

**Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act  
Conservation Initiatives  
Round 20**

National Park Service



Managing Illegal Roads to Protect Recreation, Safety, and Resources: Phase 1

Amount Requested: \$8,664,643

## A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NRA) encompasses 1.5 million acres, 91% of which is land. With the ongoing reduction in water levels of the lake, “new” land becomes exposed and access to water is limited and more difficult to reach due to topographical changes and a lack of official roads to redirect visitors to the water or recreational areas of interest.

Although Lake Mead NRA has had previous challenges with the creation of illegal roads and off-road vehicle trails, in recent years the number of these types of roads/trails has increased significantly with the ongoing attempts of people trying to access the receding water (Maps 1 and 2, the red “disturbance lines” are illegal roads that have been surveyed by the Park). The extent of damage has compounded across culturally and biologically sensitive landscapes, as well as, made rescues and law enforcement patrols difficult (due to the inability to identify where a call is occurring within a web of illegal roads.)

In addition, due to the demands of managing other low water concerns across the park and the rapidly changing shoreline, Lake Mead NRA has been unable to identify and establish new, official (approved) access points to the water in order to support public recreation. This, in addition to a lack of clear signage and boundaries delineating approved roads, as well as communicating with visitors about the harms of creating illegal roads and the Park's expectations to use approved roads, may be contributing factors to the creation of illegal roads.

The goal of this project is to simultaneously address illegal roads and their impacts on protected resources at Lake Mead NRA, while finding ways to support and enhance recreational access. Because Lake Mead NRA is so large and encompasses a variety of terrain and protected resources, as well as supports a spectrum of recreational activities, public access and illegal roads are complex challenges. This proposal is Phase 1 of a multi-phase, multi-pronged approach to address these complex issues across the park using Site-Specific Management Plans informed by data and developed with community input and recreational access considerations.

In Phase 1, Lake Mead NRA proposes to: (1) Develop two Site-Specific Management Plans (Government Wash and Overton Arm) that will collect and use cultural and natural resource survey data, illegal road survey data, and public input, to create short-term and long-term travel and recreational management decisions uniquely tailored to each Area (shown as lime green in Maps 3 and 4); (2) Implement immediate, active-management strategies in specific sub-parts of the two Project Areas that have already gone through NEPA processes (referred to as Active Management Sub-Areas and depicted in tan in Maps 3 and 4); And, (3) Develop and implement creative and robust outreach, education, and engagement activities, to determine the public's recreation goals and needs for the Government Wash and Overton Aram Project Areas that involve backcountry roads, as well as, educate the public about the park's responsibility to protect cultural and natural resources and why. Details of each of these project elements are provided in dedicated descriptions following the initial background information below.

### **Background: Lake Mead National Recreation Area and the Impacts of Low Water and Illegal Roads**

Although Lake Mead NRA has had previous challenges with the creation of illegal roads and off-road vehicle trails, in recent years the number of these types of roads/trails has increased significantly with the ongoing attempts of people trying to access the water as it recedes.

Lake Mead's water levels were at their highest point in 1983 (at 1,225 feet). From that point forward, water levels have been continuously receding. As of November 2023, the lake level has dropped over 160 feet to a level of 1,065 feet. That means about 81,000 acres of "new" land has been exposed.

Lake Mead NRA currently has 169 approved paved and dirt roads extending across the park, constituting 942 miles of approved roads for recreating (240 asphalt miles, 195 graded dirt miles, and 507 dirt unimproved miles). Prior to the receding waterline, an approved road reached the lake shore on average every 10 miles, providing approximately 60 lake access points for vehicles. As of 2023, there are approximately 10 approved roads that reach the waters of Lake Mead, half of which are at Boulder Beach. Thus, approved backcountry access to Lake Mead has all but disappeared and needs to be thoughtfully addressed by the Park to support public access.

Considering that Lake Mead is a major attraction to the Recreation Area, visitors have taken it upon themselves to create paths to the water. This is done by continuing to drive over the landscape even though the official road has ended. Illegal roads have also been created between approved roads in attempts to reach isolated points along the water.

Many of the surveys of the park's illegal roads were done when the water was higher. There are currently 824 miles of documented illegal roads, however it is estimated that the number of miles of illegal roads is at least double, if not triple, what has been officially captured.

Even back in 1989 when the Park's Backcountry Management Plan was written it states, "Illegal off-road vehicle travel has caused some of the most significant detrimental impacts to the natural resources in the backcountry of Lake Mead National Recreation Area." Today that damage is significantly higher, impacting both natural and cultural resources.

Illegal roads and off-road-vehicle trails do both visible and invisible damage to natural and cultural resources. Visible damage includes creating ruts that can funnel heavy rains and accelerate erosion, as well as, crushing and destroying plants, animals, underground animal homes, and buried artifacts (breaking them and/or displacing them such that important contextual and locational information are forever lost). Invisible damage includes compression of buried archeological sites and demolishing chemically and biologically bonded surface crusts that can take hundreds, if not thousands of years to form and are required for multiple sensitive and endangered plant species to reproduce.

In addition to causing significant damage across culturally and biologically sensitive landscapes, illegal roads have made rescues and law enforcement patrols difficult, due to the inability to identify where a call is occurring within a web of illegal roads. Thus, the management of the illegal roads, including the activities that produce them, is of critical importance to the Lake Mead NRA.

While the park needs to manage illegal roads that either lead to “nowhere” (e.g. they stop because the terrain became unpassable and/or no longer leads to water) or are in close proximity to sensitive areas, the park also needs to identify and provide long-term access to the public to new water accessible points and/or to areas of recreational interest. Lake Mead NRA seeks to find the best way to responsibly offer and support recreation activities that require roads.

### **Developing Site-Specific Management Plans**

Lake Mead NRA’s Backcountry Management Plan was developed in 1989 and is broad, vague, and extremely outdated. This makes it difficult to make or enforce management decisions – including those related to illegal roads, what to do with approved roads that no longer reach the water, and other actions that would require public input (such as using permitting as a management tool). In addition, because Lake Mead NRA is so large, with distinctive areas that span two different states, a broad Backcountry Management Plan cannot adequately address the unique attributes of each area of the park.

In Phase 1 of this multi-phase effort, Lake Mead NRA proposes to develop Site-Specific Management Plans for two Project Areas (Government Wash and Overton Arm) that, using previously collected data and data collected via this project, carefully consider the unique potential and needs for public use, presence and distribution of cultural and natural resources, as well as each areas unique terrain features, to make informed management decisions.

Project Areas were chosen due to a combination of the most pressing needs and highest concentrations of illegal roads. The Government Wash Area has 172 miles of documented illegal roads (estimates are 2-3 times that number) and this area is one of the most popular backcountry camping areas in the park with a high number of vehicle recoveries (trapped in sand) and dispatch calls. The Overton Arm Area has 87 miles of documented illegal roads (again more undocumented roads exist), some of which are going through [REDACTED] cultural site [REDACTED] and rare gypsum soil ecosystems with numerous endangered species.

Specific Project Area boundaries were chosen by including critical management areas (inclusion of cultural and natural resources that need immediate protection and areas with high recreational use) bound by official roads, natural land features (such as washes and the lake shoreline), and park boundaries. The extent of the area was chosen based upon what could also be accomplished in the 5-year project period.

