PRELIMINARY

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NV-040-03-026

Bennett Springs Wash Competitive Land Sale

N-76851

LOCATION: SOUTH OF PANACA, NEVADA
LINCOLN COUNTY, NEVADA

PREPARED BY

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ELY FIELD OFFICE

AUTHOR

Ann E. Perkins

May 2004

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

On April 21, 2003, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) received a letter from A. Morely Wilson requesting the sale of land near his newly acquired private land. Of the three parcels of land requested for sale, two are encumbered by unauthorized use and/or development, and the third parcel was needed for completion of a center-pivot irrigation system. Only two of the three proposed parcels will be put up for competitive sale.

The BLM's current policy and regulations in 43 CFR §2710.0-6 (c) (1-5) require the use of competitive sale procedures unless the authorized officer determines the public interest would best be served by modified competitive bidding or direct sale. In no case may land be sold for less than fair market value. This proposal has been determined to proceed as a competitive land sale to generate the greatest value from public lands.

The subject parcels are located in Sections 23 and 14, T. 2 S., R. 67 E., Lincoln County, Nevada, Mount Diablo Meridian (Figure 1). These parcels appraised for $21,000.00 and $ 37,000.00, respectively. The proposed sale will take place in August 2004.

The subject properties are approximately 1.5 miles south-west of the Lincoln County Airport and approximately 3 miles south-west of Panaca, Nevada. Private land in the basin along Bennett Springs Wash is primarily cultivated with alfalfa and wheat. The neighboring private land along the boundaries of the subject parcels was previously patented Desert Land Entries (DLE) in 1968 and 1971.

Reports to be completed for this sale include this Environmental Assessment (EA), a mineral potential report, a Class III cultural resource inventory report, and an Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) report on solid and hazardous materials.

Need for the Proposal

There is a need to provide for sale, public land for economic development and commercial expansion. Lincoln County, in the east-central portion of the state, is primarily federally administered public land. Opportunities for the expansion of private land and in turn, County tax base, are only when the federal government provides parcels of land for sale.

The parcels proposed for sale disposal are bounded on at least two-sides by private land. Disposal of these parcels would support community growth and provide an opportunity for economic development in Lincoln County. By pursuing this sale the BLM would also be responding to the public's request.

Relationship to Planning

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Decision Summary and Record of Decision (1983) for the Caliente Management Framework Plan (MFP) . Management Objective 4.0 states "Provide public land for urban and suburban expansion adjacent to the communities in the planning unit as needed." The plan further states (MFP Step 30 of Objective 4.0), "Additional lands surrounding the small communities of Caliente, Pioche, Panaca, and Rachel should be made available for public sale when a need can be identified by the local government organizations."

To support the community need, a letter from the Lincoln County Commission was received by the BLM on June 2, 2003. The letter requests the BLM consider the sale of the proposed parcels.

The Lincoln County Public Land & Natural Resource Management Plan (November 19, 1997) states (p.8, Policy number 2), "It is the policy of Lincoln County to increase any opportunity for local economic development by increasing the amount of available private land within the county."

Issues

The only issue identified during internal scoping in relationship to the proposed sale was the unauthorized use and development of public land. Parcel 2 has a small (less than 10-acre) area which has been plowed, seeded, and harvested for several decades. A casual use permit, issued to Mr. Wilson was authorized in April 2003 to resolve the trespass on public land. Parcel 3, while undisturbed, could be encumbered by a nearby center-pivot on the private land. In order for the center-pivot to complete a rotation of 360°, sale of the adjacent public land is necessary.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

The proposed action consists of a competitive sale of two parcels of BLM administered public land. Pursuant to the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, Section 203 (a) (3) [43 U.S.C. 1713], "…disposal of such tract will serve important public objectives, including but not limited to, expansion of communities and economic development, which cannot be achieved prudently or feasibly on land other than public land, which outweigh other public objectives and values…" Also under FLMPA Section 203 (b), "…where the Secretary determines that land to be conveyed under clause (3) of subsection (a) (above) of this section is of agricultural value and is desert in character, such land shall be conveyed either under the sale authority of this section or in accordance with other existing laws."

