

***Appendix B***

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*Press Release, Public Meeting Notices,  
Newspaper Articles*





# BLM News



Date: September 10, 2003

For Immediate Release

Contact: Phillip Guerrero, BLM Public Affairs Officer  
702-515-5046

## **BLM schedules public information meetings on Las Vegas Valley Disposal EIS**

LAS VEGAS – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Las Vegas Field Office, is hosting three public scoping meetings for the Las Vegas Valley Disposal Boundary Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The disposal boundary was created by the 1998 Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) and modified by the 2002 Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act. The BLM is identifying available lands in the Las Vegas Valley that are appropriate for auction and preparing an EIS to assess the potential environmental impacts resulting from the sale of these lands.

BLM intends to prepare a comprehensive EIS with the specific purpose to authorize transfer of title disposal actions or other uses of public land in the Las Vegas Valley. The project area consists of all lands currently identified for disposal within the Las Vegas Valley, including the Las Vegas Valley disposal area, the Valley West Disposal area and other legislatively authorized disposal areas. The EIS will fulfill the needs and obligations set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and BLM management policies.

The Clark County lands act, potentially adds 22,000 acres of land for sale by the BLM to the highest bidder at public auction. BLM must study the land for potential impacts prior to any sale of the additional acreage. Shortly after approval of the Clark County lands act, Public Law 107-282, the BLM experienced a rapid increase in the requests for public land disposal. The new law significantly increased the amount of land available for disposal in the Las Vegas Valley. This created an immediate need to augment the impact analysis, especially the cumulative impact analysis contained in the Las Vegas Resource Management Plan, signed October 5, 1998.

Completion of this EIS effort will ensure the intent of Congress as portrayed in the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act is met by providing land for organized local community development. “The BLM will work collaboratively with all interested publics,” stated Mark Morse, BLM Las Vegas Field Office, manager. “The public scoping process will help identify issues and concerns based on the potential build-out of the Las Vegas Valley as well as other potential uses of lands within the valley.”

A public participation plan should be completed within the next week, which will outline a comprehensive approach to reaching all interested parties, said Morse. “We plan to reach as many of the interested public as possible, to hear their concerns,” Morse continued. “We look forward to working with the public on this major Federal action.”

The time line for completion of this major EIS is one year, scheduled for issuance of a Record of Decision in August 2004. “This is an extremely compressed schedule for the complexity of this undertaking,” stressed Jeff Steinmetz, BLM Project Manager.

A number of local and state government agencies are being offered cooperating agency status towards the completion of this major study.

The scoping meetings provide an opportunity for the public to learn about the project and to share any concerns or comments they may have. Additionally, the public may submit information and identify issues that are addressed during the EIS process. The scoping meetings are scheduled from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the following locations:

**September 30, 2003**

Leisure Center  
101 Pavilion Center Drive  
Las Vegas

**October 1, 2003**

BLM Las Vegas Field Office  
4701 North Torrey Pines Drive  
Las Vegas

**October 2, 2003**

Convention Center  
200 South Water Street.  
Henderson

The meetings are an open house format to allow the public to visit with BLM representatives. A brief slide presentation is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. at each meeting.

For additional information please contact Jeff Steinmetz, BLM Project Manager at 702-515-5097.

# Public Meeting Notices

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR • BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

## Notice of Public Meetings

### Las Vegas Valley Disposal Environmental Impact Statement

The Bureau of Land Management, Las Vegas Field Office, will hold three scoping meetings regarding the Las Vegas Valley Disposal Environmental Impact Statement. The comprehensive EIS will determine what remaining BLM lands in the Las Vegas Valley are appropriate for auction in conjunction with the 1998 Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

The meetings will provide opportunities for the public to provide input and ask questions. Please join us at the following meetings:

**Tuesday, September 30, 2003**

5:30 PM – 8:30 PM

City of Las Vegas Leisure Center  
101 Pavilion Center Drive

Summerlin

**Wednesday, October 1, 2003**

5:30 PM – 8:30 PM

BLM Las Vegas Field Office  
4701 N. Torrey Pines Dr.

