sufficient to accommodate the proposed use.

SRP Strategy 2

Allow commercial activities in wilderness only to the extent necessary for activities that are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes. The issuance of SRPs in wilderness would be subject to a separate NEPA analysis.

SRP Decision 1

Continue the current process for issuing SRPs and recreation-use permits.

SRP Decision 2

Improve management of SRPs and film and photography compliance. Identify and resolve conflicts between permit holders, unauthorized commercial and group use, and RRCNCA values.

SRP Decision 3

Establish a SRP program specific to the Harris Springs planning area that provides needed public services; satisfies recreation demand within allowable use levels; minimizes user conflicts; and protects and enhances public lands, recreation opportunities, and sustainable healthy ecosystems. In the interim, SRP Decisions 4 and 5 will provide guidance for allowing organized group activity.

SRP Decision 4

Enable the BLM authorized officer to make the ultimate decision whether to require a permit; the guidelines may be changed as needed to prevent resource damage, address user conflicts, and maintain the Roaded Natural MEA characteristics. For noncompetitive, noncommercial organized groups staging at the Harris Springs Road parking area, the following guidelines would apply:

- An organized OHV group of 10 or fewer vehicles, including dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), razors, jeeps, or trucks, does not require a permit. The vehicle limit pertains to the actual vehicles used on the dirt roads in the Harris Springs planning area, not vehicles used as transportation to the parking lot. This group limit is based on the carrying capacity at the Harris Springs parking area, and the width and durability of the authorized motorized roads and trails.
- An organized equestrian ride of 12 or fewer horses does not require a permit. This group limit is based on the current standard applied to all organized groups in the RRCNCA.
- An organized nonmotorized (pedestrian and mountain bike) group of 12 or fewer participants does not require a permit. This group limit is based on the current standard applied to all organized groups in the RRCNCA.

SRP Decision 5

Limit permits for motorized and nonmotorized commercial tour services to two tours per 24-hour period and no more than 10 participants total. A tour is defined as a single trip to the Harris Springs planning area of the RRCNCA.

The BLM Lands and Realty Program reviews and approves film permits, including for still photography and video. The BLM processes land use authorizations on a case-by-case basis as proposals are received. The authorization process involves an analysis of potential impacts on the environment that could result from the proposed action. If appropriate, an EA or an EIS is prepared, and resource protection stipulations are developed prior to the approval of such uses. The BLM does not issue film/photo permits in the La Madre Mountain Wilderness.

Film Decision 1

Continue the current process for issuing film permits.[1]

Goal 1.4 (Trails and Access)

Maintain a designated road and trail system that protects natural resources and provides access to recreation opportunities in the Harris Springs planning area.

Dirt roads and trails are the primary means of access in the Harris Springs planning area. The following strategies and decisions are intended to enhance trail-based recreation opportunities, while protecting and enhancing the area's natural resources through strategies that keep visitors on designated trails.

Trails and Access Strategy 1

Define and protect the trails' intended use and maintain designated trails to BLM trail standards.

Trails and Access Strategy 2

Prevent new user-created trails using signs, barriers, other infrastructure, and enforcement.

Trails and Access Strategy 3

Consider future restrictions on off-trail use to protect sensitive natural and cultural resources.

[1] The BLM issues film permits through the Lands and Realty Program in accordance with the requirements of the FLPMA.

Trails and Access Strategy 4

Work with neighboring landowners in areas of new development to ensure all access to the Harris Springs planning area is from authorized locations.

Trails and Access Strategy 5

Continue to work with volunteers, organizations, and BLM staff to maintain the trail network.

Trails and Access Strategy 6

Consider seasonal or temporary closures following weather events to reduce trail impacts from visitor use.

Trails and Access Strategy 7

Partner with equestrian, mountain bike, and OHV groups for trail maintenance.

Trails and Access Decision 1

Close and restore 15.9 miles of undesignated roads and trails.

Trails and Access Decision 2

Manage 21.8 miles of routes in the Harris Springs planning area as open for pedestrian, equestrian, and mechanized uses, and 13.8 miles of those open routes for motorized use (see **Figure 2-2**).

Trails and Access Decision 3

Through monitoring and adaptive management strategies (see **Chapter 3**), evaluate route designations and adjust them as needed to reflect resource needs and visitation preferences.

Trails and Access Decision 4

Develop annual coordinated trail maintenance plans.

Trails and Access Decision 5

Consider trail reroutes and trail improvements, where appropriate, for the protection of natural and cultural resources. Analyze proposals for new nonmotorized trails as recreation interest in the area continues to grow and evolve.

Trails and Access Decision 6

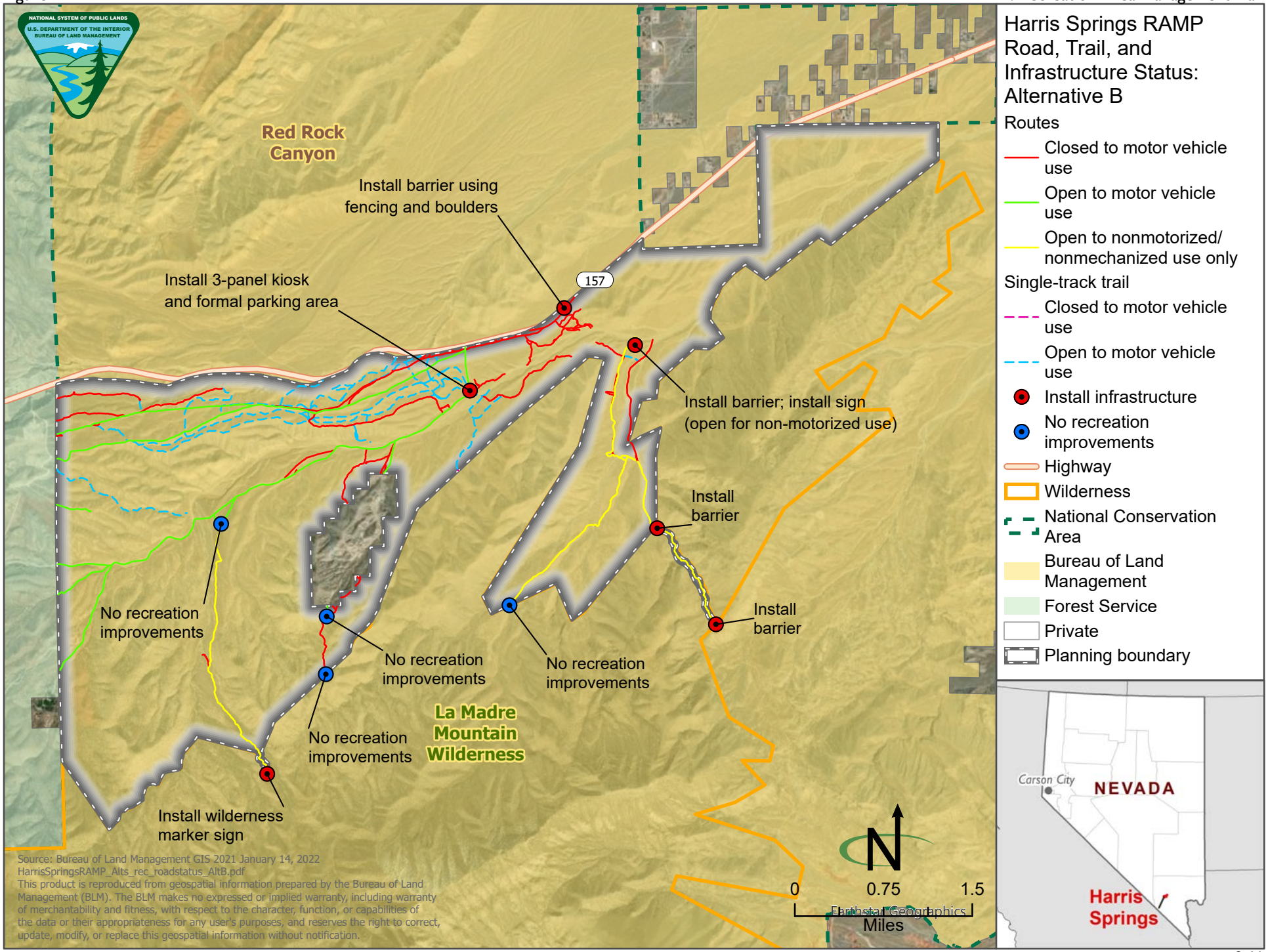
Allow Class I and III electronic, pedal-assisted mountain bikes (e-bikes) on nonmotorized trails.

Trails and Access Decision 7

Retain a cohesive travel network with designated motor vehicle use routes on neighboring National Forest System lands.

Trails and Access Decision 8

Consider locations for additional trailheads, staging areas, and access points to address future recreation demands and evolving visitor use patterns.


Red Rock Canyon
Install barrier using fencing and boulders
157
Install 3-panel kiosk and formal parking area
Install barrier; install sign (open for non-motorized use)
Install barrier
Install barrier
No recreation improvements
No recreation improvements
No recreation improvements
No recreation improvements
La Madre Mountain Wilderness
Install wilderness marker sign
Harris Springs RAMP Road, Trail, and Infrastructure Status: Alternative B
Routes
Closed to motor vehicle use
Open to motor vehicle use
Open to nonmotorized/ nonmechanized use only
Single-track trail
Closed to motor vehicle use
Open to motor vehicle use
Install infrastructure
No recreation improvements
Highway
Wilderness
National Conservation Area
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
Planning boundary
Carson City
NEVADA
Harris Springs
N
0
0.75
1.5
Miles
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HarrisSpringsRAMP_Alts_rec_roadstatus_AltB.pdf
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Goal 1.5 (Safety)

Provide enjoyable and safe experiences for visitors while recognizing there are limitations on the capability of the RRCNCA and its staff, volunteers, partners, and contractors to eliminate all hazards.

Safety Strategy 1

Strive to protect human life and provide for injury-free visits. Some visitors' recreational activities may pose a personal risk to participants, which the BLM cannot totally control. RRCNCA visitors must assume a substantial degree of responsibility for their own safety when visiting areas that are managed and maintained as natural, cultural, or recreational environments.

Safety Strategy 2

Prioritize saving human life over all other management actions.

Safety Strategy 3

Ensure public safety, protect federal land resources, and continue to create an environment to promote the health and safety of visitors, staff, and nearby residents by working with local, state, and federal agencies. These are the BLM's primary responsibilities.

Safety Strategy 4

Improve public safety through efficient use of BLM law enforcement in coordination with Clark County and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police.

Goal 1.6 (Wilderness)

Maintain or enhance the MEA characteristics, including the primitive recreation setting and wilderness character of the La Madre Mountain Wilderness.

In 1964, Congress established the National Wilderness Preservation System through the Wilderness Act (Public Law 88-577; 16 US Code 1131–1136). This law was created to "... assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States." Wilderness designation is intended to preserve and protect certain lands in their natural state. Only Congress, with presidential approval, may designate lands as wilderness. The Wilderness Act of 1964 defines wilderness character, the uses of wilderness, and the activities prohibited within wilderness boundaries.

The Harris Springs planning area's proximity to the La Madre Mountain Wilderness requires the BLM to carefully manage the recreation, natural, and cultural resources, and corresponding resource values (such as scenic values) in the planning area to reduce potential impacts on these areas and in a manner consistent with the existing La Madre Mountain Wilderness and Rainbow Mountain Wilderness Management Plan. For example, the wilderness management plan indicates that visitor-worn hiking paths will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may either be designated, rerouted, or restored. There are currently three known motor vehicle incursions in the La Madre Wilderness and one known single-track incursion (see **Figure 4-1**).

Wilderness Strategy 1

Continue to manage the La Madre Mountain Wilderness by upholding the existing La Madre Mountain Wilderness and Rainbow Mountain Wilderness Management Plan.

Wilderness Decision 1

Install a wilderness marker sign at the wilderness boundary where the one known single-track trail currently has an incursion into the La Madre Mountain Wilderness (the recommended management is to designate this single-track trail as nonmechanized use only).

Wilderness Decision 2

Block motor vehicle access to the three known road incursions into the La Madre Mountain Wilderness (routes 69, 80, and 81) using physical barriers and passive restoration techniques.

Goal 1.7 (Education and Partnerships)

Work with partner organizations, such as Friends of Red Rock Canyon, Get Outdoors Nevada, the Southern Nevada Conservancy, the Backcountry Horsemen of America, the Southern Nevada Climbers Coalition, and the Southern Nevada Mountain Bike Association, to expand visitor understanding and appreciation of the Harris Springs planning area by providing educational and interpretive opportunities that are compatible with the area's MEA setting characteristics.

Education and Partnership Strategy 1

Encourage positive visitor behavior through interpretive signage and visitor information, such as trail courtesy and etiquette or Leave No Trace™ techniques, at parking areas, trailheads, and other activity locations.

Education and Partnership Strategy 2

Educate visitors about the allowed recreation uses of trails.

Education and Partnership Strategy 3

Provide interpretation opportunities that are focused on the unique resources that exist in the Harris Springs planning area and within the RRCNCA.

Education and Partnership Strategy 4

Engage BLM staff, volunteers, and partners from multiple disciplines when developing interpretation materials.

Education and Partnership Strategy 5

Continue to work with partners, such as Friends of Red Rock Canyon, Get Outdoors Nevada, the Southern Nevada Conservancy, the Backcountry Horsemen of America, the Southern Nevada Climbers Coalition, the Southern Nevada Mountain Bike Association, and other organizations, to develop, coordinate, and facilitate quality educational programming, interpretation, and media related to the Harris Springs planning area. Continue BLM staff and partner outreach to educational institutions and work with these institutions for environmental education.

Education and Partnership Decision 1

Install interpretive materials at the locations identified in **Figure 2-2** and **Table 2-3** for education and impact reduction, with a particular emphasis where impacts are occurring.

Education and Partnership Decision 2

Continue working with partner groups that are focused on issues specific to their recreational activities.

2.3.3 Alternative C

Under Alternative C, the BLM would manage 13.0 miles of routes as open—6.0 miles already designated for motor vehicle use, 5.8 miles to be designated for motor vehicle use, and 1.2 miles to be designated for nonmotorized and nonmechanized use. The BLM would close 24.8 miles of routes, have no restoration on 0.2 miles, implement passive restoration on 10.3 miles (0.4 miles of which would include line-of-sight restoration at access points), and use a combination of passive and active restoration on 14.3 miles (see **Figure 2-3**, **Figure 2-6**, and **Table 2-2**). All 16.9 miles of existing inventoried single-track trails would be open, except for 0.8 miles that extend into the La Madre Wilderness (see **Table 2-3** and **Figure 2-3**).

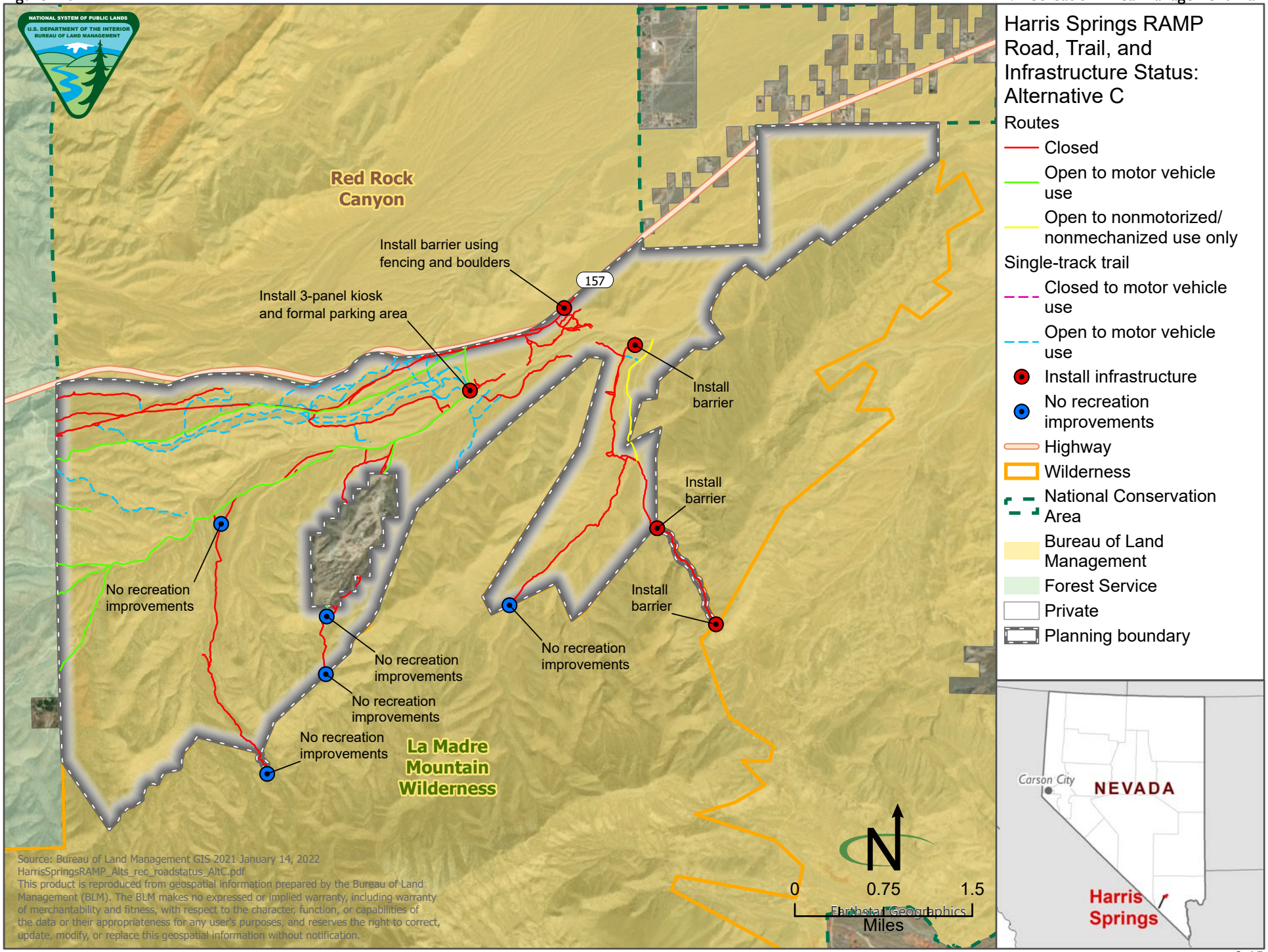
This alternative would manage the routes identified in the 2005 RMP and ROD for closure as available for nonmotorized and mechanized use.

