

**Release Number: 2000-82**  
**For Release: August 22, 2000**

## DROUGHT LEADS TO WILD HORSE GATHER AT FISH CREEK

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will begin a gather of wild horses in the Fish Creek Herd Management Area in Eureka County this week as a result of drought conditions caused by a lack of winter moisture.

About 600 wild horses may be removed in this gather which is the fifth in Nevada this summer. Since there was little winter moisture, the horses in Fish Creek have been unable to rely on springs and Coils Creek which has now retreated into a few muddy pools. The BLM's Battle Mountain Field Office has been hauling water to the horses for about three weeks while helicopter and capture crews have been engaged in other portions of Nevada. Emergency drought gathers in Nevada have also been conducted in Owyhee, Horse Mountain, and Red Rock Herd Management Areas, as well as at the Cedar Well Spring area at the Nevada Wild Horse Range.

Vegetation in the Fish Creek area is now dormant as the result of a lack of winter and spring moisture, so the wild horse condition is deteriorating, according to wild horse and burro specialists in the field.

The gather will begin on Thursday, August 24, and is anticipated to last about ten days. Wild horses will be transported to the National Wild Horse and Burro Center at Palomino Valley where they will receive veterinary care, be freeze-marked and receive inoculations for common equine diseases. Because of the emergency situation, all ages will be removed. While all animals are available for adoption, BLM is prepared to place older animals in a pasture situation such as the wild horse sanctuary in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

For information on how to qualify to adopt in Nevada, call the National Wild Horse and Burro Center at Palomino Valley at (775) 475-2222. For information about adoption in other areas of the United States visit the BLM website at <http://www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov/> or call 1 800 417-9647. While the Fish Creek wild horses will not be ready for adoption for about 60 days, there are many wild horses from other emergency drought gathers and the wildland fires of 1999, which are available now for adoption by qualified individuals.

- BLM -

*For More Information Contact:* Maxine Shane (775) 861-6586 or  
Debra Kolkman (775) 289-1946

**Bureau of Land Management Nevada State Office**  
**1340 Financial Blvd., Reno, NV 89502 phone: (775) 861-6400**  
You are at [www.nv.blm.gov](http://www.nv.blm.gov).

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**Release Number: 2000-81**  
**For Release: August 21, 2000**

### **BLM Issues Revised Black Rock Plan**

Reno, Nev. BA revised draft plan amendment and environmental impact statement (EIS) for managing a portion of the Black Rock Desert in northwestern Nevada has been released for public comment by the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Winnemucca Field Office.

Six public meetings to hear comments on the draft plan amendment and EIS will be held in September. All meetings will start at 7 p.m.

Sept. 12, Sacramento, Red Lion Inn, 1401 Arden Way

Sept. 13, Reno, BLM Nevada State Office, 1340 Financial Blvd.

Sept. 14, Winnemucca, BLM Field Office, 5100 E. Winnemucca Blvd.

Sept 19, Cedarville, Calif., BLM Field Office, 602 Cressler Street

Sept. 20, Gerlach, Community Center, 410 Cottonwood

Sept 21, Lovelock, Community Center, 820 6<sup>th</sup> Street

The draft Sonoma-Gerlach and Paradise-Denio Management Framework Revised Plan Amendment and draft EIS proposes changes to the way the west arm of the Black Rock playa is managed. The planning area includes nearly 450,000 acres of public lands in Humboldt, Pershing and Washoe counties. No privately-owned lands are directly affected by the management plan.

An initial draft plan amendment received hundreds of comments on issues such as off-highway vehicle closures, large-scale event restrictions, a common pool method of permitting, area of critical environmental concern designation and visual resource management classifications. The BLM decided the best way to address the comments would be to incorporate some of the concerns in a re-issue of the draft plan amendment and EIS.

