

I'm writing in support of the Bureau of Land Management's Bakersfield Field Office's Planning Grant application.

This grant would fund planning for the proposed E. Temblors SRMA. Although designation of the SRMA is not final, the E Temblors are an area of historical OHV use dating back to the 1970's and perhaps earlier. This 25,000 ac area is remote and little used for OHV recreation as it is a designated NCLWMA situated between the Carrizo Plain and the oil producing areas near Taft. The area is relatively inhospitable and is not located close to population centers, yet it has seen increasing use by visitors for many forms of recreation as areas adjacent to Bakersfield have been built up with housing developments.

The area has been utilized by local residents for hunting shooting, wildlife viewing, camping, hiking and viewing from scenic outlooks as well as various forms of OHV recreation. Closure of areas such as Clear Creek Management Area, Kettleman Hills, and Dogtown have displaced use in central California to previously little used areas such as the E. Temblors and Keyesville.

OHV use in the E. Temblors is relatively light at this time, but use will increase due to population growth and displacement of use from areas that are increasingly developed. It is therefore imperative that a management plan be developed for the area. There are no remaining undeveloped tracts of federal land of this size remaining in Central California making careful utilization of the area of critical importance. Over 250,000 acres has been set aside with designation of the adjacent Carrizo Plains National Monument. The E. Temblors were not included in this designation leaving a much smaller 25,000 ac. area available for a broad spectrum of use.

The Bakersfield Field Office has recently completed the initial stages of land use planning with the Bakersfield RMP-EIS. This is a landscape scale planning document that does not address project level analysis of soils, cultural, biological, and other natural resource issues that exist in the area. The proposed planning project would address the need for project level planning. Without such a plan the area would be relegated to the use of routes that are not sited according to the principles of sustainable trail design and would suffer from environmental impacts such as soil erosion and possible watershed sedimentation and potential damage to cultural sites.

Because the E. Temblors are directly adjacent to the Carrizo Plains National Monument (CPNM) there is great concerns that OHV trespass into the Monument will threaten the qualities of solitude and the unspoiled characteristics of the Monument. The boundary between the CPNM and the E. Temblors is presently fenced, however the fencing does not follow the CPMN Boundary. This causes great confusion for the public. A management plan for the E. Temblors would help address these boundary issues.

In addition the E. Temblors have very limited legal public access. A properly located access easement needs to be planned or continued conflict with adjacent landowners, primarily oil companies, will become a problem.

The cost analysis of the BLM's proposal reveals that the agency is offering significant commitment in the form of match, approximately \$275,000, for this project. This is a very positive development as the Bakersfield Field Office has not applied for very much OHV grant funding in the past.

Although the E. Temblors are presently legal opportunity, further planning and limited development of the area would make the area a more sustainable are for recreational use. All too often increased use of such areas has led to increasing environmental impacts that eventually become intolerable requiring closure of the area. This time the agency has the chance to avoid this situation and "do it right from the start" with a comprehensive plan.