

# **Damage in Gold Butte, Nevada**

## **September 2015 - April 2016**



Photo Credit: Kurt Kuznicki

**Prepared by: Friends of Gold Butte**

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## Summary

### Introduction

Located in southeastern Nevada between the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument and Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Gold Butte is approximately 350,000 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Most of the Gold Butte region is designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to protect habitat for desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*); to protect significant cultural resources such as petroglyphs, historic mining sites, and pioneer-era artifacts; and to protect sensitive plant species such as the Las Vegas bearpoppy (*Arctomecon californica*).

In addition, Gold Butte supports multiple uses including hiking, hunting, birding, camping, all-terrain vehicle riding on designated roads, and traditional tribal uses. Southern Nevadans have been asking elected officials for over 15 years to protect the nationally significant cultural, historic, and natural treasures in Gold Butte.

### Background

Due to adverse circumstances, the BLM and all federal land management agencies halted on-the-ground activities in the Gold Butte area from April 2014 to June 2016. In the absence of a land management presence, Friends of Gold Butte (FoGB) has witnessed an increasing level of damage near historic and cultural sites as well as disturbance to sensitive desert areas that are habitat for threatened and endangered species.

Between November 2014 and July 2015, FoGB documented significant damage in Gold Butte and released a [report](#) to the public and community leaders in August of 2015. FoGB continues to document damage to cultural, historic, and natural resource in the area and has produced a new report focusing on the September 2015 through April 2016 time period.

Similar to the 2014-2015 report, data were gathered through field observations completed from road surveys and by hiking into affected areas. Damage was documented by photography. GPS waypoints were recorded at damage sites using the North American Datum 1983 (NAD 83) and the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinate system; all coordinates are in UTM Zone 11S. Where appropriate, GPS data were used to create maps on Google Earth to illustrate the extent of damage on the landscape. For this report, the Gold Butte Road is also referred to as Gold Butte Backcountry Byway.

This version of the report has been redacted, removing GPS waypoints, location names, and maps of culturally sensitive locations to protect archaeological artifacts and cultural sites so as not to drive additional visitation to sensitive yet unprotected areas.

### Overview of Findings

This report compiles significant damage observed at Gold Butte over time with numerous observations made during the period of September 2015-July 2016. Previously reported damage is cited to illustrate long-lasting affects to cultural and natural resources.



### Damage to Historic Resources, Natural Resources, Signs, and Fencing

FoGB has documented vandalism to cultural sites and deliberate destruction to sensitive plant species and their habitat. Additionally, signs and fencing erected to deter illegal trespassing have been damaged or removed. Signs and fencing are important for directing appropriate and respectful use of the land; however, fences that protect vital spring riparian habitats have cut or removed, causing additional vehicle and range animal intrusion to these sensitive areas.

### Vehicle Incursions

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use is a great way to see Gold Butte while on the 500 miles of roads and trails designated by the BLM for that use. Damage occurs when riders pioneer their own routes, which can damage the fragile desert landscape. Illegal OHV routes can kill native plants, collapse desert tortoise burrows, crush desert tortoises, trample desert biological soil crusts, spread invasive weed species, create abnormal erosion patterns, and simply mar the beautiful, untouched landscape. This report summarizes numerous illegal vehicle incursions in the Gold Butte area.

### Illegal Range-Land Development

Finally, this report documents an extensive system of non-permitted water developments in northern Gold Butte. Heavy equipment was used to create a network of trenches across 22 miles of pristine desert. The land is now littered with rusty water tanks and industrial waste. Illegal water developments at Dudd and Seep springs, the Great Eastern Mine, and Key West Mine are described in this report.

### About the Friends of Gold Butte

Friends of Gold Butte is a 501(c)3 organization with over 500 members and a mission to achieve permanent protection for the natural and cultural resources in Gold Butte through education, community outreach, and advocacy. For more information about Friends of Gold Butte and their activities, contact Jaina Moan at [info@friendsofgoldbutte.org](mailto:info@friendsofgoldbutte.org).

## Damage: Historic and Cultural Resources

### Civilian Conservation Corps Storage Cave

The wall of the historic Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) storage cave, built by employees of the post-depression era work relief program during the 1930s, is being destroyed by campers knocking out the rocks and using some of them to build fire rings. In addition, the inside of the cave has been vandalized with graffiti.



CCC Storage Cave with damaged wall (756495E 4045718N, photo taken 2/17/2016).



CCC Storage Cave with graffiti (756487E 4045723N, photo taken 2/17/2016).



The area near the CCC storage cave is a popular campsite, and the area surrounding the camp was damaged over the long President's Day weekend. There is a new illegal vehicle incursion going south from the camping area, and vegetation was damaged where vehicles were parked near the campsite.



Vehicle incursion south of CCC Storage Cave (756495E 4045718N, photo taken 2/17/2016).



Damage to desert vegetation near campsite (756495E 4045718N, photo taken 2/17/2016).



### Cabin Canyon Corral

Cabin Canyon Corral was a large stock corral built by ranchers using closely spaced upright posts. Campers have removed most of the upright posts and used them for firewood, leaving little of the original corral.



Remains of Cabin Canyon Corral (762191E 4063035N, photo taken 10/30/2015).

## Garden Spring Windmill and Corral

The Garden Springs Corral and Windmill complex is the largest historic corral in Gold Butte and is located in the pinyon-juniper habitat. The corral is composed of four paddocks, each made of railroad tie fence posts with 2 x12" wooden planks forming the fencing. The intermittent Garden Spring is located in one of the paddocks. A windmill and circular watering trough stand nearby.

Recently Garden Springs Corral was virtually destroyed by cutting the 2 x12" planks at each post. A likely cause for this destruction was looting to obtain the weathered wood that is favored for construction and furniture making. Prior to this destruction, Garden Springs Corral was well preserved and had stood up to the elements relatively intact.

Although the windmill still stands, parts are missing, and what remains has been damaged by bullet holes. Extensive vehicle incursions can be seen throughout the corral area.



Garden Springs Corral planks are missing (756225E 4021184N, photo taken 7/15/2016). See original condition of the Garden Spring Corral in 2011 by [Clicking here](#).





Planks missing; damaged windmill (756216E 4021170N, photo taken 7/15/2016).



Vehicle incursion near Garden Springs Corral (756323E 4021169N, photo taken 11/6/2015).



### Gold Butte Town Site

At the historic Gold Butte town site, home to some 2,000 people during its heyday at the turn of the 20th century, visitors painted names on granite rock walls.



Paint on rocks at Gold Butte Townsite (752136E 4019009N, photo taken 3/30/2016).



Paint on rocks at Gold Butte Townsite (752136 4019009, photo taken 3/30/2016).



## Vandalism in Petroglyph Areas

Vandalism to ancient petroglyph panels is an ongoing problem at Gold Butte. The most well known act of vandalism was desecration of the [REDACTED] petroglyph panel, which was damaged by bullet holes (reported in 2003). In 2009, a vulgar image was scratched over the ancient writing and a piece of the rock art panel was broken off. Although the BLM attempted to erase the vandalism in 2010, the offensive image is still visible. Bullets have been shot at, and graffiti has been etched onto, other petroglyph panels in the Gold Butte area.



