

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND:

On April 2, 1997 the Nevada State BLM Director approved and signed the **Nevada Wilderness Action Plan**. This Plan provides a framework of critical action items which must be accomplished before the passage of a Nevada BLM Wilderness bill. These action items, when completed, will ensure that the Nevada BLM is ready for the challenge and responsibility of protecting and managing future BLM additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

One of the action items in the **Nevada Wilderness Action Plan**, Action Item I.C., required that Wilderness Study Area (WSA) notebooks be prepared for all BLM WSAs in Nevada. The notebooks provide BLM management with “desk reference guides” to WSAs within the State, and may ultimately be used by members of Congress and the general public as enhanced versions of the **NEVADA BLM STATEWIDE WILDERNESS REPORT**.

Printed notebooks have been prepared for the respective jurisdictions of each of the six Nevada BLM Field Offices and for the Nevada portions of the California BLM's Eagle Lake and Surprise Field Offices. Each notebook consists of two parts for each WSA. The first part contains a one to three page narrative, which is simply a condensation of the WSA narrative contained in the **NEVADA BLM STATEWIDE WILDERNESS REPORT**. The elements described in the WSA narratives are as follows:

- * The name, number, and acreage of the WSA
- * A general location and boundary description
- * A characterization of the wilderness values
- * A discussion of the wilderness recommendation and rationale
- * A summary of energy and mineral resource values
- * A summation of issues and public interest in the WSA

The second part of each notebook incorporates a series of six maps for each WSA which display the following Geographic Information System (GIS) themes: 1) contours, 2) counties, 3) geographic names and features, 4) land ownership, 5) public land survey system, 6) roads, 7) water features, 8) BLM WSA, recommended “suitable,” and “non-suitable” boundaries, 9) developments and disturbances, 10) rights-of-way, 11) grazing allotments, 12) herd management areas, 13) federally-listed threatened and endangered species, 14) mining claim density, 15) mining operation locations, 16) mineral potential, 17) special-use air space, and 18) military aircraft training routes.

QUALIFICATIONS:

The information displayed on the subsequent maps is intended to give the reader an overview of the most significant physical, cultural, and resource management data available within and immediately outside WSA boundaries. Because resource data is constantly changing and is frequently modified, accuracy of the data only applies to this publication.

Further, the data presented is limited to that which can be characterized at the scale utilized for this project, as it is impossible to portray all available GIS data in an 8 1/2" by 11" format. For example, not all mineral potential is shown for each WSA. In many cases, only the highest mineral potential for the most valuable mineral is indicated for a given WSA, as it would be spatially and graphically untenable, and visually discordant to attempt to exhibit all mineral potential for all minerals present within a WSA. Consequently, many medium and low mineral potentials for the least valuable minerals have not been depicted on the WSA maps. Refer to the "Definitions and Explanations" section which follows for more specific information regarding mineral potential.

Similarly, only observations of federally listed threatened and endangered species are exhibited on the WSA maps. Proposed and candidate special status species are not shown, nor are State of Nevada listed species.

The physical and resource management data arrayed on these maps has been collected from U.S. Geological Survey 1:100,000 Digital Line Graph files and were digitized from 7 1/2 minute (1:24,000) U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle maps. In some cases, if no WSA boundary exists on a 7 1/2 minute map, linear data may be incomplete for that file or map. Some linear data, such as utility rights-of-way, or livestock water systems or utility lines, may abruptly end on the map without extending all the way to the map frame line.

The physical and resource management data depicted on these WSA maps portrays the most accurate data available at the time of map preparation. Base data has been extracted from various scale base maps and some of the data has not been field-checked or ground-proofed. As more accurate inventory and resource management information becomes available, WSA maps will be amended or revised.

For a comprehensive depiction of mineral potential, special status species, or for complete information regarding any other GIS theme, please address mail to the GIS Coordinator, BLM Nevada State Office, P.O. Box 12000, Reno, Nevada 89520-0006. You may visit the GIS Coordinator at 1340 Financial Boulevard, or you may call the Coordinator at 775-861-6400.

For information regarding a specific resource inventory or database that is not GIS related, please contact appropriate Field Office or Field Station resource specialists. Field Offices and Field Stations in Nevada are located in Elko, Winnemucca, Carson City, Ely, Las Vegas, Battle Mountain, Tonopah, and Caliente. Portions of the northwest section of the State are managed by the Eagle Lake Field Office in Susanville, California and the Surprise Field Office in Cedarville, California.

