

Nevada Mustangs Star in Extreme Makeover

It didn't take long for Tom King to see that the mustang he drew for the Extreme Mustang Makeover was going to be a pleasure to train.

"He is accepting the way I go at it," said King, referring to his training techniques. "He wants to please, likes to be bathed, drinks out of a hose, and I can pick up his feet with a rope."

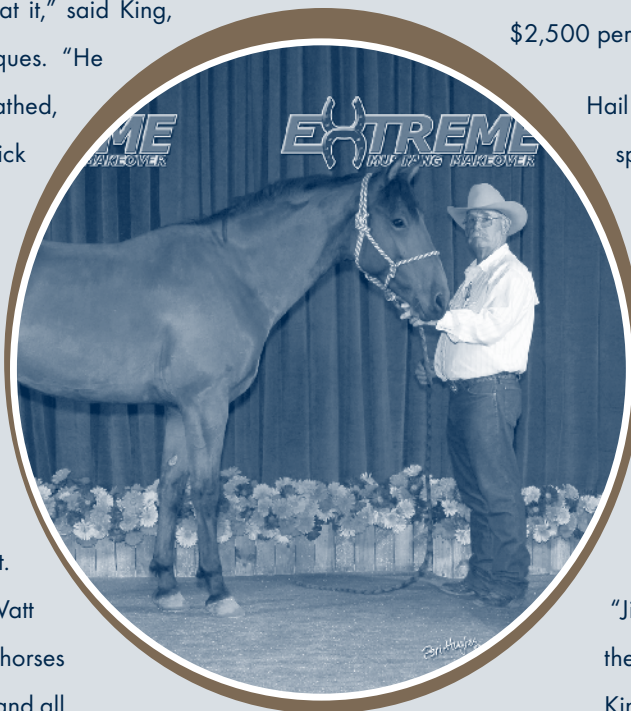
King was chosen to be among 100 horse trainers across the county to compete in the Makeover. The deal was 100 trainers, 100 Nevada mustangs, and 100 days to train before the competition on Sept. 22 at the Will Rogers Center Watt Area in Fort Worth, Tex. The wild horses were all younger than five years and all were bay or sorrel colors.

A professional cutting horse trainer from Texas, Guy Woods, took first place in the inaugural Extreme Mustang Makeover event. Woods won \$10,000 with the high score as his wild horse Max loped in smooth circles and performed a series of jumps over poles balanced on low barrels in the freestyle finals. Woods also became the owner of a wild mustang; he adopted Max during the competitive bid adoption.

Many of the trainers adopted their wild horses. Seventy-five of the 100 Mustangs made it to the event and they were all adopted bringing in a total of \$233,100. The high bid horse was "Hail Yeah," for \$50,000. The adoption averaged \$2,500 per animal.

Hail Yeah's trainer, Ray Ariss, was sponsored by his hometown Norco, Calif. Ariss trained Hail Yeah to perform at dressage, to pull a cart and in mounted shooting. Hail Yeah will be the official mascot of the city of Norco, which is registered as Horsetown USA.

King and his wild horse, Jimmy, tied for 17th place in the competition. "Jimmy was named after Jim Dorrance, the brother of Tom Dorrance," said King. "It was him and Tom Marvel who taught me about horses and cows. I hold them in great respect as they both are great horsemen and cowmen."



Farrier and horse trainer Tom King and his mustang Jimmy at the Extreme Mustang Makeover.

Jimmy found a new home back here in Nevada. Frank Cassas, from Reno, was the winning bidder for Jimmy, paying \$1,900 to adopt him.

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State Director's Column



Nevada is on the verge of leading the nation in clean energy production. Our public lands show great potential for the development of geothermal energy, and BLM is also seeing an upswing in applications for solar and wind energy related rights-of-ways.

Geothermal resources on Nevada's public and private lands are significant. BLM Nevada has the largest geothermal program in the BLM with more than two-thirds of all Federal acres leased nationally. We are on track to produce more than 1,000 megawatts of geothermal power over the next few years. This potential has the geothermal industry focused on us.