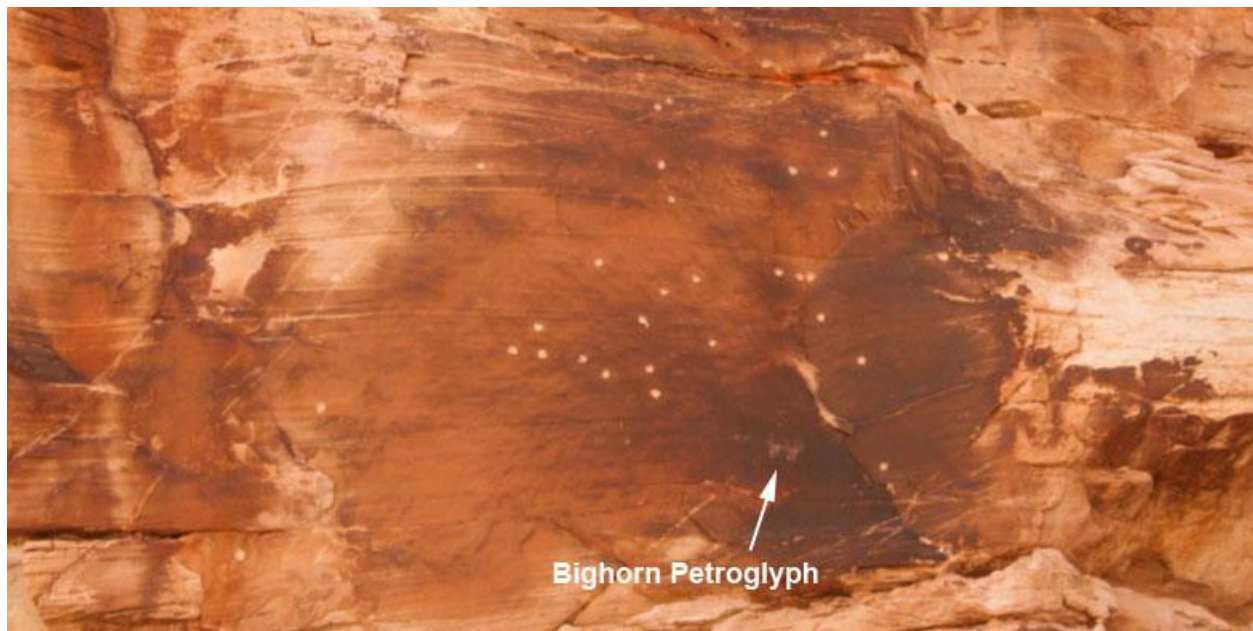
Vulgar image (circled in red) at [REDACTED] remains visible, as do two bullet holes ([REDACTED] photo taken 4/19/2016).



Graffiti etched on [REDACTED] panel ([REDACTED], photo taken 8/3/2016).

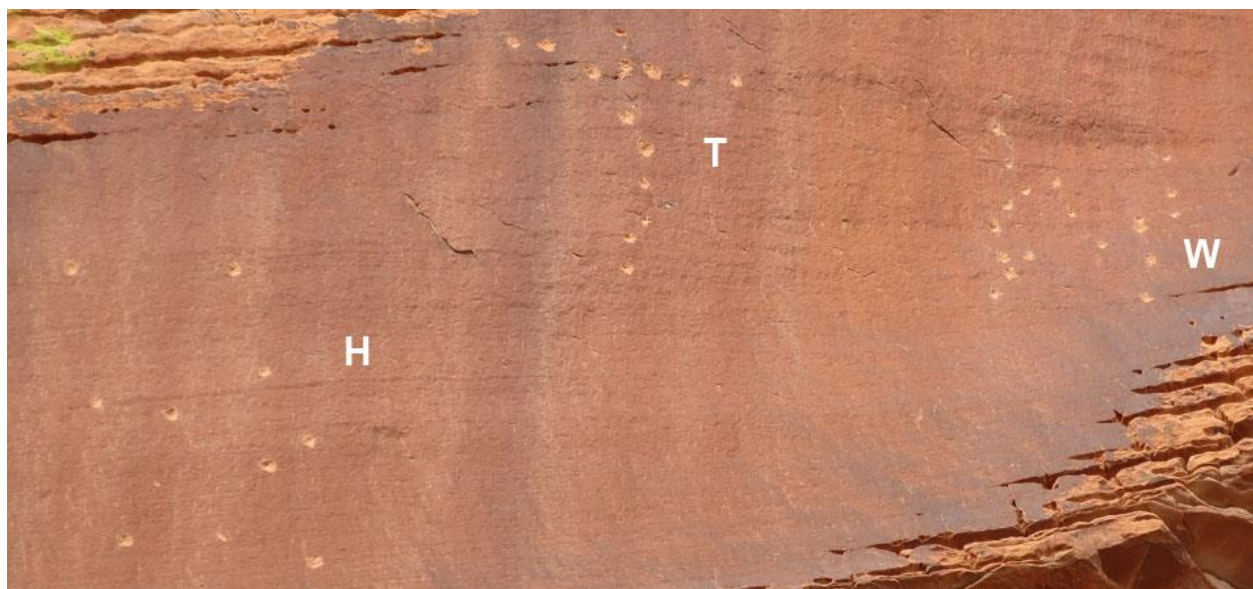


In the [REDACTED] area, bullets were shot at a rock wall many years ago, barely missing a small bighorn petroglyph. Once marred by bullets, rock walls and petroglyph panels require thousands of years of erosion to erase the damage.



Bullet holes near the [REDACTED] petroglyph [REDACTED] photo taken 4/9/2011).

Bullet holes on rock faces have also been documented at several sites in the [REDACTED] but fortunately none directly affect petroglyphs. There has been considerable shooting at the [REDACTED] site. In one case, initials (perhaps "HTW") were carved onto the rock face using bullets, and the rock wall has been blasted with shotguns.



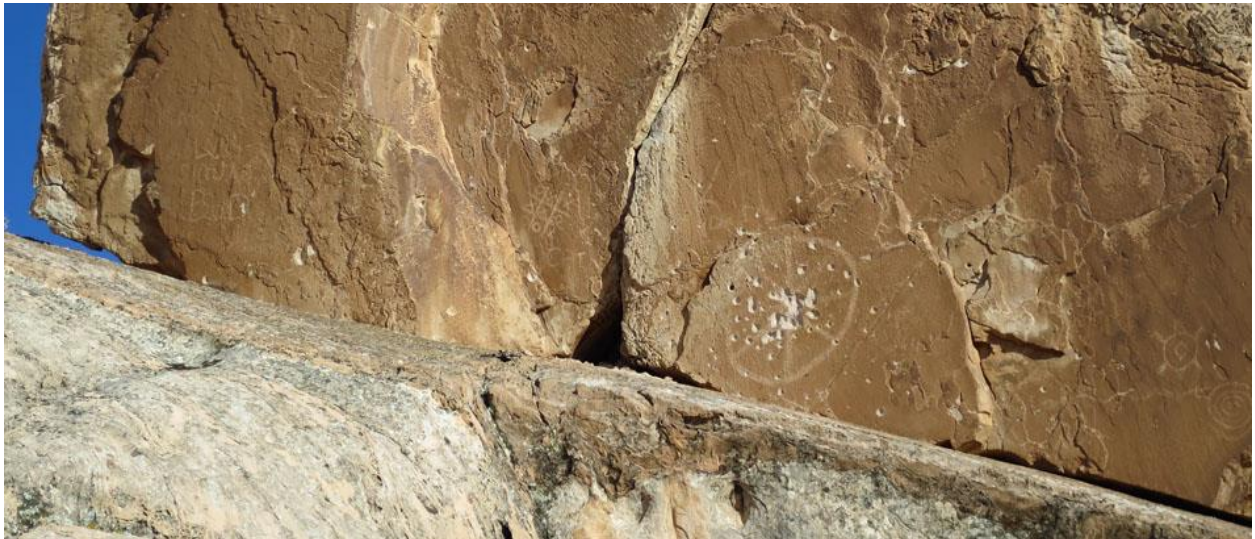
Initials HTW shot into rock wall near petroglyphs ([REDACTED] photo taken 8/3/2016).





