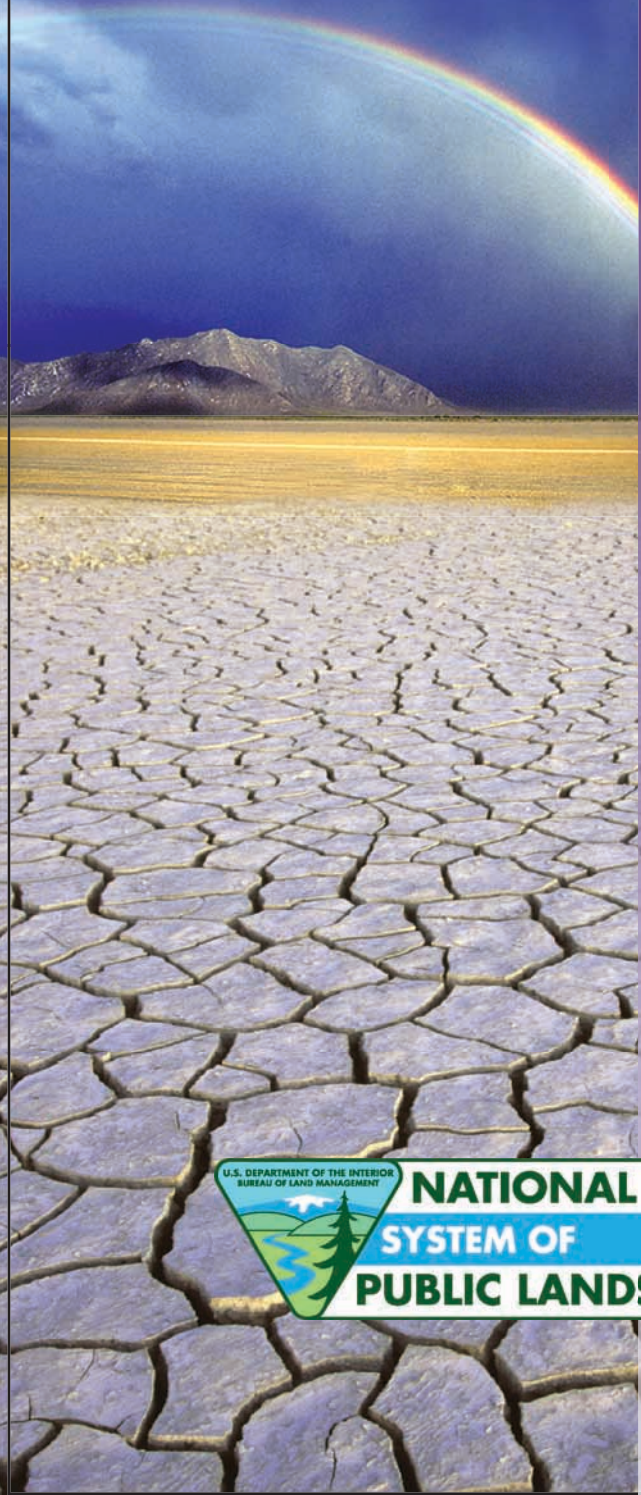


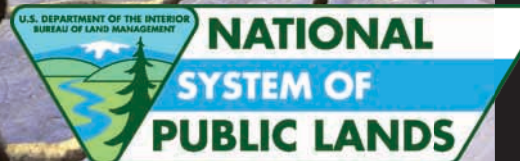
Black Rock Desert- High Rock Canyon
Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area

THE BLACK ROCK PLAYA

NEVADA
BLM



Composite photo - Top: Linda Dufurera, Bottom: Ferragallieia



THE STORY OF LAKE LAHONTAN, THE BLACK ROCK PLAYA, AND HOT SPRINGS

The Black Rock playa is made of sediments deposited in this basin by ancient Lake Lahontan during the Pleistocene epoch or the last Ice Age. Over 400 feet deep at its maximum, the receding lake etched a series of beach lines on the surrounding mountains that are still visible today. 100,000 years of lake sediments formed the flat, white playa and surrounding basin soils. In some places these lake deposits are ten thousand feet deep!

The highly alkali, unvegetated playa results when ground water is pulled to the surface through capillary action, dissolving minerals and salts along the way. As the water reaches the surface, it quickly evaporates in the dry desert environment leaving all of the minerals and salts behind. It is this harsh soil chemistry that



BLM photo

The areas around creeks, lakes and springs are called riparian zones. In the desert, riparian habitat makes up less than 1% of the land surface, yet more than 70% of the living species in the desert are totally dependent on that riparian habitat for survival.

**TREAT RIPARIAN AREAS WITH RESPECT.
LIFE DEPENDS ON IT!**

The average precipitation for the valley floor is less than 6 inches a year. The evaporation rate on the playa is 8 times the precipitation rate! It is easy to see how a body of water as big as Lake Lahontan could have evaporated!

