

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: April 7, 2015

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 3C

STAFF: Ann Bollinger, Open Space Administrator

REQUEST: **For Possible Action:** To recommend to the Board of Supervisors the transmittal of comments to the Bureau of Land Management on the Carson City District Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

GENERAL DISCUSSION: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released the Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and related Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in late 2014, and they have conducted several public presentations throughout the region. The document is extensive. Staff anticipates providing comments on several subjects; however, this staff report only contains comments previously discussed with the Commission and relevant to the purview the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The deadline for comments is April 27, 2015.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: I move recommend to the Board of Supervisors the transmittal of comments to the Bureau of Land Management on the Carson City District Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

Carson City Comments Regarding the
Bureau of Land Management, Carson City District
Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Introduction:

Several subjects are not addressed in this comment letter. Carson City either has no comment or agrees with the action(s) identified in Alternative E, the agency preferred alternative.

The best written plan will only be as good as the funding provided to put that plan into action. It is hoped that Congress will see the wisdom in providing the necessary funding to enact this plan and project these lands.

Soils and Water Resources

Page 2-23, Goal: Manage soils and water resources to maintain watershed health, enhance ecosystem health, and provide for public uses while insuring ecological diversity and sustainability. Objective: Reduce soil loss and associated flood and sediment damage caused by accelerated wind and water erosion due to ground-disturbing activity.

- Carson City recommends adding the following action to the above objective, “Limit OHV use to designated roads and trails in areas of severe erosion hazard susceptibility and in watersheds where OHV use is causing flood and sediment problems.” This is a particular concern in the canyons and drainages along Sierra Vista Lane where OHVs have impacted vegetation and soils on steep slopes, resulting in flooding and increased sediment deposition into the Carson River (a priority watershed).

Wild Horse and Burros

Page 2-72, Goal: Manage healthy animals in balance with other uses and the productive capacity of their habitat within Herd Management Areas (HMAs).

- The City supports the careful and ongoing management of wild horses where the public can enjoy these animals in a safe, managed environment. Therefore, Carson City supports Alternative E, the agency preferred alternative, which among other actions, includes:
 - Manage HMAs where habitat conditions (forage, water, cover, space) are adequate to support healthy populations and where a thriving natural ecological balances and multiple-use relationship can be achieved and maintained;
 - Maintain HMAs and Herd Areas (Has), including the Pine Nut HA/HMA located within Carson City;
 - Manage wild horses and burros at identified Appropriate Management Levels (AML) range. When populations approach the upper AML level and monitoring

data supports that excess animals are present, gather wild horses and burros to reduce numbers to the lower limit of AML range.

Recreation and Visitor Services

Page ES-12, Table ES-2, Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs)

- Based on the definitions for Alternative C (develops management strategies to preserve and protect ecosystem health and resource values across the planning area, while providing multiple use and sustained yield) and Alternative D (emphasizes the increased demand on BLM-administered lands within the urban interface area), it would seem that the most appropriate alternative for the Virginia Range would be Alternative D. With that said, the Virginia Range is identified in the Alternative E, the agency preferred alternative. Carson City agrees with the acres identified in Alternative E.

Page 2-168, Pine Nut ERMA

- While the term “Front Country” is broadly defined later (Page 3-162), it would be helpful to see a figure of the areas defined as the “Front Country RMZ,” Pine Nut Crest RMZ,” and “Rural RMZ”. This figure would also illustrate the VRM classes in the respective recreation management zones. Depending on the specific locations, Carson City would support easily accessible staging areas for OHV recreation – with the objective to provide access and travel routes into the Pine Nut Crest RMZ and Rural RMZ. Carson City generally supports the actions identified in Alternative E, which includes the actions in Alternative B plus more.

Page 2-173, Virginia Range ERMA, Alternative E

- “Objective: Virginia Range ERMA for recreation opportunities that emphasize both motorized and nonmotorized recreation uses. Emphasize equestrian use east of Washoe Lake, mountain biking north of Centennial Park, and OHV touring and trail riding east of Jumbo staging area.”
 - Carson City’s Unified Pathways Master Plan identifies motorized and nonmotorized uses north of Centennial Park. Carson City offers to partner with BLM to identify and map the various trails, including education and signage to inform the public.

Page H-78 to H-81, Pine Nuts ERMA – Pine Nut Crest RMZ and Rural RMZ

- Why aren’t there any details under Alternative E?

Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management

Please note that the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 states that OHV use is limited to designated trails and roads in existence at the time of adoption of the lands bill until superseded by a vehicle management plan.

Page 2-180, Table 2-2, Description of Alternatives A, B, C, D, and E

- In Carson City, all areas are identified as “limited to existing routes.” What defines an existing route and how is this effectively communicated to users? Will maps be provided to the public; and if so, can this be a coordinated effort with Carson City?

Page 2-184, Table 2-2, Description of Alternatives A, B, C, D, and E, Travel Management Areas (TMAs)

- Carson City acknowledges there will subsequent travel management planning in which an interdisciplinary review team will analyze each route and recommend designations based on various criteria.

Page 3-174, Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management

- “BLM Manual 1626, Travel and Transportation Management, (BLM 2011d) requires the establishment of a long-term, sustainable, multi-modal transportation system of open areas, roads, primitive roads, and trails that addresses public and administrative access needs to and across BLM-administered lands and related waters.” What defines a transportation system as long-term and sustainable?

Page 3-176, Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management – Current Conditions

- Concerning areas classified as Open, Limited, or Closed to motorized travel: How will users know they are traveling between areas? If an area changes from one classification to another, will there be an education period? How will this be enforced?

Page A-66, Figure 2-66, Alternative E

- While the RMP identifies the fact that the Prison Hill Recreation Area will be transferred to Carson City, Figure 2-66 should illustrate that the northern 2/3rds of Prison Hill is currently closed to motorized travel (per BLM regulations and as illustrated in Alternative A) and will continue to be closed to motorized travel (per the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009).