Many bullet holes (looks like shotgun blasts) and three shotgun blasts at [REDACTED] site [REDACTED] photo taken 6/20/2016).

In the [REDACTED] area, bullet holes in have been observed on rock walls in two areas. At one site, high on a rocky crag, people first carved graffiti and petroglyph-like graffiti onto the rock face, then later shot at the rock face using the petroglyph-like graffiti for targets. Closer to ground level, another rock wall was shot several times near a campsite.



Petroglyph-like graffiti and bullet holes high on a crag at [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) photo taken 8/2/2016).





Bullet holes in rock wall near a [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] photo taken 4/8/2016).

## Damage: Natural Resources

### Joshua Tree

Joshua trees are a majestic symbol of the Mojave Desert and are found nowhere else in the world. They are related to the Yuccas, grow incredibly slowly (about 2-3 inches per year), and usually live 150-200 years (but have been known to live up to 1000 years).<sup>1</sup>

A large Joshua tree was chopped down by a camper at the First Rock camp area, an action photographed by FoGB members. The tree was not used for firewood, it was simply cut down where it remains to this day.



Camper in act of chopping down a Joshua tree (754332E 4046342N, photo taken 2/14/2016).

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yucca\\_brevifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yucca_brevifolia)





Joshua tree freshly chopped down (754332E 4046342N, photo taken 2/17/2016).



Joshua tree stump with ax marks (754332E 4046342N, photo taken 6/6/2016).



## Human Waste

After most busy weekends, much of the Whitney Pocket camping area is littered with toilet paper and human waste.



Toilet paper at Whitney Pocket campsite (755972E 4045921N, photo taken 2/16/2016).



Toilet paper in bushes at Whitney Pocket (photo taken 2/16/2016).



### Recreational Vehicle Discharge

At Whitney Pocket, FoGB members witnessed at least 6 campers dumping gray water from their recreational vehicle (RV) holding tanks during a busy weekend. Gray water discharge permanently affects cryptobiotic soils and vegetation. One camper dumped black water with toilet paper from their RV holding tanks before leaving camp; they also dumped what appears to be motor oil at their campsite.



Gray water discharge from RV holding tanks (756747E 4045846N, photo taken 2/16/2016).



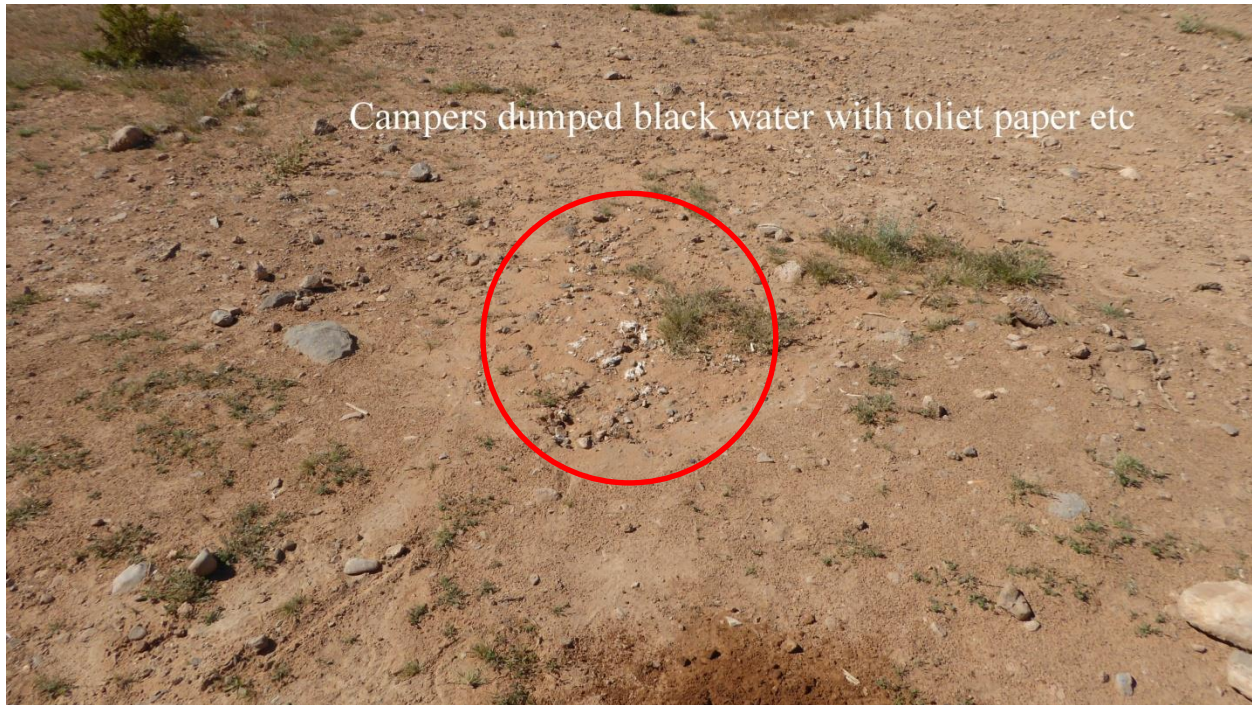


Gray water discharge from RV holding tanks (756747E 4045846N, photo taken 2/16/2016).



Motor oil dumped at campsite (755840E 4045750N, photo taken 2/16/2016).





Campers dumped black water from RV holding tanks (755840E 4045750N, photo taken 2/16/2016).

## **Damage: Signage & Fencing**

### **Red Bluff Spring Fence Damage**

Mud Wash Road had been diverted around Red Bluff Spring to protect the sensitive riparian ecosystem and the plants and wildlife that depends on it. Fences on both ends of the spring area have been cut and taken down, and vehicles are being driven through the spring area. Invasive tamarisk, once under control in this area, are also reestablishing.





Unbolted cable fence at west end of Red Bluff Spring area (745646E 4038610N, photo taken 6/21/2016).



Cut fence at east end of Red Bluff Spring area (746238E 4038787N, photo taken 6/21/2016).

### Red Rock Springs Fence Damage

Red Rock Spring is a sensitive riparian area. The road was closed to keep vehicles from driving into the spring and also to keep cattle and wild burros from trampling the area. Red Rocks Spring cable and post fence was damaged likely by a vehicle backing into one of the posts and pushing it over. The tracks don't show well in the photo, but it appears that an OHV was driven over the fence into the spring area.





Damaged fence at Red Rock Spring (749134E 4038427N, photo taken 9/6/2015).