The Government Wash Project Area is approximately 36 square miles (23,000 acres) and the Overton Arm Project Area is approximately 48 square miles (30,720 acres). The Active Management Sub-Areas (where the project will be able to implement immediate management actions like blocking off illegal roads and/or making new official roads - because NEPA/NHPA has been completed - is approximately 640 acres for Government Wash and approximately 3840 acres for Overton Arm.)

Because backcountry activities are initially accessed through dirt roads, each site-specific plan will directly address the following: existing illegal roads; activities that may create new illegal roads; defining park-supported access to the water and other backcountry activities; and

protecting each area's unique natural and cultural resources. Although the exact scope and details of each site-specific plan will be defined with input from multiple park divisions, public and tribal input, and an environmental assessment (EA), each site-specific plan will likely include the following:

- *Clearly delineate day- and overnight-use in each Area, as well as the accessibility of the use-areas by foot or vehicle.* Law enforcement rangers report that illegal roads are often littered with evidence of overnight camping (e.g. the presence large barren spots, fire pits, trash, and human feces.) Whether an illegal road was created to find a spot to camp or it already existed and was followed to find a spot to camp, the end result is still the same – destruction of the natural resource. The park's current 35-year-old Backcountry Management Plan does not clearly define where exactly backcountry camping is allowed in the park, nor does it define whether vehicle or foot access is acceptable for backcountry camping in a specific location. This lack of clarity makes it nearly impossible for park rangers to control the use of and access to specific areas. Site-specific plans would address this.
- *Clearly delineate zones of use within each area such as wild backcountry exploration, backcountry corridors, and high use/directed use.* Ideally these zones of use would be determined by a number of factors such as: How are areas currently being used by visitors? Are there cultural or natural resources that need to be protected? Are there features that would make a nice recreational destination? By identifying zones of use, it will enable the park to clearly identify human and other resource needs to manage a site.
- *Implement a permitting system for camping (free or with a fee would be determined).* The park does have limits on the number of nights people can camp in the backcountry, however, there is no real way to enforce those limits or tell how many people are staying overnight in the backcountry. A permitting system would place time, number of people, and location boundaries on backcountry use, enabling park rangers to connect cars and people with permits. A permitting system would also provide the park with usage data, which can inform decisions about whether the number and type (e.g. vehicular access) of backcountry camping areas need to be increased to meet public need. If fees will be collected, this permitting system would either use drop boxes or recreation.gov.
- *Define management/protection of cultural and natural resources in the backcountry, particularly as it relates to recreation.* Cultural and biological resources are not equally distributed across the park, some areas have higher concentrations of highly sensitive resources. Thus, having site-specific management plans will allow the park to address the unique attributes of each area, looking at how natural and cultural resources are being impacted (or have the potential to be impacted) by illegal roads, new official roads, and/or existing approved roads and their extension to the water.
- *Identify/allow for closures to official and unofficial roads that no longer lead to water, lead to dangerous areas (e.g. where vehicles frequently get stuck), and/or lead to environmentally or culturally sensitive areas being damaged by off-road activities.* Identify roads or tracks that safely lead to water and will likely do so for the next 5-10 years (in a location/manner that the park can reasonably maintain) to provide public access to the water and identify/allow for closure to official and unofficial roads that no longer lead to water, are dangerous, or lead to sensitive areas.

Phase 1 of this project proposes to take a unique management approach for the park by developing comprehensive Site-Specific Management Plans for two key areas (Government Wash and Overton Arm). These plans will be developed, approved and implemented during the five-year grant. The plans will be informed through critical new data collection (e.g. cultural surveys of sites revealed with the dropping of the water and currently being impacted by illegal roads, surveys of illegal roads that the park has not already captured, etc.) and public and tribal input, as well as careful evaluation of existing data, to determine the best courses of action to present in the plans.

Two sub-sections of each Area have already gone through the NEPA/NHPA process for some low water planning and are ready to take near-immediate action during this project cycle. These are referred to as Active Management Sub-Areas in the nomination.

### **Managing Illegal Roads in the Government Wash and Overton Arm**

Tackling illegal roads requires on-site action to either assess or actively manage actual or potential damage.

*Assessment activities* may include: (a) identifying and surveying cultural and natural resources being impacted or have the potential to be impacted by off-roading activity; (b) surveying illegal roads that have not yet been identified by the park; and (c) identifying and surveying potential new approved roads to provide access to the water and/or other recreational sites of interest.

*Active management activities* may include: (a) remediating and/or restricting/blocking existing illegal roads and/or closing currently approved roads that lead to nowhere and/or lead to highly sensitive cultural or natural resources that need protection; (b) turning an illegal road into an approved road; and (c) creating new approved roads and/or pull-off sites to support specific recreational activities, such as backcountry camping or new access points to the lake.

### **Why the Government Wash and Overton Arm Areas?**

Maps 1 and 2 show that illegal roads are prevalent across the park, which is why it is critical to address illegal roads park-wide (hence proposing a multi-phase project). But, since this would be the first time the park has attempted to directly address the problem of illegal roads, it would be best to focus on the two most critical areas and to develop and refine effective processes that can be duplicated and adapted across the Park, as well as permanently built into the Park's overall management structure.

The Areas targeted in this proposal have their own unique and immediate needs.

In **Government Wash** illegal roads form a spiderweb across the desert in a region that is very popular for backcountry camping and (previously) accessing the lake. Attempts continue to be made to access the lake, which is compounding the problem. Because of the large number of people that visit Government Wash and the immediate vicinity, there are

also a large number of calls for law enforcement, emergency assistance, and stuck vehicle recovery (Photo 1). Although there are known environmentally and culturally sensitive regions in the Government Wash Area which do need protection, the primary and immediate concern with respect to illegal roads in the Government Wash Area include the extensive damage to the general desert environment, the high frequency with which vehicles get stuck and recoveries occur, the maze of roads that can make fast emergency response difficult, and the lack of clearly designated backcountry camping sites/options.

In 2022 alone there were 272 events in the Government Wash Project Area, most of which were in the immediate Government Wash Road vicinity, but also included 8 Mile Road, Crawdad Cove, and Box Car Cove Road (labeled as 89, 90 and 91 respectively in Map 3 – Box Car Cove Road forms the eastern boundary of the project area). Events refer to actual calls that required either volunteers (such as Southern Nevada Off-road Recovery) and/or park law enforcement to intervene - including vehicle recoveries (stuck), citations, warnings, emergency calls, (human/life-saving) rescues, assists, and arrests.

Prior to the web of illegal roads (shown in red, dark grey dotted lines, and white dotted lines in Map 5), there were clear “spur” roads (dark grey dotted lines) for law enforcement, volunteer support, and medical support to know where to go and quickly reach an emergency call (the dark grey and white dotted lines are illegal roads that were mapped by law enforcement to help support their patrols and calls). (NOTE: Map 5 shows the park’s official roads in yellow. Government Wash Road is shown in solid black but is also an official approved road.) Today, because of the extreme web of illegal roads in the area, it is difficult for people to describe their location in a call. Even with the law enforcement “spur map,” they, along with volunteers, and medical support can easily go to the wrong area, losing precious time during an emergency call.