2.3.4 Alternative D

Under Alternative D, the BLM would manage 27.4 miles of routes as open, with 6.0 miles already designated for motor vehicle use, 20.2 miles to be designated for motor vehicle use, and 1.2 miles to be designated for motor vehicle use with a reroute around the portion currently intersecting the La Madre Mountain Wilderness. The BLM would close 10.3 miles of inventoried routes. The BLM would have no restoration on 0.2 miles, implement passive restoration on 6.2 miles of closed trails, and use a combination of passive and active restoration on 3.9 miles of trails (see **Figure 2-4**, **Figure 2-7**, and **Table 2-2**). The BLM would install an interpretive kiosk; a trailhead and staging area; a staging area with an interpretive kiosk; and a three-panel kiosk, formal parking area, picnic table, restroom, and garbage receptacle at the entrance from Highway 157 (see **Figure 2-4**). All 16.9 miles of existing inventoried single-track trails would be open, except for 0.8 miles that extend into the La Madre Wilderness (see **Table 2-3** and **Figure 2-4**).

2.3.5 Summary Comparison of Alternatives

Table 2-2 compares the management proposed under each alternative along with the range of potential restoration techniques that could be applied when a route is proposed for closing. **Table 2-3** provides the same information for single-track trails. **Table 2-4** details the signage and other infrastructure improvements proposed under each alternative.


Harris Springs RAMP Road, Trail, and Infrastructure Status: Alternative C
Routes
Closed
Open to motor vehicle use
Open to nonmotorized/ nonmechanized use only
Single-track trail
Closed to motor vehicle use
Open to motor vehicle use
Install infrastructure
No recreation improvements
Highway
Wilderness
National Conservation Area
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
Planning boundary
Red Rock Canyon
La Madre Mountain Wilderness
157
Install barrier using fencing and boulders
Install 3-panel kiosk and formal parking area
Install barrier
Install barrier
Install barrier
No recreation improvements
No recreation improvements
No recreation improvements
No recreation improvements
No recreation improvements
Carson City
NEVADA
Harris Springs
0
0.75
1.5
Miles
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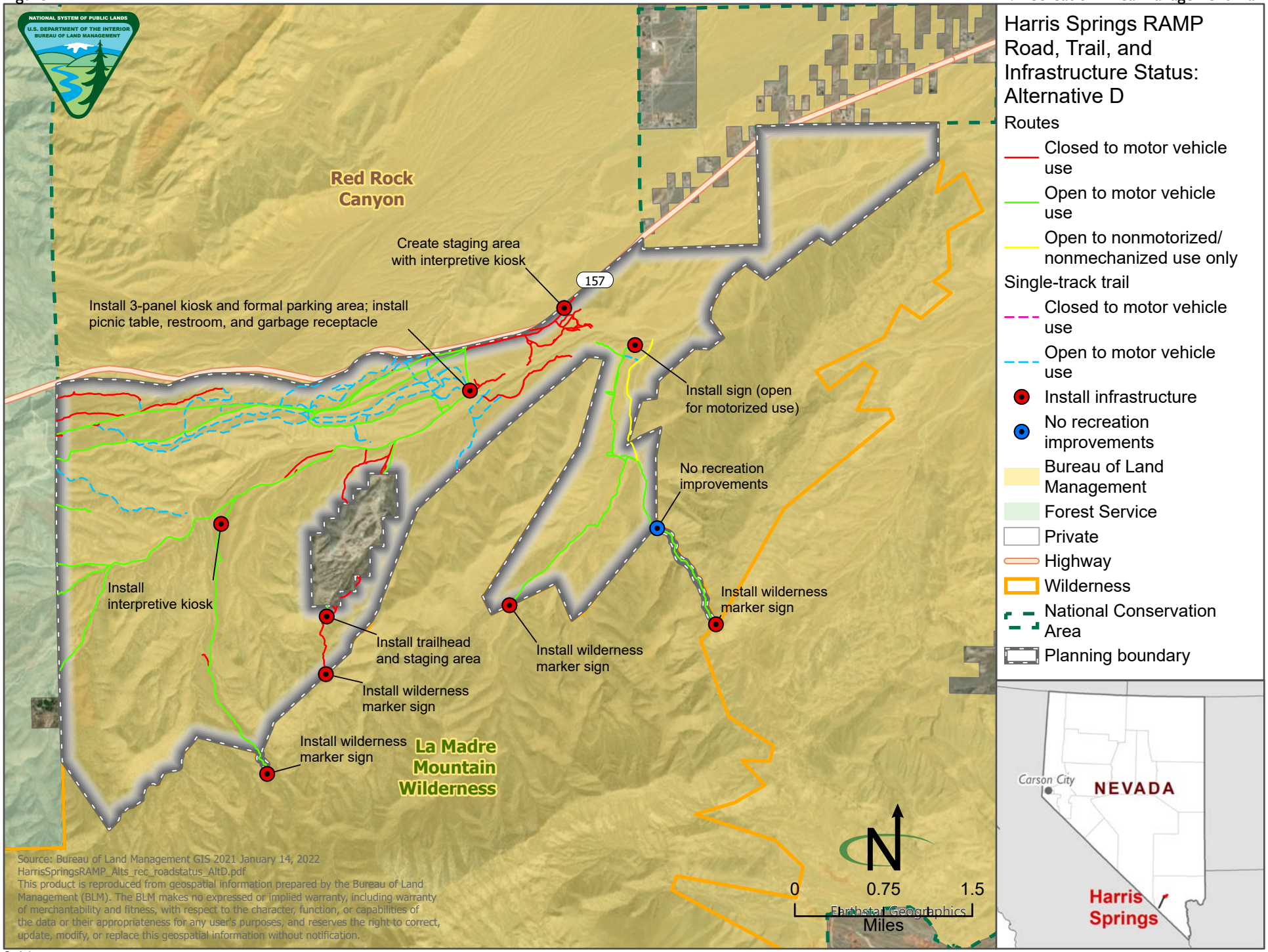
Harris Springs RAMP Road, Trail, and Infrastructure Status: Alternative D
Routes
Closed to motor vehicle use
Open to motor vehicle use
Open to nonmotorized/ nonmechanized use only
Single-track trail
Closed to motor vehicle use
Open to motor vehicle use
Install infrastructure
No recreation improvements
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
Highway
Wilderness
National Conservation Area
Planning boundary
Red Rock Canyon
Create staging area with interpretive kiosk
157
Install 3-panel kiosk and formal parking area; install picnic table, restroom, and garbage receptacle
Install sign (open for motorized use)
No recreation improvements
Install interpretive kiosk
Install trailhead and staging area
Install wilderness marker sign
Install wilderness marker sign
Install wilderness marker sign
Install wilderness marker sign
La Madre Mountain Wilderness
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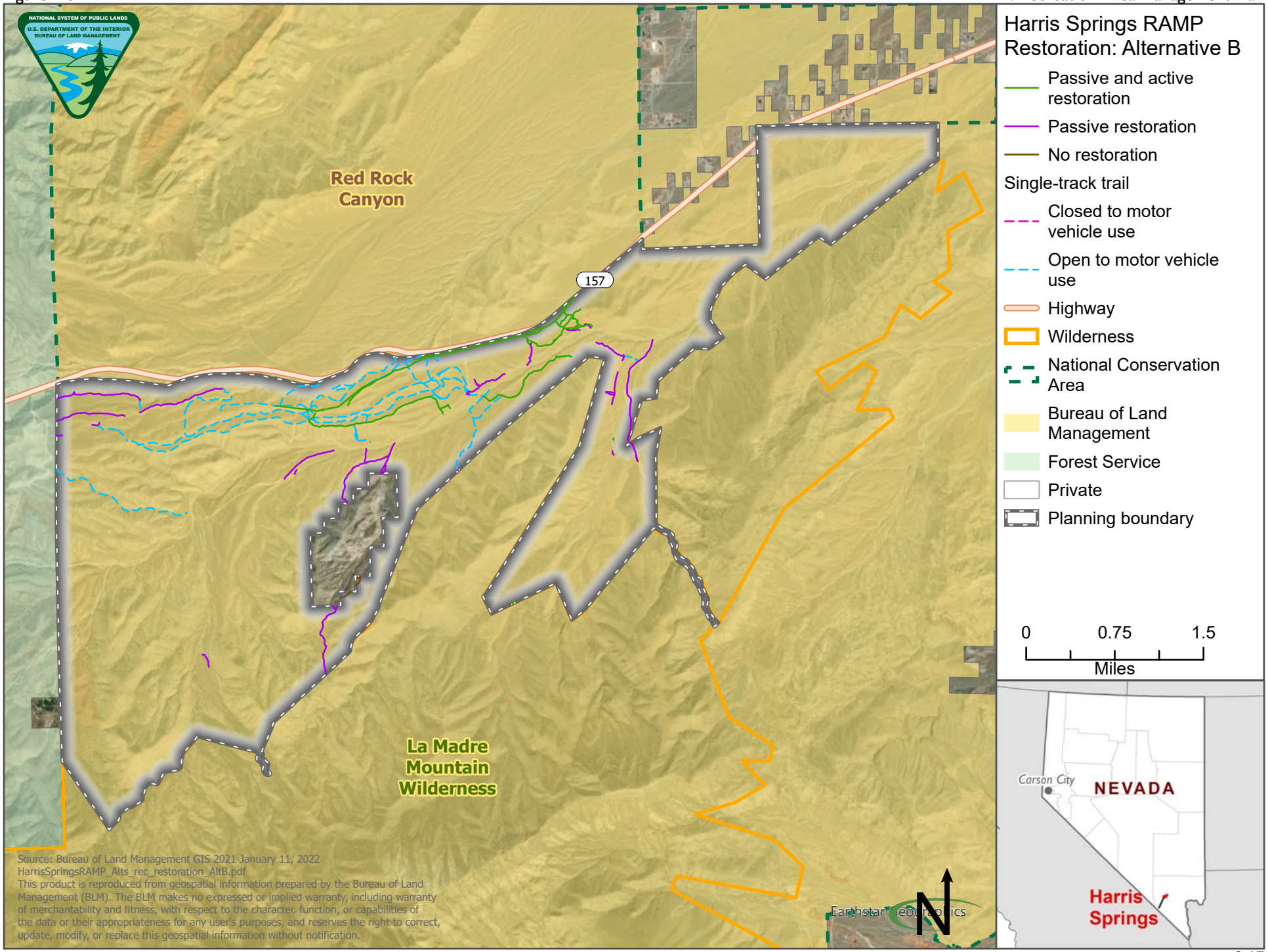
N
0 0.75 1.5
Miles
Carson City
NEVADA
Harris Springs


Red Rock Canyon
157
La Madre Mountain Wilderness
Harris Springs RAMP Restoration: Alternative B
Passive and active restoration
Passive restoration
No restoration
Single-track trail
Closed to motor vehicle use
Open to motor vehicle use
Highway
Wilderness
National Conservation Area
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
Planning boundary
0
0.75
1.5
Miles
Carson City
NEVADA
Harris Springs
Source: Bureau of Land Management GIS 2021 January 11, 2022
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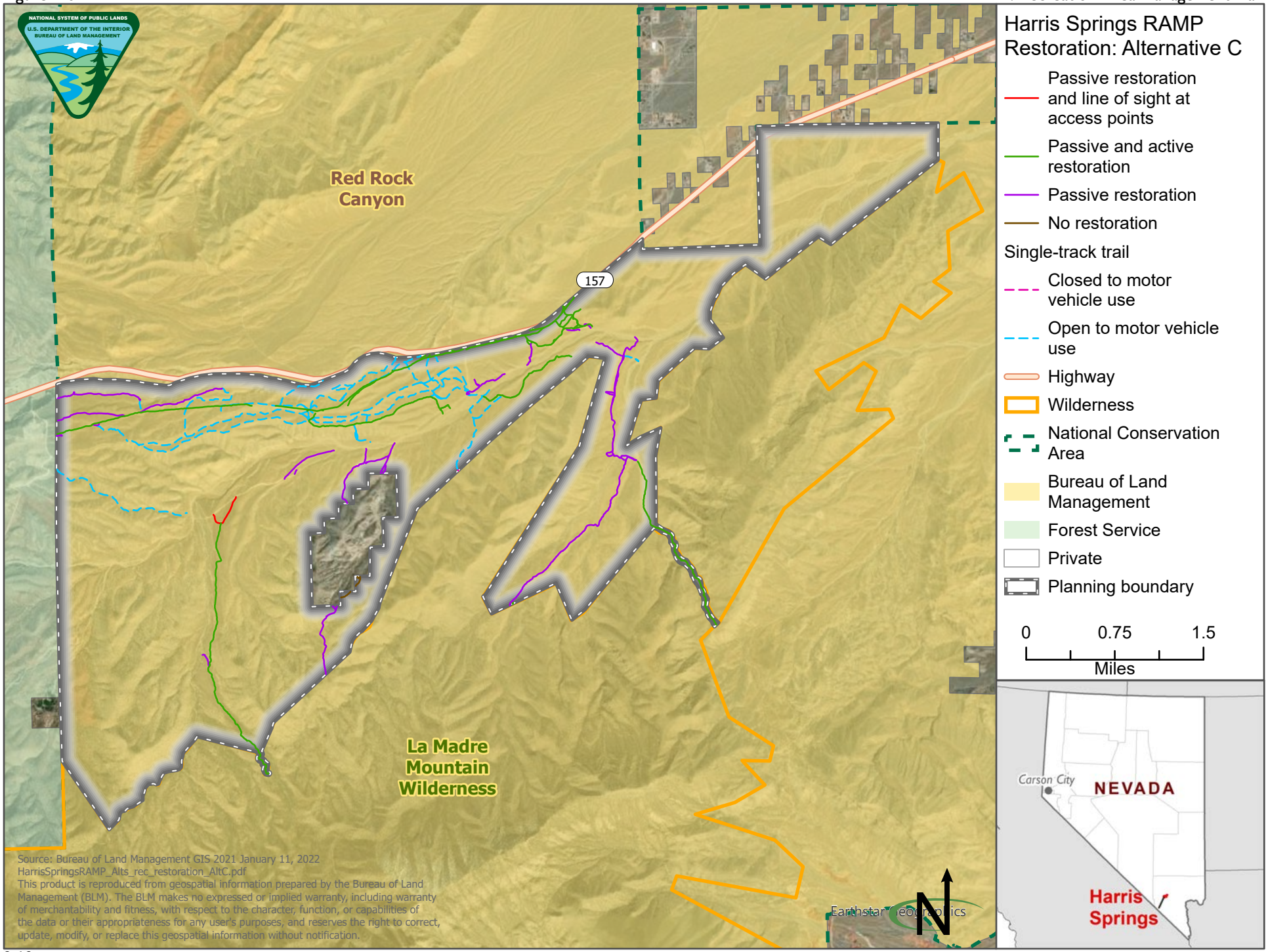
Harris Springs RAMP Restoration: Alternative C
Passive restoration and line of sight at access points
Passive and active restoration
Passive restoration
No restoration
Single-track trail
Closed to motor vehicle use
Open to motor vehicle use
Highway
Wilderness
National Conservation Area
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
Planning boundary
0
0.75
1.5
Miles
Red Rock Canyon
157
La Madre Mountain Wilderness
Carson City
NEVADA
Harris Springs
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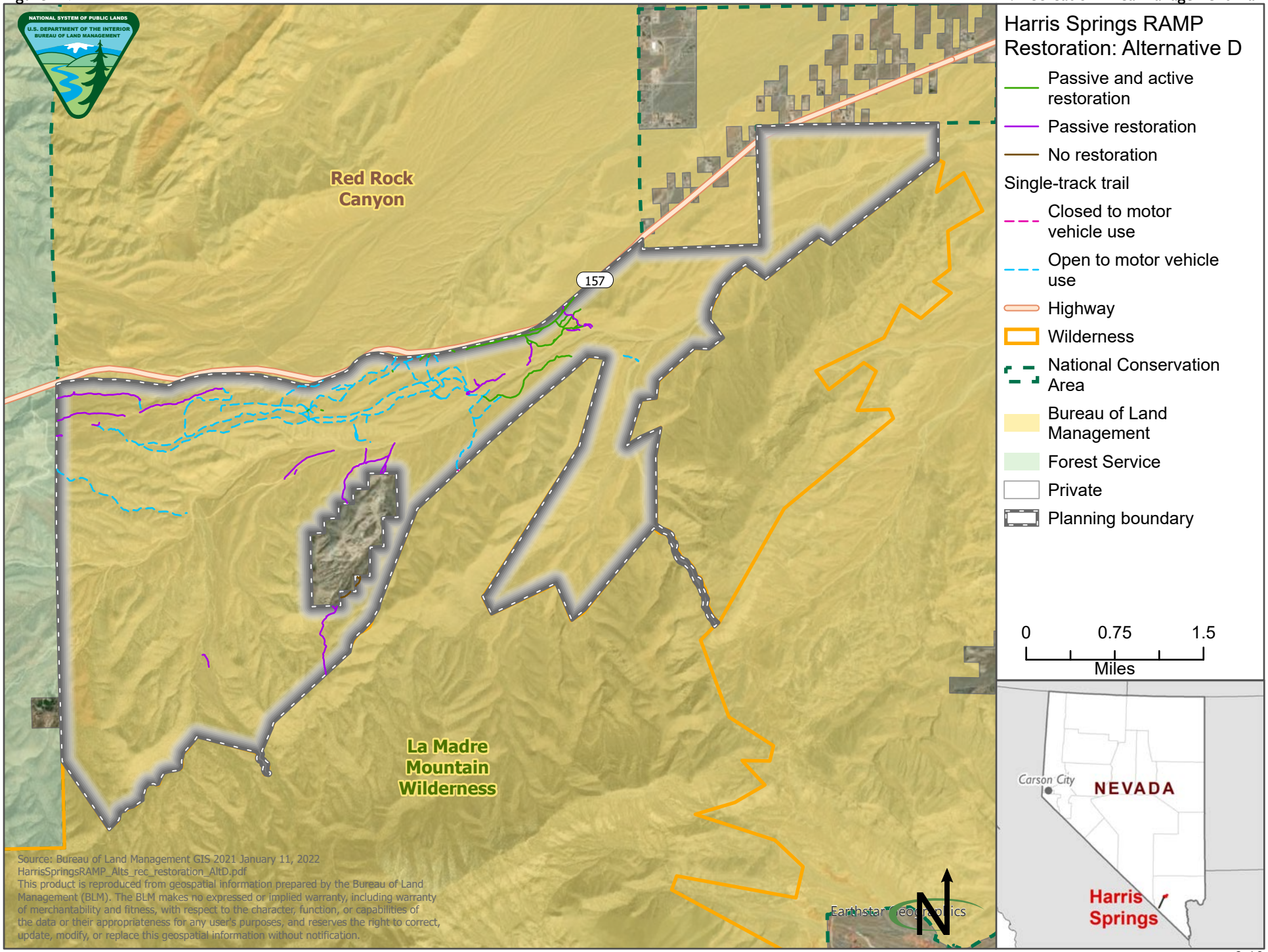
Red Rock Canyon
157
La Madre Mountain Wilderness
Harris Springs RAMP Restoration: Alternative D
Passive and active restoration
Passive restoration
No restoration
Single-track trail
Closed to motor vehicle use
Open to motor vehicle use
Highway
Wilderness
National Conservation Area
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
Planning boundary
0
0.75
1.5
Miles
Carson City
NEVADA
Harris Springs
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Table 2-2. Proposed Management and Restoration of Routes across Alternatives in the Harris Springs Planning Area