Written comments on the draft plan amendment and EIS will be accepted until Nov. 8, 2000. Written comments may be mailed to EIS Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Winnemucca Field Office, 5100 E. Winnemucca Blvd., Winnemucca, NV 89445. A final environmental impact statement will be prepared that will consider the comments received during the public review and comment period.

Copies of the draft plan amendment and EIS are available at the BLM's Winnemucca Field Office and Nevada State Office in Reno. The draft is posted on the internet at <http://www.nv.blm.gov/Winnemucca/>.

*For More Information Contact: Les Boni or Jeff Johnson, (775) 623-1500*

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**Release Number: 2000-79**

**For Release: 08/15/00**

## BLM Makes Spirit Cave Man Determination

Reno, Nev. **B**The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) made a preliminary determination today that ancient human remains from Spirit Cave are Native American but they cannot be culturally affiliated with the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, or with any other contemporary group. The remains, including Spirit Cave Man, will remain in federal ownership.

**A**After more than four years of consultation with the tribe, analyzing the information and reviewing policy, I feel it's time to make this determination, **@** said Bob Abbey, Nevada State Director for the BLM. **A**Although this determination is disappointing to the tribes, I am committed to a continuing dialogue with them on this and any other issue that comes up as we continue to determine the affiliation of human remains from BLM-managed lands. **@**

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA) requires federal agencies to inventory Native American human remains removed from public lands and housed in museums to determine if they are culturally affiliated with a contemporary Indian tribe.

Cultural affiliation means there is a relationship of shared group identity which can reasonably be traced historically or prehistorically between members of a present-day Indian tribe and an identifiable earlier group. Cultural affiliation is established when the preponderance of the evidence indicates a relationship. The kinds of evidence reviewed can be geographical, biological, archaeological, linguistic, or based on folklore, oral tradition, historical, other information and expert opinion.

Spirit Cave Man has been housed at the Nevada State Museum for nearly 60 years. The mummy is of particular interest to the scientific community because radiometric dating on artifacts found with the mummy indicate an age of more than 9,000 years. A request by the Museum to conduct DNA analysis and radiocarbon dating on Spirit Cave Man and other sets of human remains from the Lahontan Basin was withdrawn earlier this year.

**A**The Secretary of the Interior is considering recommendations from the NAGPRA Review Committee on the disposition of remains like those from Spirit Cave that cannot be affiliated, **@** said Abbey. **A**I am keenly aware of the cultural sensitivity of the materials from Spirit Cave and I have no intention of approving any research that involves invasive testing of the human remains until the Secretary acts. **@**

An inventory of human remains in the BLM-managed collections at the Museum lists 145 sets of

remains, representing at least 154 individuals. Three of these sets have been affiliated and two have been repatriated. An additional 35 sets may be reasonably affiliated and the BLM is in consultation with appropriate tribes on these remains. The BLM is working on determinations of affiliation for the other 107 sets. In addition, seven sets of remains, discovered on BLM-managed lands after 1990, have been repatriated.

Anyone wishing to dispute this preliminary determination may respond by Oct. 2, 2000, with written statements and evidence to the State Director, Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 12000, Reno, NV 89520-0006. BLM will evaluate additional evidence using the same process and criteria used in making the preliminary determination. The BLM may affirm the original determination or make a new determination.

The report and an executive summary on the evidence presented is available on the internet at <http://www.nv.blm.gov>.

- BLM -

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Stephanie Hanna (202) 208-6416

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**Release Number: 2000-78; Carson City Release No. 2000-46**  
**For Release: 08/14/00**

## **Pilot Killed Sunday in Twin Peaks Fire Identified**

Lester Lee Shadrick, 53, of Lake Charles, Louisiana, has been identified as the pilot of the Bell 412 helicopter that crashed Sunday afternoon while dropping water on the Twin Peaks Fire east of Fallon, Nevada. He was an employee of Era Aviation, Inc., and had been flying for them since 1985. A search-and-rescue helicopter from Naval Air Station Fallon and an air ambulance from Reno responded to the accident.