### Hartman Tank Fence Damage

Hartman Tank is a natural channel spring that was fenced to protect the spring from being trampled by feral burros and cows. Storm floods have damaged the fence at the north (upstream) end of the fenced area allowing livestock to enter the protected area. The previously protected riparian area has been heavily damaged by illegal grazing, cattle feces, and cattle trails.

In addition, BLM crews had been fairly successful in controlling invasive tamarisk in the wash north and south of Hartman Tank, but throughout the drainage system, tamarisk now is strongly becoming re-established.





Flood damaged fence at Hartman Tank (749134E 4038427N, photo taken 9/6/2015).



Tamarisk is becoming re-established (749134E 4038427N, photo taken 9/6/2015).



### Horse Spring Fence Damage

Horse Spring is a natural spring where water flows on the ground and considerable riparian vegetation persists in this arid environment. The wet area had been fenced to prevent damage to the habitat by feral burros and cows, but the fence has been cut near the stream and elsewhere, a salt block has been placed to encourage cattle, and at least eight cows and five feral burros reside in the area (as of 7/21/2016).



Trampled vegetation at Horse Spring (757558E 4026493N, photo taken 7/21/2016).





Salt block and cut fence at Horse Spring (757558E 4026493N, photo taken 7/21/2016).

### St. Thomas Gap Sign Removal

On Gold Butte Road southbound, the St. Thomas Gap road sign has been removed, which could cause confusion for visitors intending to drive into the lower Grand Wash area. Only the sign post remains.



St. Thomas Gap road sign post (757915E 4033670N, photo taken 3/18/2016).



## Lime Canyon Wilderness Sign Removal

The Lime Canyon Wilderness Area was designated in 2002, and a Lime Canyon Wilderness Area sign was erected at the intersection of Gold Butte Byway (Red Bluff Spring Road) and Lime Canyon Road. The sign was burned and removed after October 2015.



Burned Lime Canyon Wilderness sign posts (748156E 4022082N, photo taken 5/7/2016).



Lime Canyon Wilderness Area sign in 2015 (748156E 4022082N, taken on 2/22/2015).



### BLM Route Signs Removal

Throughout the Gold Butte area, carsonite signs are used to direct OHV users to designated routes and to indicate closure of roads into sensitive areas. Carsonite signs have been moved, removed, and broken. Intentional removal of the signs not only indicates illegal trespass, it also prompts route confusion for the responsible user and results in unintentional illegal travel.



Carsonite signs pulled up and thrown by the roadside.



Carsonite signs have been removed resulting in trespass into closed and sensitive areas.

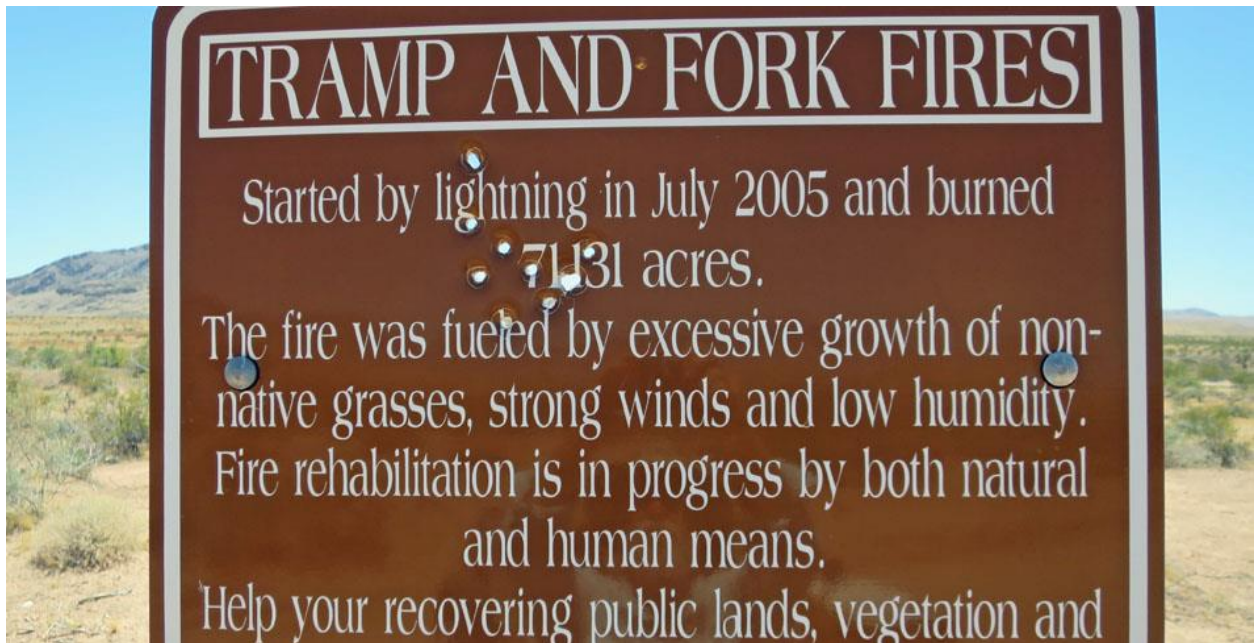


## Vandalism to Signs

Throughout the Gold Butte area, signs are routinely vandalized by shooting holes in them. For example, at the intersection of Gold Butte Road and Mud Wash Road, vandals have shot holes in one of the directional signs and in an interpretive sign.



Fourteen bullet holes in a directional sign (756020E 4035752N, photo taken 7/23/2016).



Interpretive sign with bullet holes (756055E 4035707N, photo taken 7/23/2016).



Five information and direction signs were tagged before 2/17/2016 with the L-Bar-V cattle brand used by the Finicum Ranch. The graffiti was covered over, but it was again observed on 4/3/2016 and 5/6/2016 -- and again covered over. L-Bar-V and VO (the brand used by the Bundy Ranch) were also painted on the asphalt of the Gold Butte Road near Juanita Springs and covered over.



Vandalism of information kiosks in Gold Butte (745036E 4064495N, photo taken 2/17/2016).



Vandalism of directional signs in Gold Butte (749459E 4053716N, photo taken 2/17/2016).

## Vehicle Incursions

Vehicle incursions are a common and persistent threat to the environment in the Gold Butte area where for generations visitors have ridden motorcycles and driven OHVs where they please. While most vehicle operators now stay on roadways, some drivers choose to test their machines on hill climbs, pioneer new routes across the desert, or retain memories of long-closed roads into sensitive areas. In and around the Whitney Pocket camp areas where OHV users congregate, vehicle intrusions are particularly difficult to control when unsupervised children wander into the desert with their machines.

### Whitney Pocket Campsite Incursion

Near one of the Whitney Pocket campsites, a recently disturbed area now looks like a legal roadway.



Illegal "roadway" (755965E 4045948N, photo taken 2/17/2016).



### Gold Butte Byway Diversion

Road maintenance along the Gold Butte Byway is needed to prevent driving in the bushes to get around road obstacles. On the Red Bluff Spring Road portion of the Gold Butte Byway (about two miles northwest of the Gold Butte Town Site), the road washed out at a cattle guard during a storm. Drivers have forged a route around the washout until the road can be repaired.



Washout at cattle guard requiring a detour (750325E 4019194N, photo taken 2/26/2016).