Existing Roads, Access, and Utilities

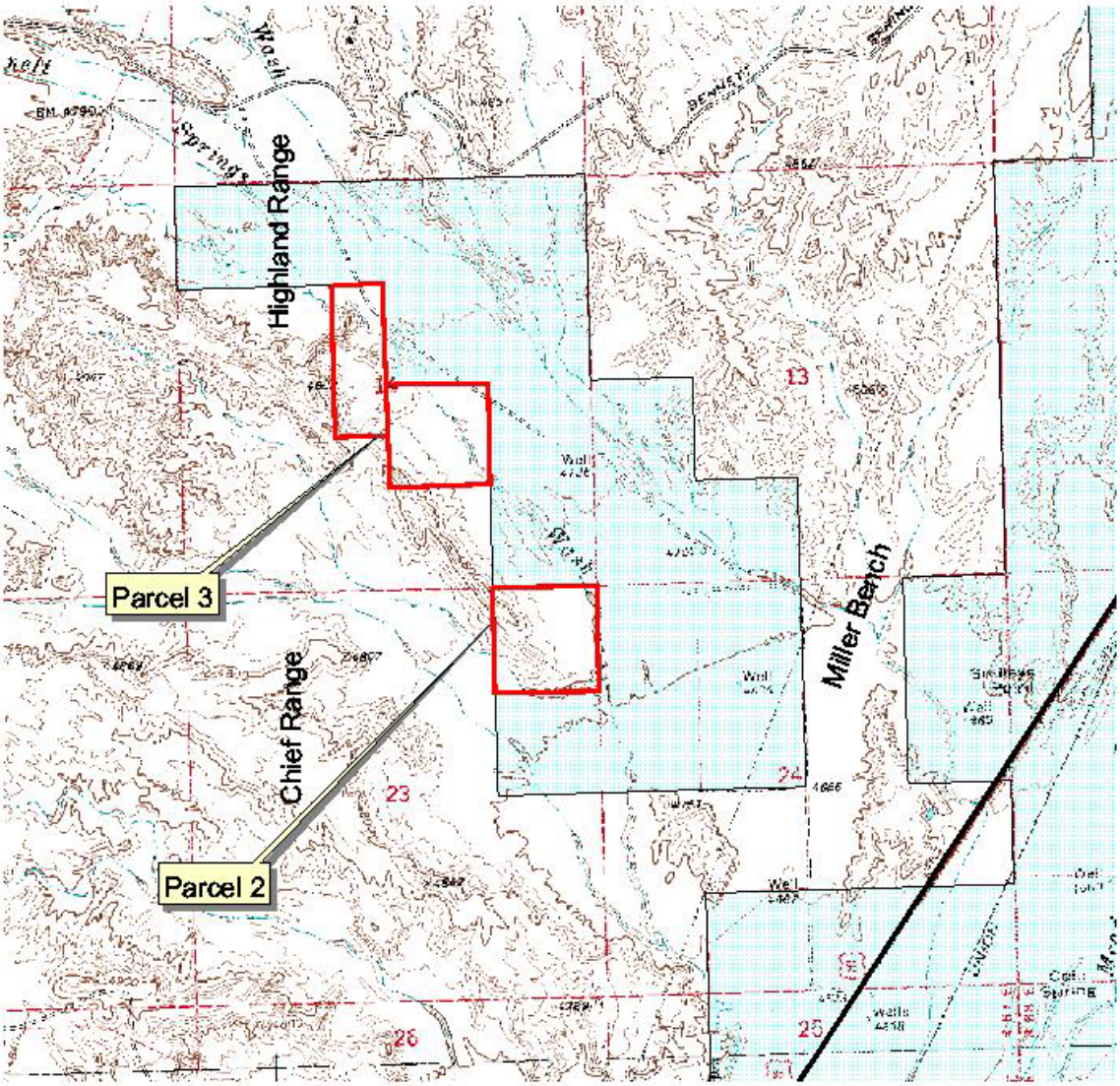
The proposed sale parcels can be accessed south of Panaca, Nevada, from U.S. Highway 93. Turn west approximately 3 miles south of the Lincoln County Airport road, and traverse north on an unimproved dirt road. Access to Parcels 2 and 3 is across private land. There is existing electrical power approximately ½ mile east of Parcel 2 and 1 mile east of Parcel 3.

MDM, T. 2 S., R. 67 E.
Panaca, Nevada
7,5' USGS Topo

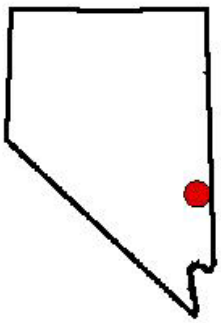
Figure 1

Bennett Springs Wash
Prposed FLPMA Sale

Bureau of Land Management
Ely District



0.4 0 0.4 0.8 1.2 Miles



Private

N

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data.