The **Overton Arm Area** (Map 4) shares some similar backcountry camping and public protection concerns as Government Wash, but to a much lesser degree. Stewart’s Point, which is part of the Active Management Sub-Area for this project, is a popular dispersed camping spot that no longer has access to the water. There are additional illegal roads in the Stewart’s Point Area that need to be surveyed, and decisions need to be made about the recreational opportunities in this area (versus other potential spots in the broader Project Area.) Although back country camping and recreation are important considerations for the Overton Arm Area, the primary concern is protecting [REDACTED] cultural and natural resources.

With respect to natural resources, over the past 10 years, biological surveys have been completed of the unique gypsum soil and other ecosystems in this Area that support several rare and endangered plant and animal species. However, follow-up surveys may be needed to be completed to assess proximity and damage from recent illegal roads to inform the Site-Specific Management Plan.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the project will conduct non-invasive/minimally invasive baseline topographic mapping, targeted geophysical investigations (which may include magnetometry, ground penetrating radar, and/or thermal imagery), along with limited subsurface testing and some surface investigation along the length of the approved and illegal roads (to the outer boundary of the active management area defined by Map 4.) These investigations will help identify the locations and boundaries [REDACTED] sites impacted by the road network and develop archeological modeling to understand the potential for buried archaeological deposits in the landform sediment assemblages. The data will be critical in providing guidance for management decisions in and around [REDACTED] in partnership with Tribes. The project will also employ tribal interns (and other youth) to help collect survey data [REDACTED] (and other cultural surveys as part of compliance activities).

The landscape of the Overton Arm Area has shifted significantly with the almost complete retreat of Lake Mead, leaving the Muddy and Virgin Rivers, and exposing other historic sites like St. Thomas. The park has pivoted and made access to St. Thomas available through roads and trails, as well as, placed educational kiosks and waysides about the area's history near the parking and along the trail. These types of recreational/educational actions (e.g. kiosks, waysides, etc.) will be considered as part of the Area's Site-Specific Management Plan with Tribal input.

### **Community Outreach, Engagement, and Education (COEE)**

Creating site-specific management plans and implementing management activities (like blocking off illegal roads or creating new roads) only partially addresses the challenges of illegal roads. There also needs to be mechanisms to connect with current and potential



creators/users of illegal roads to help prevent unwanted activities in the present and future, as well as listen to the public's recreation and access needs to determine how the park might be able to best support those needs. Community outreach, education, and engagement (COEE) is the important third leg of this project that must occur strategically for near-term and long-term effects.

The park has identified multiple COEE approaches to be implemented both within and outside of the park. At the start of the project Lake Mead NRA divisions will meet with community partners to develop a detailed COEE Implementation Plan that includes the following activities (within the park and outside of the park) along with details for when, who, and how each of the activities listed below will occur. The COEE Implementation Plan will also define specific and measurable COEE goals and outcomes, as well as techniques/methods for determining if the goals and outcomes are being met.

**Within the park:**

- (a) *Develop a new site-specific backcountry ranger program* that consists of general backcountry park rangers that would consistently roam key areas, interact with and educate visitors, and inquire/inform visitors about permits (if permits are approved as part of the Site-Specific Management Plan). The park currently does not have any general/backcountry park rangers – this would be a new and unique pilot program for the park, and, if successful, be incorporated into the park's operating budget at the end of phase 1 of this project. The backcountry ranger program would be piloted in the two management areas proposed for Phase 1 of this project.

Currently, all backcountry engagement with visitors is occurring through law enforcement (LE), which has not had the person-power to address the unique backcountry needs. In addition, LE roles and actions are different than that of a backcountry ranger. A backcountry ranger's role is primarily to engage, educate, and have consistent park presence in specific areas (proactive), while LE rangers' roles typically conduct search and rescue and engage in public protection and enforcement activities. LE rangers generally react when dispatch calls are made (this does not preclude LE rangers from engaging and educating.)

The new Backcountry Rangers would become intimately familiar with their backcountry assignments, the visitors utilizing those spaces, share observations and information to help leadership and law enforcement to make informed management decisions about the area, and interact and coordinate closely with law enforcement, as needed. Because of the large number of law enforcement related events that occur, particularly in the Government Wash area, this project would also increase LE presence in the project Areas for the duration of the project. Patrolling and actions would occur in the manner as current laws and the current (1989) Backcountry Management Plan allows and would be adjusted as the new Site-Specific Management Plans allow (once approved per the NEPA process).

- (b) It is important that the off-roading community have positive interactions and associations with the park and learn about relevant topics (such as “don't bust the crust,” protecting

cultural and natural resources - including specific endangered plants and animals in the project Area, managing public lands, and differences between the types of public land) in an environment and context that is meaningful and relatable. This will be done in partnership with the general backcountry park ranger(s) described above via **educational “rides” within the park**, led by volunteers who are leaders in the off-roading community and also advocate for protecting public resources. The COEE Implementation Plan will identify and plan locations for rides, who to target for rides, the number of rides annually, information to address in those rides, and any handouts to share.

- (c) The third in-park component of the COEE Implementation Plan is **volunteer activities**. The park proposes to work with local organizations and the park’s volunteer program to bring the off-roading community and other park users and community members to support project activities such as data collection, installing fencing, blocking or hiding closed illegal roads, and/or revegetating areas that could support revegetation.

### **Outside of the Park:**

- (d) **Conduct community engagement/input meetings**. Lake Mead NRA will partner with off-roading community experts who have respected and long-standing relationships in the off-roading community and actively advocate for natural and cultural resource protection within those communities. These meetings are envisioned being implemented as a series, building upon the information shared or gathered in previous meetings. The process will begin by: (1) letting people know about the project and concerns with illegal roads in the park; (2) asking and developing meaningful ways the off-roading community can help prevent or address the issue; (3) working with the community to identify popular routes and find out why they are popular; (4) inviting the public to provide input into planning; And, (5) developing maps and education about where to go or not to go and why.
- (e) Implement fun and informative **community education meetings**. These would be special events (such as “Science Café-style events) done at a variety of venues of interest to the off-roading and outdoor community. The events would have guest presenters to share a spectrum of educational topics of potential interest to the target audience (such as “don’t bust the crust,” protecting cultural and natural resources, specific endangered plants and animals or cultural resources in the Project Area, managing public lands, and differences between the types of public land). Target audiences may include backcountry recreators (such as fishing, hunting, and 4-wheeling), high school and college students, and the general public.
- (f) Engage in **informal education and outreach activities** including attending and presenting the project at community group meetings (such as off-roading clubs, meet-up groups, etc.), hosting tables at off-roading events and fairs (e.g. Hump N Bump) or events and fairs with groups that also commonly off-road (such as the County Fair), presenting at or attending off-roading conferences, and/or developing a new Junior Ranger book that talks about recreation, off-roading, and protecting natural resources that can be handed out at these events.
- (g) Develop **online and social media outreach campaigns** in partnership with local and regional organizations to spread the word about the project, engage and educate the community, and share information and materials developed as part of the project.