BLM recognizes we play an important role in the development and growth of renewable energy by processing energy-related leases and permit applications in a timely manner. According to a 2006 report by the Geothermal Energy Association, Nevada is the one state that has put together federal and state efforts to develop geothermal in an effective way. BLM is proud to be part of the solution in promoting the responsible development of geothermal energy.

Energy resources on public lands contribute significantly to American's quality of life. Our recent geothermal lease sale brought in nearly \$11.7 million for 43 parcels sold in Nevada—\$8.5 million of which will be paid to the state and counties where the parcels are located. Under new regulations and a competitive leasing process implemented under the Energy Policy Act, proceeds from the sale of geothermal leases will be distributed 50 percent to the state, 25 percent to the county where the revenue is generated and 25 percent to the BLM.

The development of solar and wind energy resources is starting to gain momentum. BLM Nevada has 66 applications for wind

energy rights-of-way around the state, many of which are in the monitoring stage. BLM has 21 solar energy proposals for sites in southern Nevada.

BLM plays a critical role in delivering energy. Wind, solar and geothermal energy, as well as oil and gas pipelines and power transmission lines require rights-of-way across public lands. The development of this basic infrastructure is key to making renewable energy an economically viable resource. For this reason, the Department of Energy, with BLM support, is looking at designating energy corridors throughout the west to facilitate development of energy resources.

A significant opportunity exists to increase the supply of domestic energy through environmentally sound development on public lands. Energy development requires environmental analysis and public input on all phases of development. The potential for public lands to increase renewable energy production is very real. We are excited to be part of the clean energy future.

– Ron Wenker

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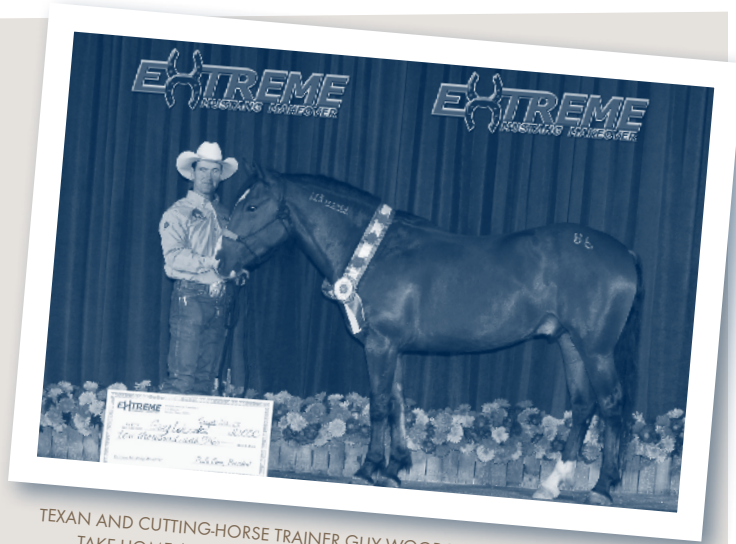
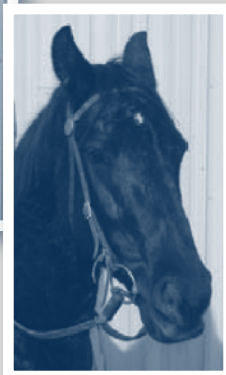
"I think Jimmy had the best looking feet, but that wasn't part of the judging," said King, a farrier. "We had a great time in Fort Worth. I want to be in the competition again next year."

The Mustang Heritage Foundation developed the Extreme Mustang Makeover in partnership with the BLM.

"This event has brought positive attention to what the BLM has been saying about the American Mustang all along," said Don Glenn, chief of the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Division. "Wild horses are beautiful, versatile and trainable."

Glenn credited Patti Colbert with the Mustang Heritage Foundation for the development and management of the event and the trainers for their work with the horses.

"This has been a stunning success," said Glenn. "The BLM is truly grateful for all Patti has done with this wonderful idea. And a lot of credit goes to the trainers for taking these Mustangs and shaping them into marketable horses."



