



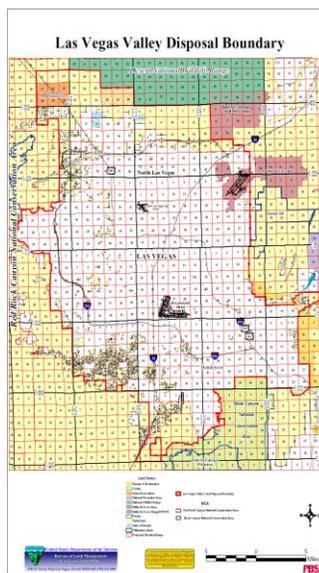
# Las Vegas Valley Disposal Boundary Environmental Impact Statement

Update

July 2004

## The Project

The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) of 1998 (PL 105-263) as amended by Title IV of the Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002 (PL 107-282) directs the BLM to sell public land within a specific boundary around Las Vegas, Nevada. The land disposal action would make public lands available for use by local governments or for purchase at auction to accommodate the rapid urban development in the Las Vegas Valley. Legal descriptions of the BLM lands were prepared from Master Title Plats to identify remaining lands available for disposal. The BLM has identified 46,700 acres of land within the disposal boundary that are appropriate for auction and/or transfer to Recreation and Public Purposes leaseholders. The BLM is also preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the potential environmental impacts resulting from the sale and potential future development and/or uses of these lands.



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### A Few Laws Relevant to the Project

- Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), as amended [43 US Code (USC) 1701, et seq.]
- Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) of 1998 (PL 105-263)
- Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002 (PL 107-282)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 [42 USC 4321 et seq.]

## Survey Updates

### Sensitive Species



Mojave Desert Tortoise in Burrow

The disposal boundary area was surveyed for potential desert tortoise habitat, Las Vegas buckwheat, Las Vegas bearpoppy, two-tone penstemon, mesquite and acacia habitat, cacti and yucca species, and other sensitive wildlife species. Populations of the Las Vegas bearpoppy, the Las Vegas buckwheat, and higher densities of cacti and yucca species were identified in the northern part of the disposal boundary area. Phainopepla, western burrowing owls, and kit foxes were also noted

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Las Vegas Bearpoppy

(Continued from page 1)  
during the field surveys.

The desert tortoise is a slow moving reptile that ranges in size from 2 to 15 inches long and can live up to 100 years. Habitat for the Mojave population of the desert tortoise occurs throughout Clark County at elevations generally below 5,000 feet. The Mojave population of the desert tortoise was federally listed as "threatened" in 1990 because of significant population decline and habitat loss and is under full protection of the Endangered Species Act.

The Las Vegas bearpoppy is a BLM sensitive plant species and Nevada state-protected species that occurs in Clark County at elevations ranging from 1,310 to 2,760 feet. It is often found in highly gypsiferous soils on barren, gravelly desert flats, hummocks, and slopes.

The Las Vegas buckwheat, a BLM special plant species, is a rare shrub that occurs only from the Las Vegas Valley to the Muddy Mountains in Clark County. It grows on rocky or sandy slopes and sandstone cliffs at elevations between 2,000 and 2,300 feet.



Las Vegas Buckwheat

### Archaeological Surveys



Prehistoric Flaked Stone



Prehistoric Rock Ring

Surveyors identified 100 archeological sites, 69 of which were newly recorded. One of the sites, the Tule Springs, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Prehistoric sites found include camps, rock rings, rock shelters, rock alignments, lithic scatter, ceramic scatter, flaked stone scatter, trail segments, and thermal features. Historic sites found include roads, campsites, Nellis Air Force Base target range, railroad grades, artifact scatters, trash and can scatters, and a modern petroglyph site.

### Paleontological Surveys

Approximately 24,900 acres were surveyed for paleontological resources. A total of 438 previously unrecorded paleontologic resource localities were identified. The field survey identified bivalves, gastropods, carapace fragments from a large tortoise, fossil remains of rodents and rabbits, and bones and teeth of large mammals including extinct mammoth, horse, bison, and possible large camel species. These fossils may answer important research questions about life during the Ice Ages in the Mojave Desert.

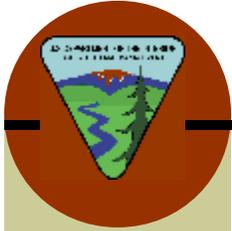


Fossil Horse Teeth



Prehistoric Mammoth Femur Bone

The units present in the disposal boundary area with significant fossil occurrences and a high paleontologic sensitivity include the Horse Spring Formation, the Muddy Creek Formation, and the Las Vegas Formation. These areas include outcrops of sedimentary rock units that contain a relatively high density of documented vertebrate fossil sites. All of the localities identified during the field survey were in surface exposures of the Las Vegas Formation.



Comments relevant to this EIS expressed concern about the potential sale of the Tule Springs NRHP.

## Draft Environmental Impact Statement Progress

Public scoping meetings were held in September and October 2003. The EIS is being prepared to fulfill the NEPA requirements associated with the land disposal action. Most comments relevant to this EIS expressed concern about the potential sale of the Tule Springs NRHP Site and suggested preservation of this site. Concerns were also expressed about the potential impacts from development.



Issues were identified during the meetings and through written comments concerning resources such as air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, paleontological resources, land use, water quality/quantity, and recreation. Other comments concerned alternatives, the NEPA process, land sale process, and increased development.