ID No.	Alternative A Management	Alternative B Management (Restoration Technique)*	Alternative C Management (Restoration Technique)*	Alternative D Management (Restoration Technique)*
1	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
2	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
3	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
4	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
5	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
6	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
7	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
8	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
9	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
10	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
11	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
12	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
13	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
14	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
15	Open	Closed (no restoration)	Closed (no restoration)	Closed (no restoration)
16	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
17	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
18	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
19	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
20	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
21	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
22	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
23	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
24	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
25	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
26	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
27	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
28	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
29	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
30	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
31	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)

ID No.	Alternative A Management	Alternative B Management (Restoration Technique)*	Alternative C Management (Restoration Technique)*	Alternative D Management (Restoration Technique)*
32	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
33	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
34	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
35	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
36	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
37	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
38	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
39	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
40	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
41	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
42	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
43	Open	Closed (no restoration)	Closed (no restoration)	Closed (no restoration)
44	Open	Closed (no restoration)	Closed (no restoration)	Closed (no restoration)
45	Open	Open, designate for nonmotorized and nonmechanized use only (N/A)	Closed (passive restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
46	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
47	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
48	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
49	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
50	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
51	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
52	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
53	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
54	Open	Open, designate for nonmotorized and nonmechanized use only (N/A)	Closed (passive restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
55	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
56	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
57	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
58	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
59	Open	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
60	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
61	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
62	Open	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Closed (passive restoration and line of sight at access points)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
63	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
64	Open	Open, already designated for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, already designated for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, already designated for motor vehicle use (N/A)
65	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)

ID No.	Alternative A Management	Alternative B Management (Restoration Technique)*	Alternative C Management (Restoration Technique)*	Alternative D Management (Restoration Technique)*
66	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
67	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
68	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
69	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
70	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
71	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
72	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
73	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)
74	Open	Open, already designated for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, already designated for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, already designated for motor vehicle use (N/A)
75	Open	Open, designate for nonmotorized and nonmechanized use only (N/A)	Closed (passive restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
76	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
77	Open	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
78	Open	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
79	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
80	Open	Open, designate for nonmotorized and nonmechanized use only (N/A)	Closed (passive restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
81	Open	Open, designate for nonmotorized and nonmechanized use only (N/A)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
82	Open	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Open, designate for nonmotorized and nonmechanized use only (N/A)	Open, designate for motorized and other uses with rerouting on a portion of the bisecting wilderness (N/A)
83	Open	Open, designate for nonmotorized and nonmechanized use only (N/A)	Closed (passive and active restoration)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
84	Open	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, designate for motor vehicle use (N/A)
85 (Harris Springs Road)	Open	Open, already designated for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, already designated for motor vehicle use (N/A)	Open, already designated for motor vehicle use (N/A)

Sources: BLM GIS 2021

*Passive treatments would include some of or all the following: blocking access, chemical staining to reduce the visual contrast, hand imprinting, herbicides, raking, revegetation, signage, and vertical mulching. Active treatments would include some of or all the following: de-compaction, harrowing, mechanical imprinting, ripping, and spiked drum aeration (see Esque et al. 2021 for a description of the passive and active restoration treatments).

Table 2-3. Proposed Management and Restoration of Single-Track Trails across Alternatives in the Harris Springs Planning Area

ID No.	Alternative A Management	Alternative B Management (Restoration Technique)*	Alternative C Management (Restoration Technique)*	Alternative D Management (Restoration Technique)*
203	Open	Open	Open	Open
204	Open	Open	Open	Open
206	Open	Open	Open	Open
209	Open	Open	Open	Open
211	Open	Open	Open	Open
213	Open	Open	Open	Open
214	Open	Open	Open	Open
216	Open	Open	Open	Open
218	Open	Open	Open	Open
222	Open	Open	Open	Open
223	Open	Open	Open	Open
245	Open	Open	Open	Open
246	Open	Open	Open	Open
247	Open	Open	Open	Open
250	Open	Open	Open	Open
251	Open	Open	Open	Open
254	Open	Open	Open	Open
255	Open	Open	Open	Open
256	Open	Open	Open	Open
261	Open	Open	Open	Open
262	Open	Open	Open	Open
263	Open	Open	Open	Open
264	Open	Open	Open	Open
265	Open	Open	Open	Open
266	Open	Open	Open	Open
267	Open	Open	Open	Open
268	Open	Open	Open	Open
269	Open	Open	Open	Open
272	Open	Open	Open	Open
276	Open	Open	Open	Open
277	Open	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)	Closed (passive restoration)
313	Open	Open	Open	Open
323	Open	Open	Open	Open
324	Open	Open	Open	Open
325	Open	Open	Open	Open
326	Open	Open	Open	Open
327	Open	Open	Open	Open
328	Open	Open	Open	Open
329	Open	Open	Open	Open
330	Open	Open	Open	Open
331	Open	Open	Open	Open
336	Open	Open	Open	Open
337	Open	Open	Open	Open
338	Open	Open	Open	Open

Sources: BLM GIS 2021

*Passive treatments would include some of or all of the following: blocking access, chemical staining to reduce the visual contrast, hand imprinting, herbicides, raking, revegetation, signage, and vertical mulching. (see Esque et al. 2021 for a description of the passive restoration treatments).

Table 2-4. Proposed Infrastructure Improvements by Alternative in the Harris Springs Planning Area

ID No.	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
1	N/A	No recreation improvements	No recreation improvements	Install an interpretive kiosk
2	N/A	No recreation improvements	No recreation improvements	Install a trailhead and staging area
3	N/A	Install a three-panel kiosk and formal parking area	Install a three-panel kiosk and formal parking area	Install a three-panel kiosk and formal parking area; install a picnic table, restroom, and garbage receptacle
4	N/A	Install a barrier using fencing and boulders	Install a barrier using fencing and boulders	Create a staging area with an interpretive kiosk
5	N/A	No recreation improvements	No recreation improvements	Install a wilderness marker sign
6	N/A	No recreation improvements	No recreation improvements	Install a wilderness marker sign
7	N/A	Install a wilderness marker sign	No recreation improvements	Install a wilderness marker sign
8	N/A	Install a barrier; Install sign (open for non-motorized use)	Install a barrier	Install a sign (open for motorized use)
9	N/A	Install a barrier	Install a barrier	No recreation improvements
10	N/A	Install a barrier	Install a barrier	Install a wilderness marker sign

Sources: BLM GIS 2021

2.3.6 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

During the early information gathering period for this RAMP/EA, the BLM considered several alternatives, but determined not to carry them forward for detailed analysis in this document. Alternatives considered, but eliminated from detailed analysis, are the following:

- ***Managing all inventoried routes as open for motorized travel***
    - The routes proposed for closure in the proposed action are either redundant or cause resource damage in the form of erosion, degradation to wilderness character, or vegetation and habitat fragmentation. Therefore, this alternative would not meet the purpose of and need for balancing resource protection and enhancement with recreation.
- ***Managing all inventoried routes as closed for motorized travel***
    - This alternative does not ensure consistent travel and access to designated motor vehicle use routes on National Forest System land and does not balance recreation with resource protection and enhancement. Therefore, this alternative would not meet the purpose of and need for balancing resource protection and enhancement with recreation.
- ***Implementing active restoration on all closed routes***
    - This alternative was eliminated from detailed analysis due its labor-intensive and expensive nature. Active restoration, such as de-compaction and ripping, requires significant hand-crew labor to naturalize the disturbance and ensure nonnative, noxious and invasive weeds do not colonize the restoration area. Therefore, this alternative

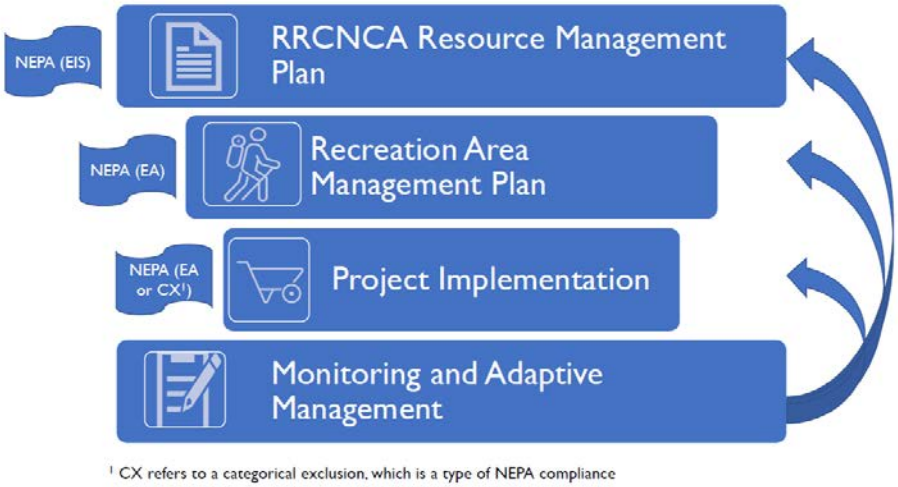
would not meet the purpose of and need for balancing resource protection and enhancement with recreation.

2.4 IMPLEMENTATION

2.4.1 Implementation-phase Projects

As described in **Section 2.1**, the Harris Springs RAMP provides high-level guidance on recreation and suggestions on potential implementation-phase projects, while acknowledging additional NEPA analyses may be required for certain implementation-phase activities. Management identified in the RAMP focuses on resource protection and consistency with the RRCNCA's mission. Similarly, the BLM will prioritize those implementation-phase undertakings that also focus on resource protection. Monitoring and adaptive management (see **Chapter 3**) will be critical for understanding the success of the plan following implementation. **Figure 2-8**, below, illustrates the relationship of the RAMP with subsequent implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management.

Figure 2-8. Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring and Adaptive Management



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Chapter 3. Monitoring, Enforcement, and Adaptive Management

3.1 MONITORING

3.1.1 RRCNCA Monitoring Requirements

The RCCNCA RMP identifies several actions and programs that include monitoring, such as wildlife, ecosystem management, commercial uses, and wild horses and burros. The BLM also regularly monitors wilderness areas for wilderness character. Monitoring is integral to all actions and programs in the RMP to measure the effectiveness of actions implemented or to record the impacts on the natural resources. While specific details are not provided, the RMP considers the RRCNCA's key resources (biodiversity, air quality, vegetation, recreation, commercial use, and cultural resources) as appropriate for monitoring, to record impacts and to seek to reverse—or mitigate—those impacts.

Whenever monitoring shows impacts that are considered significant or that surpass the limits of acceptable change, the RMP suggests the BLM carry out mitigation to reverse the situation. This could include a reduction in or elimination of the action or situation causing the impact. The RMP provides flexibility in how the monitoring is implemented; however, some monitoring details are provided, as shown below:

- The BLM will conduct an ongoing program of population monitoring for threatened and endangered species, candidate species (blue diamond cholla [*Cylindropuntia multigeniculata*]), and other special status species (Charleston Mountain angelica [*Angelica scabrida*], alkali mariposa lily [*Calochortus striatus*], Mojave milkvetch [*Astragalus mohavensis* var. *hemigyrus*], peregrine falcon [*Falco peregrinus*], and Spring Mountains springsnail [*Pyrgulopsis deacon*]).
- Recreation can spread weeds and impact sensitive plants, animals, and cultural resources. If impacts from recreation use are documented during general monitoring, the BLM may implement seasonal or temporary restrictions in specific areas or other mitigation to reduce user impacts on resources.
- The BLM will collect further information or data for sites, trails, and destinations where more information on visitor use patterns, levels, and behaviors could further inform thresholds. This information will be used to refine thresholds before taking actions to manage visitor use levels more directly.
- The BLM will monitor cumulative recreation use impacts on biological resources.
- The BLM will monitor commercial uses and evaluate permit totals as necessary.
- The BLM will enhance partnerships using volunteers to conduct photo monitoring and patrolling of sites to monitor recreation use.
- The BLM will monitor the existing designated trails and implement mitigation measures as needed to avoid excessive impacts.
- The BLM will monitor wilderness character per the La Madre Mountain Wilderness and Rainbow Mountain Wilderness Management Plan.

The programs listed above have monitoring systems developed or are in place; others would need to have monitoring techniques developed and tested to determine how to best evaluate conditions and implementation results. Issues specific to the Harris Springs planning area that may require development of specific monitoring protocols include:

- Rock writings and other cultural and paleontological resources
- Riparian communities associated with springs
- Appropriate trail use and conditions
- Sustainable trail routing and design

Monitoring practices will be developed by selecting indicators that are used to track trends in resource and experiential conditions. Established thresholds will be used to clearly define when conditions are becoming unacceptable for the selected indicators, thus alerting managers that a change in management action(s) is required. Management action in response to monitoring will be implemented as necessary (see **Section 3.3.2**, Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment).

3.1.2 Additional Proposed Monitoring

In addition to the monitoring requirements in the RRCNCA RMP, the BLM is proposing the following additional monitoring measures to understand the progress toward meeting the RAMP's goals and strategies and to inform subsequent adaptive management (see **Section 4.3**, below):

- Monitor the success of restoration
- Monitor unauthorized OHV use
- Monitor the creation of unauthorized roads, trails, or access points
- Monitor if signage and other site information provide effective guidance to encourage appropriate user behavior
- Monitor if cultural and recreation sites are vandalized or damaged
- Monitor and track where destruction or removal of natural resources is occurring and at what rate
- Monitor for public safety concerns, as well as emergency service responses or search-and-rescue operations

As described above, additional monitoring efforts should not be limited to BLM staff and managers. The BLM would implement strategies to work with partners and the public to also monitor certain activities. For example, the BLM could provide an easy process for visitors to report unauthorized trail use. The BLM could provide a way to educate partner organizations, so they could recognize poor trail conditions and report these issues to BLM staff. With this information, BLM managers will work to set standards that define the conditions desired for the wide range of recreation opportunities, identify management actions desired to achieve these conditions, and adjust management accordingly. The BLM could also consider using a variety of technological approaches, such as game cameras and drones.