N76851

Alternatives

The No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative is being analyzed in this EA in order to provide a baseline for comparison. Under the No Action Alternative, the parcels would not be sold. This would mean the parcels would stay in public ownership and the unintentional trespass on Parcel 2 would not be resolved.

Other Alternatives

No other alternatives are necessary to respond to unresolved issues concerning alternative uses of available resources.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT WITH THE ASSOCIATED ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

"The subject parcels are located in Bennett Springs Wash, an intermittent tributary to Meadow Valley Wash. Meadow Valley Wash is the remnant of Late-tertiary to Pleistocene lakes and river systems that flowed southward out of Meadow Valley, through Rainbow Canyon, and eventually to the Colorado River. Bed rock exposed within and around the subject lands consists of sediments (mostly volcanic derived) that were deposited in this ancient lake."[1]

Climate in the area is quite harsh, with winter temperatures well below freezing and summer temperatures well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The area has had snow in May and 90 degree heat as late as November. Rainfall averages only 8-14 inches per year, divided almost equally between summer and winter. Summer rains are localized, short and very intense while winter/spring rains are gentler and cover a wider area.

Vegetation in the area is characterized by a shadscale community, typical to the Great Basin. Drainage bottoms support vegetation consisting of shadscale, greasewood, bunchgrasses, and upper bench-lands support vegetation of pinyon-juniper and bunchgrasses. Scattered pockets of perennial grasses within the pinyon-juniper communities supply the majority of forage for wildlife, wild horses, and livestock. Wildlife species that frequent the area consist of mule deer, birds, reptiles, and mammals common to the Great Basin.

Resources Not Present or Affected by the Proposed Action

There would be no impacts to floodplains, wetlands and riparian areas; special status species (federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or BLM Nevada sensitive species); migratory birds; wild and scenic rivers; prime or unique farmlands; water quality (drinking/ground); Native American religious concerns; or environmental justice. In addition, the proposed parcels to be sold are not located in or near any special designated area such as Wilderness Study Areas, Wilderness Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, or Special Designation Areas. Since there would be no impact, all the above resources are dismissed from environmental review and are not discussed further.

Air Quality

Affected Environment

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), air pollutants come from a variety of natural and man-made sources. Natural sources include windblown dust particulates from unpaved roads, agricultural fields, and other sources. The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), Bureau of Air Quality web-site http://ndep.nv.gov/baqp/index.htm, details ambient air monitoring sites throughout Nevada. Unfortunately, there is no data available for the east-central portion of the state.

Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

Periodic degradation of air quality occurs due to winds blowing dust from nearby agricultural fields, access roads, and sparsely vegetated natural areas. The proposed land sale of two parcels will increase the amount of plowed and irrigated fields, thereby increasing the likelihood of more airborne dust particulates.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would result in no further land plowed and irrigated with no additional dust being released into the air.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Affected Environment

Cultural resources in and around the project area are minimal. Numerous cultural resource inventories have been conducted adjacent to the project area. These inventories located few cultural resources. The few cultural resources noted in the adjacent area are comprised of lithic scatters, isolated lithic artifacts, historic debris scatters and isolated historic debris.

In October of 2003 four District Archaeological Technicians and one archaeologist performed a Class III cultural resource intensive inventory for the entire proposed project area. This inventory located one isolated artifact (crushed fuel can) for the entire project area.

There are no paleontological resource sites known within a 6-mile radius of the proposed sale parcels. Fossil bearing strata are not present within the parcels proposed for sale.

Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The only cultural resource located during the Class III inventory was the isolated crushed fuel can. Isolated artifacts are categorically not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places per the State Protocol Agreement between the BLM and Nevada State Historic Preservation Office. No cultural or paleontological properties will be affected by this proposed action.

No Action Alternative

There would be no impacts to cultural or paleontological resources.

Geology

Affected Environment

A mineral report addressing fluid minerals (oil and gas), solid minerals (metallic or hard rock), saleable minerals (sand and gravel), and geothermal resources was completed on March 30, 2004.

