

**2004 Trailblazers Desert  
Motorcycle Race  
Environmental Assessment  
February 2004**

Permit Applicant: Trailblazers Motorcycle Club

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Proposed Date: February 15, 2004

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**Proposed 2004 Trailblazers Shawave-Nightingale Mountains Desert Motorcycle Race**

## **I. Background Information**

### **A. Introduction**

Mr. Joshua Wilson, of the Trailblazers Motorcycle Club, has applied for a Special Recreation Permit to conduct a desert motorcycle race on Sunday, February 15, 2004, beginning at approximately 10:00 a.m.

### **B. Need for the Proposal**

The proposed action would meet the demand for recreational use on public lands by allowing a motorcycle race on public lands managed by the BLM Winnemucca Field Office. As a competitive and commercial use of public lands, title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 2932.11 requires the issuance of a Special Recreation Permit (SRP).

### **C. Relationship to Planning**

The proposed action is in conformance with the Sonoma-Gerlach Management Framework Plan (MFP).

Sonoma-Gerlach MFP: Objective R-1 states to provide as many recreation opportunities as possible without undue environmental degradation. The location of the proposed course was established as being open to off-road vehicles in the MFP.

Although the sport of desert motorcycle racing was not specifically discussed in the MFP, the action would be within the intent of the objectives of the land use plans. Vehicle racing has a long tradition of being permitted on public lands in this area.

### **D. Issues**

The primary issues are: Long-term damage to the public lands due to soil erosion and removal of vegetation.

## **II. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives**

### **A. Proposed Action**

The Trailblazers Motorcycle Club has applied for a Special Recreation Permit (SRP#: NV-020-04-04) to conduct motorcycle races in the Shawave Mountains, Sage Hen Valley, Nightingale Mountains area on February 14 and 15, 2004. The proposed course for the main event on Sunday, February 15, would start on the main dirt road leading to Sage Hen Wash, travel into the Shawave Mountains, (see attached map-Appendix 1).

The proposed course contains 2 different loops and would be approximately 100 miles in length. It is a combination of numerous previously analyzed courses, dirt roads, and washes with approximately 2.5 miles of new course in the Nightingale Mountains. There are two segments of

new course which is currently used as cow/horse trails. The trails each connect two washes together which link with previously used course (Former Trailblazer Routes EA#: NV-023-03-08, NV-020-02-14, NV-020-01-11, NV-020-00-13).

Weather permitting, one lap of the course would be completed by each participant. There could be up to 250 racers racing on Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup>. There would be approximately 80 spectators on Saturday and up to 300+ on Sunday. The spectators would be at the start/finish area, which would be at the southern end of the course off Sage Hen Wash Road. The ground should be frozen and possibly snow covered which should lessen any short term impacts.

If it is too wet and/or snowy the racers would eliminate the Nightingale Mountains loop (the second loop) and complete two laps in the Shawave Mountains (the first loop). This would be done to eliminate any possible safety concerns and/or resource damage due to the steep terrain in the Nightingale Mountains.

The majority of the route is on BLM lands managed by the Winnemucca Field Office. The race organizers would obtain permission from any private landowners before race day.

Environmental Setting: Basin and Range and high desert. This area receives little precipitation and there is limited vegetation in the valleys, canyon bottoms and dry lakebeds. The vegetation in this area primarily consists of cheat grass, a variety of other grasses and low growing shrubs.

Approximately 200-250 riders are expected to participate in the main race. They would ride in classes based on age, skill level and size of their motorcycles. Each class has a staged start that would be 5 minutes apart. There would be approximately 25 riders per class.

There would be also be a short mini race on Saturday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. This proposed route would be comprised of a seven mile loop, which begins at the main pit area and utilizes the ridge road and a wash. This short course has been previously analyzed and is generally used once per year. This event would start and end at the main pit area. It would stay primarily within view of the pit area. Approximately 20 racers are expected to participate in the youth/women's event. The majority of riders would complete as many laps as they could in one hour (averaging approximately five - seven laps per racer). These racers generally ride 80-125 cc dirt bikes.

The peewee race is generally ¼ mile loop alongside the pit area. It would be to the east of the pit area using the dirt road which heads north, basically making a triangle across last year's start area to the main road, then back to the pit area. Approximately 10-15 very small children ride approximately five laps on 50cc dirt bikes.

