



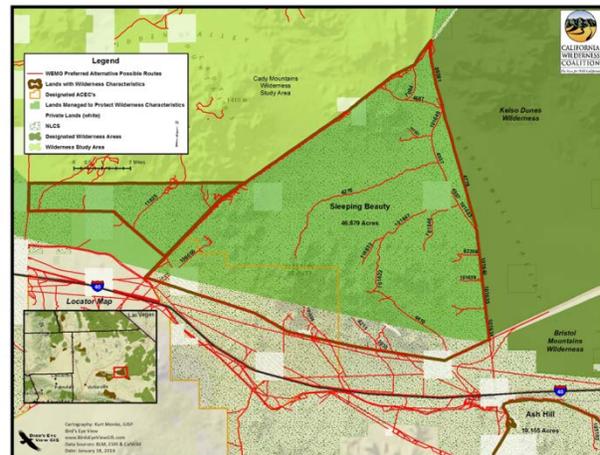
## **BLM'S PROPOSED MOTOR VEHICLE ROUTES THREATEN SLEEPING BEAUTY AREA**



At almost 47,000 acres, the Sleeping Beauty area is an unparalleled vast and largely untouched landscape located in the heart of California's Mojave Desert. The area boasts outstanding primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities, allowing visitors to experience both the intimacy of small enclosed desert areas and canyons, and the breadth of its large sweeping bajada. The Sleeping Beauty area also supports rich and diverse plant cover, and is home to numerous wildlife species such as desert tortoise, bighorn sheep, golden eagle, burrowing owl, American badger, and Mojave fringe-toed lizard.

Recognizing its unique value, the BLM's proposals under the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) will permanently protect the entire Sleeping Beauty landscape as a National Conservation Area and ensure the agency manages it to protect its wilderness qualities.

At the same time, BLM is proposing to fragment the area with over 92 miles of motorized vehicle routes. Since proposed routes were primarily identified using inaccurate aerial photography, we ground-truthed these routes and determined that most do not exist on the ground or have not been used in many years. Opening these non-existent motor vehicle "routes" in the Sleeping Beauty area could have lasting consequences, including widespread erosion, unauthorized route-proliferation, wildlife habitat fragmentation, damage to cultural sites, illegal dumping, and degradation of the area's documented wilderness characteristics and other ecological values.



### **Facts:**

- Sleeping Beauty area spans nearly 47,000 acres of wilderness-quality lands.
- WEMO Plan proposes 92.7 miles of motorized vehicle routes in the area.
- The area is rich with diverse plant life, and provides an important linkage between northern and southern populations of rare and vulnerable species like the desert tortoise.

- The landscape will be managed to protect its wilderness characteristics and permanently protected as part of the National Landscape Conservation System under the DRECP.

### Findings from the Field:



- One proposed route that is actually an impassable abandoned railroad (*see left*).
- Motorized recreation on proposed routes damaging plants and eroding the soil in areas described as “highly sensitive to surface disturbances” (*see below*).



- Multiple instances of illegal dumping along the proposed routes, with trash being used for target shooting (*see below*).



- Numerous proposed routes that do not exist on the ground or are no longer used and overgrown with vegetation; some proposed routes are actually just faint animal tracks.

- Proposed routes entering desert washes and becoming indistinguishable from the wash (*see right*).