"There are no known mineral deposits in the immediate area of the subject parcels. The area is underlain by an unknown thickness of silty alluvium and a thousand feet, or so of the Panaca Formation. Deposits known to occur in the Panaca Formation include diatomite and pumices-volcanic ash. None of these were observed in the field inspection of the subject land."[1]

"One mining claim had been located over a portion of the subject land, but it has since been abandoned. It was once leased for oil and gas, but that lease has expired."[1]

Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

"Oil and gas (Fluid Minerals) and Geothermal would be reserved to the federal government. All other minerals may be disposed of with the subject parcels or reserved to the federal government."[1]

"There are no known active mining claims, mineral leases, or material sites on the subject land. Oil and gas well drilling and agricultural irrigating could interfere with one another. Normal well spacing in Nevada is 160 acres in which case drilling could be accommodated on the public lands that surround the subject parcels.

"Geothermal development would incur surface interference problems similar to those for oil and gas operations."[1]

No Action Alternative

This alternative would not result in any changes from current management on the subject parcels. Both surface and mineral estate would be maintained by the Federal Government. No mineral resources would be affected by the No Action Alternative.

Invasive, Non Native Species (Including Noxious Weeds)

Affected Environment

On March 8, 2004, a Noxious Weed Risk Assessment was completed for the proposed Bennett Springs Wash Land Sale (N-76851), pursuant to FLPMA Section 203, Attachment 3.

There are two categories of weeds as defined by the BLM. One is invasive, non native weeds. The other is noxious weeds. Noxious weeds are listed in the Nevada Revised Statues.

The entire project area has been surveyed for noxious weeds by the Tri-County Weed District. The survey resulted in the recordation of *Tamarix ramosissima*, salt cedar or tamarisk along U.S. Highway 93, approximately 1 mile to the east of the proposed sale parcels (Figure 2, Weed Map).

Environmental Consequences
Proposed Action

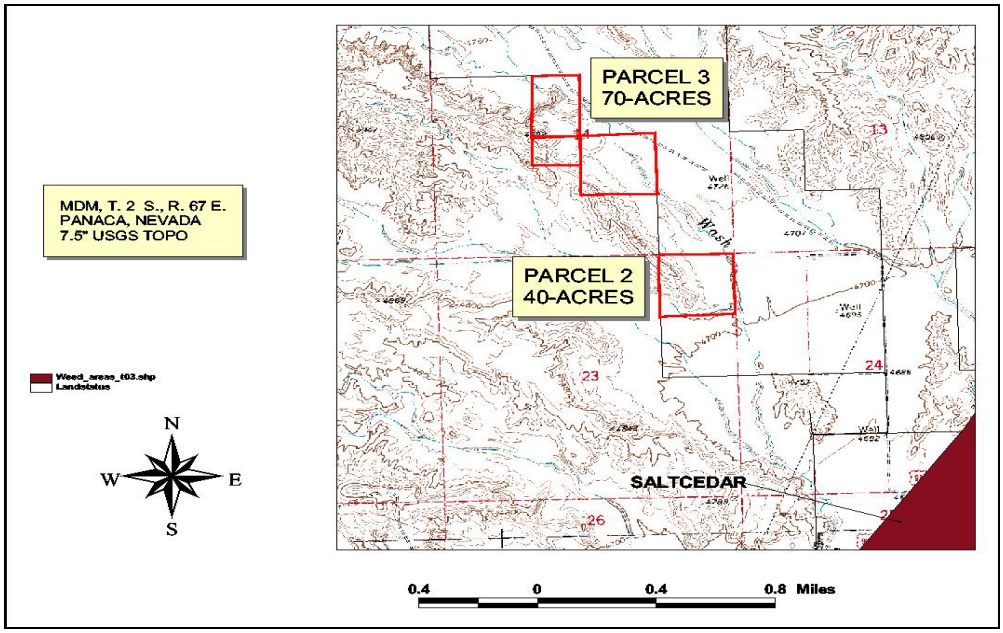
The project area would be exposed to potential invasive and noxious weeds as a result of development and production activities. Creation of disturbed areas often removes desirable perennial plant species and results in the release of introduced species seeds. The susceptibility to weeds would remain when uncovered or not in utilization, as well as, introduced in seed mix or farming equipment. Once the vegetative cover at the site is present, the risk of weed establishment would diminish to approximately pre-development levels.

The proposed sale of the BLM administered public land are likely to result in some areas becoming infested with noxious weed species even when preventative management actions are followed. However, allowing weeds to exist would be inconsistent with agricultural production.

No Action Alternative
Because of the location of salt cedar/tamarisk is located along heavily used and maintained U.S. Highway 93, spread of this invasive species is possible without proper control or abatement procedures.