3.2 LAW ENFORCEMENT ROLE

The BLM will continue to maintain its current law enforcement processes. Law enforcement and patrols fill a key role in responding to emergencies and developing situations as needed; however,

Kooistra et al. (2019) also noted there is public support for an increased presence of BLM law enforcement, officials, and designated volunteers across the RRCNCA. That increased presence could improve visitor experiences and may mitigate negative or unsafe behaviors (for example, theft and graffiti).

3.3 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The adaptive management proposed in this RAMP/EA framework is divided into four major elements:

1. Build the foundation with the broad management in the RRCNCA RMP (BLM 2005a)
2. Define specific visitor use management direction for the Harris Springs planning area in this RAMP/EA
3. Identify adaptive monitoring and management strategies
4. Implement, monitor, evaluate, and adjust

These elements provide increasingly detailed management direction from the RRCNCA RMP (BLM 2005a) to the in-field monitoring and mitigation to move resources toward the desired characteristics of the relevant MEA (see **Figure 3-1** and **Figure 3-2**). Further, this process of adaptive management is intended to be flexible, iterative, and adaptable while including the application of relevant laws and regulations, BLM guidance, and public involvement. This process is modeled on the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council's Visitor Use Management Framework. This council consists of six federal agencies: the BLM, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Forest Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and US Army Corps of Engineers (IVUMC 2016).

Figure 3-1. Adaptive Management Framework

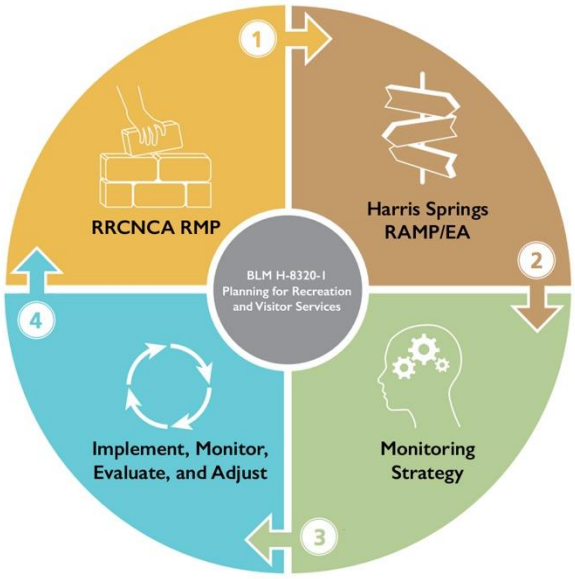
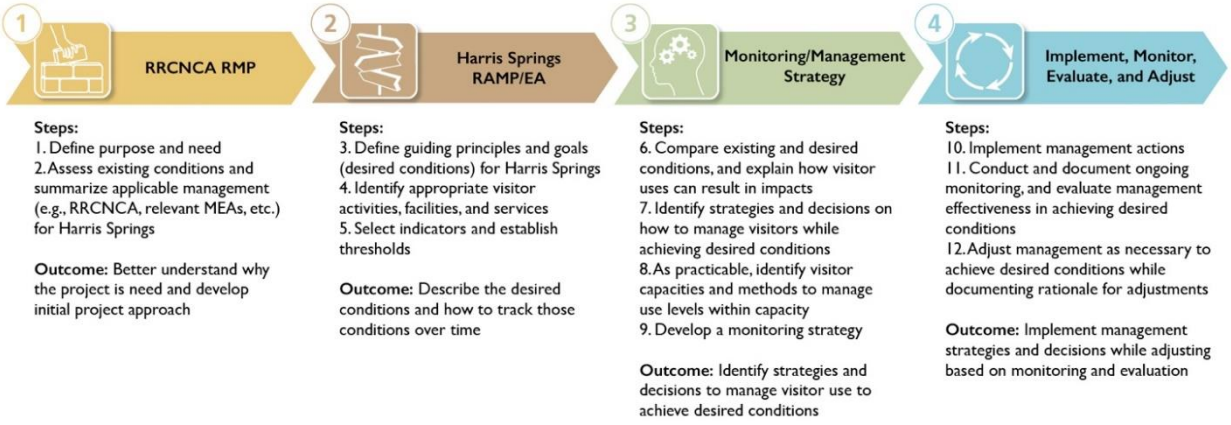


Figure 3-2. Components of Adaptive Management



Each of the steps described in **Figure 3-2** are considered in this RAMP/EA as follows:

1. The project purpose and need, along with the three project issues, are defined, respectively, in **Section 1.3**, Purpose and Need and **Section 1.7**, Interdisciplinary Team and Refined RAMP Issues.
2. Existing conditions are described in **Section 4.2**, Affected Environment. Applicable laws, regulations, guidance, and management are provided in **Section 1.5**, Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, and Other Plans; **Section 2.2**, The BLM Recreation Management Framework; and in **Section 2.2.1** under Management Emphasis Areas.
3. Guiding principles and goals are described in **Section 2.2.3**, Guiding Principles, and **Section 2.3.2** under Management Goals, Strategies, and Decisions.
4. Appropriate uses and facilities are included in **Section 2.3.2** under Management Goals, Strategies, and Decisions.
5. Indicators are described in detail below in **Section 3.3.1**, Management Indicators.
6. Existing and desired conditions are compared in **Section 3.3.2**, Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment.
7. Strategies for managing visitors while achieving desired conditions are compared in **Section 3.3.2**, Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment.
8. Methods to manage use levels are described in **Section 3.3.2**, Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment.
9. Ongoing and proposed monitoring efforts are summarized above in **Sections 3.1.1**, RRCNCA Monitoring Requirements, and **3.1.2**, Additional Proposed Monitoring. The plan for monitoring and mitigation is considered in **Section 3.3.2**, Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment.
10. Implementing management actions is discussed below in **Section 3.3.2**, Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment.
11. Step 11 is discussed below in **Section 3.3.2**, Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment.
12. Adjusting management, as necessary, is discussed below in **Section 3.3.2**, Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment.

3.3.1 Management Indicators

Each management indicator below corresponds to the issues and topics discussed in **Section 2.3.2** under Management Goals, Strategies, and Decisions. These indicators are also described under the relevant resource categories in **Section 4.3**, Environmental Effects.

- Resource protection and restoration
  - Indicator: Evidence of resource disturbance
  - Indicator: The presence or absence of wildlife and desired vegetation
  - Indicator: Distribution of noxious and invasive weeds
  - Indicator: Funding for staff to monitor and manage resources
  - Indicator: Evidence of successful restoration actions
- Visitor safety
  - Indicator: Frequency of emergency service responses
  - Indicator: Reports of crime or criminal activity
- Trail uses and access
  - Indicator: Inappropriate trail use in the Harris Springs planning area (for example, motorized use on a route where motorized use is not allowed)
  - Indicator: Widening, erosion, and braiding of trails
  - Indicator: Incidence of user-created, unauthorized trails
  - Indicator: Evidence of unauthorized motor vehicle use on closed routes
  - Indicator: Trail conditions with the potential for secondary erosion, such as those that would follow high-intensity rain
- Education and partnerships
  - Indicator: Incidence of coordination with partners, such as cooperative projects and periodic meetings
  - Indicator: Amount of new or updated interpretive materials and signage at key locations for education and impact reduction
- Recreation infrastructure
  - Indicator: Number and types of facilities and infrastructure in the Harris Springs planning area
  - Indicator: Incidents of vandalism

3.3.2 Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment

Adaptive management will allow the BLM to consider how its management actions are implemented and how to adjust management based on the results of monitoring. The management proposed for implementation under this RAMP/EA is described in the decisions discussed in **Section 2.3.2** under Management Goals, Strategies, and Decisions. Some of these decisions would be in effect immediately following the issuance of the RAMP/EA, such as route decisions and restoration proposals and signage. Other decisions could require additional NEPA and other analyses, such as future recreation improvements and amenities.

A critical need for monitoring and adaptive management under the RAMP/EA would be to ensure closed routes are successfully restored. The BLM would monitor for evidence of unsuccessful barriers or other unauthorized access. An adaptive management response could be to re-install or strengthen barriers or reconsider the status of a particular route based on the public's desired recreation experience.

Chapter 4. Affected Environment and Environmental Effects

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the affected environment, which is the existing or baseline conditions relevant to each resource or resource use. Following the affected environment is a description of the environmental effects relative to each issue. The Council on Environmental Quality regulations under 40 CFR 1500 and the BLM NEPA handbook require the BLM to identify significant issues for analysis and focus only on those issues. The BLM NEPA handbook defines an issue as "a point of disagreement, debate, or dispute with a proposed action based on some anticipated environmental effect" (BLM 2008, p. 40). In addition, an issue "has a cause and effect relationship with the proposed action and alternatives; is within the scope of analysis; has not be [*sic*] decided by law, regulation, or previous decision; and is amenable to scientific analysis rather than conjecture" (BLM 2008, p. 40).

4.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

4.2.1 Recreation

Located approximately 20 miles west of Las Vegas, the Harris Springs planning area is a popular outdoor recreation destination near the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, otherwise known as Mount Charleston, which is administered by the Forest Service. The Harris Springs planning area includes many opportunities for scenic off-road use. The Harris Springs planning area encompasses lands south of Highway 157, starting at the BLM boundary and ending before the Spring Mountains Visitor Gateway at Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The portion of this area that is managed by the BLM is included in the RRCNCA and is subject to the management prescribed in the 2005 RMP and ROD (BLM 2005a). Motorized access to the area is provided via Harris Springs Road.

Visitor Use

The broader RRCNCA provides a variety of recreation opportunities for visitors. It is the most visited NCA in the nation, with over 3.5 million visitors in 2020. Visitation in the RRCNCA is increasing (see **Table 4-1**) and is projected to exceed four million visitors by 2022 and five million by 2024 (BLM 2021). The RRCNCA RMP guides the BLM's management of the broader RRCNCA; although it does not provide specific goals or strategies for managing recreation in the Harris Springs planning area, it does designate various road closures for the area (see **Section 4.2.2**, Travel Management). The RMP's primary direction for the RRCNCA is to conserve and protect the NCA's natural resources. The RMP also identifies the need to provide recreation opportunities, so the public can enjoy and appreciate the RRCNCA's unique natural setting (BLM 2005a).

The Harris Springs planning area abuts the La Madre Mountain Wilderness (see **Section 4.2.3**, Special Designations), and three undesignated routes (routes 69, 80, and 81) currently extend into the wilderness area. There is one designated cherry-stem roadway with the wilderness boundary on either side of the route (see **Figure 4-1**). The form of recreation occurring in the wilderness area is mostly the same as that taking place in the non-wilderness areas; however, certain activities are prohibited in the wilderness, as defined in the Wilderness Act of 1964 and BLM Manual 6340 (Management of Designated Wilderness Areas).

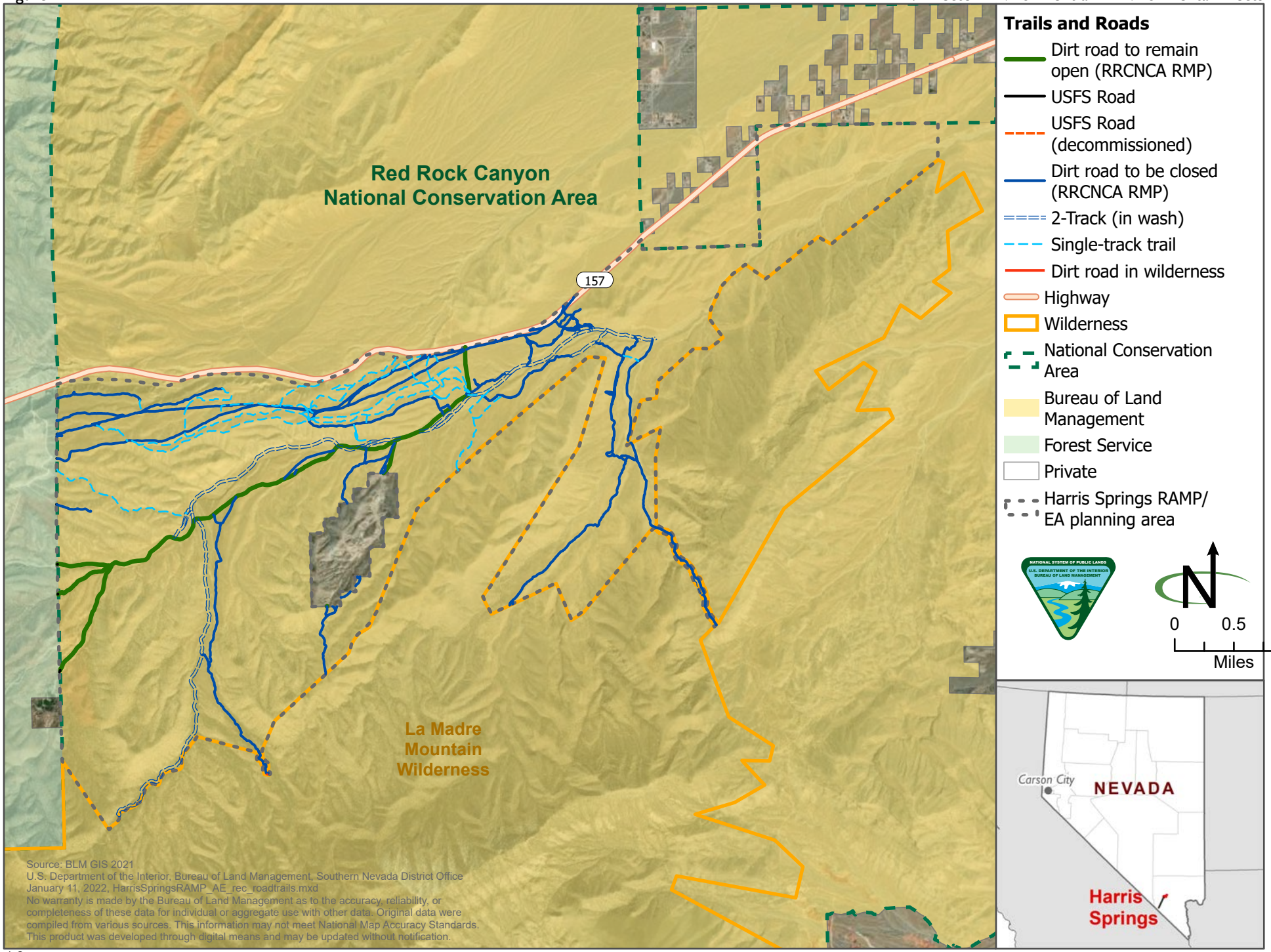

Red Rock Canyon
National Conservation Area
157
La Madre
Mountain
Wilderness
Trails and Roads
Dirt road to remain open (RRCNCA RMP)
USFS Road
USFS Road (decommissioned)
Dirt road to be closed (RRCNCA RMP)
2-Track (in wash)
Single-track trail
Dirt road in wilderness
Highway
Wilderness
National Conservation Area
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
Harris Springs RAMP/ EA planning area
0
0.5
1
Miles
Carson City
NEVADA
Harris Springs
Source: BLM GIS 2021
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Southern Nevada District Office
January 11, 2022, HarrisSpringsRAMP_AE_rec_roadtrails.mxd
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

Table 4-1. Visitation Trends

Year	Visitation in the RRCNCA (people)
2012	1,022,207
2013	1,016,802
2014	1,753,250
2015	1,203,089
2016	1,324,009
2017	2,218,286
2018	3,119,029
2019	3,563,596
2020	3,218,149

Source: BLM RMIS 2021

Trails

The Harris Springs planning area currently has approximately 54.6 miles of unimproved surface routes, including 37.7 miles of two-track roads (see **Table 2-1**). The area has seen an increase in unauthorized OHV use since the 2013 Carpenter 1 Fire. These unauthorized roadways are primarily used to access the adjacent Spring Mountains National Recreation Area on National Forest System land. Additionally, there is a heavily used illegal shooting area in the Harris Springs drainage near Highway 157. BLM staff has observed this shooting area. Staff has also observed the main Harris Springs parking area being used as an illegal dump site.

4.2.2 Travel Management

On BLM-administered lands in general, OHV use in limited to existing roads, trails, and dry washes. Within the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area and RRCNCA, including the areas of critical environmental concern, OHV use is limited to designated roads and trails. Wilderness areas, such as the La Madre Mountain Wilderness, are closed to all motorized and wheeled vehicles (SNAP 2010).

The 2005 RMP and ROD for the RRCNCA finalized several proposed road closures within Harris Springs Canyon. The RMP proposed keeping 29.8 miles of dirt roads open and closing 39.8 miles of dirt roads located north of La Madre Mountain Wilderness in what was termed the North Expansion Area (see page 22 of the 2005 RMP and ROD). This location includes the current Harris Springs planning area.