[**Note to editors:** Inquiries about the pilot should be directed to Wendy Marcantel, spokeswoman for Era Aviation, Inc., in Lake Charles, phone (337) 478-6131.]

A federal crash investigation team made up of representatives of the Department of the Interior Office of Aircraft Services and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) are expected to arrive at the crash site at approximately 2:00 p.m. today.

The Twin Peaks Fire is still burning about 60 miles east of Fallon in the Clan Alpine range. As of 7:00 a.m. today, the fire had burned about 38,300 acres and is 55 percent contained. About 365 firefighters are assigned to the fire, including three helicopters, eleven engines, four water tenders and twelve hand crews. Three residences in the area remained threatened.

Information about fires currently burning in Nevada is available on the BLM website:  
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>.

- BLM -

*For More Information Contact:* Mark Struble, (775) 885-6107 Carson City Field Office, 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, NV

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**Release Number: 2000-77a**  
**For Release: 08/13/00**

### **Fatal Helicopter Accident on Twin Peaks Fire**

The crash of a Bell 412 helicopter conducting water drops on the Twin Peaks Fire east of Fallon claimed the life of the pilot. The accident occurred about 4:40 p.m. **today, Aug. 13.** [An earlier release was misdated.] There were no passengers on the flight. The contracted helicopter was from Era Helicopters at the Reno-Stead Airport. The pilot was an Era employee. Identification of the pilot will be withheld until family members are notified.

The Twin Peaks Fire is burning about 60 miles east of Fallon in the Clan Alpine range, and the helicopter went down on the east side of the fire near the community of Cold Springs in Churchill County. As of the last report, the fire had burned about 38,000 acres and was **45 percent contained.** About **340 firefighters** are assigned to the fire, along with four helicopters and 11 engines.

The Department of the Interior Office of Aviation Services and the National Transportation Safety Board will be investigating the accident.

Information about fires currently burning in Nevada is available on the BLM website:  
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>.

- BLM -

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**Release Number: 2000-76**  
**For Release: 08/09/00**

### **FOUR ELY BLMers, RENO FIRM HONORED**

Four employees of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely Field Office were recognized at the recent National Fluid Minerals Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A further recognition was given to Eagle Exploration. Peter Hummel of Reno received that award.

Jerry Fant, John Stout, Dan Netcher and Jim Perkins each received a STAR award for helping improve

the land resource value by facilitating development of new water sources.

BLM Director Tom Fry presented the award to Eagle Exploration, during the Bureau's four-day National Fluid Minerals Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Eagle Exploration, nominated by the BLM Nevada State Office, was recognized for going beyond BLM's environmental requirements in conducting fluid mineral operations. The firm also contributed the additional cost of providing water wells that benefit wildlife, grazing, and recreation on the public lands. "The BLM recognizes those who are doing good work on the public lands," said Fry. "These companies have set a positive example by operating with and maintaining a high-level of environmental concern."

Fry added, "Although this is the first year for the Excellence Award, we hope to present it at a future National Fluid Minerals conference. I feel the exemplary work of these six companies will raise the bar for environmental compliance and improved operating practices."

In presenting the awards to the four BLM employees, Bob Anderson, BLM's Deputy Assistant Director for Minerals, Realty and Resource Protection, said "You have routinely employed resourcefulness to solve permitting problems for customers while maintaining a protective balance of land resources."

Fant is a geologist; Netcher is team leader for lands and minerals work; Perkins is assistant field office manager for renewable resources, and Stout is a petroleum engineering technician. All are permanently stationed in Ely.

Anderson said the Ely field office management has actively encouraged ideas to foster creativity and promotion of the importance of land resource values. As a team, they secured the permits for Eagle Exploration company to develop critical fresh water resources from wells discarded after wildcat drilling for petroleum. In most cases, these exploratory wells are plugged, and the sites restored, when oil is not found. This practice dismisses opportunities to develop water sources in the fragile, arid environment of the Great Basin.

