



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Nevada State Office  
1340 Financial Boulevard  
Reno, Nevada 89502-7147  
<https://www.blm.gov/nevada>



In Reply Refer To:  
1170 (NV934) P

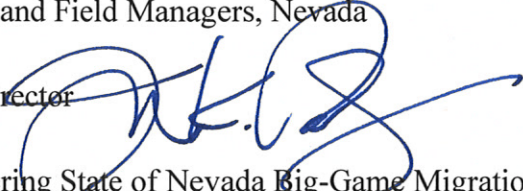
JUL - 1 2021

## EMS TRANSMISSION:

Instruction Memorandum No. NV-2021-022

Expires: 9/30/2022

To: District and Field Managers, Nevada

From: State Director 

Subject: Considering State of Nevada Big-Game Migration Corridors on BLM administered lands in Nevada.

### Program Area: Wildlife and Vegetation Management

**Purpose:** This Instruction Memorandum (IM) sets forth guidance on how the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Nevada will evaluate and consider the State of Nevada's big-game migration corridors on BLM managed lands.

### Administrative or Mission Related: Administrative

**Policy/Action:** This IM transmits policies and procedures identified in Secretarial Order 3362 (Attachment 1) in association with ongoing and proposed BLM actions, including use authorizations within migration corridors identified by the State of Nevada's *Action Plan for Implementation of Department of the Interior Secretarial Order 3362: "Improving Habitat in Winter Big-Game Range and Migration Corridors (Attachment 2)"* or any subsequent Secretarial Orders or State connectivity plans that supersede these documents. The policies and procedures identified in this IM are specifically designed to advance objectives to maintain and restore big-game migration corridors and winter range habitat, as identified by the State of Nevada's Department of Wildlife (NDOW). These policies and procedures are expected to be considered and incorporated as appropriate by local BLM offices and are in addition to, but do not replace more protective measures in existing Land Use Plans (LUPs):

- Prioritize treatments and research opportunities within migration corridors when planning and evaluating funding for vegetation treatments.
- Evaluate land treatments within migration corridors in a landscape-scale context to address habitat fragmentation.

**INTERIOR REGIONS 8 & 10 • LOWER COLORADO BASIN & CALIFORNIA-GREAT BASIN**

ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA, NEVADA, OREGON\*

\* PARTIAL

- Coordinate land treatments with adjacent landowners to avoid any unintended negative landscape effects to migration corridors and explore partnership opportunities for habitat enhancement on adjacent private lands or lands managed by other Federal, Tribal, State, and local agencies.
- Coordinate, plan, design, and implement vegetation treatments (e.g., pinyon/juniper removal, fuels treatments, green stripping) and associated effectiveness monitoring between Resources, Fuels Management, Emergency Stabilization, and Burned Area Rehabilitation programs to:
  - Promote the maintenance of large intact sagebrush communities.
  - Limit the expansion or dominance of invasive species, including cheatgrass.
  - Maintain or improve soil site stability, hydrologic function, and biological integrity.
  - Enhance the native plant community, including the native shrub reference state in the State and Transition Model, with appropriate shrub, grass, and forb composition identified in the applicable Ecological Site Description where available.
    - Use of non-native plant species may be used consistent with BLM Policy Handbook H-1740-2, District-specific RMP decisions or other direction, and Management Decisions MD VEG 7 and MD FIRE 42 from both the 2015 and 2019 Nevada and Northeastern California Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendments.
- Document analysis of (1) short- and long-term objectives and (2) direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of treatment types, and other land-uses when conducting National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) for vegetation treatments, management actions, and other land-uses or authorizations in migration corridors.
- Avoid development in crucial winter range and migration corridors during sensitive seasons.
- Minimize development that would fragment crucial winter range and migration corridors.
- Limit disturbance of big game on winter range.
- Design treatments to increase cover of sagebrush and/or understory to improve habitats for big game species where pinyon and juniper trees are encroaching on sagebrush plant communities.
- Prioritize wildfire protection, suppression, and restoration in winter range and migration corridors.
- Work with NDOW to identify and remove or modify fences that do not meet current standards for wildlife.
- Implement management actions, where appropriate, to improve degraded big game habitats that have become encroached upon by shrubland or woodland species.
- Prioritize wild horse gathers to achieve Appropriate Management Level (AML) in areas that overlap with crucial winter range, stop-overs, and migration corridors for wildlife identified in the state action plan.



- Identify and improve natural water sources that may be negatively impacted by wild horses and overuse by livestock and construct pipe-rail fencing where possible and provide alternative water for livestock and wild horses outside of the enclosures.

**Timeframe:** This IM is effective upon receipt and until rescinded or superseded.

**Budget Impact:** None

**Background:**

Secretarial Order 3362 (SO 3362) was signed on February 9, 2018 and directed appropriate bureaus within the Department of Interior (DOI), including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Park Service (NPS), and BLM to work in close partnership with the State of Nevada to identify, enhance, and improve the quality of big-game winter range habitats and migration corridors in a way that recognizes state authority for conserving and managing big-game species and respects private property rights (Attachment 1).

Through research and land management actions, wildlife such as mule deer, pronghorn antelope, Rocky Mountain elk, and other wildlife and their habitats, may benefit. Conditions and various land-uses in the broader landscape may influence the function of migration corridors and sustainability of big game populations. Such conditions include habitat fragmentation, land use patterns, resource management, and urbanization.

To achieve the objectives of SO 3362, the DOI asked states to identify 3-5 priority migration corridors or winter range habitats for big game species in their respective state. Where information on specific migration corridors or winter range habitat is lacking, the DOI requested states to identify their top 2-3 research priorities to fill these data or knowledge gaps.

Nevada has long recognized the importance of identifying and protecting migration corridors for big game species, particularly for mule deer. Beginning in 2011, Nevada initiated a large-scale research effort to investigate potential causes for declining mule deer populations in several key herds across the state. At this time, Nevada has collected GPS tracking information on approximately 600 adult mule deer, distributed across eight study areas in the state, to delineate fine scale movements and monitor survival of deer herds. Of those study areas, three mule deer populations (Areas 6, 7 and 10) clearly stood out as meeting the need for initial prioritization based on SO 3362. In addition, two pronghorn herds have been identified as a priority from a conservation and economic value to Nevada. The two pronghorn herds occur in northwestern (Areas 1, 2, and 3) and northeastern Nevada (Areas 6 and 7). It is understood that these are NDOW's initial priorities. Modifications and additional herds may be added and prioritized in future updates to the State of Nevada's *Action Plan for Implementation of Department of the Interior Secretarial Order 3362* (Attachment 2), other State connectivity plans, or BLM management plans based on improved data and understanding species movement patterns and changing environmental conditions or land use patterns.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: None

Contacts: If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the Wildlife Program State Lead at BLM Nevada State Office.

### **Attachments**

**Attachment 1-** Department of the Interior Secretarial Order 3362: “Improving Habitat in Winter Big-Game Range and Migration Corridors.”

**Attachment 2-** State of Nevada’s *Action Plan for Implementation of Department of the Interior Secretarial Order 3362: “Improving Habitat in Winter Big-Game Range and Migration Corridors.”*