The RRCNCA RMP and ROD direct the BLM to contact Clark County to check for RS-2477 status before closing any unauthorized dirt roads (BLM 2005a). RS-2477 roads refer to roads that were established in the western US on federal lands based on 43 US Code 932 (adopted in 1866) prior to the FLPMA. While the FLPMA repealed the 1866 law, many roads established between 1866 and 1976 were grandfathered in as valid existing rights. The Clark County Board of County Commissioners has designated many county roads as RS-2477. However, according to the most recent general highway map for Clark County, there are no RS-2477 status roads within the BLM portion of the Harris Springs Canyon area (NDOT 2017).

4.2.3 Special Designations

NCA

Section 2002 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 withdraws the RRCNCA from the multiple-use and sustained-yield directive for management of public lands. Under the NLCS, established from the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, the RRCNCA is managed for the conservation of cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations.

Wilderness

The La Madre Mountain Wilderness was designated as wilderness by the Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002. It offers opportunities for solitude and recreation, and it protects habitat for numerous wildlife species. While the Forest Service and BLM jointly manage this wilderness area in certain parts, the acres within the Harris Springs planning area are administered solely by the BLM. The La Madre Mountain Wilderness and Rainbow Mountain Wilderness Management Plan (BLM and Forest Service 2013) summarizes the qualities of wilderness character in the La Madre Mountain Wilderness.

The geology of the La Madre Mountain Wilderness features canyons, ridges, and mountain peaks (BLM 2021). With an elevation range spanning 6,000 feet, the La Madre Mountain Wilderness supports a variety of plant and animal life. The higher elevations of the wilderness provide crucial summer habitats for bighorn sheep, mule deer, and elk. Additionally, the La Madre Mountain Wilderness provides opportunities for hiking, rock climbing, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, hunting, and camping.

The wilderness is highly scenic and offers excellent views of classic basin and range formations, including the Keystone Thrust formation above Brownstone basin, where older limestone has been pushed over younger sandstone. There are precontact sites throughout the area, including rock writing (pictographs and petroglyphs), agave roasting pits, and rock shelters. Within the wilderness, Brownstone Canyon is listed on the NRHP (Forest Service 2021).

4.2.4 Cultural Resources and Native American Concerns

The diversity of environments and resources in the area encompassed by the present-day RRCNCA made the area generally attractive to Indigenous groups who occupied the region as early as 13,000 years before present. The RRCNCA's archaeological record provides evidence of use and intermittent occupancy by the Patayan, Ancestral Puebloan, and Southern Paiute people. Precontact sites, features, and artifacts found in the RRCNCA include rock writing panels, rock shelters, roasting pits, burned bone, milling sites, lithic scatters, and ceramics (Myhrer 1991). The Southern Paiute people resided in and around the RRCNCA in 1829 at the time of initial European contact with emigrants, fur trappers, and settlers who were traveling the Old Spanish Trail or the nearby Mormon Trail (BLM 2005a). Use of the area continued into the twentieth century; this use is evidenced by the five artifact scatters dating to this period (all considered ineligible to the NRHP) documented in the Harris Springs planning area during archaeological surveys as part of the RAMP/EA.

The RRCNCA and Harris Springs planning area are a region traditionally used by the Nuwu, or Southern Paiute peoples, with significance to their culture that extends to the present (UNLV 2021). It is unknown if there are traditional cultural properties (TCPs) or sacred sites in the Harris Springs planning area, but there may be areas of traditional cultural practice. The BLM follows multiple regulations and guidelines when considering these types of resources and uses, including the NHPA (for

example, Section 101(d) of the NHPA requires that federal agencies consult with Native American tribes who historically occupied the area of an undertaking or who may attach significance to resources in the region); the American Indian Religious Freedom Act; and EO 13007, Indian Sacred Sites.

The BLM has reached out to 13 federally recognized Tribes in the region (see **Chapter 5**). As part of the Section 106 process of the NHPA and pursuant to regulations under NEPA and FLPMA, the BLM currently maintains ongoing coordination or consultation with these regarding the Harris Springs RAMP/EA.

4.2.5 Vegetation

General Vegetation

The predominant vegetation type on BLM-administered lands within the Harris Springs planning area is Mojave Mid-Elevation Mixed Desert Scrub, which encompasses approximately 7,700 acres. Other vegetation types present include Sonora-Mojave Creosote Bush-White Bursage Desert Scrub (300 acres), Great Basin Pinyon-Juniper Woodland (300 acres), Inter-Mountain Basins Semi-Desert Shrub Steppe (200 acres), and North American Warm Desert Bedrock Cliff and Outcrop (100 acres). Vegetation varies with the topography, soil type, and elevation. These vegetation communities are illustrated in **Figure 4-2** and summarized below in **Table 4-2**.

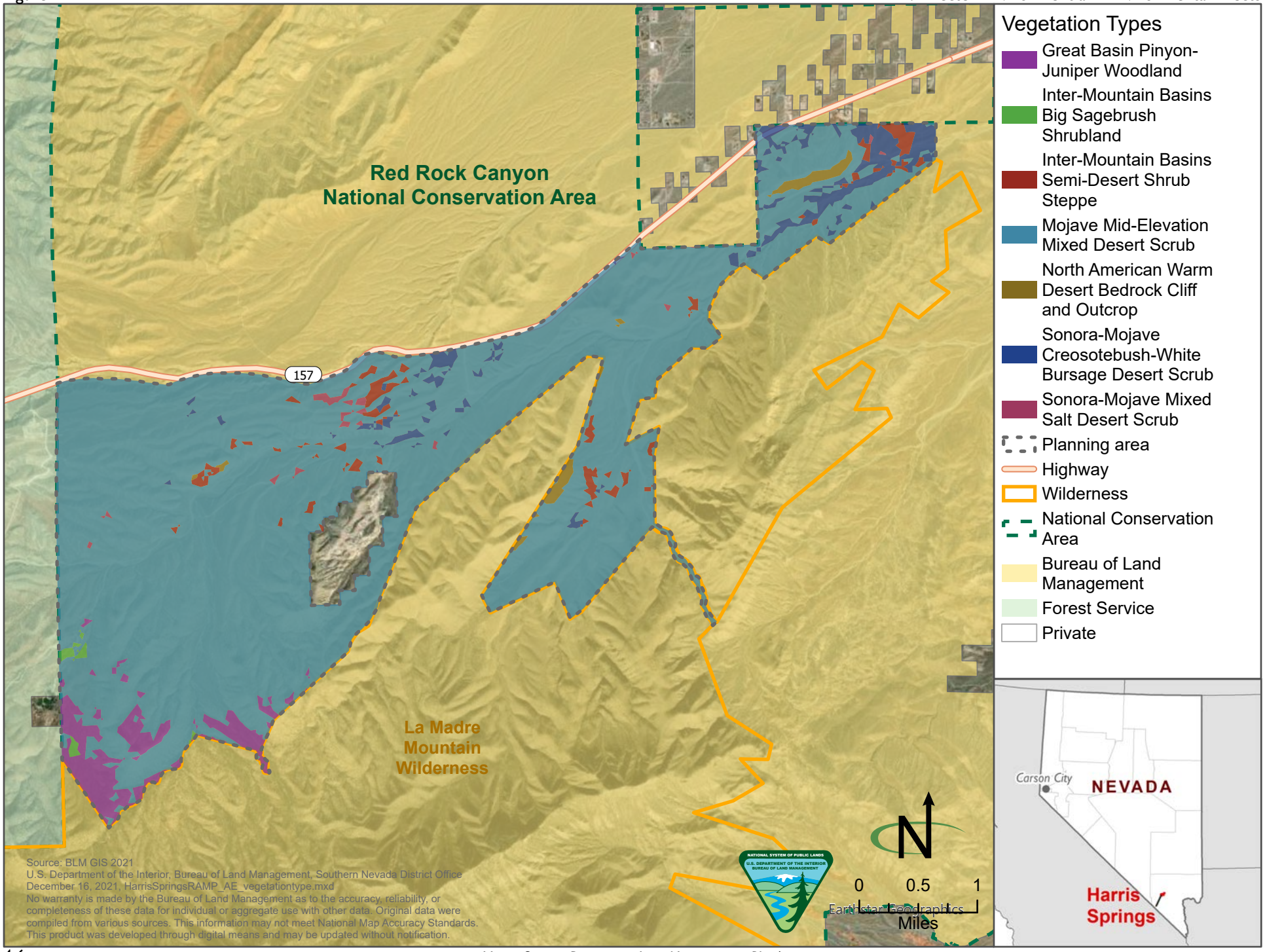
Table 4-2. Vegetation Types on BLM-Administered Lands in the Harris Springs Planning Area

Vegetation Type	Acres
Mojave Mid-Elevation Mixed Desert Scrub	7,700
Sonora-Mojave Creosote Bush-White Bursage Desert Scrub	300
Great Basin Pinyon-Juniper Woodland	300
Inter-Mountain Basins Semi-Desert Shrub Steppe	200
North American Warm Desert Bedrock Cliff and Outcrop	100
Total	**8,600**

Source: BLM GIS 2021

Invasive and Noxious Weeds

Invasive and noxious weeds in the planning area include cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), red brome (*Bromus rubens*), and puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*). The invasive annual grasses (cheatgrass and red brome) are relatively widespread and ubiquitous; they are not necessarily associated with a specific disturbance, other than the area disturbed by the Carpenter 1 Fire. No weed surveys have been completed in the planning area. Weed management in the planning area is guided by the 2005 RMP and ROD (BLM 2005a) and the Las Vegas Field Office Noxious Weed Plan (BLM 2006).


Red Rock Canyon
National Conservation Area
157
La Madre
Mountain
Wilderness
Vegetation Types
Great Basin Pinyon-Juniper Woodland
Inter-Mountain Basins Big Sagebrush Shrubland
Inter-Mountain Basins Semi-Desert Shrub Steppe
Mojave Mid-Elevation Mixed Desert Scrub
North American Warm Desert Bedrock Cliff and Outcrop
Sonora-Mojave Creosotebush-White Bursage Desert Scrub
Sonora-Mojave Mixed Salt Desert Scrub
Planning area
Highway
Wilderness
National Conservation Area
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
Carson City
NEVADA
Harris Springs
N
0 0.5 1
Miles
Source: BLM GIS 2021
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Southern Nevada District Office
December 16, 2021, HarrisSpringsRAMP_AE_vegetationtype.mxd
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4.2.6 Wildlife

General Wildlife

Common mammal wildlife species known to exist in the Harris Springs planning area include the coyote (*Canis latrans*), rock squirrel (*Otospermophilus variegatus*), and Panamint chipmunk (*Neotamias panamintinus*).

Common reptilian wildlife expected to exist within the planning area include the desert collared lizard (*Crotaphytus bicintores*), gopher snake (*Pituophis catenifer*), western whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris*), desert nightsnake (*Hypsiglena chlorophaea*), desert horned lizard (*Phrynosoma platyrhinos*), and western patch-nosed snake (*Salvadora hexalepis*).

Common avian species include the red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapilllus*), ladder-backed woodpecker (*Dryobates scalaris*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), pinyon jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*), ash-throated flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), woodhouse's scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii*), lesser goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*), and spotted towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*).

Migratory Birds

Migratory bird species commonly known to exist in the planning area include black-chinned sparrow (*Spizella atrogularis*), Costa's hummingbird (*Calypte costae*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Le Conte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*), pinyon jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*), and Rufous-winged sparrow (*Aimophila carpalis*) (USFWS 2021a).

Special Status Species

The USFWS's Information, Planning, and Conservation (IPaC) tool, which the BLM queried on November 30, 2021, identified federally endangered, threatened, and candidate species with the potential to exist in the planning area. The four federally endangered species are the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), Yuma Ridgway's rail (*Rallus obsoletus yumanensis*), Pahrump poolfish (*Empetrichthys latos*), and Mount Charleston blue butterfly (*Icaricia shasta charlestonensis*). The one federally threatened species is the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*). The one candidate species is the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). Although the IPaC tool identified the southwestern willow flycatcher and Pahrump poolfish as having the potential to exist in the planning area, BLM staff have verified that habitat for these species does not exist in the Harris Springs planning area. There are no federally threatened or endangered plant species in the Harris Springs planning area. No critical habitats were identified (USFWS 2021a).

There are several BLM Nevada sensitive species that are known to exist in the Harris Springs planning area (**Table 4-3**). Some unique species to note are the Mount Charleston blue butterfly and Sin City scorpion.

The Mount Charleston blue butterfly is a subspecies of the Shasta blue butterfly (*Icaricia* [*Plebujus*] *shasta*). The subspecies is extremely rare and endemic to the high elevations (between approximately 8,200 and 11,500 feet) of the Spring Mountains. The Mount Charleston blue butterfly is known to exist within and adjacent to Kyle and Lee Canyons (USFWS 2021b).

Table 4-3. Special Status Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status[1]
Avian Species		
Golden eagle	*Aquila chrysaetos*	S
Ferruginous hawk	*Buteo regalis*	S
Swainson's hawk	*Buteo swainsoni*	S
Loggerhead shrike	*Lanius ludovicianus*	S, SB
Lewis's woodpecker	*Melanerpes lewis*	S
Pinyon jay	*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*	S
Phainopepla	*Phainopepla nitens*	S
Crissal thrasher	*Toxostoma crissale*	S
Brewer's sparrow	*Spizella breweri*	S, SB
Yuma Ridgway's rail	*Rallus obsoletus yumanensis*	E, S, EB
Invertebrates		
Monarch butterfly	*Danaus plexippus*	C
Mount Charleston blue butterfly	*Icaricia shasta charlestonensis*	E
Sin City scorpion	*Pseudouroctonus peccatum*	S*
Mammal Species		
Big brown bat	*Eptesicus fuscus*	S
California myotis	*Myotis californicus*	S
Western small-footed myotis	*Myotis ciliolabrum*	S
Fringed myotis	*Myotis thysanodes*	S, PM
Pallid bat	*Antrozous pallidus*	S, PM
Reptile Species		
Desert collared lizard	*Crotaphytus bicinctores*	S
Desert tortoise	*Gopherus agassizii*	T
Long-nosed leopard lizard	*Gambelia wislizenii*	S
Mojave Desert sidewinder	*Crotalus cerastes ssp. cerastes*	S
Nevada shovelnose snake	*Chionactis occipitalis ssp. talpina*	S

Source: BLM 2017. See source for habitat requirements.

[1]Status Key:

E: USFWS endangered
T: USFWS threatened
C: USFWS candidate
S: BLM Nevada sensitive species
S*: Pending BLM Nevada sensitive species
SB: Nevada Department of Wildlife sensitive bird
EB: Nevada Department of Wildlife endangered bird
PM: Nevada Department of Wildlife protected mammal

The Sin City scorpion is a very rare scorpion species that is endemic to Kyle Canyon in the Spring Mountains. This species has been found within the planning area on BLM-administered lands adjacent to Kyle Canyon Road as well as along the edge of washes. The species has been collected in the mixed pine-oak woodlands in Kyle Canyon, which is an area that receives heavy visitor traffic and was impacted during the 2013 Carpenter 1 Fire (Tate et al. 2013). While not currently on the BLM sensitive species list, the species is pending inclusion in the 2022 update.

4.2.7 Soils and Water Resources

Soils

Soils in the planning area range from loamy to sandy textures. This means they are made up of mostly silt and sand particles and few clay particles. Most soils have high percentages of rock fragments, which

means they are very porous and drain water easily. The climate of the Harris Springs planning area and surrounding RRCNCA is arid, with extreme heat, low and infrequent precipitation, and evaporation rates exceeding precipitation rates (BLM 2005a).

Erosion

The Natural Resources Conservation Service uses a soil erosion hazard rating to estimate the hazard of soil loss from roads and trails. It is based on soil erosion factor K (a measure of soil erosion susceptibility to water), the slope, and the content of rock fragments. A rating of slight indicates that little or no erosion is likely; moderate indicates that some erosion is likely and that simple erosion-control measures are needed; and severe indicates that significant erosion is expected and that intensive erosion-control measures are needed (NRCS 2021). **Table 4-4** and **Figure 4-3** show erosion hazard ratings for soils near trails in the Harris Springs planning area.

Table 4-4. Erosion Hazard Ratings Near Trails

Erosion Hazard Rating	Acres within 1/4 Mile of Trails	Percentage of Planning Area
Slight	7,300	36.9
Moderate	5,900	30.3
Severe	6,400	32.8
Total	**19,600**	**100**

Source: BLM GIS 2021

Compacted soils can also contribute to the erosion hazard by reducing water infiltration (NRCS 2021). Compaction occurs when force is applied to the surface of a soil that pushes soil particles together and decreases the available space for air and water in the soil (NRCS 2021).