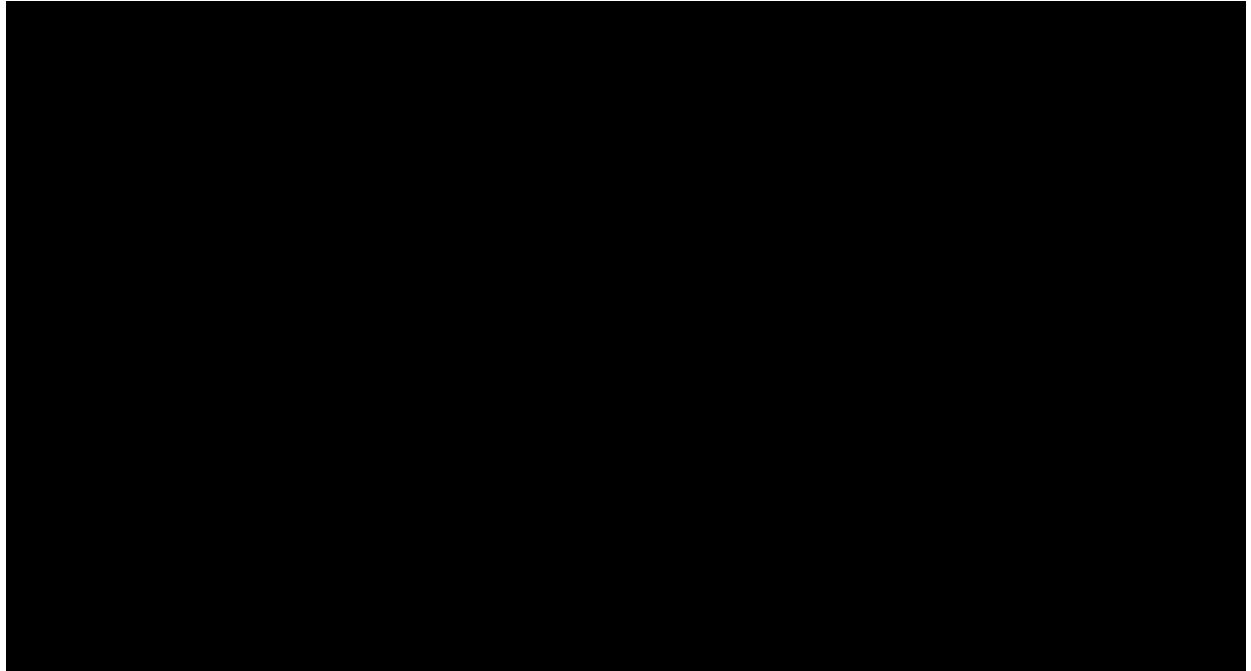


### Kohta Circus Incursion

Kohta Circus area has had several major vehicle incursions since November 2015, opening two paths into the closed area. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The incursions happened over a period of time and involved vehicles intruding at different dates or times. Some of the vehicles travelled a long distance across the desert and through drainages where there had been no road or path previously. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Map of Kotha Circus vehicle incursion



Vehicle Incursion into wash [REDACTED] [REDACTED] photo taken 11/2015).





Vehicle incursion around parking corral ([REDACTED] photo taken 11/2015).



Vehicle incursion deep within the closed area ([REDACTED] photo taken 11/2015).





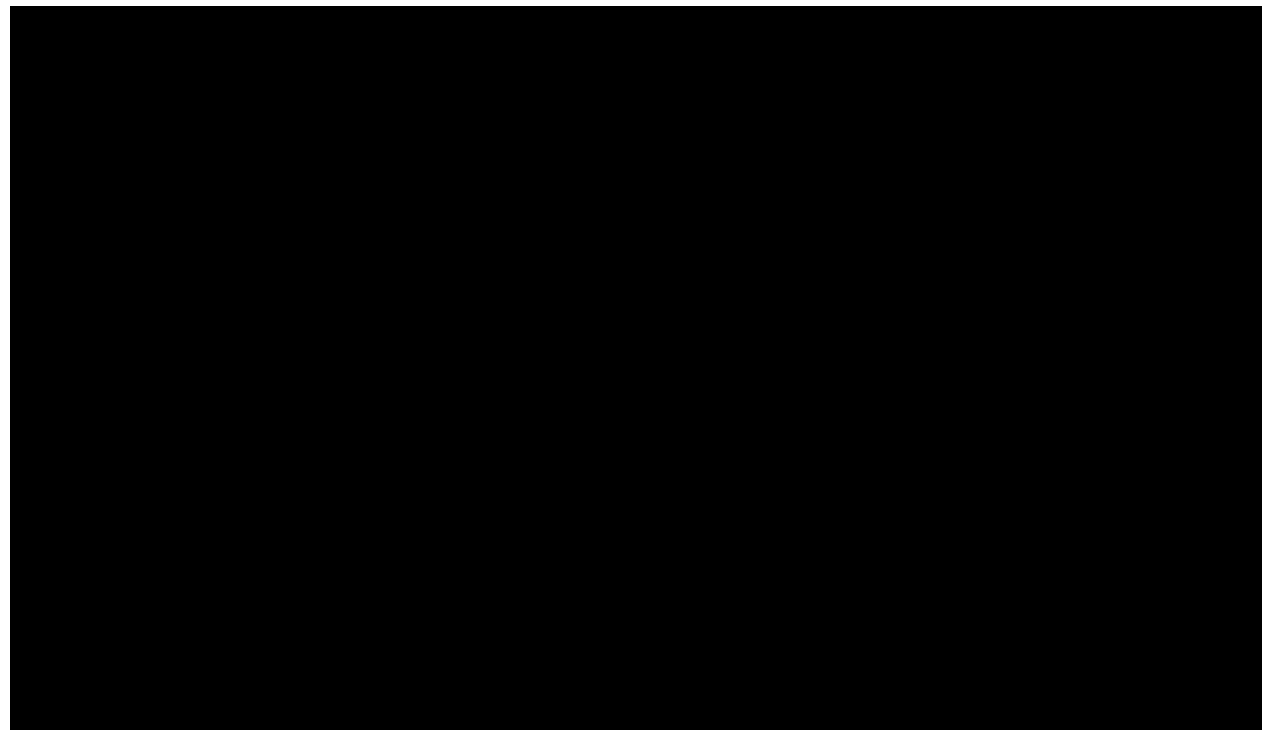
Vehicle incursion deep within the closed area [REDACTED] photo taken 11/2015).



### Trespassed Route

When the BLM finalized a travel management plan for the Gold Butte ACECs<sup>2</sup> in 2008, a route south of Whitney Pocket along the Gold Butte Road was closed to vehicles to prevent damage and encroachment into areas with have high concentrations of archaeological resources. This 2008 plan was developed with input from local stakeholders and users.

Recently, OHV users have opened this closed road [REDACTED] and have used it and open washes to drive to the [REDACTED] Panel at [REDACTED]. At that point, some drivers turn around and return to Gold Butte Road. Other drivers, however, continue west and have created a path west around a parking corral [REDACTED] to get back onto a road. Still others have chosen to follow the old closed road, which goes through a Las Vegas Bearpoppy restoration area, to [REDACTED]



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<sup>2</sup> “Decision Record for Route Designations for Selected ACECs Located in the Northeast Portion of the Las Vegas District.” Bureau of Land Management. July 15, 2008.





