



BLM'S PROPOSED MOTOR VEHICLE ROUTES THREATEN RODMAN MOUNTAINS AREA

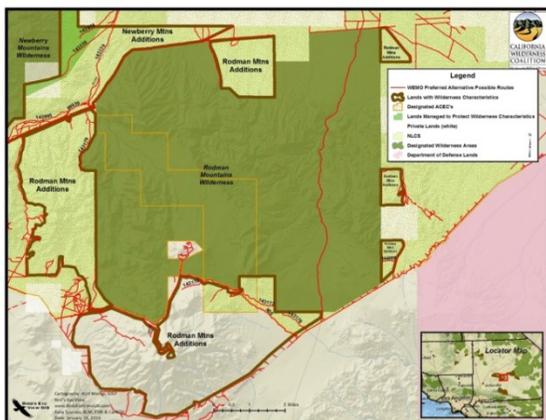
Over 17,000 acres of citizen-inventoried lands with wilderness characteristics surround the BLM-managed Rodman Mountains Wilderness. This unprotected area includes extensions of the rugged Rodman Mountains and the washes and bajadas that flow from them. The area boasts rich cultural resources, including significant rock art sites that have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is also a stronghold for imperiled desert tortoise – supporting one of the highest tortoise population densities in the Mojave Desert – and home to ancient creosote bushes that are estimated to be 12,000 years old.



Recognizing the area's distinct qualities, the BLM's planning initiatives under the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) will permanently protect over half the unprotected Rodman Mountains area as part of the National Landscape Conservation System. Much of this land is also designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern designed to protect high-density tortoise habitat and cultural resources.



BLM is proposing to designate 15 miles of motor vehicle routes in the Rodman Mountains additions, which would fragment the landscape, jeopardize the area's high-quality wildlife habitat and irreplaceable archaeological resources, and undercut its designation as a National Conservation Area.



Facts:

- Rodman Mountains additions span over 17,000 acres of wilderness-quality lands.
- WEMO Plan proposes 15 miles of motorized vehicle routes in the area.
- Rodman Mountains provide critical desert tortoise habitat and nationally important archaeological resources.
- Over half the area will be permanently protected as a National Conservation Area under the BLM's DRECP.

Findings from the Field:

- A proposed route passing through the Rodman Mountains Cultural Area of Critical Environmental Concern and near a petroglyph site, increasing the risk of damage and vandalism (*see right*).
- Proposed routes that do not exist on the ground and are instead naturally occurring desert washes.
- Crushed vegetation and the presence of sensitive plant species along a proposed route.



- Multiple instances of illegal, off-route travel, including trespass into the Rodman Mountains Wilderness facilitated by a proposed route (*see left*).
- A proposed route leading into a riparian area and causing significant erosion (*see below*).
- Numerous proposed routes in desert tortoise critical habitat.