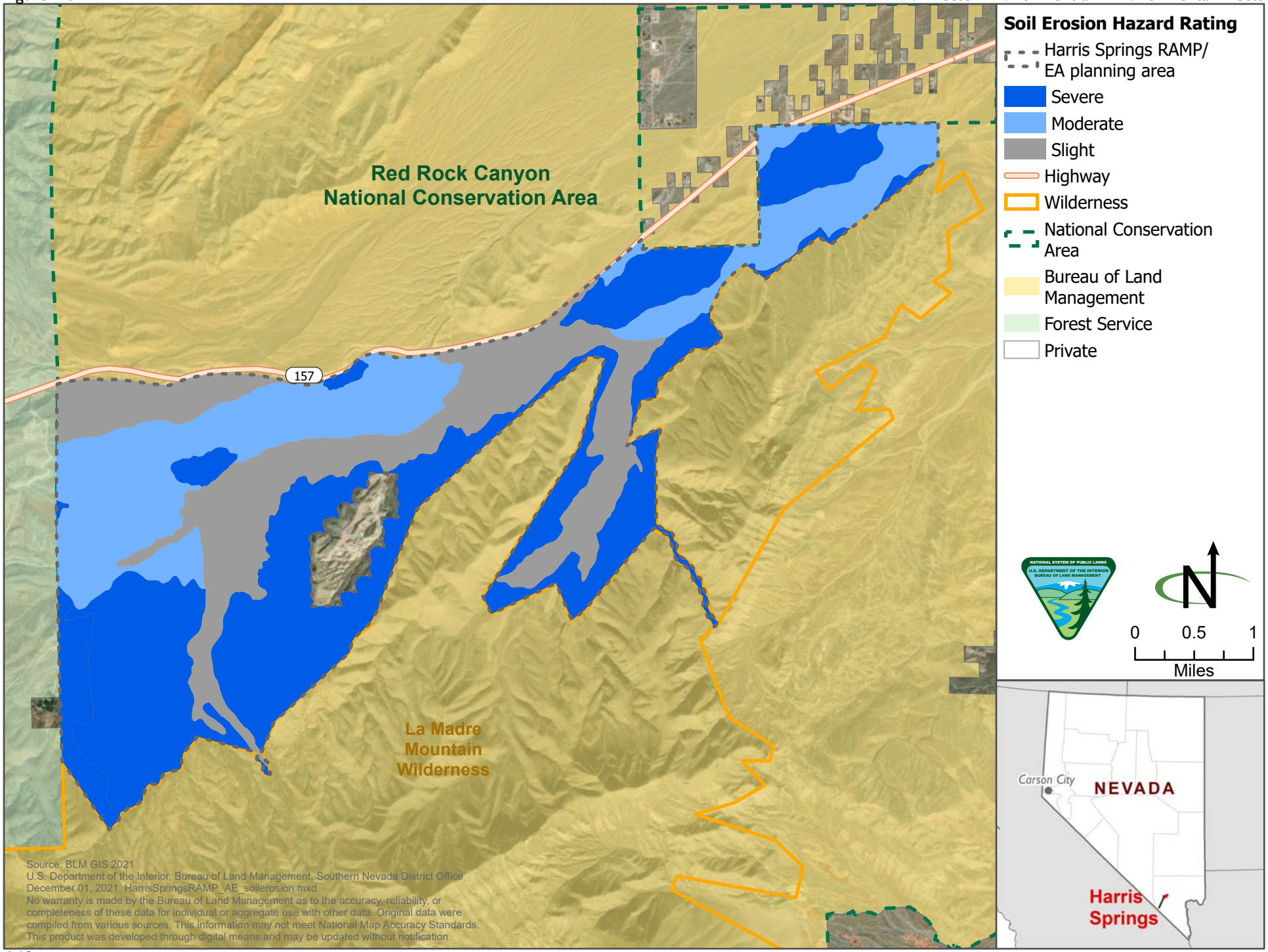
Slope

Another indicator for soil erosion susceptibility is the slope (or gradient) of the landscape. The higher percent slope, or the steeper the gradient, the more susceptible soils are to erosion, especially to water erosion. Most soils (88.7 percent) in the planning area are on gentle slopes of 0–5 percent, with the remainder on moderate to steep slopes of 31–55 percent (see **Table 4-5**).

Table 4-5. Slope Percent Intervals Near Trails in the Planning Area

Slope Percent Interval	Acres within 1/4 Mile of Trails	Percentage of Planning Area
0%–5%	17,300	88.7
6%–10%	500	2.6
31%–35%	500	2.6
51%–55%	1,200	6.2
Total	**19,500**	**100**

Source: BLM GIS 2021


Red Rock Canyon
National Conservation Area
157
La Madre
Mountain
Wilderness
Soil Erosion Hazard Rating
Harris Springs RAMP/
EA planning area
Severe
Moderate
Slight
Highway
Wilderness
National Conservation
Area
Bureau of Land
Management
Forest Service
Private
0 0.5 1
Miles
Carson City
NEVADA
Harris
Springs
Source: BLM GIS 2021
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Southern Nevada District Office
December 01, 2021, HarrisSpringsRAMP_AE_soilerosion.mxd
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Water Resources

Wetlands

The BLM classifies wetland areas as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration necessary to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted to saturated soil conditions. Data indicate there are approximately 310 acres of wetlands in the Harris Springs planning area, of which approximately 40 acres are categorized as freshwater pond, and approximately 270 acres are categorized as riverine (BLM GIS 2021). However, there is typically no surface water present in the planning area.

Streams and Springs

The BLM defines riparian areas as a form of wetland transition between permanently saturated wetland and dry upland areas. These areas exhibit vegetation or physical features that demonstrate the influence of permanent surface or subsurface water common to lands adjacent to perennially or intermittently flowing spring streams (BLM 2005a). There are approximately 105 miles of stream channels and washes in the Harris Springs planning area; all of these are ephemeral and include areas within sandy washes (BLM GIS 2021). These intermittent streams are often the only source of available water in the arid desert environment (BLM 2005a). Their locations in the Harris Springs planning area are shown in **Figure 4-4**.

4.2.8 Lands and Realty

The Harris Springs planning area is in the northern portion of the RRCNCA, approximately 17 miles west of Las Vegas. The 8,660-acre planning area consists of BLM-administered surface lands (8,641 acres) and private lands (8 acres) (BLM GIS 2021). The Harris Springs planning area is accessible from Kyle Canyon Road (State Highway 157), Prospect Springs Road, Harris Springs Road, and a variety of dirt roads and nearby washes.

The BLM issued a right-of-way to the Nevada Department of Transportation to manage Highway 157 within the planning area that leads to BLM-administered lands. The BLM has also issued rights-of-way to the central telephone company CenturyLink and the USFWS.

4.2.9 Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

Socioeconomics

From 2010 to 2019, Clark County is estimated to have grown by 16.1 percent (US Census Bureau 2019a). Data on population demographics, income, and poverty status were collected for the state of Nevada, Clark County, and census tracts 58.23 and 75, both of which occur in the Harris Springs planning area (**Table 4-6**). Due to the relatively small population size in the area, both census tracts cover a large swath of land area. Census tract 75, in particular, encompasses a notably large area to the west of the planning area and, therefore, incorporates demographic information for additional communities outside of those located closest to the Harris Springs planning area.

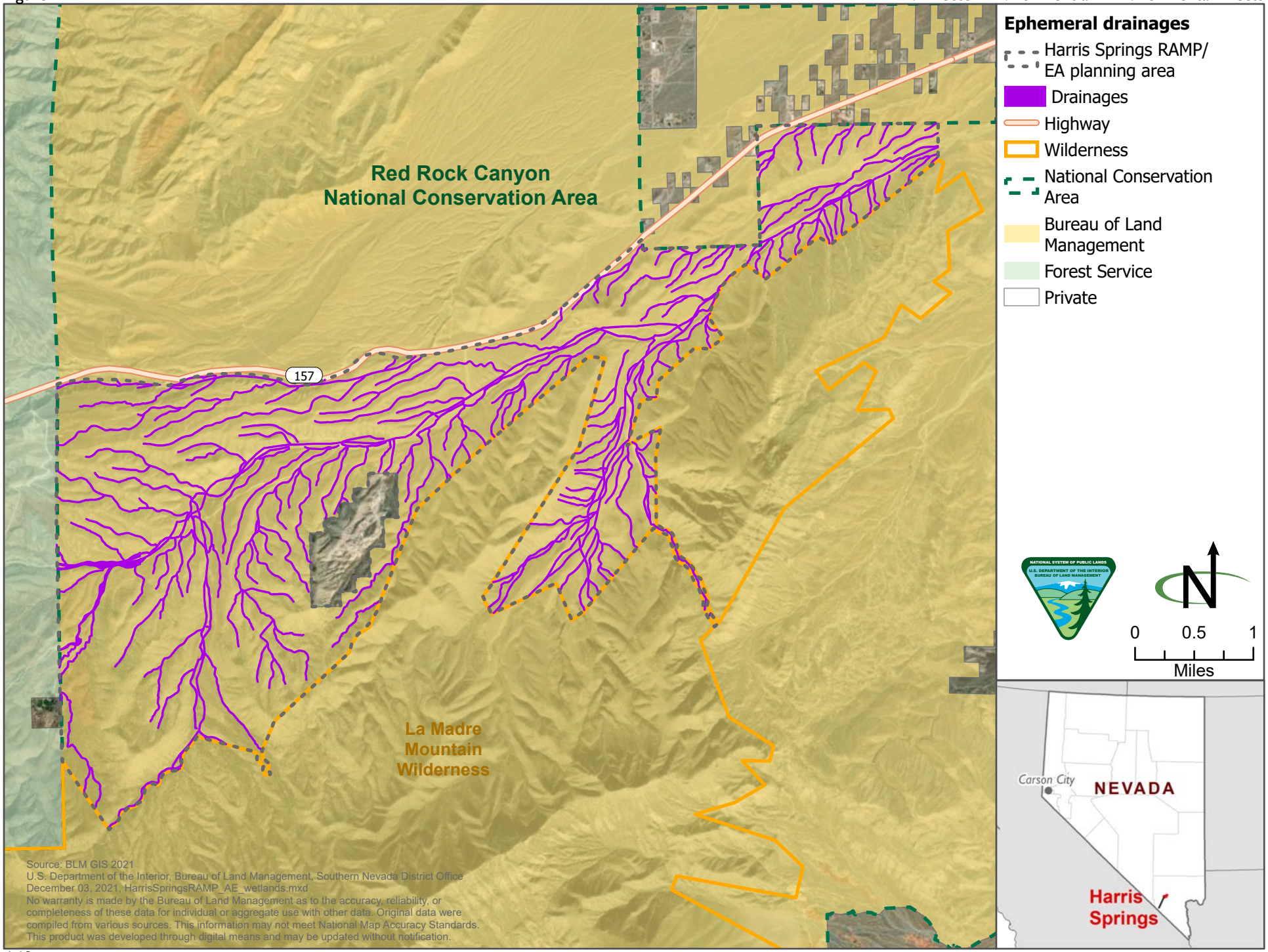
Red Rock Canyon
National Conservation Area
157
La Madre
Mountain
Wilderness
Ephemeral drainages
Harris Springs RAMP/
EA planning area
Drainages
Highway
Wilderness
National Conservation
Area
Bureau of Land
Management
Forest Service
Private
0 0.5 1
Miles
Carson City
NEVADA
Harris
Springs
Source: BLM GIS 2021
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Southern Nevada District Office
December 03, 2021, HarrisSpringsRAMP_AE_wetlands.mxd
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Table 4-6. Regional Harris Springs Planning Area Demographics (2019)

Demographics	Nevada	Clark County, Nevada	Census Tract 75	Census Tract 58.23
Population	2,972,382	2,182,004	3,718	8,177
Race (Population)				
White	1,949,707	1,312,652	1,719	5,883
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	*1,463,237*	*933,344*	*1,582*	*5,222*
Non-white (minority), percent	*16.4%*	*17.4%*	*3.7%*	*8.1%*
Black or African American alone	271,005	255,174	1,081	88
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	38,026	18,693	172	0
Asian alone	242,267	212,385	86	1,448
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone	20,022	16,407	36	11
Some other race alone	304,947	249,921	483	360
Two or more races	146,408	116,772	141	387
Median annual income (dollars)	$60,365	$59,340	$22,173	$64,271
Income in the past 12 months below the poverty level (population)	384,690	295,030	90	398
Percentage of population with income below the poverty level	*12.9%*	*13.5%*	*2.4%*	*4.9%*

Source: US Census 2019b

The 2005 RMP and ROD provide summary data on the demographics of visitors to the RRCNCA compiled from a survey completed in 1992 (BLM 2005a). The data include:

- Gender: 55 percent were male and 45 percent were female
- Age
  - 40 percent were 25–44 years old
  - 25 percent were 45–64 years old
  - Approximately 10 percent were each of the following: 11 and younger, 12–14, and 65 and older
- Race/ethnicity: 87 percent were white, 8 percent were Hispanic, and the remainder were composed of other minorities
- Education (highest level completed)
  - 14 percent had a bachelor's degree or equivalent
  - 46 percent had some college
  - 26 percent had a high school diploma
  - 14 percent did not receive a high school diploma
- Employment
  - 44 percent work full time
  - 16 percent were retired
  - Other groups that each had around 7–10 percent: not employed, student, self-employed, part-time, and homemaker

- Annual household income
  - 35 percent had a household income of $25,000–$50,000
  - Other groups that had around 10 percent each: less than $10,000, $10,000–$24,000, $50,000–$75,000, more than $75,000, and would not disclose
- Impairment: Slightly over 2 percent had some type of impairment, with half involving mobility and the other half involving a hearing, visual, or mental impairment.
- Origin: 55 percent of visitors were from Nevada, with most residing in Clark County, and 45 percent of visitors were from outside of Nevada.

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice populations consist of individuals and families with incomes below the national poverty level and people who self-identify as belonging to one or more ethnic or racial minority group. Impacts on these populations from proposed federal actions would normally be the same as those considered for the entire population of a planning area. If, however, some actions would have an adverse and disproportionate impact on identified environmental justice populations, then environmental justice impacts would be assessed. EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, requires federal agencies to identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.

The BLM incorporates environmental justice efforts into the planning process by identifying potential areas where proposed action(s) could have disproportionately high and adverse impacts on the health of minority populations, low-income communities, and tribes or their surrounding environment, and documenting findings and recommended solutions (BLM 2005b). To identify communities of potential environmental justice concern in the planning area, the BLM used US Census Bureau data to determine whether the populations in each county met at least one of the following criteria:

- The minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent or is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis (CEQ 1997). "Meaningfully greater," for the purpose of the analysis in this plan, is defined as more than 5 percentage points higher than the comparison population at the state level.

  The total minority population is defined as the total population minus that portion that is listed in US Census Bureau data as white, of non-Hispanic origin. This method includes all individuals who identify as a racial or ethnic minority, or both, without double counting these populations.
- Low-income populations are defined relative to the annual statistical poverty thresholds from the US Census Bureau (CEQ 1997). The Council on Environmental Quality guidance does not provide criteria for determining low-income populations as specifically as it does for minority populations; therefore, for this analysis, low-income populations are defined as 50 percent or more of the population in the affected area being below the poverty level, or populations with at least 5 percentage points or greater at or below the poverty level, relative to the state average level in poverty. Because US Census Bureau data collected for this analysis are from 2019, the annual poverty threshold from 2019 is used. The 2019 poverty level is based on a total income of $13,011 for an individual and $26,172 for a family of four (US Census Bureau 2019c).

Minority and Low-Income Populations

Table 4-6, above, provides details from the 2019 American Community Survey regarding the proportion of the population in census tracts 58.23 and 75 categorized as "Non-white (minority)." Both census tracts are well below the county and state levels for this category of the population. Similarly, neither census tract contains populations with incomes below the poverty level that are at least 5 percentage points greater than the state or county level.

4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The issues identified during the early information gathering process (see **Section 1.7**) and carried forward for analysis include those elements of the proposed RAMP that would cause or have the potential to cause significant environmental effects. This chapter provides an analysis of the environmental effects relevant to each of the two issue categories identified during the early information gathering period.

4.3.1 Issue 1: How will the proposed RAMP meet the RRCNCA's primary management objective of protecting and enhancing natural and cultural resources?

Cultural Resources and Native American Concerns

Alternative A (No Action)

Under Alternative A, the existing routes would remain open to motor vehicle use with the potential for impacts such as surface disturbance, sediment compaction, and fugitive dust. Based on preliminary results from archaeological field surveys completed as part of this undertaking for the Harris Springs RAMP/EA, it appears there are five archaeological sites along routes in the planning area. These archaeological sites were from the Historic period. They were preliminarily considered not eligible to the NRHP, pending further determination on NRHP eligibility by the BLM and subject to comment from the Nevada SHPO.

Pending the results of this determination of eligibility by the BLM in the NHPA Section 106 process, it appears likely that Alternative A would not result in adverse effects on any historic properties. Further, no TCPs or sacred sites have been identified in the planning area; therefore, Alternative A would not impact these resources. Alternative A's lack of impacts, however, needs further revision based on coordination or consultation, or both, with the potentially impacted tribes described in more detail in Chapter 5, Consultation and Coordination.

Alternative B (Proposed Plan)

The potential adverse effects on cultural resources and Native American concerns under Alternative B would be similar to those described under Alternative A.

Alternative C

The potential adverse effects on cultural resources and Native American concerns under Alternative C would be similar to those described under Alternative A.

Alternative D

The potential adverse effects on cultural resources and Native American concerns under Alternative D would be similar to those described under Alternative A.

Vegetation

Alternative A (No Action)

Under Alternative A, current vegetation conditions would continue and may worsen as the use of undesignated trails continues. OHV use of undesignated trails has the highest potential to impact vegetation resources. OHV use primarily affects vegetation through soil compaction, breaking or crushing aboveground portions of plants, fugitive dust, and the introduction of nonnative plants, which can change the species composition along areas with high OHV use (Ouren et al. 2007). User-created trail use would continue, leaving vegetation on and along these trails vulnerable to trampling, removal, and the introduction of noxious and invasive weed species.