Under the No Action Alternative other impacts as described above would not occur because the native vegetation would not be disturbed.

FIGURE 2.
Weed Map



Livestock Grazing

Affected Environment
The distinctive plant communities associated with the proposed land sale are found in the Major Land Resource Area (MLRA), labeled Southern Nevada Basin and Range, number 029. These associations are: shadscale and winterfat. The shadscale association contains: shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), spiny hopsage (*Grayia spinosa*), Nevada jointfir (*Ephedra nevadensis*), galleta *(Hillaria jamesii*), and big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentate wyomingensis*). The winterfat association contains: winterfat (*Ceretoides lanata*), Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*), bud sagebrush (*Artemisia spinescens*), galleta *(Hillaria jamesii*), shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), and squirreltail (*Sitanion hystrix*).

Environmental Consequences
A grazing waiver was sent to Mr. Lom Thompson on December 2, 2003. As of March 12, 2004, there has been no reply to the voluntary forfeiture of two Animal Unit Month (AUM's) in the Comet Grazing Allotment (No.21018).
Proposed Action
Under the proposed action the grazing permittee would lose two AUMs due to a loss of land. This would result in a permit reduction from 214 to 212 AUMs . In order to maintain the livestock operation at 18 cattle the permittee would need to run their cattle six days less than his current permit (Table 1).

Table 1.

The current grazing permit is as follows:

Permit	Permittee	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use	%Public Land	Total AUMs
1001 Ranch	Comet	18 Cattle	03/01 to 02/28	100	214

No Action Alternative
Under this No Action Alternative there would be no loss of AUMs and there would be no impact to the grazing permit.

Socio-Economic Factors

Affected Environment
Lincoln County is sparsely populated. Employment is predominantly government services, tourism, and agriculture.

Environmental Consequences
Proposed Action
The proposed action would provide an opportunity for private, local farmers to generate an economic use of the public lands and provide the local community with additional tax-base.

No Action Alternative
The local community would be deprived of potential future privately-owned land. The economic development of public lands would not occur.

Soils, Hydrology, and Water Resources

Affected Environment
Soils are mostly of the Geer-Heist association. These soils are defined as deep moderately drained to moderately drained gravelly sandy loams. Erosion to water is slight to moderate. Normal precipitation is eight to twelve inches per year received mostly from thunderstorms in the warmer seasons.

The private land owner, who shares common property lines with the subject parcels, currently has two functioning center-pivots on his property.

Environmental Consequences
Proposed Action
The proposed land sale parcels are located on the bottom and side-slopes of the Bennett Springs Wash which is normally dry. The occasional stream flow is driven by storm runoff and snow melt. There would be no affect to soils and hydrology by the proposed disposal of these parcels.

There are no associated water rights on the parcels for sale. It will be the decision of the Nevada State Water Engineer to grant additional water needed for any agricultural use on these parcels.

No Action Alternative
Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no affect to soils and hydrology.

Recreation

Affected Environment
The proposed land sale parcels are located in an area generally isolated and undeveloped with no recreation facilities. Recreation activities could include off-highway vehicle use, hunting, cultural tourism, and camping in a dispersed semi-private recreation setting. Other recreational (within a 10-mile radius) activities available include horseback riding, rock and fossil collection, sightseeing, and wildlife viewing.

Environmental Consequences
Proposed Action
It is anticipated that the proposed land sale would not have direct or indirect impacts on the recreation of the area.

No Action Alternative
Under the No Action Alternative there would be no affect to recreation opportunities.

Access

Affected Environment
The parcels of land for sale are accessed from U.S. Highway 93, to the west across a combination of private and public land. There is no associated formal right-of-way (ROW) to give "legal" access to the BLM administered public land.

Environmental Consequences
Proposed Action
The successful bidder for the parcels would need to coordinate with the private land owners in order to gain access to their parcels. No BLM issued ROW is needed as a result of this land sale, unless upgrading the road is required or a lending institution requires it.

No Action Alternative
Access to the subject parcels is across private and BLM administered land. Currently, there is no formal agreement for the public to cross on private land.

Visual Resources Management (VRM)

Affected Environment
The proposed land sale parcels are located in central Lincoln County and is low shrub with sporadic pinyon-juniper trees in the vicinity. The Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class is IV, which allows for activities that involve major modifications of the visual landscape.