TEXAN AND CUTTING-HORSE TRAINER GUY WOODS AND NEVADA MUSTANG MAX TAKE HOME \$10,000 FOR FIRST PLACE AT THE EXTREME MUSTANG MAKEOVER.

Patti Colbert and the Mustang Heritage Foundation have great ideas to add excitement to the 2008 Extreme Mustang Makeover. To find out more, go to their website at www.mustangheritagefoundation.org.

Saddle-trained Horse Adoption

16 wild horses; each horse up to 120 days of intensive training

Saturday, Feb. 9

Preview: 9 a.m.

Competitive oral bid: 10 a.m.

Bids start at \$150

Warm Springs Correctional Center, Carson City

Security Restriction: No blue clothing or blue jeans

Adopters must meet qualifications to bid

Call Susie Stokke at 775-861-6469 for information and directions

See photos online at: www.blm.gov/nv/

Is the Sagebrush Ocean Becoming the Great Cheatgrass Basin?

Its real name is downy brome, but most people know it as cheatgrass. This introduced annual is a cheat; it cheats other plants by germinating early and grabbing all the moisture. It cheats grazing and browsing animals by covering hill and dale with a bright green carpet; yet a few weeks from green-up it matures, becoming an unpalatable purplish red. The promise of forage disappears as quickly as it arrived. Then the worst part begins.

At maturity cheatgrass becomes a fire hazard, forming straw-colored mats of fine fuels, easily sparked to fire by lightning, catalytic converters or a bullet ricocheting off a rock. Cheatgrass has changed the fire cycle in Nevada from one ranging from 15 to over 100 years to every three to five years. Most native species, especially shrubs, cannot recover from frequent reburning, but cheatgrass can.

Cheatgrass is the ecologically dominant plant species on more than 25 million acres of land in the Great Basin. In Nevada, there are at least 11 million acres dominated by this invader.

BLM is involved in several approaches to manage cheatgrass:

- Fire rehabilitation and restoration
- Livestock grazing
- Development of seed and seeding techniques for reestablishing desirable plants
- Herbicide treatments

First, we needed to know where the cheatgrass is. Almost everywhere is not a useful answer for management. BLM now has a good idea where the problem areas are thanks to the efforts of the Nevada Natural Heritage Program (NNHP) to map annual grass cover around the state. Using satellite imagery to detect the greenup and early drying stages, NNHP is able to map cheatgrass and the exotic annual grasses red brome and Mediterranean grass in southern Nevada.



AS CHEATGRASS MATURES IT TURNS PURPLISH RED.

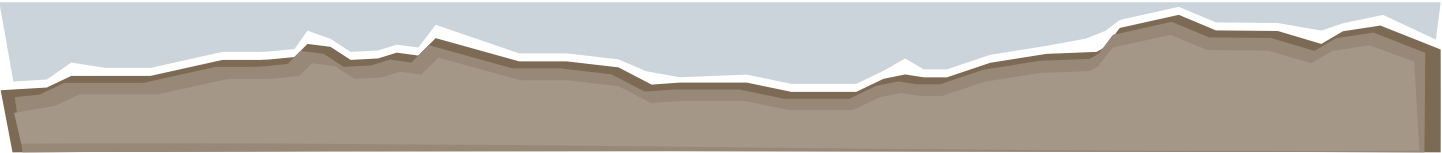


THE SLIGHTEST SPARK CAN SET THIS DRY CHEATGRASS ABLAZE.

The main cheatgrass management activity on BLM lands is emergency stabilization and rehabilitation following wild fires. We introduce species that we hope will compete with or displace cheatgrass. To increase our success, we are working through the Great Basin Restoration Initiative and Joint Fire Science Program to develop seed sources for native plants and learn more about the seeding and establishment culture for these plants.

Livestock grazing is ubiquitous on Nevada public lands and cows readily eat cheatgrass—while it's green. These two facts may lead to the development of management techniques that result in restoring desirable plant communities.