(h) Develop *K-12 outreach activities and materials*. Outreach into K-12 education can be an important way to shape future stewards of the land, as well as reach audiences both directly and indirectly. For example, high school students who are finding independence through driving may go into the backcountry for their own fun and exploration (via cars, trucks, ATVs, and dirt bikes) but may not know the difference between an “approved” dirt road and an illegal road, or the destructive nature of going off approved roads. Outreach to high school students would be an important component of this project and is an example of direct reach to audiences that may contribute to illegal roads. Indirect reach would connect off-road, recreation, and resource protection information to younger students who do not drive but may go with their families on “off-roading” experiences. While they are in the backcountry, students may share what they learned with their families. Or the information might impact future behaviors when those students can drive. K-12 education information can be delivered in a variety of creative ways including: having college students go into high school classrooms and present information or activities (this educates both the college students and the high school students); partner with local organizations who already regularly deliver environmental/cultural/biological education in area schools and add in off-roading information to common resource protection messages; conduct teacher workshops; and/or assemble boxes or kits that have lessons and supplies that teachers can check out and deliver activities to their students independently.

**a. Describe Relationship to Prior Approved Projects and/or Phases Relevant to this Project (SNPLMA funded or not), and any anticipated Future Phases**

a. This is a new project and has no previous phases. Future phases are likely depending upon the greater implementation needs in other areas of the park (beyond the two management areas defined in this project) and the success of the approaches described in this proposal.

**b. Acknowledgement of Stand-Alone Project and no Guarantee of Funding for Future Phases**

This project is submitted as Phase 1 of a multi-phase project. However, it is recognized that funding this project does not guarantee funding of future phases. This is why we are prioritizing the two most critical areas for Phase 1.

## **B. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE’S SNPLMA STRATEGIC PLAN VALUES**

Conservation Initiative projects have two goals identified in the Strategic Plan:

- Goal 1: Sustain the quality of the outdoor environment by conserving, preserving, and restoring natural and cultural resources.
- Goal 2: Improve the quality of life for all publics in urban and rural communities by enhancing recreational opportunities that connect people with the outdoor environment.

Nominated projects should meet these two goals by focusing on the three SNPLMA core values, connectivity, sustainability, and community. Every nomination must explain how the three values are promoted by the project.

- **Connectivity**

This project connects people with the outdoor environment in multiple ways: meetings with stakeholders to obtain input into the why and how they use and access the backcountry at Lake Mead, specifically with respect to the two project Areas (Government Wash and Overton Arm), and what their preferences and priorities are with respect to that use; opportunities for on-site educational “rides” sharing information about resource protection and identifying shared values and goals; volunteer events that take place in project Areas to help manage/remove/or block illegal roads; connect with locals via educational and social events to talk about the project, its goals, and why protecting natural and cultural resources is important; identifying ways the park can better meet the backcountry access goals and needs for a variety of audiences while protecting natural and cultural resources.

- **Sustainability**

The project promotes long-term sustainability by utilizing a multi-pronged, multi-phased approach to immediately address the areas of highest concern and to develop plans and infrastructures to manage short-term and long-term needs related to illegal roads across the park. The multipronged approach includes education and outreach activities both on park land and in surrounding communities (targeting off-road recreation groups and other key recreation groups identified during the project), developing Site-Specific Management Plans that address the park’s approach to managing illegal and approved roads as well as backcountry activities that may require or produce roads, protecting natural and cultural resources, and setting up a backcountry management/special uses program to manage the issues at the project Areas, within and beyond the 5-year project timeframe, and taking immediate action where Environmental Assessment activities have already occurred. These funds will allow the park time to build partnerships, address the most damaged areas, develop management capacity, and educate the public on the problems with illegal roads, as well as develop new policies to help curb the destructive behaviors and support responsible recreation and access. The project will also enable the park to identify long-term funding to support backcountry management, be it from new fees generated from permits and/or finding funds within the park’s budget.

- **Community**

This project promotes community within the park and outside of the park. Within the park the project coordinates nearly all of the divisions towards a shared goal and vision, each playing a key role: facilities, interpretation, law enforcement, public affairs, administration, volunteer program, and resource management. Outside of the park, the project engages the following communities (1) the park and other federal agencies whose land is adjacent to (BLM) or within (BOR) the Lake Mead National Recreation Area and they would have interest in or benefit from the activities associated with this project (refer to letters of support); (2) local non-profit and educational organizations whose missions are to educate and support the public in outdoor recreation and off-roading, as well as connecting all of these entities with target audiences including the off-roading community, the public that engages in other recreational activities that

utilize off-roading to participate in other forms of recreation (e.g. fishing, hunting, or backcountry camping), and K-12 audiences; and (3) Engaging with Tribal Nations who have an interest and stake in the data collected as part of this project (particularly [REDACTED] cultural resources in the project Areas) and management decisions made as a result of the data collected, public input, and other Environmental Assessment actions taken as part of developing the Site-Specific Management Plans. Community engagement occurs across a short-term and long-term timeline using a planned, multi-phased approach. What is developed and learned in Phase 1, will inform subsequent phases, to ultimately result in a pro-active, well thought-out long-term management plan for illegal roads and backcountry access and recreation at the Park.

## C. PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this project is to develop and implement Phase 1 of a multi-phase effort to holistically address illegal roads and recreation access at Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Phase 1 focuses on two high-impact regions of the park (Government Wash and Overton Arm) to address high-priority public protection needs and cultural and natural resource protection while expanding backcountry public access to Lake Mead since the waterline has receded.

## D. PROJECT DELIVERABLES

### Primary:

#### 1. Site-Specific Management Plans

- a) Develop a Site-Specific Management Plan for the Government Wash Project Area
- b) Develop a Site-Specific Management Plan for the Overton Arm Project Area

#### 2. Manage Illegal and Official Roads

- a) Block off access to approximately 25 illegal roads in the two Active Project Areas
- b) Provide visual barriers and/or remediation of approximately 5 miles of illegal roads in the two Active Management Areas
- c) Identify illegal roads (that have not already been surveyed) in the Government Wash Project Area
- d) Identify illegal roads (that have not already been surveyed) in the Overton Arm Project Area
- e) Identify current official roads for potential closure in the two Project Areas
- f) Identify potential routes for new official roads to reach the shoreline and/or potential recreational opportunities in the Government Wash Project Area and Overton Arm Project Area
- g) Install approximately 20 signs in the two Project Areas

#### 3. Community Outreach

- a) Implement approximately 8 educational “rides” within the Park
- b) Conduct approximately 14 community education meetings/events
- c) Conduct approximately 10 community engagement/input meetings

- d) Attend approximately 10 community events (e.g. Hump N' Bump) (informal education and outreach)
- e) Attend approximately 3 conferences related to off-roading and backcountry recreation
- f) Develop a social media campaign
- g) Develop a project website
- h) Develop approximately 3 K-12 outreach activities
- i) Conduct approximately 60 outreach activities into K-12 schools
- j) Conduct approximately 6 teacher workshops
- k) Develop approximately 3 new materials (e.g. brochures, handouts) related to key project educational topics
- l) Develop the Backcountry Ranger Program for the two Project Areas
- m) Patrolling of the two Project Areas by Law Enforcement and/or general ranger approximately twice per week
- n) Identify potential locations and topics for educational kiosks/waysides in the Project Areas
- o) Conduct approximately 10 volunteer events

#### **4. Cultural and Natural Resources**

- a) Conduct non-invasive and/or traditional surveys (Class II and Class III) on approximately [REDACTED] cultural site
- b) Identify cultural and natural resources being impacted in the Government Wash Project Area (that have not already been surveyed and are needed to inform the Management Plan)
- c) Identify cultural and natural resources being impacted at the Overton Arm Project Area (that have not already been surveyed and are needed to inform the Management Plan)

#### Anticipated:

##### **1. Site-Specific Management Plans**

- a. Approve (via an EA process, as needed) a Site-Specific Management Plan for the Government Wash Project Area
- b. Approve (via an EA process, as needed) a Site-Specific Management Plan for the Overton Arm Project Area
- c. Begin implementation of a Site-Specific Management Plan for the Government Wash Project Area
- d. Begin implementation of a Site-Specific Management Plan for the Overton Arm Project Area
- e. Implement backcountry use permitting systems as defined in the Site-Specific Management Plans
- f. Identify future areas for Site-Specific Management Plans in anticipation of Phase 2 of the project.