Environmental Consequences
Proposed Action
The proposed action is within the activities allowed for the VRM classification. The proposed land sales would not affect the VRM in the area.

No Action Alternative
There would be no impact to the view shed under the No Action Alternative.

Wastes, Hazardous and Solid

Affected Environment
Hazardous materials typically found on public land in eastern Nevada include solid waste dumps (household trash), junked automobiles and farm equipment, old transformers containing PCBs, construction waste, tires, automobile batteries and occasionally abandoned drums and containers. The majority of these items may be simply removed and deposited in a municipal landfill.

On January 27, 2004, an on-site inspection was made by Jeannette Matovich (Ely District Hazardous Materials Coordinator). In addition an oral interview with the neighboring landowner, Mr. A. Morely Wilson, was conducted for the purposes of establishing known historic use of pesticides, herbicides, and solid waste dumping. Pieces of metal machinery are present on Parcel 2.

Environmental Consequences
Proposed Action
The solid waste dump on parcel two does not appear to pose a threat to human health or the environment. As a result of agricultural activities, use of pesticides, herbicides and solid waste dumping could increase.

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would neither increase nor decrease the use or frequency of solid and/or hazardous material waste.

Wild Horses and Burros

Affected Environment
The Highland Peak Herd Management Area (HMA) is a 137,000 acre HMA located to the west of the small town of Panaca, NV. The HMA consists of two small mountain ranges (Highland and Chief) and their associated foothills. The HMA has only one primary source of water that is centrally located within the HMA, but several small spring sources are found along the Highland Peak Range.

The appropriate management level for the Highland Peak HMA is 20-33 wild horses. The current (as of March 2004), estimated population is 66 wild horses. The proposed land sale is located outside the boundary of the Highland Peak HMA. However, a few horses have been observed in and around the area. This may be occurring because of the excess wild horses in the HMA.

Environmental Consequences
Proposed Action
If sold, future conflict between wild horses and private land owners could occur. If conflicts occur, it is incumbent on the private land owner to fence-out wild horses.

No Action Alternative
The No Action Alternative would result in no impact to wild horses.

Wildlife

Affected Environment
The area in which the parcels are proposed to be sold is considered year-long mule deer habitat. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) is currently addressing depredation on existing adjacent alfalfa fields. Other Great Basin mammals, reptiles, and birds frequent the area as well.

Environmental Consequences
Proposed Action
The highest and best use for these parcels has been determined to be agricultural. An increase in the number of acres devoted to agricultural crops could increase the number of mule deer on the property. This would in turn, increase the depredation problem NDOW is currently addressing.

No Action Alternative
If the parcels remain in public ownership, an increase in the amount of acres devoted to agriculture would stay as they are now. The possibility of mule deer depredation issues would continue and may increase.

IV. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts could result from individually minor, but collectively significant actions, taking place over a period of time (Council on Environmental Quality, Regulations for Implementation of NEPA, 1508.7).

Cumulative impacts of this project would include the production of alfalfa and wheat crops along Bennett Springs Wash. The addition of these 110 acres to the Lincoln County tax base would be a long range benefit for a county that is over 85% public land.

Past Actions
The following table is a synopsis and Master Title Plat (MTP) of those rights-of-way, range improvements, and disposals in Township 2 South, Range 67 East, Lincoln County, Nevada (Table 2 & Figure 3). Additionally, portions of Sections 14 and 23 have been leased for Oil and Gas; the lease has since expired.

Table 2. Land Use Permits on Parcels 2 and 3

ROW/IMPROVEMENT NUMBER	ROW HOLDER/PURPOSE
N-10114	Nevada Division of State Parks, Cathedral Gorge State Park
N-63221	Level 3, Fiber Optic Line
N-43923	WorldCom, Fiber Optic Line
NVCC-020073	LN. County Power District, Power line including Panaca Area
N-66377	LN. County Power District, Power line including Meadow Valley Wash
Nev-042771	Union Pacific Rail Road
NVCC-0356	SP La, SL, and UP Rail Roads
Nev-063256	Power line for private use
Nev-064889	Irrigation facilities for private use
N-17054	LN. Communications, Buried Telephone line
NVCC-02064	Federal Highway, U.S. HWY 93
406	Rangeland Improvement, Fence
0237	Rangeland Improvement, Fence
27-68-0113	Desert Land Entry Land Patent
27-71-0101	Desert Land Entry Land Patent
27-68-0078	Desert Land Entry Land Patent
607515	Desert Land Entry Land Patent
27-79-0077	FLPMA Direct Sale

