



BLM News

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Elko Field Office, 3900 East Idaho Street, Elko, Nevada 89801 (775) 753-0200

DATE: December 10, 2002

ELKO FIELD OFFICE: 2003-11

FOR RELEASE: December 10, 2002

CONTACT: Mike Brown

(775) 753-0386

e-mail: mike_brown@nv.blm.gov

BLM COMMERCIAL RECREATION PERMITS CHANGE

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) published a Final Rule in the *Federal Register* on October 1, 2002, that would update cost-recovery requirements and make other changes in BLM's existing recreation regulations. Copies of the rule as published in the *Federal Register* may be accessed online at www.blm.gov/nhp/news/regulatory/2002f.html. Look for "Permits for Recreation on Public Lands."

The main purpose of the rule is to update BLM regulations to reflect changes over the last 15 years in recreational activities and large-scale events. Most of the updates and changes specifically apply to commercial and competitive users such as outfitter and guides or off-road race promoters. The new regulations provide that if an application will require more than 50 hours of staff time to process (instead of the current threshold of \$5,000), the BLM may charge a fee for recovery of costs to the agency instead of the Special Recreation Permit fee. Cost recovery charges will be limited to BLM's costs of issuing the permit, including necessary environmental documentation, on-site monitoring, and permit enforcement.

The revenues collected for cost recovery from the permittees will be retained by BLM to manage their activities on public lands. This, in turn, makes the regular BLM recreation appropriations available to manage recreation uses and activities over a much broader area and benefitting the entire spectrum of the recreating public. According to David Vandenberg, BLM Elko Assistant Field Manager for Nonrenewable Resources, in Fiscal Year 2002 processing and administering competitive Special Recreation Permits in the Elko Field Office used of 50% of the Field Office total recreation budget. "The net result is that other recreation uses, planning efforts, new projects, and high priority maintenance projects had to be curtailed in early summer due to budget shortfalls," Vandenberg said.

The new regulations also provide that the BLM may require users who request a Special Recreation Permit submit their applications to the BLM 180 days in advance. This is to help the BLM adequately assess the environmental effects and prepare the required documentation or consultation for an activity.

Locally the Elko Field Office is currently revising its policy for issuing Special Recreation Permits to reflect the new regulatory provisions. The district policy applies specifically to competitive events. Major highlights of the revision will include implementation of the new 50-hour cost recovery rule, criteria for requiring the 180-day time frame for submitting applications, and bonding requirements for new race applicants. Since the Elko Field Office currently has hundreds of miles of previously used racecourse routes open for recreational use, the new policy will discourage creating new racecourse routes across undisturbed public lands.

For more information on the Federal Register Notice, or to comment on the Elko Field Office Special Recreation Permit Policy, please contact JuLee Lindsay at the BLM Elko Field Office (775) 753-0347.

-blm-