A recently completed study in northern Humboldt County showed that cheatgrass declined significantly on grazed plots, but declined still more on plots that were grazed and burned. Several Nevada ranchers in cooperation with BLM have set



up projects where cheatgrass is being grazed in a manner that creates fuel breaks. The study did not address the length of control and what species replace the cheatgrass. The big question is how to transition from a cheatgrass dominated plant community to one composed of a desired mix of natives or natives and non-natives.

The use of herbicides is expected to become a bigger factor in managing cheatgrass. Certain herbicides in proper dosages can kill cheatgrass while not affecting or only slightly affecting established perennial plants. BLM is near completion of a bureau-wide vegetation management environmental impact statement which will allow usage of herbicides that BLM has not been able to apply for general use on public lands. Herbicides can be used for control and for site preparation prior to seeding desirable species.

Through a concerted effort, we hope to reduce the threat of cheatgrass to Nevada's rangelands. Homeowners with cheatgrass can take actions to protect their property, especially those who live near wildlands. First, remove cheatgrass from at least 30 feet from buildings. Second, be extremely careful with potential sources of fire.

For more information on how to be fire safe, go to www.livingwithfire.info, or call 775-784-4848.
For more information about the NNHP ground cover mapping, go to <http://heritage.nv.gov/vlibanngr.htm>.

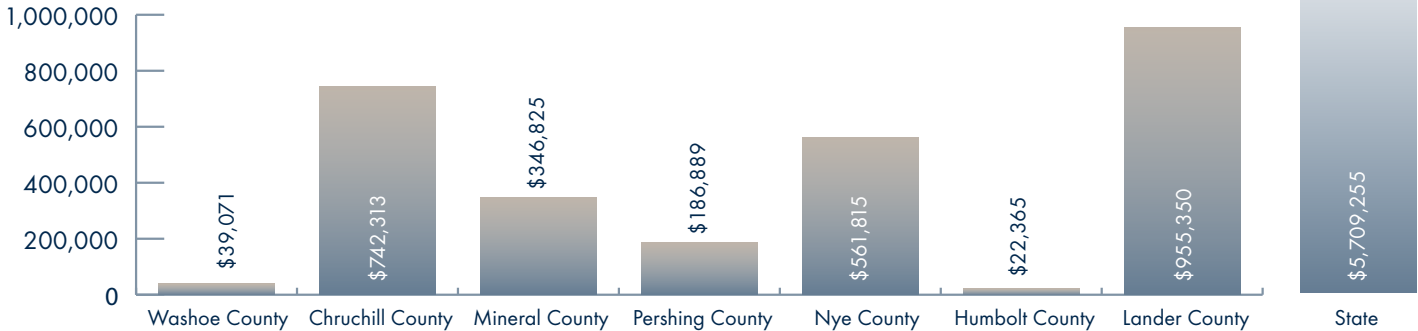
Geothermal Sale Nets \$8.5 Million for Nevada

The bidding for geothermal leases at BLM's August sale got off to a rousing start with the offer of a California parcel in the Geyser's area. It had been 22 years since the last Geyser parcel was offered and interest was intense. The Geyser bid was more than \$6.5 million for a 470-acre parcel; a record price for a geothermal lease. But it was the 43 parcels sold in Nevada that signaled the significance of geothermal as a viable renewable energy resource on the public lands.

The Nevada parcels brought in nearly \$11.7 million—\$8.5 million of which will be paid to the state and counties where the parcels are located.

Under new regulations and a competitive leasing process implemented under the Energy Policy Act, proceeds from the sale of geothermal leases will be distributed 50 percent to the state, 25 percent to the county and 25 percent to the BLM.

The total bonus bids brought in \$11,418,509. The bonus bids paid to the State and counties where the lease parcels are located is:



Additionally the total for the first year rental, \$251,312 will be distributed according to the 50/25/25 split. The State will receive \$125,656 and the counties will share \$62,828, which will be determined by percentage of acres. The high bid for a Nevada parcel was more than \$2.6 million for a 5,120-acre parcel made by Ormat Nevada Inc.