Vehicle incursion near [REDACTED] Panel [REDACTED] photo taken 11/12/2016).



West end of the reopened road looking into the bearpoppy restoration area [REDACTED] photo taken 11/12/2015).



### Rock Cabin Wash Incursion

Rock Cabin Wash is now looks like a legal road and is heavily traveled by OHVs coming up out of Mesquite.



Vehicle tracks in Rock Cabin Wash (761030E 4047412N, photo taken 10/1/2015).

### Gold Butte Road

Gold Butte Road is the main, 40-mile road that provides access to the Gold Butte region. Vehicle incursions off this main road are not uncommon where drivers simply head off into the desert.



Incursion east of Gold Butte Road and south of Fisherman's Cove Road (749517E 4053483N, photo taken 2/17/2016).



### First Rock Camp Area Incursion

The First Rock camp area (1 mile before Whitney Pocket) is a popular campsite for groups with RVs and trailers, and incursions in this area are not uncommon, although the post-and-cable fencing seem to have helped. This area was heavily damaged over the long weekend for President's Day.



Incursions at First Rock camp area (view east; 754347E 4046318N, photo taken 2/16/2016).



Incursions at First Rock camp area (view west; 754347E 4046318N, photo taken 2/16/2016).





Incursions at First Rock camp area (754347E 4046318N, photo taken 2/16/2016).



### Black Butte Road Incursions

An intrusion of two or more vehicles was noted on the Black Butte Road past Falling Man parking area. The vehicles left the road (750997E 4043692N) and drove west. The tracks were followed for some 120 yards (750945E 4043694N), but they continued on from there running over plants in the previously undisturbed desert.



Vehicle incursion from Black Butte Road (750997E 4043692N, photo taken 2/16/2016).



Vehicle incursion from Black Butte Road (750945E 4043694N, photo taken 2/16/2016).



On April 12 2016, a new intrusion onto the hills just west of the Falling Man parking area was noticed (751517E 4044270N). These are gypsum hills with an unusual cryptobiotic-gypsum soil environment now damaged from a network of illegal OHV trails. This area had been restored by BLM crews several years ago (note large rocks at the bottom of the hill that had been used to close the illegal route). This is the first intrusion since restoration.



Incursion into gypsum hills (751517E 4044270N, photo taken 6/21/2016).



Tracks cutting through the cryptobiotic-gypsum soil environment near Falling Man (751517E 4044270N, photo taken 4/12/2016).



## Other Incursions

Aside from incursions listed above, there are so many illegal, OHV incursions that it would be impossible to photograph, catalogue, and maintain data for them all. The following areas are experiencing considerable damage.

First, south of the Whitney Pocket information kiosk, the desert floor and southern ridge are covered with recent tracks recording incursions (approximately 756187E 4045486N).

Second, the Mud Wash Corral area has seen numerous incursions. Drivers have reopened the road that runs towards Little Finland, but most of the incursions follow multiple paths into the desert and end at impassable cliffs (approximately 749896E 4036601N).

Third, there have been multiple incursions at the junction of Gold Butte Road and Mud Wash Road (the turnoff to Devil's Throat). Vehicles have been driven into a signed Las Vegas bearpoppy restoration area, intentionally and wantonly damaging the habitat. The sign for the restoration area has been removed and the cryptobiotic soil at this junction has been heavily impacted. The sign might have been removed to reduce attraction to this restoration area (approximately 756042E 4035726N).

Fourth, vast areas of open desert on the bajada between the Virgin Mountains and Highway 170 (near Mesquite and Bunkerville) have been driven on illegally by off-trail trucks and OHVs. For example, just south of Mesquite, it is not uncommon to see truck tracks in virgin desert where drivers have crushed shrubs, cactus, and animal burrows. Similarly, in the Great Eastern Mine area, truck tracks can be found traversing the rolling hills. These areas are prime habitat for the threatened Mojave Desert tortoise and located within the boundaries of Clark County's Gold Butte Desert Wildlife Management Area.<sup>3</sup>

Fifth, vehicles have been driven into virgin desert in southern parts of Gold Butte. In the hills south of Bills Spring, a motorcycle scar can be seen climbing into the mountains towards Mica Peak and OHV tracks can be found near the edge of the Jumbo Springs Wilderness Area (near 753650E 4005500N).

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<sup>3</sup> *Conservation Management Strategy: Gold Butte Desert Wildlife Management Area*. Clark County, Nevada., February 2007. Map B. Appendix C.



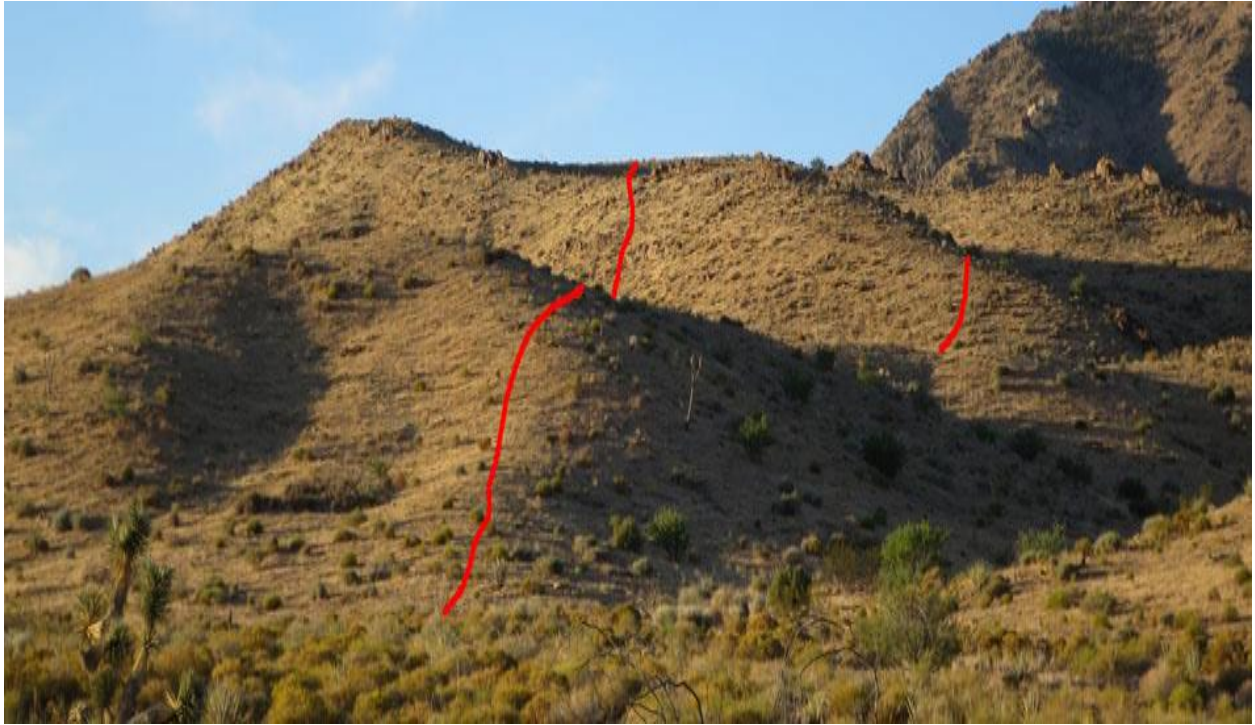


Vehicle tracks on desert bajada north of the Virgin Mountains (763132E 4072569N; photo taken 02/11/2016).