##### **2. Manage Illegal and Official Roads**

- a. Provide visual barriers and/or remediation of an additional 10 miles of illegal roads in the two Active Management Areas

- b. Survey the illegal roads (that have not already been surveyed) in the two Project Areas
- c. Block off access to an additional 25 illegal roads in the two broader Project Areas, as resources allow
- d. Survey/conduct compliance activities for potential routes for new official roads to reach the shoreline and/or potential recreational opportunities in the Government Wash Project Area and Overton Arm Project Area
- e. Build and open a new official road in at least one of the Project Areas
- f. Close official roads in the two Project Areas as needed to support management decisions as outlined in the Site-Specific Management Plans (number will be determined by assessment and management plans)
- g. Create approximately 15 pull-off sites to support specific recreational activities, such as backcountry camping along approved roads in the two Project Areas.

### **3. Community Outreach**

- a. Implement an additional 8 educational “rides” within the Park
- b. Conduct an additional 5 community education meetings/events
- c. Conduct an additional 8 community engagement/input meetings
- d. Attend an additional 5 community events (e.g. Hump N’ Bump) (informal education and outreach)
- e. Conduct an official conference presentation for at least 1 of the attended conferences
- f. Develop an additional 2 K-12 outreach activities
- g. Conduct an additional 30 outreach activities into K-12 schools
- h. Conduct an additional 5 teacher workshops
- i. Develop an additional 2 new materials (e.g. brochures, handouts) related to key project educational topics
- j. Patrolling of the two Project Areas by Law Enforcement and/or general ranger an additional 2 times per week
- k. Install two new educational kiosks/waysides in the Project Areas
- l. Conduct an additional 8 volunteer events

### **4. Cultural and Natural Resources**

- a. Conduct an additional approximately Class II and Class III cultural resource surveys on approximately 6,000 acres.
- b. Conduct additional surveys/compliance actions on illegal roads, and/or for kiosks, signs, and potential new official roads as the Site-Specific Plans are developed.
- c. Implement backcountry camping permitting system in the Project Areas as the new Site-Specific Management Plans define.
- d. Conduct additional surveys or actions at [REDACTED] (stabilization/protection/inventoried/monitored) based upon the surveys completed as part of the primary deliverables.

Standard:

1. NEPA and SHPO
2. Environmental and cultural surveys as needed for road extensions or backcountry camping sites.
3. Pre-construction engineering and design, as needed
4. Public scoping for the Backcountry Management Plan, as needed
5. Requests for bids/proposals
6. Developing scopes of work for contracts and sub-awards/cooperative agreements
7. Submitting and obtaining management approval of project documents
8. SMART reporting
9. Project closeout

## E. PROJECT LOCATION

### Identify County in Nevada where Project will be carried out:

Clark

### Identify Congressional District(s):

NV District 1 & 4

### Latitude and Longitude:

36.1214000000 -114.8268200000

## F. PROJECT TIMEFRAME

- a. Year 1
  1. Initiate hiring NPS-positions in support of the project.
  2. Establish contracts, cooperative agreements, and interagency agreements.
  3. Initiate equipment purchases and leases.
  4. Develop drafts of the Site-Specific Management Plans for the Government Wash and Overton Arm Project Areas and identify and conduct public input and NEPA compliance requirements/Environmental Assessment (EA).
  5. Towards the end of Year 1, begin *active assessment* of the project Areas (defined by the sub-boundaries in Maps 3 and 4). *Active assessment* means assessing the extent of the illegal roads in each area, possible viable paths for new approved roads, and identifying sensitive cultural or natural resources that would impact road management decisions.
  6. Towards the end of Year 1, begin *active management* of the smaller sub-areas outlined within the larger project Areas (along Government Wash Road and at Stewart's Point). *Active management* refers to actively closing off illegal roads and/or extending existing/creating new approved roads to manage the area.
  7. Finish developing and begin implementing a backcountry park ranger general special uses program and increased law enforcement ranger patrolling in the project Areas (these would be actions or activities that do not require public input a part of the Backcountry management Plan EA).



8. Finalize the Community Outreach, Education, and Engagement (COEE) Plan and begin implementing a community outreach, education, and engagement activities.
  9. Continue tribal consultation.
  10. Develop new signage and identify locations to place signage that requires minimal NEPA compliance.
- b. Year 2
1. Finalize the new Site-Specific Management Plans and conduct public input and NEPA compliance requirements, as needed and not completed in Year 1.
  2. Continue *active assessment* of project Areas (defined by the larger boundaries in Map 2). *Active assessment* means assessing the extent of the illegal roads in each area, possible viable paths for new approved roads, and identifying sensitive cultural or natural resources that would impact road management decisions.
    - a. A major *active assessment* activity will be to conduct surveys of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Project Area.
  3. Continue *active management* of the sub-areas outlined in *within* the larger Government Wash and Overton Arm (along Government Wash Road and the Stewart's Point area). *Active management* refers to actively closing off illegal roads and/or extending existing/creating new approved roads to manage the area.
  4. Continue tribal consultations.
  5. Continue community outreach, education, and engagement as defined by the COEE Plan.
  6. Continue park ranger general and law enforcement patrols in the two project Areas.
- c. Years 3 and 4
1. Once the EA is complete and the Site-Specific Plans for the two project Areas are approved initiate *active management activities* to address illegal roads and public access to the water and other recreational areas of interest in the two project areas. Conduct NEPA compliance activities on a case-by-case basis as specific projects are defined and prioritized.
  2. Using the new Site-Specific Plans as a guide, continue *active management* (including mapping, cultural and biological surveys, and road management activities) within the project Areas. Obtain NEPA compliance approvals as needed.
    - a. In year 4 identify additional management activities and areas to prioritize across the park (beyond the two active management areas defined in this project) for Phase 2 of the project.
  3. Continue tribal consultations.
  4. Continue community outreach, education, and engagement as defined by the COEE Plan.
  5. Continue park ranger general and law enforcement patrols in the two project Areas, prepare to transition park ranger general and law enforcement patrols for the Areas into the park's operational budget.
- d. Year 5
1. Complete any elements of the project not yet completed.
  2. Continue community and educational outreach.