Some of the participants and their families would be camping at the main pit area alongside the main road. It is estimated there could be 20 to 30 camp units at the pit area on Saturday night. These campers would have self-contained motor homes. Trailblazers would provide at least three portable restrooms at the pit area.

Road wardens, with flags, would be stationed at any main crossroad. These volunteers would hold back traffic until the roads are safe to cross. Numerous checkpoints would be spread throughout the course to ensure that shortcuts are not taken. Any racer that does not make all of these points would be disqualified. Temporary directional signs would be placed throughout the course, as well as signs that would warn the driver of potentially hazardous areas. The entire course would be marked on both sides of the proposed route. The widest area would be approximately 30 feet in width.

It is expected that vehicles would stay primarily on roads, trails and washes. There are short cross country sections which connect the roads, cow trails and washes. There would be areas where racers would leave the track in order to pass another racer. Also, if race course monitors notice any racer to be more than 20 feet from the centerline of the course, he/she would be disqualified.

The Flying Ws would list the U.S. Government, and all affected private landowners and rights-of-way holders as additional insured on the Certificates of Liability Insurance.

Upon conclusion of the race, the course would be ridden by representatives of the applicant to close all gates, and pick up all signs and any debris left by the participants and/or spectators.

#### Environmental Protection Measure

Later this spring, Trailblazers Motorcycle Club would rehabilitate the course by performing the following tasks in necessary areas as determined by a BLM representative: Hand raking the single track trails, OHV raking the pit area/dirt roads where the 4 - 5 foot drag could be towed behind an ATV or pickup truck, planting native seeds and installing water bars on the steeper slopes to prevent erosion. Any native plant seeding would be conducted later in the fall (see special recreation permit stipulations-Appendix 2).

#### **B. Alternative No. 1 - No Action.**

The race would not be held.

**Other possible alternatives not considered in detail:** Using another existing route in the Nightingale Mountains. The race organizer did not wish to use this alternate course for it would use existing dirt roads where the racers can get to very high speeds.

### **III. Affected Environment**

The affected environment for both the Proposed Action and Alternative No. 1 - No Action are the same.

## **A. Watershed/Soils/Vegetation**

Soils for the race area are diverse. Soils are derived from alluvium, residuum and lake deposits. Soils occur on the following landforms: Lake plain terraces, fan piedmonts, sand sheets and foothills.

Lake plain terrace soils occur below 4380 feet elevation. Textures are coarse through moderately fine and are strongly saline/alkaline. Vegetation is mainly black greasewood and shadscale. Erosion hazards are slight for water and moderate for wind.

Fan piedmont soils have medium textured surface layers and moderately fine and fine textured subsoils with strongly cemented layers. Vegetation is shadscale/bud sagebrush or Wyoming big sagebrush. Erosion hazards are moderate for both water and wind.

Sand sheet soils are coarse textured throughout. Vegetation is spiny hopsage, Indian ricegrass, fourwing saltbush and cheat grass. Erosion hazards are slight for water and high for wind.

Foothill soils are on the footslopes of mountains. These soil types range from very cobbly, medium textured surfaces and very gravelly fine textured subsoils to decomposed granite. Vegetation is mainly low sagebrush, ephedra, cheatgrass and shadscale. Erosion hazards are moderate for water and slight for wind

The proposed course travels through several ephemeral washes. There are a number of perennial springs within the area of the proposed race. This proposed course has been selected to avoid all potential impacts to these springs.

**B. Visual:** The proposed course is located in a Visual Resource Management Class IV setting. The Class IV description is: Contrasts may attract attention and be a dominant part of the landscape in terms of scale. However, the change should repeat the basic elements (form, line, color and texture) inherent in the characteristic landscape. The changes may subordinate character but must reflect what could be a natural occurrence.

**C. Wildlife and Aquatic:** Antelope, California bighorn sheep, and mule deer can be found in the area. There are small animals of the type associated with the Great Basin. These include coyote, ground squirrel, jackrabbits, lizards, snakes and small birds. The area of the proposed course is dry, which limits the numbers present. The BLM and Nevada Department of Wildlife database has been checked and there are no sage grouse leks in this area. And, there are no chukar guzzlers within one mile of the proposed course. The proposed race course does not go through any BLM managed spring, seep, meadow, creek or wetland.