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

ALLOTMENT -- An area of land designated and managed for the grazing of livestock.

CHERRY-STEMMED ROAD -- A road that is completely enclosed on both sides by a Wilderness Study Area boundary. The Wilderness Study Area boundary is the edge of the right-of-way if a right-of-way has been granted, or the edge of disturbance if no right-of-way has been issued. Cherry-stemmed roads appear as red and black dashed lines within WSA boundaries on the “WSA Boundaries and Land Ownership” maps. Cherry-stemmed ways, trails, and washes appear as black dashed lines within WSA boundaries on the “WSA Boundaries and Land Ownership” maps. In some instances, these black dashed lines may appear to be a solid line at the page size scale.

DEVELOPMENT -- For purposes of this document, any structure, facility, or enhancement constructed and located on public lands. These include but are not limited to, developed springs, fences, wildlife guzzlers, stock ponds, gabions.

DISTURBANCE -- For purposes of this document, a disruption of the soil or vegetation within a Wilderness Study Area necessitating recontouring of the topography, replacement of topsoil, and/or restoration of native plant cover. These include but are not limited to, mines, material sites, ditches, roads, excavated trash dumps.

HERD MANAGEMENT AREA (HMA) -- A geographic area identified as having been used by a herd as its habitat on the date of passage of the Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971 that has been established for the maintenance of wild horse and burro herds.

INSTANT STUDY AREA (ISA) -- Any of eleven natural areas formally identified by the Nevada BLM through a final action published in the Federal Register before November 1, 1975. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA, Public Law 94-579, 90 Stat. 2743, 43 USC 1701) required an accelerated wilderness review of these areas which, for all intents and purposes, are Wilderness Study Areas.

MILITARY TRAINING ROUTE -- A route established to accommodate low-altitude military training operations of aircraft that permits speeds in excess of 250 knots indicated air speed below 10,000 feet mean sea level (MSL). Some segments may extend above 10,000 feet MSL due to terrain or other requirements.

MINERAL POTENTIAL -- A prediction of the likelihood of the occurrence of a solid, liquid, or gaseous mineral resource within a Wilderness Study Area expressed in terms of "high," "medium," or "low" potential.

The mineral potential information portrayed on the WSA maps is taken from U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Bulletins prepared in conjunction with the U.S. Bureau of Mines to study the mineral potential of Wilderness Study Areas in Nevada. The USGS and Bureau of Mines conducted mineral surveys on areas approximating recommended "suitable" portions of WSAs to determine the mineral values, if any, that may be present. The recommended "unsuitable" portions of WSAs within WSAs containing recommended "suitable" portions were not surveyed, nor were literature searches conducted on the "unsuitable" portions of these WSAs. The mineral potential for WSAs that were wholly recommended "unsuitable" was not studied by the USGS and Bureau of Mines. However, wholly recommended "unsuitable" WSAs were assessed based on a literature search and, where applicable, on discussions with private industry.

Some inconsistencies may be noted between the discussion of mineral potential in the WSA narratives and the mineral potential displayed on the WSA maps. These inconsistencies are attributable to the fact that the BLM's Geology, Energy, and Minerals (GEM) Reports, which were prepared in the early 1980s, were the primary source of mineral information for the WSA narratives. The GEM Reports predated the Bureau of Mines and U.S. Geological Survey Bulletins, which were prepared as late as 1990, and were the only sources of data utilized in the preparation of WSA maps. Thus, due to the availability of new mineral information, advances in technology, and the refinement of predictive models between 1980 and 1990, some differences may be noted between the WSA narratives and the WSA maps.

The Bureau of Mines and USGS Bulletins were prepared utilizing the best information available. The "best information available" was characterized in the Survey Bulletins as "Levels of Certainty" which ranged from "Available information (A - is not adequate for determination of) (B - only suggests) (C - gives a good indication of) (D - clearly defines) the level of mineral resource potential." "Levels of Certainty" are not displayed on the WSA maps for the minerals present within each WSA due to spatial and graphic limitations.

In some cases, the boundaries of the mineral potential do not coincide precisely with the boundaries of the Wilderness Study Areas because Bureau of Mines and USGS report boundaries were digitized at a different scale compared with the WSA boundaries, and WSA boundaries had not been finalized at the time the mineral reports were published. Furthermore, in some areas of the state where WSAs are clustered and two or more WSAs are separated only by a road, a reader interested in a given WSA may have to refer to the "Mineral Potential" maps of adjacent WSAs for a more comprehensive display of the mineral potential within the WSA of interest. That is to say, larger mineral groupings identified on the "Mineral Potential" maps of adjoining WSAs may extend into the WSA of interest but may not be exhibited in the legend of the WSA of interest.