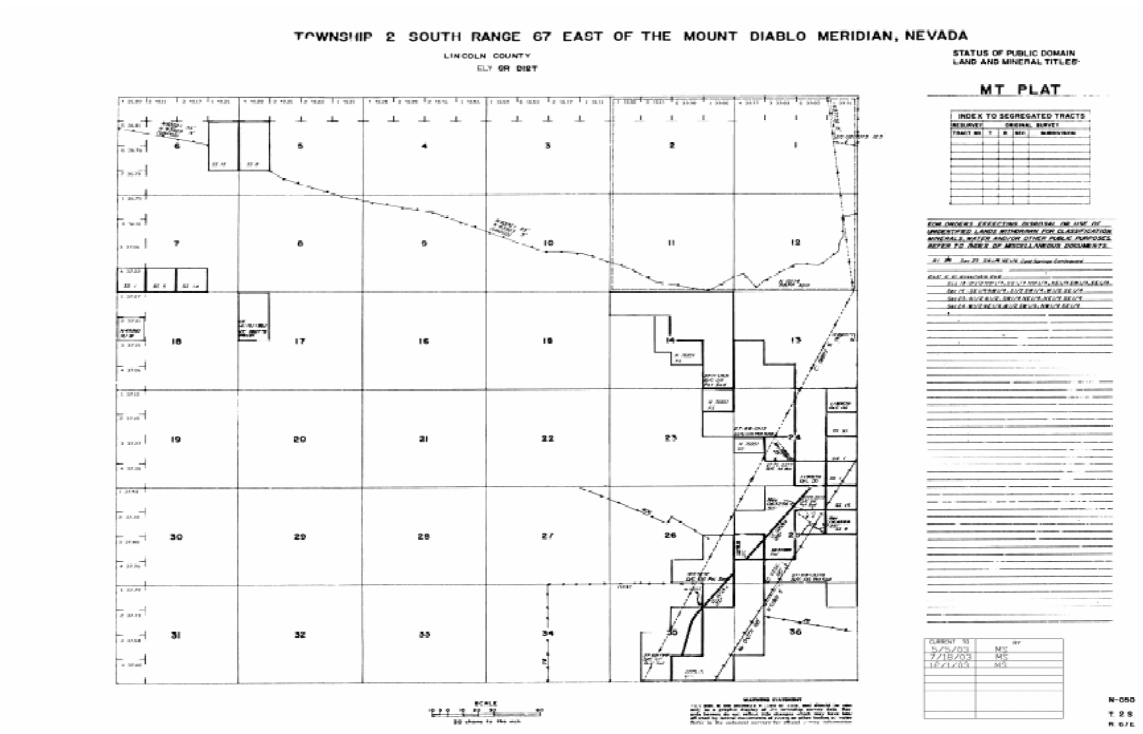
Present Actions
The proposed land sale parcels are located both in and near the proposed rail corridor for the Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear waste transport. The proposed corridor is currently under a land segregation pending the application.

Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions
More public land will be identified for disposal in communities in rural Nevada. Along with the disposal of public land will be the increased need for rights-of-way, recreation opportunities, and other uses of BLM administered land. There is currently a land segregation for a proposed Department of Energy railroad corridor to Yucca Mountain. The segregation does cover a portion of Parcel 2 (40-acre parcel). This railroad corridor segregation is subsequent to the land sale segregation created for the competitive sale and is "junior" to the land sale segregation. This means land sale may proceed prior to any decision made on the railroad.

Impacts - Proposed Action
The proposed action would add an additional 110 acres of privately owned land to the tax base of Lincoln County. There would be long-term impacts to air quality, wildlife, and livestock due to loss of native vegetation.

Impacts - No Action Alternative
The cumulative impacts as described above would not occur under the No Action Alternative.

Figure 3. Master Title Plat



V. PROPOSED MITIGATING MEASURES

No mitigating measures are included or will be for this proposed land sale.

Even though this sale parcels are outside a wild horse herd management area and there will be a total loss of 2 AUMs, Nevada is a "fence-out" state. Any problems with wild horses and livestock require the landowner to fence out offending animals from their fields.

VI. MONITORING

There are no monitoring measures needed for the proposed land sale.