**D. Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, and Sensitive Species:** No on-the ground field investigation was conducted for sensitive/protected plants and animal species. According to the

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nevada Natural Heritage Program (January 2003), no endangered, threatened, candidate or sensitive plants or animals have been reported within a quarter mile of the proposed course.

The BLM has a sensitive species list and the following sensitive species of plants and animals may occur in the vicinity of the proposed course:

Pygmy rabbit	<i>Brachylagus idahoensis</i>
Spotted bat	<i>Euderma maculatum</i>
Small-footed myotis	<i>Myotis cilioabrum</i>
Long-eared myotis	<i>Myotis evotis</i>
Fringed myotis	<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>
Long-legged myotis	<i>Myotis volans</i>
Pale townsend' s big-eared bat	<i>Plecotus townsendii pallescens</i>
Pacific Townsend' s big-eared bat	<i>Plecotus townsendii townsendii</i>
Western burrowing owl	<i>Athene cunicularia hypugea</i>

Of these species only the western burrowing owl may be present near the race course.

**E. Migratory Birds:** Executive order #13186 titled Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds, signed 11/10/01, requires that BLM evaluate the effects of federal actions on migratory birds. No migratory bird inventory has been completed for this area. Common migratory birds which may use this area as habitat include various species of song birds, owls, blackbirds, ducks, magpies, crows, ravens, hawks, finches, doves, juncos and meadow larks. The proposed action will occur in February so there will not be any breeding and/or nesting neotropical migratory birds to be impacted.

**F. Wild Horses:** The western loop of the proposed course goes through the southern half of the Nightingale Mountains Herd Management Area (HMA) and Shawave Mountains HMA. The eastern loop of the proposed course goes through the southern half of the Shawave Mountains HMA only. Wild horses primarily use roads, trails, and washes as travel ways, therefore horses could be present anywhere along the proposed course.

A recent horse gather last September has decreased the density of animals in this area. Current horse population estimates are 38-63 head in the Nightingale Mountains (HMA) and 44-73 head in the Shawave Mountains (HMA). The primary foaling season for wild horses is March through June, with peak foaling occurring in April. However, foaling can occur at any time of the year and heavy mares (soon to foal) and new foals may be present.

Horses are known to water at Sage Hen Spring troughs, but should be utilizing free water and snow from recent winter weather events. Horses are expected to be dispersed in small groups throughout the area. The race staging/camping area is located within the Shawave Mountains HMA.

**G. Range:** C-Punch Ranch, Inc. runs cattle in Blue Wings/Seven Troughs Allotment. John Espil Sheep Company and Dufurrena Sheep Company also run sheep in this Allotment. At the time of the proposed action there will be 1297 head of cattle numbers authorized in this Allotment. This year they will generally be spread throughout the southern end of the allotment though livestock are usually concentrated near manmade and natural water sources.

**H. Cultural:**

Ninety-eight miles of the proposed race is previously disturbed (i.e. on existing roads or in washes) and/or has been culturally inventoried in the past. Fourteen cultural resource inventories have been undertaken within one mile of the proposed route. Two isolates, CrNV-22-3125 and CrNV-22-3126 were recorded within .25 miles of the proposed race course. Several isolated rock cairns were recorded adjacent to the proposed route in cultural resource inventory CR2-2794(P). These were most likely utilized by surveyors as control elevation points when the benchmarks were being established. Cultural Resource Inventory CR2-2566(P) recorded a small ineligible lithic scatter, CrNV-22-3126 200 meters from the proposed course and a fossil bone scatter PaNV-02-184 and biface located .5 miles from the proposed course.

Two miles of the proposed race course had not been previously disturbed or inventoried and were inventoried in cultural resource inventory CR2-2885(N) in January and February 2004 by Barbara Keleher (DAT) of the BLM. The inventory was negative.

**I. Native American Religious Concerns**

Two Native American Tribes, the Lovelock Paiute Tribe and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe were notified by letter of the proposed race. No comments were received from either Tribe. There are no known traditional cultural properties or sacred sites along the course route.