## 3. Project close-out.

**G. LEVEL OF PROJECT READINESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Is this a shovel-ready project?  Yes  No

Elements of this project are shovel-ready. Maps 3 and 4 show the Project Areas (green boundary) and the Active Management areas (tan polygon). The active management areas have already gone through a previous NEPA EA process and work can begin right away in those areas to manage illegal roads, restore damaged areas, and determine if any new approved roads and/or formal backcountry camping sites will be developed in those regions.

**H. FUTURE OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE**

As part of this process the park will consider long term funding mechanisms such as permitting with fees as part of a funding strategy for managing the backcountry. The Park anticipates incorporating multiple of the new positions being brought in via this project. That includes the new Backcountry Ranger position and two new Patrol Ranger positions. Other new positions (listed as Term in the budget) may be considered being made permanent depending on the success of this project and plans to address illegal roads in other areas of the Park.

**I. PROJECT BUDGET**

Complete the project budget using the provided Excel spreadsheet template and upload as a separate document to the “Submissions” tab in the Nomination Portal. Do not embed the project budget in this document.

Partnership and/or Contributed Funds

Volunteers will help survey, build barriers, hide, and/or revegetate illegal roads in the two Project Areas. Volunteers (18 events x 3 hours = 54 hours x 10 people per event = 540 hours; surveying of illegal roads 1080 hours) Total 1620 hours x \$31/hr = \$50,220

**J. KEY CONTACTS**

Authorized Officer: Mike Gauthier, Superintendent  
 Email: mike\_gauthier@nps.gov  
 Phone Number: 760-252-6103

Project Manager: Stefani Dawn, Partnerships and Grants Management Specialist  
 Email: stefani\_dawn@nps.gov  
 Phone Number: 702-280-0388

Budget Officer: Scott Briggs, Supervisory Financial Administration and Program Analyst  
 Email: scott\_briggs@nps.gov  
 Phone Number: (702) 293-8687

## K. RANKING CRITERIA

The Ranking Criteria are used to evaluate the nomination against the goals for the Conservation Initiatives category. Nominating entities are not to include either the total point value or the point values by criteria in their responses. Nominations will be reviewed and scored by the Conservation Initiatives subgroup. Explain how the project meets each applicable criterion.

**1. The nomination supports habitat enhancement, cultural resources, environmental health and protection, and/or public health and safety through connectivity and sustainability.** Include as many project subtypes as applicable to your nomination. Points for this criterion will be awarded on how well the nomination addresses the concepts within the factors, and the quality/quantity of results the project provides. The examples identified are not an all-inclusive list.

A. Habitat Enhancement. *The following are examples of project subtypes for habitat enhancement goals, objectives, or actions: Enhances or connects habitats, migratory corridors, or protected areas; Protects endangered species; Proactive steps to prevent listing; Invasive species treatment and/or control (plant and/or animal); Restoration of habitat for sensitive species at the watershed and/or landscape level; Project addresses climate change; Water quality and quantity monitoring; Cave management; Restoration of springs/streams/rivers; Road decommissioning and rehabilitation/restoration; Reintroduction or augmentation of species to restore overall ecosystem; Mitigates impacts of drought.*

Answer: This project protects endangered species by: (a) closing illegal roads crossing into sensitive habitats; (b) closing approved roads that no longer lead to water or areas of recreational value AND encourage illegal offroad activities on or near sensitive habitats; (c) rehabilitation or restoration of damaged areas as resources allow; (d) creating new approved roads that support recreational access and are not located near sensitive habitats that support endangered species.

B. Cultural Resources. *The following are examples of project subtypes for cultural resources goals, objectives, or actions: surveys; National Register (eligible or currently approved); Protection/site stewards; Restoration/stabilization; and tribal involvement in the planning, design and/or implementation.*

Answer: The nomination supports protecting cultural resources through compliance surveying prior to any soil is moved/work is done to close off illegal roads and/or establish new recreational roads. The most extensive and significant cultural work for this project

using a variety of very specialized non-destructive survey

techniques alongside more traditional techniques. [REDACTED]

Surveying [REDACTED] will protect the resource by identifying the extent of the site, especially relative to illegal roads that have been/are being established and used in the area and then working with tribes to determine potential management actions such as making official designated roads as needed in the vicinity and keeping recreators from driving over the structures.

Tribal involvement will occur in all aspects of the project, but there will be in-depth involvement in the surveying [REDACTED] through tribal interns, invitations to share input into preferred management options [REDACTED], and invitations to provide input into outreach and education messaging for the project.

C. Environmental Health and Protection and/or Public Health and Safety. *The following are examples of project subtypes for public health and safety goals, objectives, or action: Illegal litter/dumping cleanup; Information kiosks and signs; Addresses and mitigates adverse impacts to resources caused by the volume of people using the resource; Resolving trespass/encroachment/illegal use of public lands (i.e. homeless encampments, marijuana grow sites)/boundary surveys; Abandoned mine land (AML) with habitat restoration component; Improve the sustainability of the landscape health and ecosystem function; Remove the threat of catastrophic fire loss of the ecosystem; Improve water quality and/or mitigate the threat of soil erosion.*

Answer: This project will close illegal roads and/or create new official roads in heavily visited backcountry areas (per the Project Areas defined boundaries) to allow law enforcement, emergency personnel, and vehicle recovery support to more easily locate distress calls; install signs marking closed roads and discouraging the use and creation of illegal roads and clearly marking open, official roads; implement a permitting system to allow tracking of vehicles and number of people in the backcountry; close illegal roads or create new official roads to enable safe access to recreation and the lake (e.g. close roads that may have a high frequency of vehicle recovery); install signs to inform users of any new permitting requirements; identify locations within the two Project Areas that allow overnight use and areas that are day use only, and install signs clearly identifying those areas.

**2. The nomination promotes sustainability by providing benefits in the near and long term by implementing actions to conserve and sustain healthy and resilient landscapes and providing durability, and relevancy.**

A. Conserves resources to ensure availability to current and/or future generations through management of natural and/or cultural resources for public benefit and sustainable social and economic utilization.

Answer: This project conserves both natural and cultural resources in two Project Areas (Government Wash and Overton Arm) while also considering a variety of elements for public benefit, including reclamation/restoration of damaged land, protection of cultural resources and undamaged land, education about cultural resources and protecting natural and cultural resources, and providing clear/labeled official access to recreational activities that illegal roads sought to access (e.g. the lake shoreline for social activities, fishing, etc.)

B. Will remain relevant and continue to provide a benefit beyond the existence of SNPLMA.

Answer: There are numerous ways the results of the project will provide benefit beyond the existence of SNPLMA. (1) Education and outreach activities will provide benefit for the lifetime of those who participate in the activities. They also have the potential to extend beyond the direct participants through person-to-person sharing. (2) The project will produce Site-Specific Management Plans for the two Project Areas, that will guide the park's management actions for those areas for years to come. The park also plans to incorporate successful actions/components from the project into budgets. (3) The illegal roads that are closed will have barriers that will maximize the long-term closure/blockage (preventing the creation of new illegal roads around the barriers). (4) The new official roads that are identified and created as part of this project will be maintained by the park and be available to visitors for many years to come.