The Draft EIS will contain two action alternatives, along with the required no-action alternative. The action alternatives were developed based upon sensitive resources identified during surveys and input from the BLM, the cooperating agencies, and the public. The cooperating agencies are the U.S. Air Force (Nellis Air Force Base), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex), Clark County Regional Flood Control District, Clark County Comprehensive Planning, City of Henderson, City of Las Vegas, and City of North Las Vegas. Under the proposed action, all BLM land within the disposal boundary would be available for disposal, unless the transfer would violate another law, such as the Endangered Species Act. Under the Conservation Transfer Alternative, approximately 5,000 acres located in the northern portion of the project area would be disposed subject to a conservation agreement developed by the interested parties, which may include preservation of sensitive resources. Under the No Action Alternative, no additional BLM lands would be sold under SNPLMA.

## Project Website and Information

A project website was created as a venue to keep the public involved and informed during the EIS process. This website also provides updated information and news about the project. The public can also sign up for the project mailing list to receive information.

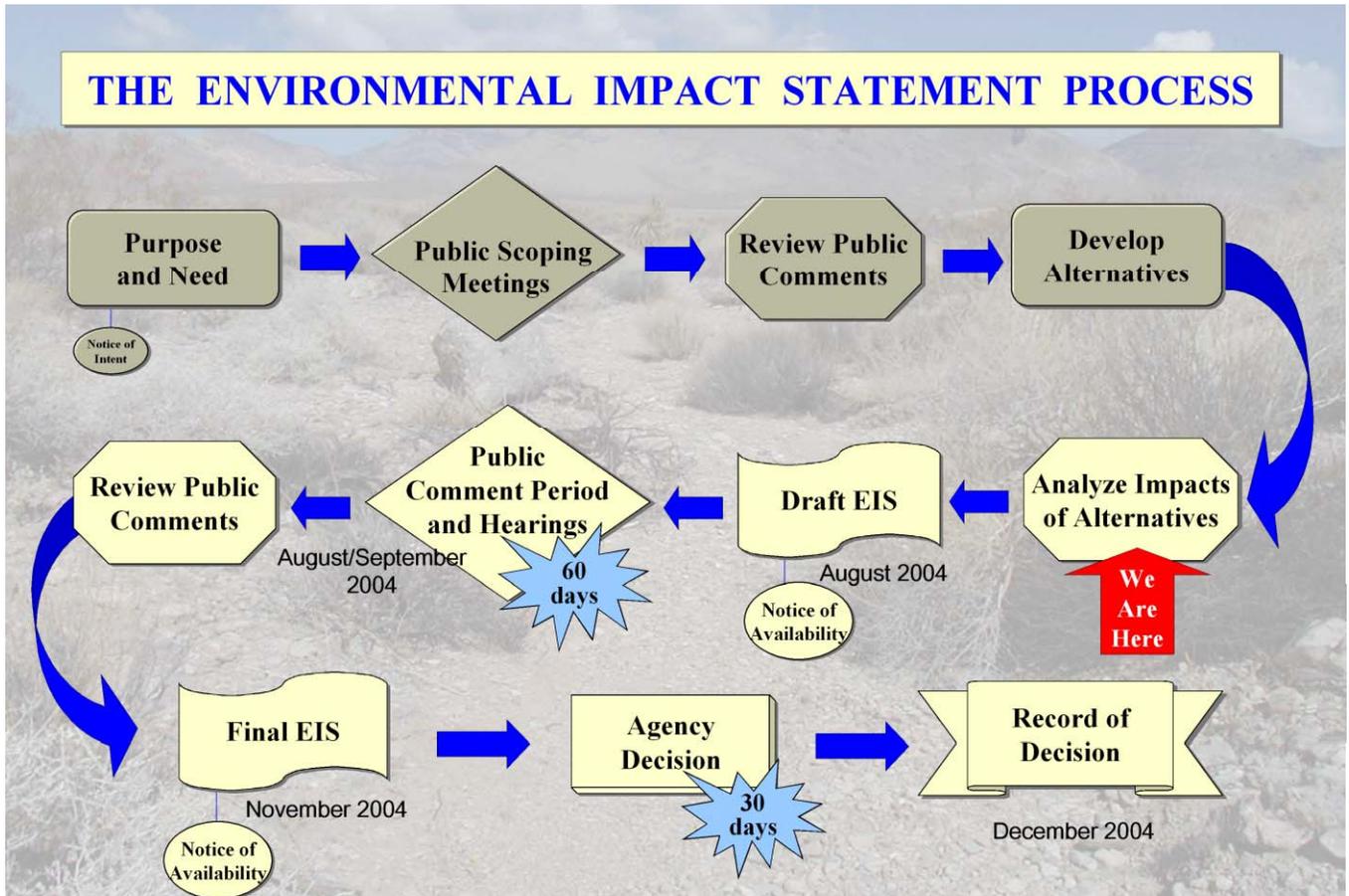
The website address is <http://www.nv.blm.gov/lvdiseis>.

The public will be able to review the Draft EIS when it is available and provide comments from the website. Public participation is encouraged throughout the EIS process. The BLM needs valid input regarding the project. Public participation is important to preparing an accurate and thorough EIS. Comments may also be submitted via E-mail at [lvlmeis@pbsj.com](mailto:lvlmeis@pbsj.com) or via postal mail at:



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# Where Are We Now?



## What's Next?



Burrowing Owl



A Notice of Availability will be published in the Federal Register by the Environmental Protection Agency when the Draft EIS is available for public review. A 60-day period will follow when comments regarding the Draft EIS and the project will be accepted by the BLM. All comments will be responded to and used to prepare the Final EIS.

Public hearings will also be held after the Draft EIS is available. The date, time, and location of these hearings will be published via news releases and on the website.

Comments will be accepted via the project website, email, postal carrier, and during the public hearings.