**J. Fire:** The area managed by the BLM Winnemucca Field Office is currently experiencing low wildland fire conditions. The Winnemucca Field Office is not currently in Fire Restrictions. There is a very slight chance that a dirt bike could crash and catch on fire.

**K. Noxious Weeds/Invasive Plants:** An inventory was conducted in this area. There are currently no noxious weeds recorded in the vicinity of the proposed course.

**L. Lands and Realty**

The proposed course travels through private and federal lands. The first section of the course has a *checkerboard status*, where every other section of land is either managed by BLM or privately owned. A number of the privately owned sections in the checkerboard land status area are owned by Nevada Lands and Resources. The westernmost portion of the course is

comprised of lands managed by the BLM Winnemucca Field Office (see case file for legal descriptions).

As an environmental protection measure a search of the Master Title Plats was conducted. The following companies hold rights-of-ways in the area of the proposed course: Southwest Gas Corporation; City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Sierra Pacific Power Company. Each of the rights-of-way holders was mailed a letter on January 28, 2004, informing them of the upcoming event.

**M. Socio-Economic:** Providing more outdoor recreation opportunities is one way northern Nevada is trying to enhance the economic situation in the rural communities. More than 95% of the racers come from out of town. Approximately 400 visitors (including spectators) would be expected to visit the Fernley area as a result of this event. This would add to the local economy as many of the visitors would be renting motel rooms and/or campsites plus purchasing gas, food and supplies.

**N. Public Safety:** This area normally received little recreation visitor use, especially during the winter months.

**O. Air Quality:** Air quality within the race area is typical of rural areas of the Great Basin and is considered good quality. Dust storms and rangeland wildfire impact air quality during the summer months. The proposed race is in a Class II air quality basin which is considered not a non-attainment area. Due to the snow the area has received in December 2003 and January 2004 the soils are well saturated and there is little to no dust.

**P. Hazardous Materials:** Each of the motorcycles will have gasoline, oil and other fluids. The racers will refuel and complete equipment checks at the Start/Main Pit area.

**Q. Noise Levels**

The BLM Winnemucca Field Office currently has no data or studies on noise levels. The area of the course normally receives very few visitors and is very quiet. There are no residences near the proposed course.

**List of Critical Elements of the Human Environment.** To comply with the National Environmental Protection Act, the following elements of the human environment are subject to requirements specified in statute, regulation or executive order and must be considered. It has been determined that the following critical elements of the human environment are not present or would not be affected by the proposed action or alternatives: Air Quality, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), Cultural Resources, Environmental Justice, Floodplains, Invasive Nonnative Species, Migratory Birds, Native American Religious Concerns, Prime or Unique Farmland, Special Status Species, Wastes, Hazardous or Solid, Water Quality (Surface and Ground), Wetlands and Riparian Zones, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness.

#### **IV. Environmental Consequences**

##### **A. Watershed, Soils, Vegetation**

Proposed Action: There should be little to no impact to the watershed, soils and/or vegetation due to the proposed action. As the race route avoids water sources, there will be no impact to water sources. Consequently, there will be no impact to water quality.

The soils surface textures are viable, coarse textured soils which would have low dust hazard potential, medium textured soils would have a moderate dust hazard potential and textured soil would have a high dust hazard potential. Wind erosion would be slightly accelerated throughout the course.

Soil compaction is unlikely. The majority of the route runs on existing roads, trails and dry washes, there is expected to be little, if any, long-term detrimental soils disturbance. There is very low precipitation throughout the area: 4-8 inches annually.

Alternative number 1: No Action. There would be no impact(s) to the watershed, soils and/or vegetation due to the proposed race since it would not occur.

##### **B. Visual**

Proposed Action: There would be very little impact to visual resources.

Alternative No. 1 - There would be no impact upon visual resources.

##### **C. Wildlife**

Proposed Action: There would be little to no impact upon wildlife. It is expected that some wildlife may be temporarily displaced from their home habitat. Numbers of large animals are few and the proposed race would only be temporary, lasting approximately five hours. Small animals could be run over or their burrows temporarily affected by someone driving on them. Cumulatively, these impacts have a low probability of occurring. Since, the race course does not go through any public lands which consist of springs, meadows, creeks and/or wetlands, no negative impacts are expected.