Las Vegas

**Thursday, October 2, 2003**

5:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Henderson Convention Center  
200 S. Water Street

Henderson

For additional information, please call the Bureau of Land Management

**702-515-5000**

Web-site: <http://www.nv.blm.gov/vegas>

AFFP DISTRICT COURT  
Clark County, Nevada  
AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION  
STATE OF NEVADA)  
COUNTY OF CLARK) SS:

Donna Stark, being 1st duly sworn, deposes and says:

That she is the Legal Clerk for the Las Vegas Review-Journal and the Las Vegas Sun, daily newspapers regularly issued, published and circulated in the City of Las Vegas, County of Clark, State of Nevada, and that the advertisement, a true copy attached for,

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was continuously published in said Las Vegas Review Journal and/or Las Vegas Sun in 2 edition(s) of said newspaper issued from 09/18/2003 to 09/24/2003, on the following days: SEPT. 18, 24, 2003

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

*Donna Stark*

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN BEFORE ME THIS THE \_\_\_\_\_

25

day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2003

*September*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

*Mary B. Sheffield*

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS**  
**Las Vegas Valley Disposal**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

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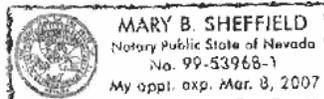
**Tuesday, September 30, 2003**  
5:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
City of Las Vegas Leisure Center  
101 Pavilion Center Drive, Las Vegas

**Wednesday, October 1, 2003**  
5:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
BLM Las Vegas Field Office  
4701 N. Torrey Pines Dr., Las Vegas

**Thursday, October 2, 2003**  
5:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
Henderson Convention Center  
200 S. Water Street, Henderson

For additional information, please contact  
Bureau of Land Management  
Las Vegas Field Office  
4701 North Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, NV  
702-515-5000

Web-site: <http://www.nv.blm.gov/vegas/default.htm>  
PUB: Sept. 18, 24, 2003 LV Review Journal & Sun



September 29, 2003

*BLM plans hearings on land that will be sold in future*

**By Mary Manning**

<[manning@lasvegassun.com](mailto:manning@lasvegassun.com)>

LAS VEGAS SUN

The Bureau of Land Management is preparing to survey up to 50,000 acres that might be eligible for sale some day -- but first the agency is asking for the public's help.

Three hearings are scheduled this week in an effort to determine the possible environmental impact on the land.

The hearings are:

- Tuesday, Leisure Center, 101 Pavilion Center Drive, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, BLM Las Vegas Field Office, 4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Convention Center, 200 S. Water St., Henderson, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The majority of the lands ripe for surveys are north of North Las Vegas and the Las Vegas Paiute Indian reservation, Jeff Steinmetz, environmental protection specialist, said. "The president has already decided the lands are for disposal, but we have to assess the environmental impacts," Steinmetz said.

The surveys are expected to include searches for threatened or endangered plants, animals, insects and birds, archaeological hunts and environmental assessments, Steinmetz said.

For example, the Blue Diamond cholla, a type of cactus that has not been found anywhere else, is under study near the Jim Hardie gypsum mine southwest of Las Vegas. All surveys and reports are expected in time for a decision by the BLM in August 2004.

"It's an extremely aggressive schedule, but we have to be aggressive," Steinmetz said.

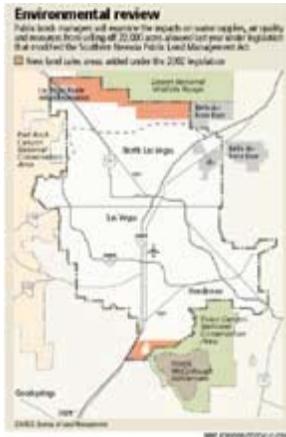
If any areas contain rare plants or animals, or significant cultural or historical treasures, the BLM would protect the resources, BLM spokesman Phil Guerrero said.

"We would leave it as is, somehow protecting the resource," Guerrero said.

## Public input sought on BLM land auctions

### First meeting set in process to determine environmental impacts

By [KEITH ROGERS](#)  
[REVIEW-JOURNAL](#)



Click on the image for an enlargement.

The Bureau of Land Management will begin a yearlong process today to assess impacts on water supplies, air quality, traffic and other growth-related issues from auctioning off 22,000 acres of additional public land.

The first scoping meeting to take the community's pulse on developing a full-blown environmental impact statement for disposal of more public lands in the Las Vegas Valley will be from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Summerlin Leisure Center, 101 Pavilion Center Drive.