Tracks traversing rolling hills near Great Eastern Mine (754054E 4056786N; photo taken 02/17/2016).





Motorcycle scar (red) on flanks of Mica Peak (754730E 4020170N, photo taken 7/16/2016).



## Illegal Rangeland Development

The 2014-2015 “[Gold Butte Damage Report](#)” documented the installation of water tanks, watering troughs, and PVC pipe southwest of the junction of Gold Butte Road and Fisherman’s Cove Road. More water tanks and troughs have been discovered. Three water systems have been mapped along the northern and western edge of the Virgin Mountains. To connect the water tanks and troughs throughout these systems required a total of 22.5 miles of illegal trenching into virgin desert terrain that is currently managed as an ACEC to protect habitat for the threatened Mojave Desert tortoise.

These illegal water systems represent a violation of management intent for this land. The use of heavy equipment to trench into virgin desert landscape destroys tortoise burrows and habitat in an area that is designated for conservation. Furthermore, this type of illegal development requires a right-of-way permit and the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The illegal development is a violation of federal law. The installation of the water tanks and pipe required heavy equipment and road grading. In addition, rusted fuel tanks and large tires serve as water tanks and troughs and have created a trail of toxic, industrial trash across the desert.

Three water systems are summarized below:

1. The Dud and Seep Springs water system starts on the north slopes of the Virgin Mountains at Dud and Seep Spring and extend northwest toward Bunkerville.
2. The Great Eastern water system starts on the northwest edge of the Virgin Mountains and extends west toward the Key West Mine.
3. The South Key West (SKW) water system starts at the South Key West mine and extends along the west slope of Virgin peak across the Fisherman Cove bajada.

### Dud and Seep Springs Water System

The Dud and Seep Springs (D&S) water system starts on the north slopes of the Virgin Mountains at Dud and Seep Spring and extend northwest toward Bunkerville. The D&S system appears to be joined into one water system used to water cattle and apparently for domestic use.

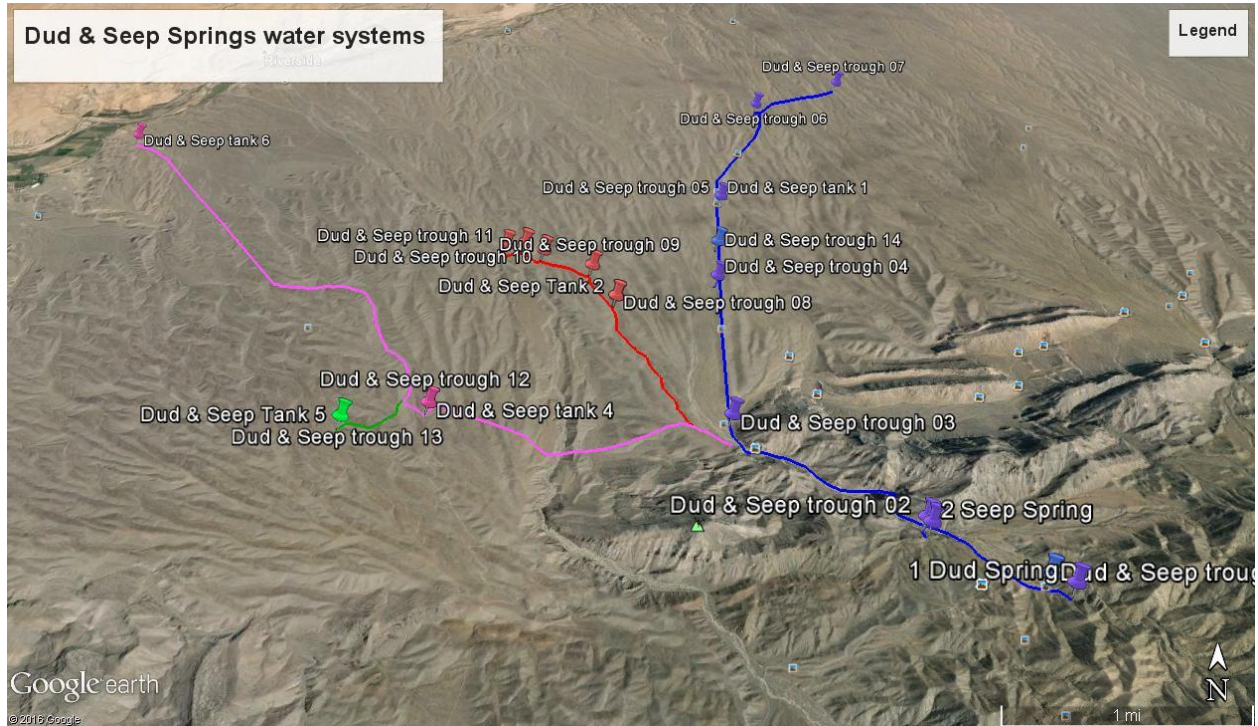
There are an estimated 16 miles of trenching and pipes on this system. Pipes from the two springs join above a narrow gap locally called 'the seeps.' A single 1 1/2 inch pipe runs through the gap exiting above Bunkerville Flats and divides into 3 separate pipe system. Further southwest, pipe 3 splits again, so there are 4 pipes all with storage tanks and or water troughs. There are at least 5 large tanks on this system and another has been placed near pipe 2 but has not been connected.

The tanks and some troughs of the D&S water system are visible on Google Earth as is some of the recent trenching. Recent trenching was done to replace failed pipes or to extend the existing water system to new areas. The map below shows the extent of the water system.

- Pipe 1 (blue) runs approximately 6.9 miles, has 7 troughs (some dry) and one tank.
- Pipe 2 (red) runs approximately 2.6 miles, has 5 troughs and two tanks (one not yet connected).



- Pipe 3 (violet) runs approximately 6.55 miles, has 1 trough and one tank and in addition appears to provide water to the white water tank above the Bundy ranch.
- Pipe 4 (green) runs approximately 0.5 miles, has 1 trough and one tank.



This water tank was first observed on 1/16/2016. Many plants were damage including the Joshua tree in the foreground (752455E 4064299N, photo taken 1/16/2016).