Alternative No. 1 - No Action: There would be no impact upon wildlife and/or aquatic life.

##### **D. Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, and Sensitive Species**

Proposed Action: There would be no known impact on any Threatened, Endangered, Candidate species. Since, this race is taking place in February the western burrowing owls which may be present should not be breeding and/or nesting and therefore should not be impacted.

Alternative No. 1 - No Action: There would be no impact upon these resources.

### **E. Migratory Birds**

Proposed Action: The race would not occur during the critical migratory bird breeding and/or nesting season. The proposed action would not impact any migratory bird populations.

Alternative #1 - No Action: There would be no impacts on any migratory birds.

### **F. Wild Horses**

Proposed Action: There would be little to no impact to wild horses. Temporary displacement of and minor stress to animals may occur due to the activity of racers, spectators and campers in the area. There is potential that a wild horse(s) could be on or crossing the race course during the race. A horse/motorcycle collision could occur resulting in injuries to both horse and racer. Horses are flight animals and are likely to run from the sight and sound of motorcycles and other vehicles.

Although few newborn foals are expected this time of year, those present may be left behind or become exhausted if displacement is extensive. Additional stress to animals may occur if horses are repeatedly displaced due to the circular race course design and other activity associated with the two-day event.

There would be little to no impact to wild horses displaced from Sage Hen Spring troughs and other waters due to the current availability of snow and runoff. Mitigation measures are identified in Chapter VI.

Alternative No. 1 - No Action: There would be no impacts to wild horses.

### **G. Range**

Proposed Action: There would be little impact to the range program. Any disturbance of livestock would be short term and negligible. There are cattle present, on the lands managed by the BLM Winnemucca Field Office, in the area of the proposed course.

Riders are most likely to encounter livestock in the vicinity of stock water than in other areas. Cattle will tend to avoid the race path once the race has begun due to noise and activity. However, some cattle may be expected to continue to cross the path.

A letter was sent to each grazing permittee informing him/her of the proposed race, course and date. No comments were received. The race organizer would hold a prerace meeting which informs all riders of the possible hazards along the proposed course. One of the hazards is that livestock and wild horses could be in the area of the proposed course.

Alternative No. 1 - No Action: There would be no impact on livestock.

### **H. Cultural**

Proposed Action: As long as the designated routes are used, the proposed action would have no

impact on significant cultural resources.

Alternative 1 - No Action: There would be no impact to cultural resources.

#### **I. Native American Consultation**

Proposed Action: There would be no adverse impacts to any known traditional cultural properties or sacred sites.

Alternative#1- No Action: There will be no adverse impacts to known traditional or religious properties important to Native American groups.

#### **J. Fire**

Proposed Action: There would be little to no impact upon resources due to a wildfire started by a racer. This area is currently in a moderate fire danger rating. It is mandatory that all participants and race volunteers have spark arrestors on their motorcycles. There is a slight chance that one of the motorcycles could crash and start a fire. This impact has a low probability of occurring. The permit compliance officer, Law Enforcement Officer and Fire Prevention Technician would also be prepared for wildfire suppression by carrying along their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), hand tools and bladder bags. If needed, Central Nevada Interagency Dispatch will send an engine to suppress any wildfires.

Alternative No. 1 - No Action: There would be no impact upon resources from a wildfire started by a motorcycle racer.

#### **K. Noxious Weeds**

Proposed Action: There would be little to no impacts from the spread of noxious weeds. It is anticipated the bikes will be cleaned and tuned up prior to the race. Therefore, there should be few new weed seeds transported by the motorcycles. There is a possibility that trucks and trailers hauling bikes may have weeds on them. Those vehicles are limited to the access route, Sage Hen Wash Road.

Alternative No. 1 - No Action: There would be no impact to noxious weeds in the area.

#### **L. Lands and Realty**

Proposed Action: There would be no impact to Lands and Realty. The applicant is responsible for securing all authorization to cross private lands. The BLM sent an information letter to rights-of-way holders and received no comments. Trailblazers Motorcycle Club will list the US Government as additionally insured on the Certificate of Liability Insurance and provide the BLM Winnemucca Field Office with a copy of each Certificate. The applicant is responsible for rehabilitation of the entire course.

