

Wilderness.net's Black Rock Desert Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Black Rock Desert Wilderness in 2000 and it now has a total of 314,835 acres. All of the wilderness is in Nevada and is managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Description

The Black Rock Desert Wilderness, which contains the eastern arm of the Black Rock Desert, is the largest Wilderness managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The Black Rock Desert is the dry

lakebed of ancient Lake Lahonton and vegetation in the area consists mainly of saltbush and greasewood. Large portions of the area are unvegetated. Elevations range from 3,900 to 5,931 feet on top of Elephant Mountain. The Wilderness is essentially flat with the only topography occurring at Elephant and Pinto Mountains on the western edge of the area. During years of heavy snowpack the Quinn river flows through the area. The Wilderness also contains important paleological resources along the old lakeshore. Several mammoths and a saber tooth tiger have been excavated from the area. Wildlife in the area include; mule deer, pronghorn antelope, mountain lions, coyotes, and sagegrouse.

Leave No Trace

How to follow the seven standard Leave No Trace principles differs in different parts of the country (desert vs. Rocky Mountains). Click on any of the principles listed below to learn more about how they apply in the Black Rock Desert Wilderness.

1. [Plan Ahead and Prepare](#)
2. [Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces](#)
3. [Dispose of Waste Properly](#)
4. [Leave What You Find](#)
5. [Minimize Campfire Impacts](#)
6. [Respect Wildlife](#)
7. [Be Considerate of Other Visitors](#)

For more information on Leave No Trace, [Visit the Leave No Trace, Inc. website.](#)

Location

The Wilderness is located in western Humboldt County. The best access to the Wilderness is located along the BLM and County roads that form the eastern and northern boundaries of the Wilderness.

Area Management

The Black Rock Desert Wilderness is part of the 111 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System. This System of lands provides clean air, water, and habitat critical for rare and endangered plants and animals. In wilderness, you can enjoy challenging recreational activities like hiking, backpacking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, stargazing, and extraordinary opportunities for solitude. You play an important role in helping to *"secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"* as called for by the Congress of the United States through the Wilderness Act of 1964. Please follow the requirements outlined below and use Leave No Trace techniques when visiting the Black Rock Desert Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

A Wilderness Management Plan for this wilderness area was completed in December of 2012. For more information, please contact the Winnemucca District Office at 775-623-1500.

Contacts

Black Rock Field Office, Winnemucca District
5100 E Winnemucca Blvd
Winnemucca, NV 89445

Phone: 775-623-1500
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Links to Other Websites

[Black Rock Desert Wilderness Fact Sheet](#)

[Bureau of Land Management, Black Rock Desert Wilderness](#)

Links on Wilderness.net

[National, Regional and Local Wilderness Organizations \(NGOs\)](#)

A listing of societies, organizations, coalitions and other wilderness-related advocacy and stewardship groups.

[Career and Volunteer Opportunities](#)

A listing of sites providing information about wilderness- and environmentally-related career and volunteer opportunities.

Applicable Wilderness Law(s)

Law	Date	Acreage Change (in acres)
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Public Law 106-554

December 21, 2000

315,700

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001 - Public law 106-554 (12/21/2000) In order to conserve, protect, and enhance for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations the unique and nationally important historical, cultural, paleontological, scenic, scientific, biological, educational, wildlife, riparian, wilderness, endangered species, and recreational values and resources associated with the Applegate-Lassen and Nobles Trails corridors and surrounding areas, there is hereby established the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area in the State of Nevada

NOTE: This appropriations act contains the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act of 2000 designating 10 new wilderness areas in northern Nevada.

 [download 106-554](#) - Relevant legislation found on page(s): 355.

Public Law 107-63

November 6, 2001

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Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2002 - Public law 107-63 (11/6/2001) The Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act of 2000 is amended in sections 4(b) (16 U.S.C. 460ppp-2(b)) and 8(a) (16 U.S.C. 460ppp-6(a)) by striking “July 19, 2000” each place it appears and inserting “October 3, 2001”

NOTE: Amends the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act of 2000 (contained within the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001, Public Law 106-554) by changing the original referenced map to exclude several routes that were initially included.

 [download 107-63](#)

Recreational Opportunities

While the area is essentially flat, its large size provides for outstanding opportunities for solitude. The Quinn River has been floated during spring runoff through the Wilderness. Floating the river generally requires hiking 7-10 miles with your boat to reach the nearest take-out road.

Climate and Special Equipment Needs

The area has a typical climate of the Great Basin; hot summers with temperatures over 100 degrees F and cold winters with temperatures often below 20 degrees F. Sufficient amounts of water should be carried. Because the area has poor cell phone coverage the only reliable form of communication is by satellite phone. Access roads in the area are very rough and visitors should have high clearance four wheel drive vehicles with extra gas and two spare tires.

Safety and Current Conditions

Current conditions for the area can be found by calling the BLM Winnemucca Field Office at 775-623-1500