The BLM would not restore the areas burned during the 2013 Carpenter 1 Fire. This would continue to leave these areas vulnerable to the spread of noxious and invasive weed species, such as cheatgrass and red brome. While areas currently infested with noxious or invasive weeds would continue to be monitored and treated following the RRCNCA RMP and ROD (BLM 2005a) and the Las Vegas Field Office Noxious Weed Plan (BLM 2006), impacts may be hard to quantify. This is due to the lack of monitoring and adaptive management as part of an area-specific plan.

Overall, the lack of management of undesignated trails under Alternative A would not enable the BLM to adequately protect and enhance vegetation resources in the Harris Springs planning area.

Alternative B (Proposed Plan)

Compared with Alternative A, designating specific trails for particular uses, closing routes for active and passive restoration, and providing for increased visitor education opportunities under Alternative B would improve vegetation conditions.

Under Alternative B, vegetation impacts from OHV use, as described under Alternative A, would be limited to 13.8 miles of routes. Similar to under Alternative A, the BLM would continue to monitor and treat areas currently infested with noxious or invasive weeds in accordance with the RRCNCA RMP and ROD (BLM 2005a) and the Las Vegas Field Office Noxious Weed Plan (BLM 2006). The additional monitoring described in **Chapter 3** would inform the need for any adaptive management to address potential impacts on vegetation from recreation use.

Alternative B would close and restore 7.8 miles of trails using passive methods, and 7.9 miles would include passive and active restoration, thereby minimizing the potential for new impacts on vegetation. Restoration treatments could result in short-term, localized impacts on vegetation, such as trampling or crushing of vegetation and soil compaction within the vicinity of restoration locations. These impacts would result from foot traffic and/or the use of vehicles or mechanized equipment to access project locations, transport materials, and implement specific projects. Active restoration would result in a higher degree of soil and vegetation disturbance than passive restoration efforts. However, these effects would be short term, and studies have indicated that active restoration practices yield higher net positive soil, plant, and habitat outcomes in the long term (Miguel et al. 2020). Restoration would result in long-term improvements in the plant community cover, density, and composition, and an overall increase in cover of native species.

Increased educational opportunities for visitors would assist in decreasing the impacts on vegetation resources. Under Alternative B, the BLM would implement two new educational and interpretive signs.

There would be localized impacts on vegetation from the physical placement of signage; however, educating visitors on the importance of staying on designated routes and single-track trails would keep users from trampling and removing vegetation over a greater area.

Collectively, the key management decisions on trail uses, route closures, restoration methods, and education would all assist in decreasing the potential impacts on vegetation under Alternative B, when compared with Alternative A.

Alternative C

Alternative C would close and restore all routes identified for closure in the RRCNCA RMP, thereby improving vegetation conditions compared with Alternative A. Of all the alternatives, Alternative C would close and restore the greatest miles of trails (24.8 miles); therefore, vegetation conditions would be improved the most under this alternative. There would be 10.4 miles of routes restored using passive methods (0.4 miles would be passive restoration and line of sight at access points), and 14.3 miles would be restored using passive and active methods. Management of noxious and invasive weeds would be similar to management under Alternatives A and B. Vegetation improvements resulting from new educational opportunities would be the same as those described under Alternative B.

Because Alternative C would close and restore the greatest miles of trails and would manage the fewest miles of trails as open to motorized use, it would protect and enhance vegetation conditions the most of all alternatives.

Alternative D

Under Alternative D, 27.4 miles of trails would be managed as open for motorized travel. Vegetation on these routes would be subject to the impacts from motorized use, as described under Alternative A. Alternative D would close and restore 6.2 miles of trails using passive methods and 3.9 miles of trails using passive and active methods. This would benefit vegetation conditions, as described under Alternative B. Benefits to vegetation from increased educational opportunities would be similar to those described under Alternatives B and C. Of all the alternatives, Alternative D would include the most signage and recreation infrastructure; it would, therefore, have the greatest localized impacts on vegetation, as described under Alternative B. However, these would be offset to some extent by the benefits that educating visitors on trail etiquette and resource protection would have.

Overall, Alternative D would provide greater protections for vegetation than Alternative A, but to a lesser extent than Alternatives B and C.

Wildlife (Including Special Status Species)

Alternative A (No Action)

Under Alternative A, current wildlife habitat conditions would persist, with the potential to decline as use of undesignated trails continues. Unauthorized OHV use has the greatest potential to impact wildlife species and their habitats. OHV trail networks fragment wildlife habitat, increase the proportion of edge to interior habitat, and reduce the patch size of habitats (Reed et al. 1996; Forman et al. 1998). This may particularly impact area-sensitive species such as the desert tortoise, Mount Charleston blue butterfly, and Sin City scorpion. These habitat impacts can also affect predator-prey relationships and overall population dynamics.

OHV trails can also create conditions unlikely to occur in the absence of OHV activity and, therefore, may be conducive to invasions of noxious and invasive species. OHV use can additionally contribute to the direct mortality of wildlife through vehicle and wildlife collisions, nest destructions, and burrow collapses (Ouren et al. 2007). OHV use may particularly impact ground-dwelling species. Finally, noise generated by OHVs may alter animal behavior, breeding populations, predator detection, and inappropriate burrow emergence (Brattstrom and Bondello 1983). The continued use of undesignated routes, in general, could impact wildlife through human interaction and harassment and habitat degradation.

Overall, the lack of management of undesignated trails under Alternative A would not enable the BLM to adequately protect and enhance wildlife and their habitats in the Harris Springs planning area.

Alternative B (Proposed Plan)

Alternative B would designate routes for particular uses, close routes for restoration, and provide for increased visitor education opportunities. Therefore, Alternative B would decrease the impacts on wildlife and special status species, compared with Alternative A, by decreasing the potential for human interaction and harassment of wildlife and by improving habitat conditions. Implementing monitoring and adaptive management would identify potential impacts on wildlife and sensitive species, and inform new or modified management strategies to protect species.

Alternative B would limit the impacts of OHV use on wildlife and their habitats described under Alternative A to 13.8 miles of routes. The BLM would close 15.9 miles of routes; 7.8 miles would be restored using passive restoration and 7.9 miles would be actively restored. This would reduce the potential for disturbances relating to human presence, and it would expand and enhance wildlife and sensitive species habitat in the long term.

Alternative B would also have short- and mid-term impacts on wildlife species. This is because restoration could temporarily disturb, displace, or harm wildlife species through habitat realignment, noise, vibrations, and human presence. Active restoration would result in a higher degree of disturbance than passive restoration efforts, but it would likely result in greater net positive habitat restoration outcomes. Additionally, it would be unlikely that restoration would occur across the planning area and at the same time. Therefore, wildlife may be displaced from an area undergoing restoration but could move to other undisturbed areas. Most general wildlife is mobile and could avoid disturbances, but some less mobile or burrowing species may be more susceptible to impacts. These species would be impacted until restoration is complete and new vegetation is established and matured. Scheduling restoration activities outside of sensitive time periods for species, such as the peak breeding and nesting season for birds, would mitigate impacts on wildlife to the greatest extent possible. In the long term, closing and restoring undesignated trails would reduce the potential for future disturbance, compared with Alternative A.

Increased educational opportunities for visitors would assist in decreasing impacts on wildlife and their habitats. Under Alternative B, the BLM would implement two new educational and interpretive signs. There would be localized impacts on wildlife and their habitats from the physical placement of signage; however, educating visitors on the importance of staying on designated trails, picking up litter, and the consequences of harassing wildlife or trampling sensitive vegetation would create better-informed visitors that would be less likely to impact wildlife and their habitats in the Harris Springs planning area.

The key management decisions on route uses, route closures and restoration, and education would all assist in expanding and enhancing wildlife habitat and provide greater protections to wildlife under Alternative B, when compared with the no-action alternative.

Alternative C

Alternative C would close and restore all routes identified for closure in the RRCNCA RMP, thereby improving wildlife habitat conditions compared with Alternative A. Of all the alternatives, Alternative C would close and restore the greatest miles of routes (24.8 miles); therefore, wildlife habitat would be expanded and improved the most under this alternative. There would be 10.4 miles of routes restored using passive methods (0.4 miles would be passive restoration and line of sight at access points), and 14.3 miles would be restored using passive and active methods. Reductions in wildlife disturbance and improvements to habitat resulting from new educational opportunities would be the same as under Alternative B.

Because Alternative C would close and restore the greatest miles of routes and would manage the fewest miles of routes as open to motorized use, this alternative would protect species and enhance wildlife habitat conditions the most of all alternatives.

Alternative D

Under Alternative D, 27.4 miles of routes would be managed as open for motorized travel. Wildlife and their habitats on these routes would be subject to the impacts from motorized use described under Alternative A. Alternative D would close 10.3 miles of routes, with 6.2 miles being restored using passive methods, and 3.9 miles using passive and active methods. This would impact wildlife and their habitats on restored routes, as described under Alternative B.

Benefits to wildlife and their habitats from increased educational opportunities would be similar to those under Alternatives B and C. Of all alternatives, Alternative D would include the most signage and recreation infrastructure; it would, therefore, have the greatest localized impacts on wildlife and their habitats, as described under Alternative B. However, these would be offset to some extent by the benefits that educating visitors on the importance of staying on designated trails, picking up litter, and the consequences of harassing wildlife or trampling sensitive vegetation would have on wildlife and their habitats.

Overall, Alternative D would protect wildlife and enhance their habitats to a greater extent than Alternative A, but to a lesser extent than Alternatives B and C.

Soils and Water

Alternative A (No Action)

Under Alternative A, current conditions for soil and water resources would persist and may worsen as OHV use continues. Since the BLM does not manage user-created trails, water erosion from these trails could lead to sedimentation downstream into detention basins.

Alternative B (Proposed Plan)

Impacts from OHV use under Alternative B would be similar to those described under Alternative A with the exception that fewer trails would be available for motorized use. Compared with Alternative A, closing routes for active and passive restoration would improve soil conditions such that the erosion

hazard would not worsen. Active restoration, which would include de-compaction and recontouring, would result in temporary surface disturbance from the use of heavy machinery; however, active restoration would eventually maintain the soil stability and potentially improve soils with moderate or severe erosion hazard ratings to low or moderate ratings, respectively.

Compaction is a direct effect of surface disturbance that can be caused by consistent and heavy force applied by recreation users on trails. It is also one of the main contributors of soil erosion. This is because it reduces the pore space between soil particles so that water infiltration is low or inhibited into the soil. This causes water runoff and increases the potential for water erosion. Therefore, restoration that reverses the effects of compaction would decrease erosion susceptibility. Recontouring trails for more effective water flow would reduce water pooling and runoff; this, in turn, would reduce water erosion and sedimentation in streams and wetlands.

Under Alternative B, additional and interpretive signing would educate users about erosion from off-trail uses, which would help prevent user-created trails and would reduce those impacts on soils resources.

Alternative C

Under Alternative C, all routes would be closed and restored, either actively or passively. Impacts on soils and water resources from restoration activities and education improvements would be the same as those described under Alternative B. However, Alternative C would be more effective in maintaining or improving the erosion hazard ratings; this is because it would restore more miles of trails and would avoid future disturbance from trail uses, when compared with Alternative A.

Alternative D

Impacts on soils and water resources from OHV use under Alternative D would be the same as those described under Alternative A. Impacts on soils and water resources from restoration activities and education improvements would be the same as those described under Alternative B. Alternative D would be less effective for restoration because it would restore fewer miles of trails; however, it would still be more effective than Alternative A.

Special Designations

Alternative A (No Action)

NCA

Under Alternative A, the BLM would not adapt the Harris Springs RAMP and would continue to manage the Harris Springs planning area according to the overarching direction in the RRCNCA RMP. The BLM would not close and restore any unauthorized routes, which would slow or prevent recovery of certain areas impacted by the Carpenter 1 Fire. Continued use of unauthorized routes and trails would result in ongoing resource degradation, such as soil erosion, trampling of vegetation, and wildlife disturbance. These impacts would alter the scenic characteristics and the associated recreation setting that contribute to NCA values. Without a RAMP specific to the Harris Springs planning area, the BLM would not have adequate planning-level direction to address the current use of unauthorized trails and to avoid adverse and potentially irreversible impacts on natural resources from increasing recreation use.

Wilderness

Under Alternative A, the BLM would continue managing the La Madre Mountain Wilderness according to the La Madre Mountain Wilderness and Rainbow Mountain Wilderness Management Plan (BLM and Forest Service 2013). Allowed recreation uses would be consistent with the wilderness plan. Continued unauthorized OHV and mechanized use on user-created routes would jeopardize the wilderness character in the La Madre Mountain Wilderness. Specifically, these unauthorized uses would diminish opportunities for solitude, alter the untrammeled and primitive character of the area, and continue to impact the natural resources that contribute to the wilderness character.

Overall, the lack of management of undesignated trails under Alternative A would not enable the BLM to adequately protect and enhance the NCA and La Madre Mountain Wilderness in the Harris Springs planning area.

Alternative B (Proposed Plan)

NCA

In general, Alternative B's outcomes would result in recreation use that occurs concurrently with, and not at the expense of, the natural and cultural resource objects and values being protected and enhanced in the NCA. The designation of 13.8 miles of motorized routes and 8.0 miles of nonmotorized routes would provide access for both types of uses, but would avoid, minimize, or mitigate the potential for recreational user conflicts, resource impacts, and undesirable conditions on conservation lands in the Harris Springs planning area. The closure and restoration of 15.7 miles of trails would allow these areas to recover from the Carpenter 1 Fire and would protect the natural and cultural resources.

Wilderness

By closing and restoring all unauthorized routes in the wilderness, Alternative B would restore the untrammeled, natural, and undeveloped character of the La Madre Mountain Wilderness. Strategies and decisions would provide opportunities for unconfined recreation and solitude in a primitive recreation setting. For example, installing a marker sign at the wilderness boundary would ensure recreation use in the La Madre Mountain Wilderness is consistent with the area's designation. Additionally, compared with Alternative A, the proposed implementation of monitoring programs would help protect and preserve wilderness character in the long term. Implementing educational programs would foster visitors' appreciation and understanding of the natural and cultural resources—as well as the recreation opportunities—in the La Madre Mountain Wilderness. This would help to protect the La Madre Mountain Wilderness's sensitive natural resources and wilderness character while maintaining opportunities for unconfined recreation.

Alternative C

NCA

Alternative C would close and restore all routes identified for closure in the RRCNCA RMP, thereby closing and restoring the greatest miles of trails (24.8 miles) of any alternative. Of all alternatives, this would facilitate the greatest extent of the NCA to recover from unauthorized uses and would offer the most protection to the natural and cultural resources in the Harris Springs planning area.

Wilderness

Alternative C would close and restore all unauthorized routes in the wilderness; therefore, Alternative C would confer similar benefits to the La Madre Mountain Wilderness as described under Alternative B. Alternative C would not install wilderness marker signs on route 7, which may reduce recreational compliance with the area's designation, compared with Alternative B.

Alternative D

NCA

Alternative D would manage all routes in **Figure 2-4** as open for motorized travel. Natural and cultural resource benefits to the 10.3 miles of routes closed and restored would be the same as those described under Alternative B. Of all alternatives, Alternative D would include the most signage and recreation infrastructure; this would confer the same visitor education benefits as described under Alternative B, but to a larger extent. Overall, Alternative D would protect and enhance natural and cultural resources to a greater extent than Alternative A, but to a lesser extent than Alternatives B and C.

Wilderness

Under Alternative D, all routes in **Figure 2-4** would be managed as open for motorized travel. A small segment of Route 82 would be rerouted to avoid how it currently crosses the wilderness area (see **Table 2-2**).

Under Alternative D, impacts on the La Madre Mountain Wilderness would be similar to those described under Alternative B. Alternative D would install more wilderness marker signs, which would further ensure recreation use in the La Madre Mountain Wilderness is consistent with the area's designation, compared with Alternative B.

4.3.2 Issue 2: How will the proposed RAMP address recreation opportunities and access for current and future visitors?

Travel Management

Alternative A (No Action)

Under Alternative A, the BLM would not adopt the Harris Springs RAMP; the BLM would continue to manage designated roads in the Harris Springs planning area according to the overarching direction in the RRCNCA RMP. Unauthorized use on user-created roads would continue, which would be inconsistent with the proposed road closures and management direction in the 2005 RMP and ROD for the RRCNCA. Motorized use would continue to be allowed in washes. There would continue to be redundant and unnecessary travel options, and there would not be specific management direction for improving connectivity with adjacent National Forest System lands. Of all alternatives, Alternative A would provide the greatest access for current and future visitors, since it would not close and restore any user-created roads and trails.

Alternative B (Proposed Plan)

Alternative B would continue to manage designated routes in the Harris Springs planning area consistent with the RRCNCA RMP. Alternative B would result in the designation of 13.8 miles of motorized routes, 8.0 miles of nonmotorized routes, and the closure of 15.9 miles of inventoried routes, as shown in **Table 2-2**. Redundant and unnecessary travel options would be eliminated, and route decisions would improve connectivity with adjacent National Forest System lands. Motorized access in washes

would be the same as it would be under Alternative A. Implementing the RAMP, including the monitoring and adaptive management strategies in **Sections 3.1** and **3.3**, would ensure the travel network is maintained and supports the intended visitor uses in the Harris Springs planning area. The closure of 15.9 miles of inventoried routes under Alternative B would reduce motorized access compared with Alternative A.