C. Conserves or restores the functionality, resilience, and integrity of biological communities.

Answer: This project conserves both natural resources in two Project Areas (Government Wash and Overton Arm). These areas were identified for Phase 1 of this multi-phase project because of the high concentration of illegal roads and the high priority impacts to natural resources, especially highly sensitive biological communities like desert tortoise habitat and gypsum-soil habitats that support multiple endangered species. The project takes a multi-pronged approach to manage the issue with the intent of long-term sustainability (by creating Site-Specific Management Plans and incorporating successful actions/components from the project into the Park's budgets and management approaches). The project's activities will help to protect sensitive cultural resources from further damage, as well as, create circumstances (through physical barriers, education, and restoration, where possible) to allow the landscapes to heal and protect natural resources that have not yet been damaged but have the potential for damage from the creation of new illegal roads.

D. Conserves or restores cultural resources through prudent management and prevention of damage, injury, decay, waste, or loss.

Answer: This project has a very significant cultural resource conservation and management component that will have long-lasting impacts beyond SNPLMA. Not only

will it help identify and survey cultural resources in the two project areas being impacted by illegal roads (or potentially impacted in the future by illegal roads getting close to the resource), it will enable the park to make management decisions (in consultation with tribes) about whether/how to develop future official roads in the vicinity of these cultural resources, whether/how to educate the public about these resources, and whether/how to close off illegal roads damaging these resources.

**3. The nomination promotes community, connecting humans to engage in the protection and the integrity of biological communities or cultural sites. Encourages people to connect with habitats, migratory corridors, protected areas, etc., and to appreciate and care for the environment.**

A. Encourages people to meaningfully connect with their natural environment and helps them appreciate and be a steward for the environment. Provides information and resources to educate and engage people in understanding their role in protection and maintenance of the natural environment by providing opportunities for them to connect to the natural resources directly or virtually, or provides education of the environment.

Answer: This project has a robust Community Outreach, Engagement, and Education component that includes in-park and out-of-park components and activities that educate people about responsible off-roading, differences in public land designations and uses, as well as how and why to protect natural and cultural resources.

Within the park we will develop a site-specific management program with backcountry rangers that engage with and educate people recreating in the project areas, including those partaking in or interested in participating in off-road activities, co-conducting educational rides within the park with community partners, and volunteer activities to support the project goals.

Outside of the park, NPS will partner with community experts (cultural resource and natural resource experts, as well as community outreach and off-roading experts) to conduct community engagement/input meetings (to inform park planning to close off illegal roads and create new official roads to meet recreational needs), informal and formal education events and outreach, social media and online campaigns, and K-12 outreach activities and materials on the target topics.

B. The nomination clearly defines and includes a stewardship component (federal or non-federal) to broaden support and reduce long-term costs by minimizing the human impact on the environment through an education plan with clear curricula and achievable goals and objectives.

Answer: The stewardship components of this project focus on the stewardship of both cultural and natural resources in the park. The project will develop formal and informal educational events, as well as formal and informal materials for distribution to schools and the public at targeted outreach events, as well as shared with visitors of the park. Stewardship will also be advanced through volunteer events to close off illegal roads, restore damaged areas, survey illegal roads, and where possible, and install signage and educational kiosks.

- C. Preserves the past (cultural or historic sites) for present or future generations.

Answer: This project will preserve cultural and historic sites by identifying and surveying illegal roads that have been created since the last surveys conducted by the park, determining their proximity to cultural resources, and developing a management plan for two targets areas (Overton Arm and Government Wash). There is [REDACTED] relative to the illegal roads in the vicinity of and directly on the resource. As part of the site management plan process, the park will use the data collected as well as engage with tribes to determine next-step management decisions to preserve [REDACTED] cultural site.

**4. The nomination enhances partnerships to promote cooperation, collaboration, and stewardship. The nomination has identified committed non-SNPLMA sources of funding or in-kind contributions in the development and/or implementation of the project.**

- A. The nomination promotes partnerships to promote collaboration which addresses and meets the needs of more than one agency (federal or state).

Answer: Although the project takes place within the boundaries of NPS land (Lake Mead NRA), the park is adjacent to BLM land, through which many of the off-road vehicles enter. The park has met with BLM managers about this project and will partner and consult with them regularly as the project progresses. The BLM has shared the following documents with NPS and has provided a letter of support. These documents outline BLM plans for managing illegal roads on the lands relevant to this project:

- Las Vegas Field Office Resource Management Plan 1998 (includes lands BLM manages in Clark County)
- Travel Management Plan/Route Designations (2008)
- Muddy Mountains Travel Management Plan (Ongoing Process), including scoping meeting materials, recordings of public meeting, and map data.

- B. The nomination involves non-Federal, public partners, citizen groups or organizations in the development or accomplishment of resource management goals and other activities to prevent waste, damage, or neglect.

Answer: The nomination has the support of numerous non-Federal organizations and individuals (see letters of support) who are invested in cultural and natural resource protection, outdoor recreation (including off-roading and backcountry activities that require off-roading to access), and community outreach and education about recreating responsibly and protecting cultural and natural resources in southern Nevada. These partners, among others, will provide project guidance and support in a spectrum of activities and roles relative to their specialization and audience.

C. Project has support for the planning, design, and/or implementation from non-profit, local, or state government, academia, tribal, or youth initiatives.

Answer: The NPS works with 18 different tribes who have ancestral connections with the land and water in the Lake Mead NRA. Although tribes will be engaged through project activities that require compliance, the largest tribal engagement will occur through the [REDACTED] surveying activities and subsequent [REDACTED] site management decision-making. Tribal youth, along with other youth, will be hired to support the surveying and outreach and education activities. The [REDACTED] surveying will be done in partnership with NPS staff and academic/scientific professionals well-versed in advanced non-disruptive cultural resource survey techniques. Academic professionals, in partnership with community experts, will also help create and/or review specialized educational materials for the project (see letters of support).

D. The nomination has identified committed non-SNPLMA sources of funding or in-kind contributions in the development and/or implementation of the project, (i.e., volunteer labor valuation to be computed at the rate used by the Department of the Interior, non-federal employees' actual hourly rate plus the value of any fringe benefits received, actual costs for material, equipment, and supplies. ***Overhead costs may not be included in determining in-kind contributions.***

Answer: In-kind contributions include volunteers to help build barriers to block illegal roads, visually block and/or revegetate illegal roads, and collect survey data of illegal roads (18 events x 3 hours = 54 hours x 10 people per event = 540 hours; surveying of illegal roads 1080 hours) Total 1620 hours x \$31 = \$50,220

## L. ORDERS AND PRIORITIES

Respond to the Executive Orders, Secretarial Orders, Department of the Interior Priorities, and USDA Forest Service Priorities as they apply to the purpose of the nomination.

A. Executive Orders (EO):

- ***EO No. 13855: Promoting Active Management of America's Forests, Range Lands to Improve Conditions and Reduce Wildfire Risk***



Offroad vehicles travelling on illegal roads are a wildfire risk. Illegal roads typically have dry plant matter that can come in contact with a hot vehicle and ignite a fire. In addition, illegal road use can encourage visitors to camp or recreate (including partaking in activities like cooking or smoking) in areas that are not properly cleared for or designated for that type of use, all of which increase fire risk. Stopping illegal road creation and use, creating new official roads to meet recreational needs, and managing backcountry camping through designated areas (potentially with permitting), all help reduce wildland fire risk.