Nominate Lands for Geothermal Lease Sale

BLM is accepting nominations of lands for a competitive geothermal lease sale through Feb. 29. Nominations must be submitted on BLM form 3203-1 and be accompanied with a nonrefundable filing fee of \$100 per nomination plus 10 cents per acre of land nominated. BLM will review nominated parcels for availability, environmental and cultural concerns prior to being placed on a sale list. The next geothermal sale is tentatively scheduled for July 15. Call Chris Pulliam at 775-861-6506, or e-mail: chris_pulliam@nv.blm.gov.

R h y o l i t e i n R e h a b

The town of Rhyolite was short lived; followed by a long lingering death. A gold strike in 1904 lasted less than eight years; but the cultural and archeological treasures of Rhyolite endure. Gone are hotels, bars, opera house, stock exchange, livery stable, swimming pools, baseball field, and banks. Left are remains—of the jail, schoolhouse, train depot, general store, miner’s cabin, and banks. A bottle house built by Tom Kelly, of beer, whiskey, soda and medicine bottles lasted the longest; the story is that a local family lived in it during the ‘60s and ‘70s.

Four miles southwest of Beatty, Rhyolite is seeing something of a revival. No one is moving into town, but the town is being spruced up and more than 80,000 visitors a year show up to take a look around.

Repairs to the town are happening thanks to the Rhyolite Partnership, which includes Nye County, Beatty General Improvement District, Town of Beatty, Beatty Museum, the Gold Well Open Air Museum, and numerous interested individuals.

-Two years ago, exterior repairs to the Tom Kelly Bottle House, including a new porch, doors, windows and roof, were completed.

-Nye County has funded \$75,000 to replace the roof on the Railroad Depot and have architectural and engineering plans done for future rehabilitation work on the depot and other structures. Rehabilitation work on the entire Depot will be ongoing as funding becomes available. The County also funded \$24,000 for a trench drain that will protect the Tom



RHYOLITE BOTTLE HOUSE BEFORE THE REPAIRS.



THE BOTTLE HOUSE WAS FENCED TO THWART

IN REHAB

Kelly Bottle House and \$28,000 for shade structures to protect the caretakers' RV. These projects will begin this winter.

-Several BLM funded projects will also begin this winter. These include the rehabilitation of a small, two-room miner's cabin with a new roof, windows, doors, and floors, ADA compliant walkways for the Tom Kelly Bottle House, bottle house parking lot improvements, and RV pads and utilities for on-site caretakers.

-The first phase of a BLM funded archaeological survey of the town site will also begin this winter, recording and identifying ruins, and other townsite features.

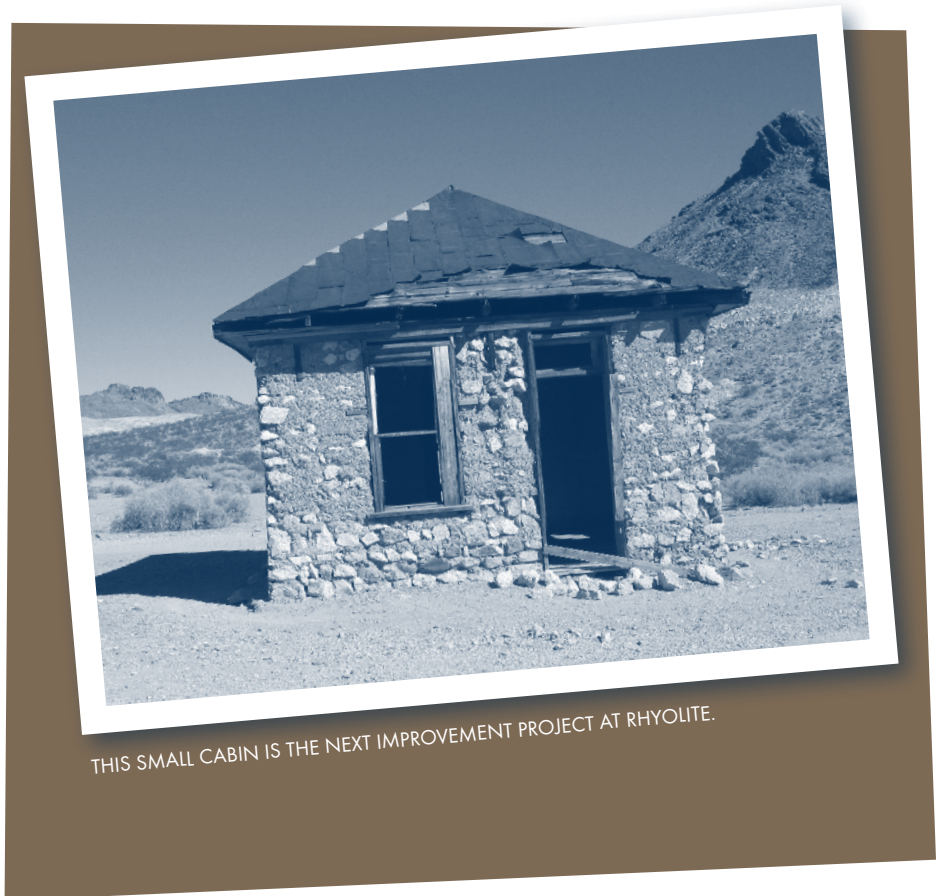
There are restrooms, but no services in Rhyolite. There are no fees, but visitors may find a friendly ghost town host, ready to tell about the town. Volunteer caretakers are frequently on site to open the bottle house complex so visitors can have a closer look at the bottle house. Once the concrete pads and utilities are installed, caretakers will be living on-site fulltime.