The region's mountains may receive as much as 15 to 20 inches of precipitation, but much of this moisture evaporates into the dry, desert air.

Some precipitation seeps into the ground and emerges as springs. Very little water in the high desert remains on the surface. In fact, most of the creeks in this region flow only seasonally and at high altitude.



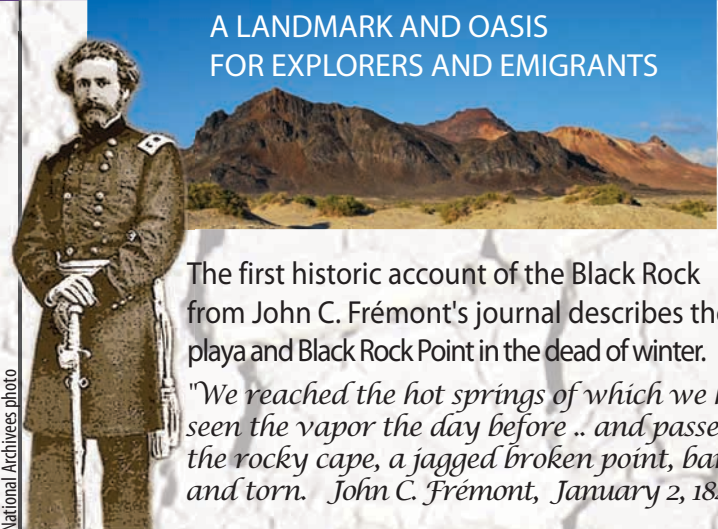
E. Kerflin photo

**HOT SPRINGS CAN BE DANGEROUS OR FATAL.
WATCH CHILDREN AND PETS**

Because the earth's crust in the Great Basin is relatively thin, groundwater is closer to the earth's hot mantle. Heated groundwater rises back to the surface and forms the many hot springs of the area.

THE BLACK ROCK POINT

A LANDMARK AND OASIS
FOR EXPLORERS AND EMIGRANTS



M. Eber photo

The first historic account of the Black Rock from John C. Frémont's journal describes the playa and Black Rock Point in the dead of winter.

"We reached the hot springs of which we had seen the vapor the day before .. and passed the rocky cape, a jagged broken point, bare and torn. John C. Frémont, January 2, 1846

In 1846, Levi Scott and the Applegate brothers blazed an alternate route to the West. During the California gold rush of 1849, nearly a third of the emigrants used this "California Cut-off, or the "Applegate-Lassen Trail" because they believed it to be easier and shorter. In fact, it was 200 miles longer and just as difficult.



National Archives photo

The Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails NCA preserves a significant portion of one of the most important chapters in American history much as it was over 150 years ago.

The first ten miles lay over a heavy sand road; the next twelve, over a white alkali plain. The moon shone bright, and the night was cool and chilly. Not a shrub, nor even a bunch of wild grass was to be seen; and far off as the eye could reach, the surface glittered like a bed of snow in the moonlight, and it was difficult to divest one's self of the illusion that what we saw and felt was truly a winter's scene.." George Edward Hayes, 1849

TRAVEL ON THE PLAYA CAN BE HAZARDOUS!

DUST: Where there is dust there is liable to be traffic and low visibility. Be careful!

MUD: Watch for color changes to the playa surface which can indicate wet areas. Test walk damp areas before proceeding in your vehicle.

SPEED: The playa surface and transient dunes can cause roll-overs at higher speeds.

DUNES: Driving on the dunes is prohibited to protect fragile habitat.



BLM photo

TRAINS: Be especially careful when crossing train tracks. There are no signals.

NO VEHICLE USE in the dunes and hummocks that surround the playa.

THE FLAT unvegetated surface of the playa is open to motorized vehicles.

CAMPING ON THE PLAYA

Camping is allowed anywhere on the flat playa surface.

Campfires must be contained in a firepan so as to not burn the surface.

Camps should have a light to be visible to approaching vehicles at night.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



BLACK ROCK DESERT HIGH ROCK CANYON EMIGRANT TRAILS

NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

The Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area is a part of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System, a diverse program that incorporates National Scenic and Historic Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Areas, National Monuments, and Conservation Areas. The mission of the NLCS is to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for present and future generations of Americans. Instead of protecting "islands" of special land, it conserves whole landscapes.

Surprise Field Office
<http://www.blm.gov/ca/surprise> (530) 279-6101

Winnemucca District Office
<http://www.blm.gov/nv> (775) 623-1500

Report wildfires (775) 623-3444 or (800) 535-6076

Friends of Black Rock / High Rock
<http://blackrockdesert.org> (775) 557-2900