VII. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Intensity of Public Interest and Record of Contacts

There is general public interest in this type of land and realty action. The proposed action to sell BLM administered public land was discussed during the May 22, 2003 Tribal Coordination Meeting.
Notification of the Initial Planning was posted on the Ely Field Office BLM Internet site on November 18, 2003 (http://www.nv.blm.gov/ely/nepa/ea_list.htm) to solicit public participation in the EA. Notification of this preliminary EA is being sent to:

Lincoln County Commission
Committee for the High Desert
Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Nevada State Clearinghouse
Sierra Club
Western Land Exchange

Record of Internal District Review

Karen Prentice	Invasive, Non-Native Species
Jared Redington	Range, Wild Horses and Burros
NathanThomas	Cultural, Historic, and Paleontological Resources
Jack Tribble	Recreation, Visual Resource Management, and Wilderness
Jeanette Matovich	Hazardous/Solid Waste
Jeff Brower	Water Quality/Floodplains
William Wilson	Geology & Minerals
Paul Podborny William Smith	Wildlife, Migratory Birds, Special Status Plants, Special Status Animals Riparian/Wetlands
Elvis Wall	Native American Consultation
Susan Baughman	Environmental Coordinator

Attachment 1

References and Selected Bibliography

1. Bureau of Land Management, 2004. Mineral Potential Report. William Wilson, Geologist.
2. Bureau of Land Management, 2004. Cultural Resource Inventory Report. Nathan Thomas, Archaeologist.
3. Bureau of Land Management, 2004. Noxious Weed Risk Assessment. Karen Prentice, Noxious Weed Coordinator.
4. Bureau of Land Management, 2004. Environmental Site Assessment. Jeanette Matovich, Hazardous Materials Coordinator.
5. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), April 199, EPA-456/F-99-001, Pamphlet on "How Air Pollution Affects the View".
6. Nevada Department of Environmental Quality, Bureau of Air Quality web-site at: http://ndep.nv.gov/baqp/index.htm

Attachment 2

Photos of the Proposed Bennett Springs Wash Land Sale

View of Parcel 2 looking east. Agricultural fields in background are privately owned land.

Photo taken from parcel 2 looking north at parcel 3.

Photo of Parcel 2 looking south-southeast. Note solid debris in the form of an old car body in center of frame.

Photo of Parcel 3 taken while standing on ridge in Parcel 2. View to the North-northeast.

Attachment 3

Risk Assessment for Noxious Weeds

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR NOXIOUS WEEDS

On March 8, 2004, a Noxious Weed Risk Assessment was completed for the proposed Bennett Springs Wash land sale (N-76851), pursuant to FLPMA Section 203. The proposed project is located in Mount Diablo Meridian, Lincoln County, Nevada, T. 2 S., R. 67 E., Sections 14 and 23 (See attached map).

The proposed competitive land sale will be 110.00 acres of public land administered by the BLM. The sale consists of 2 separate, non-conjoined parcels which will ultimately leave Federal jurisdiction and become private land. The area is zoned for agricultural use and will therefore likely result in additional plowed fields of wheat and alfalfa. The sale is projected to occur sometime in August 2004.

The entire area has been surveyed for noxious weeds by the Tri-County Weed District. The survey resulted in the recordation of *Tamarix ramosissima*, Salt Cedar or Tamarisk along U.S. Highway 93, approximately 1 mile to the east of the proposed sale parcels.

Factor 1 assesses the likelihood of noxious weed species spreading to the project area.

For this project, the factor rates as (4) Moderate, at the present time.

Moderate (4-7)	**Noxious weed species *located immediately adjacent to or within the project area*. Project activities are likely to result in some areas becoming infested with noxious weed species even when preventative management actions are followed. Control measures are essential to prevent the spread of noxious weeds within the project area.**

This means that the weed map in the GIS layers was consulted and the natural path of spread is along Rights-of-Way that are used heavily and maintained on a regular basis, in this case U.S. Highway 93.

Factor 2 assesses the consequences of noxious weed establishment in the project area.
For this project, the factor rates as (4) Moderate, at this time.

Moderate (4-7)	**Possible adverse effects on site and possible expansion of infestation within the project area. Cumulative effects on native plant communities are likely, but limited.**

The Risk Rating is obtained by multiplying Factor 1 by Factor 2.

For this project, the Risk Rating is an 8.

Low (1-10)	**Proceed as planned. Initiate control treatment on noxious weed populations that get established in the area.**

Reviewed by: _____ _____

Karen Prentice Date
Ely District Weed Coordinator