Alternative C

Alternative C would manage designated routes the same as Alternatives A and B. Alternative C would result in the designation of 11.8 miles of motorized routes, 1.2 miles of nonmotorized routes, and the closure of 24.8 miles of routes, as shown in **Table 2-2**. Alternative C would manage the routes identified in the 2005 RMP and ROD for closure as available for nonmotorized and mechanized use. Benefits from reducing redundant travel options, improving connectivity with National Forest System lands, and monitoring and adaptive management would be the same as those described under Alternative B. Motorized access in washes would be the same as it would be under Alternative A. Of all alternatives, Alternative C would provide for the most limited access, since it closes the greatest mileage of inventoried roads and trails.

Alternative D

Alternative D would manage designated routes in the same way as Alternatives B and C. Alternative D would manage all routes identified in **Figure 2-4** as open for motorized travel. Alternative D would result in 27.4 miles of routes being open to motor vehicle use, and it would close 10.3 miles of routes and restore 10.1 miles (see **Table 2-2**). Alternative D would manage several of the proposed road closures identified in the 2005 RMP and ROD for the RRCNCA as open for motorized travel, which would be inconsistent with the 2005 RMP and ROD's direction. Motorized access in washes would be the same as it would be under Alternative A. Alternative D would thus provide the greatest access of all action alternatives since it manages the most miles of routes as open for motorized travel.

Recreation

Alternative A (No Action)

Under the no-action alternative, the BLM would not adopt the Harris Springs RAMP. The BLM would continue managing recreation opportunities and access for current and future visitors in the Harris Springs planning area consistent with the RRCNCA RMP. Without a RAMP specific to the Harris Springs planning area, the BLM would not have adequate planning-level direction to implement the necessary projects and programs to ensure the desired recreation settings and experiences are achieved. Continued and increasing visitor use, particularly OHV use, on unauthorized trails would prevent certain areas impacted by the Carpenter 1 Fire from recovering; this would result in continued resource damage that would degrade the recreation setting. The BLM would not designate any routes for motorized or nonmotorized travel, which could create user conflicts on routes where these uses co-occur.

The BLM would not implement a monitoring and adaptive management program under Alternative A. While data would be collected, where possible, to inform future management, the BLM would implement adaptive management on a case-by-case basis to respond to high-priority needs.

Alternative B (Proposed Plan)

Under Alternative B, the BLM would continue to manage recreation in the Harris Springs planning area consistent with the RRCNCA RMP, but with the additional direction from the RAMP that is specific to the recreation opportunities and resource considerations in the Harris Springs planning area. To balance resource protection, post-fire recovery, and recreation use, Alternative B would designate 13.8 miles of routes for motorized travel, 8.0 miles for nonmotorized routes, and close 15.9 miles of inventoried routes, as shown in **Table 2-2**. While opportunities for pedestrian-based, mechanized, and motorized recreation would continue to be provided on designated trails, these would be inherently limited compared with Alternative A. However, closing and restoring undesignated routes and preventing new social trails would improve the soil, vegetation, and visual resource conditions that contribute to the characteristics of the MEAs and positive recreation outcomes.

Directing visitors to designated trails would ensure that visitors use trails that are designed to accommodate the desired use and would limit the potential for user conflicts to occur. Implementing the RAMP, including the monitoring and adaptive management strategies in **Section 3.1**and **3.3**, would ensure the trail network is maintained and supports the intended trail-based uses in the Harris Springs planning area.

Providing additional educational and interpretive opportunities, including through the development of a trail signage plan, the installation of a three-panel kiosk, a formal parking area, and an informational and interpretive sign at the entrance to the area, would improve the communication of the importance of trail safety and resource protection to visitors. Signage, education, and other information would convey appropriate trail uses to visitors at parking areas, trailheads, and other activity locations, which would reduce the potential for user conflicts on trails. Increasing educational opportunities for recreation users via interpretive signage and visitor information would improve visitors' understanding of the factors that contribute to the desired recreation setting and positive recreation experiences. This enhanced understanding through educational and interpretive opportunities would improve the overall visitor experience by reducing incidents of unauthorized use that degrades the recreation setting and detracts from the desired experience.

Alternative C

Under Alternative C, the BLM would manage the Harris Springs planning area under a RAMP similar to Alternative B. Alternative C would close and restore all routes identified for closure in the RRCNCA RMP, which would limit motorized use and recreation access to the greatest extent of all alternatives. Alternative C would result in the designation of 11.8 miles of motorized routes, 1.2 miles of nonmotorized routes, and the closure of 24.8 miles of inventoried roads and trails. Benefits to recreation resulting from trail use designations, route closures, and increased educational and interpretive opportunities would be similar to those described under Alternative B.

Alternative D

Under Alternative D, the BLM would manage the Harris Springs planning area under a RAMP similar to Alternatives B and C. Alternative D would designate 27.4 miles of motorized routes and close 10.3 miles of routes. This would provide the most motorized access of all action alternatives. In addition, Alternative D would provide more recreation infrastructure improvements than the other alternatives, including multiple interpretive kiosks, wilderness marker signs, two staging areas, a formal parking area, a

picnic table, a restroom, and a garbage receptacle. Alternative D would thus provide the greatest amount of recreation opportunities and visitor access of all action alternatives.

Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

Alternative A (No Action)

Under Alternative A, the BLM would not adopt the Harris Springs RAMP. The BLM would continue managing recreation opportunities and access for current and future visitors in the Harris Springs planning area consistent with the RRCNCA RMP. There would not be specific management direction for improving connectivity with adjacent National Forest System lands.

The BLM would not designate any routes for motorized or nonmotorized travel, which would likely result in continued unauthorized OHV use on most routes in the Harris Springs planning area. This could deter nonmotorized use for those who cannot afford OHVs. Both motorized and nonmotorized access would continue to occur, and visitor spending would likely increase with visitation in the planning area. The BLM would not close and restore user-created roads and trails, thereby providing the greatest access of all alternatives. No new interpretive and informational signage or recreation infrastructure would be installed, which could deter users seeking those types of recreation experiences.

In census tracts 58.23 and 75, which include the Harris Springs planning area, 4.9 percent and 2.4 percent of families, respectively, live below the poverty level. This would continue to be a significantly lower percentage compared with Nevada or other portions of Clark County. Further, the population in census tracts 58.23 and 75 would have fewer minorities compared with Clark County or Nevada, although the lack of available census data on those self-identifying as both Hispanic and white makes exact conclusions difficult. It, therefore, appears that Alternative A would not have a disproportionate impact on environmental justice populations.

Alternative B (Proposed Plan)

Under Alternative B, the BLM would continue to manage recreation in the Harris Springs planning area consistent with the RRCNCA RMP, but with the additional direction from the RAMP that is specific to the recreation opportunities and resource considerations in the Harris Springs planning area. Travel network designations in the Harris Springs planning area would be designed to improve connectivity with adjacent National Forest System lands, which would provide enhanced access to recreation opportunities in the Harris Springs planning area. To balance resource protection, post-fire recovery, and recreation use, Alternative B would designate 13.8 miles of routes for motorized travel, 8.0 miles for nonmotorized routes, and close 15.9 miles of inventoried roads and trails, as shown in **Table 2-2**.

The greater diversity of trail designations under Alternative B would allow for nonmotorized use for those who cannot afford OHVs. Additionally, allowing motorized and nonmotorized access would lead to the greatest potential for visitor spending and the fewest limitations on access. Because Alternative B would limit motorized travel and close certain routes, compared with Alternative A, this would preclude access to some portions of the planning area. However, the increased informational and interpretive signage under Alternative B may attract visitors seeking this type of recreation experience. Also, there would continue to be motorized access and connectivity. Therefore, the difference between the impacts on socioeconomics between Alternative A and Alternative B would be negligible. Similar to Alternative A, it appears that Alternative B would not have a disproportionate impact on environmental justice populations.

Alternative C

Under Alternative C, the BLM would manage the Harris Springs planning area under a RAMP that is specific to the recreation opportunities and resource considerations in the Harris Springs planning area, which is similar to Alternative B. Travel network designations in the Harris Springs planning area would be designed to improve connectivity with adjacent National Forest System lands, which would provide similar improvements to access as Alternative B. Alternative C would close and restore all routes identified for closure in the RRCNCA RMP, which would limit motorized use and access to the greatest extent of all alternatives. Alternative C would result in the designation of 11.8 miles of motorized routes, 1.2 miles of nonmotorized routes, and the closure of 24.8 miles of inventoried roads and trails, thereby reducing access compared with Alternatives A and B.

Alternative C would still provide for motorized access and connectivity, and would include the same informational and interpretive signage as Alternative B. Therefore, the difference between the impacts on socioeconomics under Alternative C compared with Alternatives A and B would be negligible. Similar to Alternatives A and B, it appears that Alternative C would not have a disproportionate impact on environmental justice populations.

Alternative D

Under Alternative D, the BLM would manage the Harris Springs planning area under a RAMP similar to Alternatives B and C. Alternative D would designate 27.4 miles of motorized routes and close 10.3 miles of inventoried routes. This would provide the most motorized access of all action alternatives. In addition, Alternative D would provide more recreation infrastructure improvements than all other alternatives, including multiple interpretive kiosks, wilderness marker signs, two staging areas, a formal parking area, a picnic table, a restroom, and a garbage receptacle. Alternative D would thus provide the greatest amount of recreation opportunities and visitor access of all action alternatives. Of all alternatives, this would lead to the greatest potential for visitor spending. Similar to all other alternatives, it appears that Alternative D would not have a disproportionate impact on environmental justice populations.

Chapter 5. Consultation and Coordination

5.1 Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, and Agencies Consulted

During the NEPA process for this RAMP/EA, the BLM formally and informally coordinated and consulted with other federal agencies, state and local governments, Native American tribes, and the interested public. The agency did this to ensure its compliance, in both the spirit and intent, with 40 CFR 1501.7, 1502.19, and 1503. In addition to the public information gathering process, the BLM implemented collaborative outreach and a public involvement process for the RAMP/EA planning process. A cooperating agency is any federal, state, or local government agency or Native American tribe that enters into formal agreement with the lead federal agency to help develop an environmental analysis. The BLM invited the aforementioned entities to be cooperating agencies, but none accepted.

5.1.1 Government-to-Government Consultation

The federal government works on a government-to-government basis with Native American Tribes because they are recognized as separate governments. This relationship was formally recognized on November 6, 2000, with EO 13175 (65 *Federal Register* 67249). As a matter of practice, the BLM coordinates with all Tribal governments, associated Native communities, Native organizations, and Tribal individuals whose interests might be directly and substantially affected by activities on public lands.

In addition, Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consult with Native American Tribes for undertakings on Tribal lands and for historic properties of significance to the Tribes that may be affected by an undertaking (36 CFR 800.2(c)(2)). BLM Manual 1780, Tribal Relations, and BLM Handbook H-1780-1, Improving and Sustaining BLM-Tribal Relations, provide guidance for Native American consultations. EO 13175 stipulates that during the NEPA process, federal agencies must consult Tribes identified as being directly and substantially affected.

The BLM Southern Nevada District Office regularly coordinates with the following Tribes on projects and plans: Moapa Band of Paiutes, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Fort Independence Indian Community of Paiute Indians, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Owens Valley Paiute Benton Reservation, San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, Hopi Tribe, and Timbisha Shoshone.

The BLM contacted these tribes specifically about the Calico Basin, Cottonwood Valley, and Harris Springs RAMPs on March 3 and 11, 2021. The Moapa Band of Paiutes, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, and Timbisha Shoshone have responded by phone, email, tribal consultation meetings, and one in-person site visit to the Calico Basin. The remaining Tribes have not provided responses yet. The BLM continues to consult with Tribes who may be interested in this area.

The BLM met with the Moapa Band of Paiutes on December 1, 2021 regarding the Harris Springs RAMP project. No comments were offered at the time regarding the shared routes. The BLM met with the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe on December 3, 2021, who stated that the Tribe does not have any interest in this project. The BLM met with the 29 Palms Tribal Historic Preservation Officer on December 8, 2021, who did not have comments to provide at the time.

5.1.2 Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer

In accordance with the requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA, the BLM is consulting with the Nevada SHPO. The BLM anticipates that the SHPO will issue a finding of no adverse effect.

5.1.3 Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating agencies and Tribes work with the BLM, sharing knowledge and resources, to achieve desired outcomes for public lands and communities within statutory and regulatory frameworks. The BLM invited the Forest Service to be a cooperating agency on this RAMP/EA and has been working closely with the Forest Service during the early planning and NEPA process. A key consideration is the connectivity of routes on BLM-administered lands in the planning area with those on adjacent National Forest System lands.

5.1.4 Other Stakeholders

The BLM communicates with homeowners in the Kyle Canyon community to discuss issues related to recreation and public land management at the Harris Springs planning area. As part of the early information gathering period in November 2021, the BLM met with Kyle Canyon residents to introduce the RAMP concept and obtain feedback from the community members. The BLM intends to continue similar coordination during the implementation of proposed management in this RAMP.

The BLM has worked directly with the Southern Nevada Climbers Coalition and the Southern Nevada Mountain Bike Association in the early planning stages of this project. The BLM has also contacted the Backcountry Horsemen of America, Vegas Valley 4 Wheelers, Kokopelli ATV Club, Pahrump Valley 4 Wheelers, and Dunes and Trails ATV Club; however, the BLM has not met with any of these groups directly.

5.2 LIST OF PREPARERS

This RAMP/EA was prepared by an IDT of staff from the BLM and Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, Inc. The following is a list of people who prepared or contributed to the development of this RAMP/EA.

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Chapter 7. Glossary

Authorized officer—A BLM employee to whom authority has been delegated to perform the duties described.

Class I e-bike—Electronic, pedal-assisted mountain bike limited to a top speed of 20 miles per hour with an electric motor works only when the rider is pedaling.

Class III e-bike— Electronic, pedal-assisted mountain bike limited to a top speed of 28 miles per hour with an electric motor works only when the rider is pedaling.

Commercial use—Recreation use of the public lands and related waters for business or financial gain. When any person, group, or organization makes or attempts to make a profit, receive money, amortize equipment, or obtain goods or services as compensation from participants in recreational activities occurring on public lands and related waters, the use is considered commercial. An activity, service, or use is commercial if anyone collects a fee or receives other compensation that is not strictly a sharing of, or is in excess of, actual expenses incurred for the purposes of the activity, service, or use. Commercial use is also characterized by situations when a duty of care or expectation of safety is owed participants as a result of compensation. It may also be characterized by public advertising for participants.

Competitive use— Any organized, sanctioned, or structured use, event, or activity on public lands and related waters in which one or more individuals contest an established record (for example, speed or endurance) or in which two or more contestants compete and either of the following elements apply: (1) participants register, enter, or complete an application for the event; or (2) a predetermined course or area is designated.

Cultural resources—Per BLM Manual 8100, definite locations of human activity, occupation, or use identifiable through field inventory, historical documentation, or oral evidence; these include archaeological, historic, or architectural sites, structures, or places with important public and scientific uses, and may include definite locations (sites or places) of traditional cultural or religious importance to specified social or cultural groups.

Nuwu—The name that the Southern Paiute use to identify themselves from their own Uto-Aztecan dialect.

Organized group—An organized group activity or event that is not commercial, not competitive, has no paid public advertising, poses no appreciable risk for damage to public land or related water resource values, and requires no specific management or monitoring.

Paleontological resources—Any fossilized remains, traces, or imprints of organisms, preserved in the earth's crust, that are of paleontological interest and that provide information about the history of life on earth (Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, Section 6301, 16 US Code 470aaa-1).

Potential Fossil Yield Classification—The Potential Fossil Yield Classification system allows the BLM employees to make initial assessments of paleontological resources in order to plan for multiple

uses of public lands, consider disposal or acquisition of lands, analyze potential effects of a proposed action under NEPA, or conduct other BLM resource-related activities. The Potential Fossil Yield Classification system can also highlight the areas for paleontological research efforts or predict illegal collecting. The system provides a consistent and streamlined approach to determine whether a potential action may affect paleontological resources on public lands.

Precontact resources—Any material remains, structures, and items used or modified by people before Euro-Americans established a presence in the region.

Sustainable—Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. To be sustainable is to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations. The DOI's 2015 Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan affirms the DOI's commitment "to integrating sustainability into everything we do as a Department to protect America's great outdoors and power our future."

Traditional cultural property (TCP)—A property that is eligible for inclusion on the NRHP based on its associations with the cultural practices, traditions, beliefs, lifeways, arts, crafts, or social institutions of a living community, as defined in National Park Service *Bulletin 38* (Parker and King 1998). TCPs are rooted in a traditional community's history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community. The cultural practices or beliefs that give a TCP its significance are, in many cases, still observed at the time a TCP is considered for inclusion on the NRHP. Because of this, it is sometimes perceived that the practices or beliefs themselves, not the property, make up the TCP. While the beliefs or practices associated with a TCP are of central importance, the NRHP does not include intangible resources. The TCP must be a physical property or place—that is, a district, site, building, structure, or object.