Alternative No. 1 - No Action: There would be no impacts to Lands and Realty from the proposed race.

#### **M. Socio-Economic**

Proposed Action: There would be no negative impacts to local socioeconomics from the proposed action. Any economic effect would be positive.

Alternative 1 - No Action: There would be no impact to socioeconomics due to the proposed action.

#### **N. Public Safety**

Proposed Action: There would be no impact to any casual recreation visitor's public safety due to the proposed action. The race organizers will post a flag person at any main dirt road intersections.

Alternative 1 - No Action: There would be no impact to public safety from the proposed action.

#### **O. Air Quality**

Proposed Action: There would be little to no impact upon air quality. The majority of the proposed course travels along rocky and/or sandy soil types. These soil types should create little impact to air quality. The soils are currently wet and/or snow covered. If conditions get drier and warmer the race could generate fugitive dust which would impact air quality. It is anticipated that these impacts would be localized to the race route and would be short term. Generation of fugitive dust may impair racers.

Alternative 1 - No Action: There would be no impact to air quality.

#### **P. Hazardous Materials**

There would be little to no impact to the resources from hazardous materials. The pit crews usually place plastic under where they refuel the bikes and work on them. There is the possibility that a racer could have a serious accident and leak one quart or more of oil, gas and/or other fluids on the course during the race. If this were to happen the permit holder must follow special recreation permit stipulation #45.

Alternative 1 - No Action: There would be no impacts to the lands from hazardous materials.

#### **Q. Noise**

It is estimated there would be a temporary impact, due to increased noise levels, to any recreation users, spectators, wildlife, wild horses and/or livestock within approximately 1/4 - 1/2 mile of the course. This short term impact should only last approximately four hours. The start would have the highest noise levels since all the motorcycles will be together at one time. After the race begins the racers would be spread out so the noise would be limited to one or two motorcycles at a time.

Alternative 1 - No Action: There would be no impact from the proposed action to noise levels.

#### **V. Cumulative Impact Assessment**

## 1. Cumulative Actions

As defined in 40 CFR 1508.7 (regulations for implementing NEPA) a cumulative impact is an impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future action, regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over a period a time.

There are no known cumulative impacts to the following resources within the cumulative assessment area: Air quality, ACEC, prime farm lands, fisheries/aquatic resources, wildlife, wild horses and burros, threatened and endangered species, noxious weeds, Native American Religious concerns, wild and scenic rivers, wetlands, wastes (hazardous or solid), wetlands, soils, vegetation, lands and realty, migratory birds, fire, environmental justice, paleontology resources and wilderness, water quality (surface and ground).

### **Cumulative Effects Study Area**

The cumulative effects study area for the Proposed Action is bounded on the east by Rye Patch Reservoir; on the north by the tail of the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area; on the south by Interstate 80; and on the west by Nevada State Highway 34 (see map - Appendix 1).

### **PAST AND PRESENT ACTIONS**

Past activities in the Cumulative Effects Study Area include livestock grazing, recreational use (off-highway vehicle use, hunting and rock hounding) and mineral exploration and development of transportation and communication routes and sites.

### **Cultural**

Prior to the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy & Management Act (FLPMA) of 1966 and the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA), few, if any, measures to control or minimize impacts to cultural resources were required. The lack of protective measures led to a wide variety of adverse effects ranging in severity and extent. In the Cumulative Effects Study Area, these are primarily consequences of unauthorized collection/excavation, mining, road construction, OHV use and ranching.

Since the enactment of NHPA, NEPA, and FLPMA impacts to cultural resources as a consequence of public land use actions have been significantly reduced. BLM presence, enforcement of ARPA and public education have helped to decrease impacts from unauthorized collection. Impacts from OHV use, however, continue to increase.

Cumulative impacts to cultural resources due to present actions are considered to be the same as those for past actions since the enactment of the NHPA, NEPA, FLPMA and ARPA.

### **Motorcycle Racing**

There have been many prior Special Recreation Permits for Motorcycle Racing in the Shawave Mountains, Sage Hen Valley, Blue Wing Flat and Nightingale Mountains area.