- Sue Rigby

Tonopah Field Office



VANDALISM.



THIS SMALL CABIN IS THE NEXT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AT RHYOLITE.

Conservation Easements Maintain Ranching Heritage

Sometimes keeping open space wins out over the economic pressures of urban expansion. That is the case for the River Fork Ranch, a 739-acre site at the confluence of the two forks of the Carson River in Douglas County.

Thanks to a federally-funded conservation easement, hay and alfalfa fields will continue to grow and be harvested, livestock will continue to graze in some pastures and the Brockliss Slough, a premiere migratory water bird area—one of the most ecologically important sites in the Carson Valley—will continue to support a large variety of bird and wildlife species.

The River Fork Ranch Conservation Easement was purchased for \$4 million in funds from Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) land sales in Clark County. The ranch owners, Timken-Sturgis Foundation and The Nature Conservancy conveyed the easement to the BLM to hold for the public in perpetuity to preserve the ecological integrity and preserve the open space character of the Carson River corridor.

Conservation easements such as this are arranged to enhance and restore the conservation values of private property in ecologically valuable areas. These conservation values for the River Fork Ranch include ranch land, open space, natural

landforms, waterways, meadows, wetlands and riparian natural communities.



RIVER FORK RANCH EASEMENT

It is the intent of the conservation easement to permit continuation of use of the property in a manner consistent with the conservation values identified. In the case of the River Fork Ranch, uses such as hay/alfalfa production and managed grazing will continue in some areas, while preservation of wet meadow and riparian habitat that supports a large variety of bird

and wildlife species will be emphasized on the rest of the property.

River Fork Ranch is the second SNPLMA-funded easement acquisition in the Carson Valley; the first was the Hussman Ranch in 2006.

Four other conservation easements in Douglas County have been approved and are being processed for acquisition with SNPLMA funding.

– **Mark Struble**

Carson City Field Office



We Built This City

Pssst, here's a dirty little secret—Las Vegas wasn't built on avarice and bad luck; it was built on sand and gravel. Tons and tons of sand, aggregate and decorative rock for residential and commercial business pads, concrete, landscaping, sidewalks, roads and flood detention basins are supplied, for a price, by your public lands.

The Las Vegas Field Office leads the nation in the amount of mineral materials sold from public lands, representing about one quarter of the Bureau's total sales each year. The scene at busy community pits in the Vegas valley is one of tractor trailer load after load leaving the pit, sometimes creating tractor-trailer rig traffic jams.