"We knew to meet the demands the community is putting on us we had to act and act now," said Jeffrey Steinmetz, a BLM environmental protection specialist and team leader for the project.

He said the impact statement will examine the cumulative impacts of building out the additional acreage, which is mostly in the northern part of the valley. Of specific concern will be collecting soil stability data to address air quality, and surveying for threatened desert tortoises as well as cultural and paleontological resources.

The \$3.6 million review, which will be conducted by an environmental consulting firm, PGS&J, will consider community growth plans developed by valley cities and Clark County.

"We'll develop scenarios that will assess impacts of air and water based on the potential for development," Steinmetz said.

The environmental review comes on the heels of last week's decision by the Southern Nevada Water Authority board to conduct a \$160,000 study on the economic effects of growth restrictions tied to water availability.

On Monday, the authority's general manager, Pat Mulroy, noted that the BLM's Resource Management Plan anticipated that growth would continue. In this case, 22,000 acres is enough to accommodate a community as big as Summerlin, which has taken more than 20 years to develop.

"We're a growing area. It's no different than what happened in Los Angeles or the Phoenix area. It will mean developing new water resources," she said.

"Will water be available? If political will is there, it will be, but if political will is not there, then it won't be," Mulroy said.

In addition to the 22,000 acres that were earmarked for sale in last year's Clark County lands act, the impact statement will encompass 26,481 acres of public land previously covered by the impact statement for the Resource Management Plan.

That plan was used as the environmental document for the 1998 Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, which launched public land sales in the Las Vegas Valley as a mechanism to acquire environmentally sensitive lands elsewhere in the state.

Since then, the BLM has held 15 auctions and disposed of 18,042 acres. After an auction set for Nov. 6, BLM officials expect only 6,234 acres will be left that are covered by the 1998 impact statement, according to bureau spokesman Phillip Guerrero.

Steinmetz explained that this new environmental review stems from congressional action that allows for a faster-paced disposal rate than was previously considered.

Of all the land that remains for disposal, some is expected to be set aside for schools, parks and public services. "In the next two or three months, we'll know what's available for sale," he said.

Two more scoping meetings will be held this week on Wednesday, at the BLM Las Vegas Field Office, 4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive; and on Thursday at the Henderson Convention Center. Both will be from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

October 03, 2003

*Water key issue as BLM studies future land sales*

**By Mary Manning**

[<manning@lasvegassun.com>](mailto:manning@lasvegassun.com)

LAS VEGAS SUN

The four-year-long drought was on the minds of those attending Bureau of Land Management workshops this week on the possibility of opening 50,000 acres of public land to development.

They questioned whether the Las Vegas Valley has enough water available to grow further.

The BLM held the workshops as it prepares to survey thousands of acres of land that may be eligible for sale some day. Areas north and south of the Las Vegas Valley have not been studied, Jeff Steinmetz, BLM environmental protection specialist, said.

"It's one of the largest surveys the BLM has ever undertaken," Steinmetz said.

These early workshops were designed to help the BLM find, inventory and protect environmentally sensitive areas and cultural resources, Jackie Gratton of the BLM's lands division, said.

Steve Collins was typical of those who questioned BLM biologists, archaeologists and hydrologists.

"I think our biggest problem is growth," Collins said Thursday night at the Henderson Convention Center. "Vegas wants to grow, but we have water problems."

The Las Vegas Valley and the Southwest have experienced four years of drought with no end in sight.

"Water is one of the big ones," BLM archaeologist Stan Rolf said after listening to residents at Thursday's workshop.

A two-year Las Vegas resident, Collins moved to Southern Nevada from Tucson.

Although Tucson is a desert community, it relies on ground water. The drain by residents on the water supply there has caused the land to drop, in some places as much as 20 feet, he said.

"As a biologist I'm particularly concerned about the desert tortoise and destroying its habitat," Collins said.

In order to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as Tule Springs in the northwest valley and Blue Diamond cholla habitat south of Las Vegas, the BLM could suggest certain areas be turned into regional parks, Rolf said.

"We're going to preserve resources such as Tule Springs," Rolf said, noting that fossils such as mammoths, camels and horses as well as snakes, frogs and other water creatures have been found in the area during the past century.