- ***EO No. 14004: Ensuring the Future is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers***

Supplies, materials, and contracting for the illegal roads and building of any new roads will meet this order.

- ***EO No. 14063: Use of Project Labor Agreements for Federal Construction Projects (applicable to projects estimated at \$35 million or more)***

Not applicable.

- ***EO No. 14072: Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies***

Subawards for this project will go to local non-profit, local academic institutions, and local businesses.

- ***EO No. 14096: Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All***

Not applicable.

## B. Secretarial Orders

- ***SO No. 3347: Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation.***

This project meets the secretarial order for conservation stewardship and outdoor recreation in multiple ways:

- It provides multiple community outreach, engagement, and education activities related to preventing the use and creation of illegal roads to protect cultural and natural resources.

- It connects with the community to identify their goals for backcountry recreation that require “off-road” use in the two project areas (Government Wash and Overton Arm) and determining where the park can create new official backcountry roads to help meet those community recreational needs.
  - It allows the park to assess and develop a plan for where backcountry camping and other backcountry recreational opportunities can occur in the two project areas to meet community recreational needs while protecting natural and cultural resources.
  - The project will provide volunteer/stewardship activities to help close/block off illegal roads, as well as restore land, where possible.
- ***SO No. 3356: Hunting, Fishing, Recreational Shooting, and Wildlife Conservation Opportunities and Coordination with States, Tribes and Territories.***

Answer: The Site-Specific Managements Plans that will be produced as part of the project will consider hunting, fishing, and wildlife conservation opportunities in the Overton Arm and Government Wash. The plans will be part of an Environmental Assessment process that includes input from all stakeholders.

- ***SO No. 3362: Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors.***

Blocking off and removing illegal roads, as well as educating people about not creating illegal roads, will help protect and restore habitat valuable as migration corridors.

- ***SO No. 3366: Increasing Recreational Opportunities on Lands and Waters Managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior***

Answer: One of the reasons many illegal roads are being established in Lake Mead NRA is because of the public’s desire and attempts to reach the lake after the water levels have dropped. Because of the terrain, some areas are more accessible than others, which spurs more illegal roads in an attempt to find a path that “goes.” This project will enable the park to collect the data and information it needs to determine the best paths to access the new lake shoreline (paths that avoid culturally and biologically sensitive areas, as well as things like deep sand that can require rescue) and the best locations and processes to use for backcountry camping, access, and recreation options in the two project areas. The project will also connect with the off-roading community to learn more about their recreational goals and needs, which will be considered in the site management plans created as part of this project.

- ***SO No. 3370: Conservation Stewardship and Increasing Public Access to Urban National Wildlife Refuges.***

*Not applicable*

- ***SO No. 3372: Reducing Wildfire Risks on Department of the Interior Land Through Active Management.***

Offroad vehicles travelling on illegal roads are a wildfire risk. Illegal roads typically have dry plant matter that can come in contact with a hot vehicle and ignite a fire. In addition, illegal road use can encourage visitors to camp or recreate (including partaking in activities like cooking or smoking) in areas that are not properly cleared for or designated for that type of use, all of which increase fire risk. The active management components of this project that will reduce wildfire risk include: blocking off access to illegal roads; identifying and, where possible, creating new official backcountry road access, where brush is cleared; identifying, and, where possible, creating official backcountry camping designations that have reduced wildfire risk and management activities; and educating the public about wildfire risk from off-roading activities.

- ***SO No. 3373: Evaluating Public Access in Bureau of Land Management Public Land Disposal and Exchanges (focus is on Sec. 4.b.(3) Potential increased public recreational access to existing public lands resulting from the proposed land acquired through an exchange (acquisition).***

*Not applicable*

- ***SO No. 3376: Increasing Recreational Opportunities through the use of Electric Bikes.***

*Not directly applicable – the use of electric bikes on back country roads that have been identified and potentially created as part of this project, could be a recreational opportunity.*

C. Department of the Interior Priorities:

- ***Identifying steps to accelerate responsible development of renewable energy on public lands and waters. We are investing in climate research and environmental innovation to incentivize the rapid deployment of clean energy solutions, while reviewing existing programs to restore balance on America's public lands and waters to benefit current and future generations.***

*Not applicable.*

- ***Strengthening the government-to-government relationship with sovereign Tribal Nations.*** *We understand that tribal sovereignty and self-governance, as well as honoring the federal trust responsibility to Tribal Nations, must be the cornerstones of federal Indian policy.*

Answer: The NPS works with 18 different tribes who have ancestral connections with the land and water in the Lake Mead NRA. Although the tribes will be engaged through project activities that require compliance, the largest tribal engagement will occur through the [REDACTED] activities. Tribal youth will be hired to support the surveying and outreach and education activities for the project. Once the [REDACTED] survey data are collected, including the illegal and official road data in the vicinity, tribal nations will take part in/provide input into the next-step decision-making to manage this area of the park.

- ***Making investments to support the Administration's goal of creating millions of family-supporting and union jobs.*** *This includes establishing a new Climate Conservation Corps Initiative to put a new generation of Americans to work conserving and restoring public lands and waters, increasing reforestation, increasing carbon sequestration in the agricultural sector, protecting biodiversity, improving access to recreation, and addressing the changing climate.*

Answer: This project has multiple conservation components that will require both volunteers and youth hiring/conservation corps hiring including activities like closing off illegal road access through building fences and blockades, creating other natural physical and visual barriers to hide the road from view, conducting surveys of illegal roads and natural and cultural resources for compliance and data for decision-making, and restoring natural habitats, when possible.

- ***Working to conserve at least 30% each of our lands and waters by the year 2030.*** *We will work to protect biodiversity, slow extinction rates, and help leverage natural climate solutions by conserving 30% of America's lands and waters by 2030. This relies on support for local, state, private, and tribally led conservation and restoration efforts that are underway across America.*

With over 200 miles of illegal roads creating a web across the two project areas targeted in this nomination, this project will enable NPS to assess the extent of damage, especially relative to sensitive natural (and cultural) resource areas. By identifying recreation goals and the best paths to reach the new lake shoreline, the park can meet recreational needs while closing down access to illegal roads and allowing the damaged land to be restored (either naturally and/or with volunteer support). These actions will contribute to the goal of land conservation.

- ***Centering equity and environmental justice.*** *The impacts of the multiple crises in the United States are not evenly distributed in our society. Communities of color, low-income families, and rural and indigenous communities have long suffered disproportionate and cumulative harm from air pollution, water pollution, and toxic sites. At every step of the way, Interior will engage diverse stakeholders across the country, as well as conduct formal consultation with Tribes in recognition of the U.S. government's trust responsibilities.*

Not applicable.

D. USDA Forest Service Priorities:

- ***Controlling the COVID-19 pandemic***

Click or tap here to enter text.

- ***Providing economic relief***

Click or tap here to enter text.

- ***Tackling climate change***

Click or tap here to enter text.

- ***Advancing racial equity***

Click or tap here to enter text.

- ***Improving our workforce and work environment***

Click or tap here to enter text.

## M. MAPS

Maximum of six maps, labeled with a description. Insert here and upload maps as JPEG in the Nomination Portal.

## N. PHOTOS

Maximum of six photos, up to 20mg each or less. Provide descriptions. Insert here and upload photos as JPEG in the Nomination Portal.