



Gold Butte National Monument – Environmental Assessment Draft Alternatives

DRAFT ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives are preliminary and were formulated from the BLM’s internal scoping discussions and input received during the initial public input period from February 1 through March 3, 2022. The Public Input Period – Summary Report can be viewed here: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2021951/510>.

Alternative A (No Action)

Under the no-action alternative, the BLM would not adopt the Gold Butte National Monument (GBNM) Implementation Plan (IP). The decisions detailed in the signed Presidential Proclamation #9559, which established the monument, would supersede decisions from the 1998 Las Vegas Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision (ROD) 1998. The current goals and objectives for BLM-administered lands would not change. Appropriate allocations and restrictions pertaining to activities, such as recreation, would also remain the same. All uses would be consistent with the care and management of the objects identified in the proclamation.

Alternative B (Proposed Action)—Management for Resource Sustainability and Consistent Uses

Under the proposed action, the BLM would adopt the GBNM IP. Alternative B emphasizes maintaining or enhancing priority species and habitats, and preserving and restoring cultural and historic resources, while allowing for appropriate uses consistent with the care and management of the objects identified in the proclamation. Under Alternative B, the BLM would provide measures for maintaining and improving vegetation, biological crusts, and native plant species. The BLM would also implement treatments to reduce the spread of exotic and invasive species. The BLM would protect, preserve, and restore cultural and historic resources, consistent with the proposed Gold Butte National Monument Historic Properties Protection Project; this project is analyzing protection measures (bathrooms, kiosks, and trails) at Falling Man and Kirk’s Grotto as well.

Under Alternative B, the BLM would manage high visitation areas to continue to provide sustainable recreation opportunities while protecting sensitive resources. Trails and infrastructure in the greater Whitney Pocket area would be managed consistent with the proposed Gold Butte National Monument Historic Properties Protection Project. The BLM would consider select sites for designated developed camping areas, with limited infrastructure and amenities, such as, but not limited to, restrooms, picnic tables, shade structures, and trash receptacles. All uses would be consistent with the care and management of the objects identified in the proclamation.



Gold Butte National Monument – Environmental Assessment Draft Alternatives

Alternative C (Increased Recreation Use)

Alternative C is similar to Alternative B; however, Alternative C emphasizes opportunities for increased recreational use, while still maintaining or enhancing priority species and habitats, and preserving and restoring cultural and historic resources. Alternative C would have the fewest restrictions on recreational use. This alternative would provide for increased recreational use and offer amenities such as, but not limited to, a visitor center/contact station, designated parking areas, trailheads, installation of a viewing platform at Devil's Throat, increased signage throughout the monument, development of multiple nonmotorized trails, increased road improvements in high visitation areas (including the Back Country Byway), designated camping areas (specific to equestrian use and corrals), and specific designated camping areas to accommodate recreational vehicles (RVs). The BLM would consider adding additional recreation infrastructure specific to the Whitney Pocket area and Cabin Canyon.

The BLM would consider special recreation permit proposals, including but not limited to, those for off-road vehicle use, mechanized use, equestrian use, hiking, vendors, concessionaires, and other activities, on a case-by-case basis, adhering to critical tortoise habitat protection measures, as provided in the 1998 RMP ROD decision. All uses would be consistent with the care and management of the objects identified in the proclamation.

Alternative D (Management for Use and Resource Protection)

Alternative D emphasizes maintaining or enhancing priority species and habitats, and preserving and restoring cultural and historic resources, while allowing for appropriate uses consistent with the care and management of the objects identified in the proclamation. This alternative would have the most restrictions on recreational use, infrastructure, and amenities. Under Alternative D, the BLM would provide limited opportunities for recreation and nonmotorized travel, minimizing development of recreational facilities, infrastructure, and amenities. The BLM would minimize and limit sign installations, parking areas, trailheads and trailhead construction, bathroom installations, developed camping areas, and road improvements and maintenance.

Alternative D would be the most proactive in promoting conservation and recovery of endangered and other special status species, preserving and restoring cultural and historic resources and protecting other social and scientific values consistent with the care and management of the objects identified in the proclamation.

Common to All Alternatives

Under all alternatives, the BLM would allow low-level overflights of military aircraft, the designation of new units of special-use airspace, and the use or establishment of military flight training routes over the lands, consistent with the care and management of the objects identified in the proclamation. Motorized vehicle use in the monument would be permitted only on roads designated as open. Nonmotorized



Gold Butte National Monument – Environmental Assessment Draft Alternatives

mechanized use would be permitted only on roads and trails, consistent with the care and management of the objects identified in the proclamation.

The BLM would provide for the operation, maintenance, replacement, modification, or upgrade within the physical authorization boundary of existing flood control, pipeline, and telecommunications facilities or other water infrastructure, including wildlife water catchments or water district facilities, that are within the monument. The lands within the monument's boundaries would be appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, or other disposition under the public land laws; from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing. The BLM would also renew, operate, maintain, replace, and modify water delivery facilities from valid existing water rights while protecting natural and cultural resources.

The BLM would, to the maximum extent permitted by law and in consultation with Indian tribes, ensure the protection of Indian sacred sites and traditional cultural properties in the monument and provide access by members of Indian tribes for traditional cultural and customary uses, consistent with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. No new rights-of-way would be authorized within the monument, except as necessary for the care and management of the objects of value. The BLM would not issue any new grazing permits or leases on lands within the monument. The BLM would not interfere with the jurisdiction of the State of Nevada, including its jurisdiction and authority with respect to fish and wildlife management, including hunting and fishing.

The BLM would consider special recreation permit proposals on a case-by-case basis, to manage visitor use, protect natural and cultural resources, and provide a mechanism to accommodate commercial and organized recreational uses, while adhering to critical tortoise habitat protection measures, as provided in the 1998 RMP ROD decision. Lands within the monument's boundaries are subject to valid existing rights, including valid existing water rights. All uses would be consistent with the care and management of the objects identified in the proclamation.



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Las Vegas Field Office

Gold Butte National Monument – Environmental Assessment Draft Alternatives

This page intentionally left blank.

DRAFT