Because of the high demand, Las Vegas periodically offers competitive sales of certain parcels for amounts that can range anywhere from 500,000 tons to 19 million tons of material. In September, a competitive sale netted \$25.4 million for nearly 30 million tons of materials. The top bid per ton was \$.90 for materials from the South Jean Lake community pit. Bid prices on other lots averaged \$.76 per ton. The winning bidder is required to pay five percent down on the total value of the sale up front. The rest is paid as the material is produced, usually over 10 years.

The more typical scene around the rest of Nevada is that of a lone pickup truck with a shovel and a wheel-barrow in the back easing into a borrow pit. People are responsible for their own loading and transporting if they use public sand and gravel sites. BLM tries not to establish gravel sites that would compete with local businesses on private land.

BLM's field offices sell sand and gravel permits. Prices for sand and gravel generally range from \$.50 to \$.75 per yard. Collection sites are also available for landscape rocks. Rock permit prices vary but average around \$7 per ton. Permits can be purchased at the field offices or through the mail.

The money received from mineral material sales is typically distributed 76 percent to the Reclamation Fund, 20 percent to the U.S. Treasury and four percent to the State.

Contributors:

Kirsten Cannon, *Las Vegas Field Office*

Mike Brown, *Elko Field Office*

Mining Claim Season

BLM Nevada has our own version of black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving when crowds flock to retail outlets. Our black Friday is more like the "black last week in August" as mining claimants scramble to pay their annual maintenance fees by Sept. 1. Like retailers, we are selling something—one year of ownership of a mining claim. One size fits all and there are no deep discounts for those inclined to line up before dawn.

Owners of unpatented mining claims are required to pay an annual maintenance fee of \$125 per 20-acre claim. A claim holder can pay in person at the state office or through the mail anytime before the deadline. People tend to put it off until the last minute. There is no grace period; any claims with unpaid maintenance fees after Sept. 1, are up for grabs.

This year, BLM Nevada collected more than \$22 million in maintenance fees for 176,000 mining claims. We have the most mining claims bureau wide—nearly half. No other western states

even come close. In 2003, the Nevada State Office collected \$9.5 million in maintenance fees for 95,200 mining claims; the fee price was \$100 at that time. The increase in claim filings can be attributed to one economic indicator—the price of gold. This year the price of gold ranged from \$575 to \$750 an ounce. In 2003, the price of gold ranged from \$350 to \$400.

BLM has put a system in place to keep the process to pay maintenance fees running smoothly. Large mining companies with hundreds of claims can schedule an appointment to pay their fees. Customers have some options: they can get a temporary receipt and come back later to pick up the original or have it mailed to them.

The flurry of activity to make the deadline progresses into a massive effort to reconcile through adjudication all the documents associated with the maintenance fees. That job is preferably finished by the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30. For some divisions, that is a time of great cheer—the best day of the season.

BURNING MAN SETS NEW RECORDS

Burning Man Sets New Records

Once again Black Rock City sprang to life on the barren playa of the Black Rock Desert in northwestern Nevada, and for a few days, Nevada's seventh largest town—population 48,011—resided in one of the most desolate places in America.

Black Rock City is the site of the Burning Man Event, which operates under terms of a permit issued by BLM's Winnemucca Field Office. This year, Black Rock City LLC, the organizers of Burning Man, were required to comply with 79 stipulations and 16 conditions included in the permit that promote public health and safety, protect the natural environment, and assure proper and coordinated administration and management. The 2007 event ran from Aug. 27 through Sept. 3.

A nine-mile long orange trash fence defines the nearly five-square mile event area. The Federal Aviation Administration approved Black Rock City Airport is located just outside the fence. On Sunday, Sept. 2, the airport moored a record 151 aircraft. More than 90 percent of the Black Rock Desert Playa remains unaffected by Burning Man and is open to dispersed recreational use and enjoyment by the general public.

Economics of Burning Man

This year BLM changed the fee structure for the Burning Man permit from a per person/per day fee to a cost recovery fee. Under the cost recovery formula, the organizers are charged for the actual costs incurred by BLM for permitting and administering the event, including a 19 percent surcharge for BLM's National Business Center in Denver, plus three percent of the gross revenues. The total fee for 2007 was about \$900,000; the previous year's total was \$823,000.