"The water resource, which will enhance the grazing, wildlife, wild horses and recreation programs, improves the quality of Nevada's public lands," Anderson said.

Three other firms also received awards from Fry for their innovations and environmental sensitivity in the production of fluid minerals: Cross Timbers Operating Company in Wyoming, Devon Energy in New Mexico, River Gas Corp. in Utah, Texaco Exploration and Production Inc. in California, and WBI Production Inc. in Montana. Cross Timbers Operating Company, nominated by the BLM Wyoming State Office, selected for designing facilities that minimize surface disturbance and contamination. The company has also developed systems that prevent the need for surface containment pits.

Devon Energy, nominated by the BLM New Mexico State Office, for its environmentally sensitive development of their operations near Carlsbad, New Mexico which encourages public involvement in planning and development.

River Gas Corp., nominated by the BLM Utah State Office, for taking a leadership role in substantially reducing the impacts of coal bed methane development near Price, UT.

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**Release Number: 2000-75**

**For Release: 08/07/00**

### MINING CLAIM MAINTENANCE FEES DUE **SEPT. 1**

The deadline for annual filing with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) of mining claim fees is September 1, 2000, State Director Bob Abbey said today. All mining claims, mill site and tunnel site claims that claimants wish to hold on public lands in the 2001 assessment year must pay a \$100 maintenance fee on or before September 1. The fee is waived for those with no more than 10 claims nationwide, thus qualifying for a small miner waiver which is also due on or before September 1.

Unless the appropriate forms are filed by the deadline, miners risk the loss of their claims, Abbey said. BLM employees are available to answer questions individuals may have concerning these filings and maintaining of active claims.

Each payment must be accompanied by a written list of claim name and BLM serial numbers for which the maintenance fee is being paid. All certificates and fees must be filed or paid at the BLM State Office. The office moved to a new location in March 1998. The new address is 1340 Financial Boulevard, near Mill and South McCarran. The mailing address is P.O. Box 12000, Reno, Nev. 89520-0006. Filings made by mail need to be postmarked on or before September 1, 2000.

The office is open for payment or filing from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Cash, check or credit card (Visa or MasterCard) can be presented to make payment. Claims for which no maintenance fee has been paid or no qualified waiver has been filed or postmarked on or before September 1 will be declared forfeited and void.

For more information on the filing deadline, the claim fee or the small miner waiver, call the BLM State Office Information Access Center at (775) 861-6500. Copies of the maintenance fee and maintenance fee waiver certification forms are also available via the internet at: [http://www.nv.blm.gov/minerals/Mining/Mining\\_on\\_Public\\_Land.htm](http://www.nv.blm.gov/minerals/Mining/Mining_on_Public_Land.htm).

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**Release Number: 2000-74**  
**For Release: 08/06/00**

## **Wildland Firefighting Priorities Set**

With wildland firefighting resources reaching the limit, suppression priorities are in place to guide decisions on assigning available firefighters and equipment. The National Interagency Fire Center, in conjunction with 11 geographic area coordination centers, has set the following priorities: 1) firefighter and public safety, 2) Initial attack B to keep new fires from becoming large fires, and 3) protection of communities B with emphasis on population centers, critical natural resources such as water supplies, and infrastructure needs such as utilities and transportation routes.

For Nevada fires burning on open rangeland, fire managers are also looking at natural resource concerns to set priorities. Resources considered include sagegrouse habitat, threatened and endangered species, wild horse and burro herd management areas, viewsheds, bighorn sheep habitat, historic and cultural resources, and proximity of new fires to areas burned last year.

When fires grow beyond initial attack capability, resources are requested through the Western Great Basin Coordination Center in Reno. Working with the Great Basin Multi-agency Command Group, the Reno center assigns aircraft, crews and fire management teams based on established priorities.