MINING CLAIM -- The mining claims identified on the “Mining Claim Density and Operations” WSA map are the total number of “active” mining claims and sites within and adjacent to each WSA as of the date specified on the WSA map. “Active” mining claims and sites are defined as “claims and sites for which all required fees and filings have been timely submitted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.” The mining claim density symbol depicted on the WSA map gives a representation of the number of claims and sites within a section of land. It does not necessarily indicate that mining claims and sites are located wholly within WSA boundaries.

MINING OPERATION -- A mining claim activity for which a 3809 Mining Notice or Plan of Operation or a 3802 Plan of Operation has been filed with the Bureau of Land Management.

Mining operations shown on the “Mining Claim Density and Operations” WSA map, which have no corresponding mining claim beneath them, can be attributed to one or more reasons. First, the information came from two separate and distinct databases that may not have been completely reconciled, one with the other. Second, mining law states that a description of location need only be sufficient for a person to find a claim on the ground. Sometimes the description of location is only the “best guess” of the claimant or the operator as to where the claim is actually located rather than a legally described location. Third, discrepancies may be due to data entry errors.

It is not always necessary to possess a mining claim in order to conduct a mining operation. For example, failure to pay necessary fees and filings in a timely manner will result in mining claim termination. However, the associated mining operation may not terminate with the claim.

RECOMMENDED NON-SUITABLE -- All or a portion of a Wilderness Study Area that the President has recommended to the United States Congress as not appropriate and not acceptable for preservation and designation as wilderness based on an analysis of the existing and potential uses of the land.

RECOMMENDED SUITABLE -- All or a portion of a Wilderness Study Area that the President has recommended to the United States Congress as appropriate and acceptable for preservation and designation as wilderness based on an analysis of the existing and potential uses of the land.

RIGHT-OF-WAY -- An authorization to use or occupy public lands pursuant to the issuance of a right-of-way grant. A right-of-way grant authorizes use over, upon, under or through public lands for construction, operation, maintenance and termination of a project. Right-of-way grants may be issued for, but are not limited to, such uses as roads, trails, reservoirs, canals, ditches, pipelines, transmission lines, railroads, and communication sites. These more common types of right-of-way grants are specifically identified on the “Rights-of-Way” WSA map. Less common types of right-of-way grants,

for such uses as weather stations, stock driveways, etc., have not been shown on the WSA maps.

ROAD -- For purposes of the wilderness review program, a route that has been improved and maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular and continuous use. "Improved and maintained" means physical actions taken by man to keep the road open to vehicular traffic. "Improved" does not necessarily mean formal construction. "Maintained" does not necessarily mean annual maintenance. "Mechanical means" is the use of hand or power machinery or tools. "Relatively regular and continuous use" means vehicular use which has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis.

SPECIAL USE AIRSPACE -- Consists of airspace wherein activity must be confined because of its nature and/or wherein limitation may be imposed upon aircraft operations. The purpose of a special use airspace is to identify for other airspace users where military activity occurs, segregate that activity from other users to enhance safety, and allow charting to keep airspace users informed of activity within the special use airspace.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED (T&E) -- The words "threatened" and "endangered" are used in this document to describe Federal listings authorized by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended. "Threatened" means any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. "Endangered" means any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. Only Federally listed threatened and endangered species are shown on the WSA maps. Points on the map represent observation records or museum collections only and do not indicate extent of habitat or species distribution.

TRAIL -- A pathway usually created and maintained by human foot traffic, beasts-of-burden, livestock, or wildlife. Trails are not shown on WSA maps but are mentioned in some WSA narrative texts.

WAY -- A track or route within a Wilderness Study Area maintained solely by the passage of vehicles which has not been improved and/or maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular and continuous use. Ways were identified during the intensive inventory phase of the Wilderness Review Process. Although mentioned in some WSA narrative texts, ways are not shown on WSA maps.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA) -- A roadless area or island that has been inventoried and found to possess wilderness characteristics as described in Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. Private and other agency inholdings within Wilderness Study Area boundaries are officially, legally, and technically not part of the Wilderness Study Area. Some private and other agency inholdings are not shown with the Wilderness Study Area boundary symbol around them.