By creating a regional park, the BLM could offer educational tools to the community and the tourists who come to Las Vegas looking for more than slot machines, Rolf said.

"We might be able to better manage these areas," Rolf said.

Monday, October 13, 2003

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## **Mammoth Undertaking**

### **Fossils, current life-forms open door to desert life during Ice Age**

[By KEITH ROGERS](#)  
[REVIEW-JOURNAL](#)

A Mojave Desert tortoise, the descendent of an Ice Age survivor, hid in a burrow last week at the north end of the Las Vegas Valley, protecting itself from the sun's broiling rays and any predators that might pass.

For 40 years, researchers figure, this reptile -- a threatened species -- has crawled over the hard and rocky terrain not far from where ancient elephants tramped through marshes some 20,000 years ago at the edge of what was a shallow lake.

It was a vicious world then, and it's a vicious world now.

That's according to an environmental team combing an area the Bureau of Land Management has targeted for the auction block.

The BLM has hired a consulting firm, PBS&J, to conduct a \$3.6 million review of cumulative effects from building on lands that Congress has authorized for disposal. The survey work is expected to last through December, and the final environmental impact statement is due in August.

The bureau has not received any requests for the land from developers yet, a spokesman said, but significant paleontological or archaeological finds could launch a consultation process with Nevada's congressional delegation, and eventual public meetings, about how to protect the sites or preserve what is found.

"If more sensitive sites are found, we would work with our federally elected officials to determine the best protection for these resources," said the spokesman, Phillip Guerrero.

In only a week's time, paleontologists conducting a systematic survey of the 50,000 acres have documented 90 sites where Ice Age fossils or fragments from mammoths, ancient horses, camels and bison poke from the surface. Scientists think mammoths migrated to this continent from Asia about 2 million years ago.

Some of the young mammoths, experts say, were probably stalked by the North American lion, a voracious cat that came on the scene about 200,000 years ago. The lion was up to 30 percent larger than today's male African lions.

"This valley is one of the richest for fossils in the Mojave," explained Eric Scott, curator of paleontology at California's San Bernardino County Museum. The museum is consulting on the project.

"You had the perfect combination of lake, river and stream deposits and the exposure," he said last week.

The team's discovery Oct. 2 of a Columbian mammoth's fossilized femur bone resting in the top foot of crust had scientists on the project buzzing with excitement. Judging by its size, it came from a mammoth that stood up to 14 feet tall at its shoulders.

If the BLM decides to excavate the site, Scott believes more fossils will be found and certainly this one could be collected, preserved and replicated for display after it's been extracted.

"It's going to be a big, beautiful mammoth femur," he said. "Something like this is definitely worth collecting."

The yard-long fossil is believed to be 15,000 to 26,000 years old, based on the estimated age of the surrounding sediment. Like many mammoth tusks, teeth and skeletal remains that have been found locally since the 1960s, it is another piece of the puzzle about the valley's past that the team is trying to understand.

Continuing to explore this rich fossil area could shed light on why the animals went extinct and the effects of early people in the region.

In the same area, wildlife biologists have found carcasses of desert tortoises, victims of what they believe were powerful predators that ripped away the front part of some of their shells.

The remnants of tortoise shells strewn across the surface are in various stages of decay ranging from roughly 20 years ago to recent kills, according to the biologists. In fact, they have found more carcasses than live tortoises in their survey.

"On an adjoining site, we found only two live tortoises but tons and tons and tons of carcasses," said John Morrison, an ecologist with one of the project firms, Southern Nevada Environmental Inc.

The newly found paleontological sites represent the existence of a menagerie of large, prehistoric animals that prowled the Mojave landscape up until about 11,000 years ago, when for some reason, perhaps climate change or hunting by humans, the prehistoric beasts became extinct.

Scott said many of them seem to have disappeared during periods of temperature changes as the Ice Age waned.

"We still don't know what killed the animals, but I'm willing to bet it wasn't people. I think it was climate change," he said.

Evidence is beginning to bolster another theory about the composition of species that roamed this area. Scott had predicted that bison fossils would be found in relatively younger sediments, bridging a gap in knowledge that had been left open since the 1960s Tule Springs excavations. Bison fossils have been found in other parts of the Mojave Desert but to a lesser extent in this area.

Now, he said, "We're finding lots of bison in the younger deposits."