### **Visual Resources**

The visuals have been changed due to roads from mining exploration and ranching. There have also been changes to vegetation color and texture from large wildfires

### **Livestock Grazing**

The major past and present use within the cumulative impact assessment area is grazing. Cattle grazing is the dominant land use that occurs within the assessment area.

## **REASONABLY FORESEEABLE FUTURE ACTIONS (RFFAs)**

### **Cultural**

Cumulative impacts due to Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions are expected to remain the same as those under Present Actions.

### **Visuals**

There is the possibility that visitors associated with the proposed race may return to the public lands to ride their dirt bikes. This could bring an increase in use. Each year more individuals are purchasing ATVs and dirt bikes and coming to the area managed by the Winnemucca Field Office to ride their Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs). Northern Nevada is becoming known for OHV uses which include: ATVs, dirt bikes, dune buggies and four wheel drive vehicles. With or without this race, we can safely predict more people will be visiting the public lands in this area, which are managed by the Winnemucca Field Office, to participate in motorized outdoor recreation activities.

After the proposed race, returning OHV users may increase recreation numbers along this particular race route. The majority of racers would be travelling from Reno and Northern California. Due to the long driving distances involved, it is doubtful that many riders would travel back to this area to go on a casual ride. If riders do continue to use former race courses there could be a loss of vegetation and soils along the route which could impact the visual quality of certain areas.

## **VI. Proposed Mitigation Measures**

The special recreation permit stipulations ensure that proposed mitigation measures are followed. To eliminate as many user conflicts as possible the race organizers will post signs at all road and ATV trail intersections along the proposed course to warn other recreation users/hunters of the race course, date and times. The race organizers would hold a pre-race riders' meeting so that all participants are aware of potential hazards, concerns, etc. All racers will be forewarned to watch

for the possibility of other recreation users, wildlife, cattle, wild horses and/or other obstacles along the course. A BLM Law Enforcement Ranger and one BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner will also be available to assist all of the public land users.

In the event of a horse/racer collision, a BLM wild horse specialist will be immediately notified and given details and exact location. A pre-race sweep of the course is recommended to deter horses from the general vicinity of the race course. In the unlikely event that a foaling mare or newborn foal is encountered, efforts should be made to detour the race course away from that location. The stipulations state that it is illegal to harass wild horses, wild burros and/or livestock.

It is proposed that this course be rested for at least one year to allow the soils to settle and vegetation to grow back. Course sections which need rehabilitation will be marked on the map and the permit holder will be responsible for dragging, raking and seeding these sections to the BLM Compliance Officer's specifications (see stipulations).

## **VII. Consultation and Coordination**

### **A. Intensity of Public Interest and Record of Contacts**

Public Scoping was conducted from December 15, 2003 – January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004 for this activity. A news release was placed in the Humboldt Sun, KWNA Radio, The Battle Mountain Bugle, The Elko Daily, The Lovelock Review Miner, la voz hispana, Elko Radio and Mailbox News.

The following persons and/or agencies were also informed of the proposed activity by the BLM Winnemucca Field Office: Roy Leach and Jim French of the Nevada Department of Wildlife; C-Punch Ranch, Inc.; Dufurrena Shhep Company; John Espil Sheep Company; Bob Redd; Mr. and Mrs. Griffith; The Lovelock Paiute Tribe, The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe; Southwest Gas Corp. and the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

### **B. Internal Field Office Review**

Gene Seidlitz, Acting Assistant Field Manager Nonrenewable Resources  
Jeff Johnson, Environmental Coordinator  
Peggy McGuckian, Cultural  
Barb Kehrberg, Lands and Realty  
Ronda Purdy, Range  
Mike Zielinski, Vegetation, Soils and Watershed  
Clarence Covert, Wildlife, Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species  
Glenna Eckel, Wild Horse and Burro  
Chuck Schlarb, Engineering/Transportation  
Charles Neill, Noxious Weeds

## **VIII. Intensity of Public Interest**

Based on the results of the thirty day public scoping the amount of public interest is deemed as low.

**IX. Irretrievable/Irreversible Commitments of Resources**

There would be no irretrievable or irreversible commitments of resources resulting from the issuance of the permit.