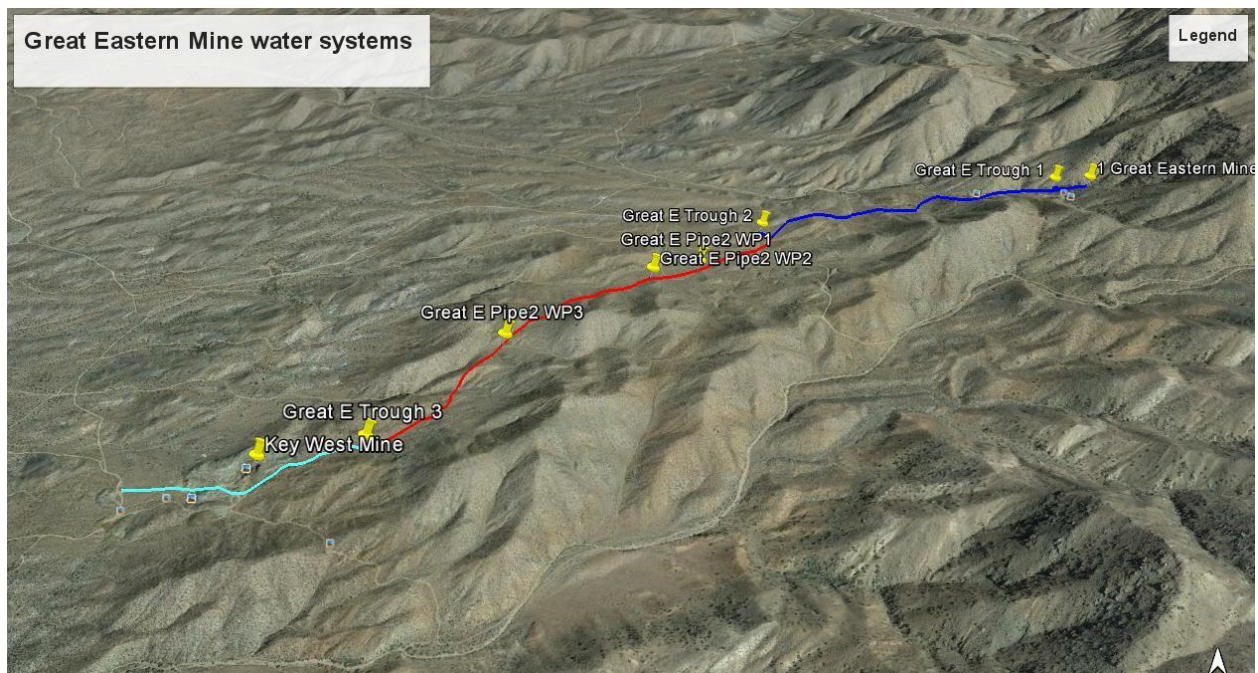




D&S Water System, tank 5, water trough 13 (751835E 4061731N, photo taken 1/16/2016).

### Great Eastern Water System

The Great Eastern (GE) water system starts on the northwest edge of the Virgin Mountains and extends west toward the Key West Mine. This water system has 1.25 miles of piping to 3 watering troughs. When first observed in 2015, much of the trenching looked new as if the piping had been replaced or newly installed. The water source is the collapsed mine tunnel. GE water trough 2 is located approximately 1/2 mile southwest of the mine.







GE water trough 2 when trough was full and running over (754457E 4057032N, photo taken 9/22/2015).

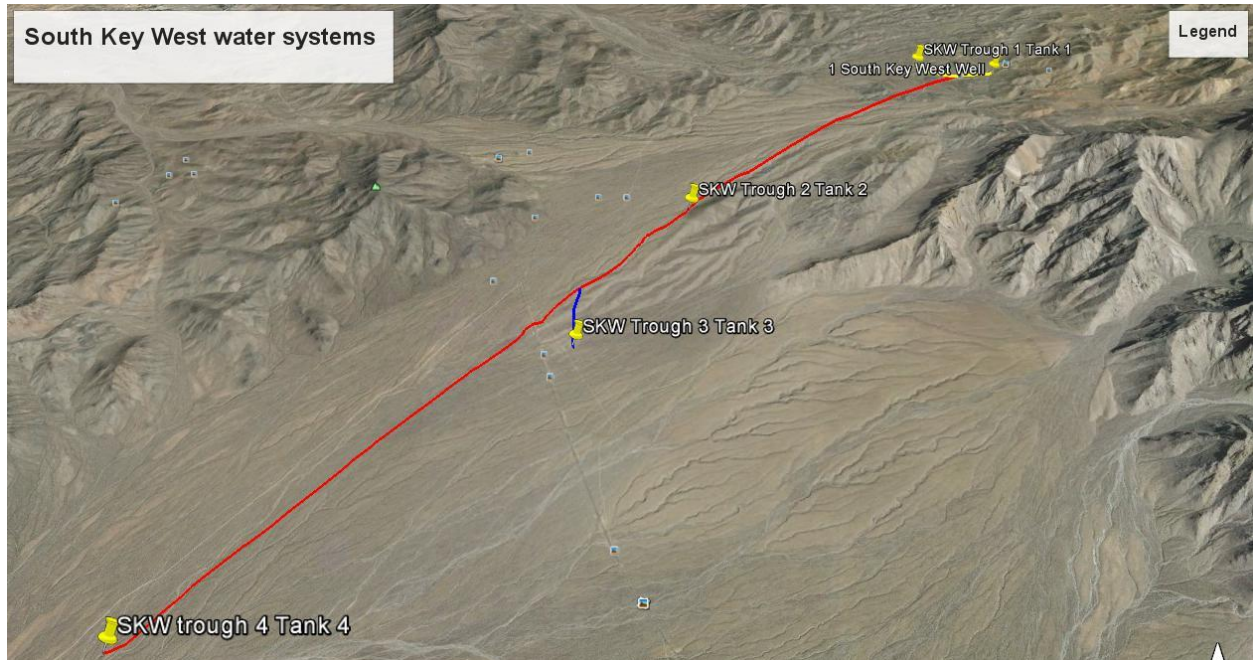


GE water trough 2 when trough was dry (754457E 4057032N, photo taken 12/9/2015).



## South Key West (SKW) Mine Water System

The South Key West (SKW) water system starts at the South Key West mine and extends along the west slope of Virgin peak across the Fisherman Cove bajada. The system consists of 5.25 miles of trenching and water pipe to connect 4 storage tanks and water troughs. It is estimated that 4.5 miles of the water pipe system were trenched since spring 2015. The photos below provide an example of the tanks and troughs connected to this water system.



SKW tank and trough 1 (752584E 4056316N, photo taken 5/13/2015).





SKW tank 4 (747520E 4050757N, photo taken 9/18/2015).



SKW trough 4 (747520E 4050757N, photo taken 9/18/2015).



## **Conclusion: Protecting and Restoring Gold Butte**

Gold Butte is a special place for many people. It deserves respect and appreciation. In America, we recognize our special places by ensuring that everyone, including current and future generations, can access and appreciate them.

Gold Butte needs protection. As this report shows, there is an increasing amount of damage in Gold Butte. There is a persistent and urgent threat as our natural and cultural history is being erased from this land. And, once it is gone, we won't get it back.

Gold Butte is a treasure trove of cultural, historic, and natural wonders, including thousands of petroglyphs; historic mining- and pioneer-era artifacts; rare and threatened wildlife such as the desert tortoise and bighorn sheep; dramatic geologic features like sculpted red sandstone and rock spires; and fossil track-sites dating back 170 to 180 million years ago. If we lose this land to irresponsible use, so too will we lose part of our heritage. We will lose a special place that allows us to connect to the serenity of the Mojave Desert. We will lose a connection with people who have traveled across this land throughout time.

Restoration is an individual and community responsibility. It is our duty to be stewards of our public lands and special places, but in order to do that effectively and sustainably, we need to also ensure they are protected in perpetuity. Protecting Gold Butte as a National Monument is a vital next step to restoring Gold Butte.

We ask us that you join us in our efforts to protect Gold Butte as a National Monument. Visit [www.protectgoldbutte.org](http://www.protectgoldbutte.org) to learn more about how you can help us achieve a National Monument designation for this amazing place.