Wildland firefighting is conducted on an interagency, intergovernmental basis nationwide. In Nevada the agencies represented on the Nevada Fire Board of Directors are the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and Nevada Division of Forestry. Nevada community fire organizations are also partners through state and local agreements, and the Nevada National Guard=s resources are also available.

AWildland firefighting is a coordinated effort in Nevada,@ said BLM Nevada Fire Management Officer Kevin Hull. AAll of the agencies involved work together to ensure public safety and to minimize the impact on property and Nevada=s natural resources.@

Two helicopters arrived today to begin work on the O=Neil Basin fires in Elko County, 25 miles southwest of Jackpot. Each of the helicopters can transport between 1,500 and 2,000 gallons of water at a time. A smaller helicopter is also expected, which will also make water drops and transport firefighters and supplies to the fire. The Camp fire now exceeds 28,000 acres, and the Cold Springs fire, which exceeds 5,500 combine for more than 33,500 acres burning in this area. Four ranches in the area are threatened.

The Trout fire in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Clark County threatens 60 residences in the community of Trout Canyon.

Across the state there are 15 new wildfires that have burned more than 22,000 acres in the last 24 hours. High winds caused the Fireball fire in a remote area 23 miles northeast of Fernley to grow from 900 acres yesterday to about 5,500 acres overnight.

**Note to Editors: The Department of the Interior Office of Aircraft Services was misnamed in a release Friday about the helicopter accident at the Charlie Fire in Elko County.**

**Information about all fires burning in Nevada is available on the Internet at**

<http://www.nv.blm.gov/wgbcc>.

- BLM -

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**Release Number: 2000-73a**  
**For Release: 08/04/00, noon**

## Helicopter Accident Identifications

The crew member killed in the helicopter accident yesterday evening in northeastern Nevada is Phillip Conner, 29, an employee of the National Park Service Lake Mead National Recreation Area. He was from Prescott, Arizona, and this is the fourth year that he has worked as a summer seasonal firefighter.

The crew member who is in the Magic Valley Medical Center in Twin Falls, Idaho, is Matt Cannon, a Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service employee.

The pilot, who was taken to Elko General Hospital is Kenneth Carlton, who is employed by Rogers Helicopters in Clovis, California. The fuel truck driver taken to Elko General Hospital is Rodney Scott, and is also employed by Rogers Helicopters.

The helicopter is under an exclusive use contract with the Department of the Interior Office of Aviation Safety. It had been carrying water and cargo to the fire, and was taking off to return to the Incident Command Post in Wells, Nevada, for the night.

"I want to express my deepest sympathy to the family of Phillip Conner," said Bob Abbey, BLM Nevada State Director. "Our firefighters put their lives in danger for our safety, and we owe them our gratitude."

"I wish a quick and successful recovery to those others who were injured." Abbey continued.

The helicopter was assigned to a fire in northeastern Nevada and crashed during take-off yesterday evening about 7 p.m.

The Bell 206 "Jet Ranger" helicopter was assigned to the "Charlie" fire which is burning in the rugged Murdock Mountain Range, northeast of Elko, Nevada, and 8 miles west of Montello, Nevada. The fire so far has burned about 3,600 acres.

The U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Aviation Safety and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating the crash.

- BLM -

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**Release Number: 2000-73**  
**For Release: 08/04/00**

## Helicopter Accident in Nevada Kills 1, Injures 3

A helicopter assigned to a fire in northeastern Nevada crashed during take-off yesterday evening about 7 p.m. One crew member was killed. A second crew member was injured and transported to Magic Valley Medical Center in Twin Falls, Idaho. The pilot and a fuel truck driver who rushed to help after the crash were injured and transported to Elko General Hospital. Names are being withheld pending notification of family members.

The Bell 206 helicopter was assigned to the "Charlie" fire which is burning in the rugged Murdock Mountain Range, northeast of Elko, Nevada, and 8 miles west of Montello, Nevada. The fire so far has burned about 3,600 acres.

The U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Aviation Safety and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating the crash.

- BLM -

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