The fees generated from the three percent of gross revenues are used to improve resource protection and visitor facilities and services in the immediate area.

Public Safety

This year, at its peak, there were 63 BLM employees working at the Burning Man event, about the same as in 2006. Most were law enforcement officers or those who support that function. BLM, the Pershing County Sheriff's Office and Black Rock City, LLC, set up an Incident Command Post about a quarter mile outside of Black Rock City from which BLM administration and law enforcement activities are conducted.

BLM, the Nevada Highway Patrol, and the Pershing County



BLM LAW ENFORCEMENT RANGERS EAT PLENTY OF PLAYA DUST.

SETS NEW RECORDS

Sheriff's office made 15 arrests and issued 521 citations. Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) recorded 1,865 patient visits to its Black Rock City medical tent this year.

Environmental Education and Public Outreach

A playa interpretive exhibit created through a BLM partnership with the Desert Research Institute, University of Nevada, Earth Guardians, Nevada Outdoor School, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Nevada State Parks, Friends of Black Rock-High Rock, and Friends of Nevada Wilderness was visited by 8,000 people, some of whom also attended lectures on the history and dynamics of the playa.

During the event, 50 volunteers were organized from among the citizens of Black Rock City to build a buck and pole fence around Coyote Springs on the south edge of the playa. The fence will protect the sensitive dunes surrounding this historic spring from damage caused by off-road vehicle use.

"Burning Man is the largest special recreation event permitted on public lands in the United States," said Black Rock-High Rock National Conservation Area Manager Dave Cooper. "Each year BLM works to protect the public lands affected by the event and to improve public safety measures. It certainly helps that Burning Man is also the largest Leave No Trace event in the world"

– **Jamie Thompson**

Winnemucca Field Office

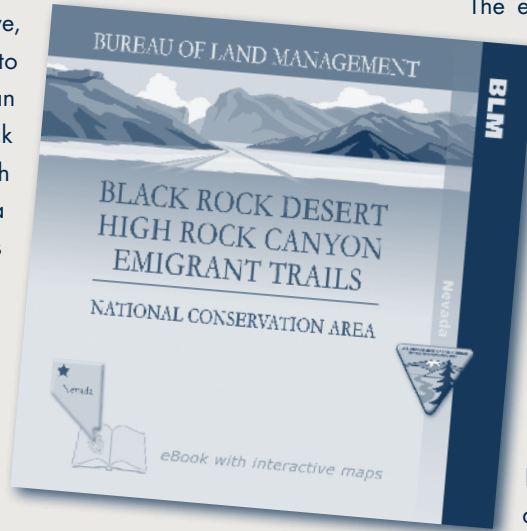


A FIREBALL ERUPTS AT THE CRUDE AWAKENING OIL DERRICK SCULPTURE IN BLACK ROCK CITY.

BLM, THE NEVADA HIGHWAY PATROL, AND THE PERSHING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE MADE 15 ARRESTS AND ISSUED 521 CITATIONS. REGIONAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AUTHORITY (REMSA) RECORDED 1,865 PATIENT VISITS TO ITS BLACK ROCK CITY MEDICAL TENT THIS YEAR.

Free! Black Rock NCA eBook

The Black Rock country is primitive, vast and remote—a good place to “know before you go.” You can do that with a free CD, the Black Rock NCA eBook. It is loaded with information using a variety of media including interactive maps, videos and photos. You’ll also learn safety and survival tips, and find out the locations and services available in gateway communities. The Black Rock offers wilderness experiences and recreational activities such as camping, rock hounding and hiking.



The eBook CD can be installed on Microsoft Windows compatible computers. The CD is not compatible with Apple computers, however, some similar information is available on the Friends of Black Rock-High Rock web site at <http://www.blackrockfriends.org/>.

A copy of the eBook may be requested by email at NV_WFO_Webmail@blm.gov; please note NCA eBook in the subject line and provide your complete mailing address. The CD is also available at BLM offices in Winnemucca, Cedarville and Reno.

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