

The various resources found in the Soldier Meadows ACEC are described inside this brochure. Please be aware of the wonderful, rare, and unique resources found in and around these springs, and help ensure their continued existence by following these camping and vehicle regulations and suggestions.

Hot Spring Use

Soaking in natural hot springs is a recreational activity that many people enjoy, but public land hot springs can be dangerous. Some of the hot springs in the ACEC reach temperatures over 120 degrees Fahrenheit (hot enough to burn human skin). Other hazards include biting bugs, chemical fumes, bacterial irritations, and disease.

Visitors should use caution when using the areas around the springs. The BLM does not manage hot springs for human uses and recommends people to stay safe and away from natural hot pools on public lands. If you do decide to soak in the springs, please do not contaminate the water with soap or any other foreign substance, and avoid wearing excessive sunscreen.

Construction of new dams or other structures (such as decks, tables, benches) in and around the hot springs is prohibited.

Camping and Campfires

Camping is only allowed in designated campsites within the ACEC. Look for the designated campsite markers. There are eight campsites designed for use within the ACEC, including two large group campsites (one at the cabin and one at the hot springs camping area). Please restrict campfires to existing established fire rings.

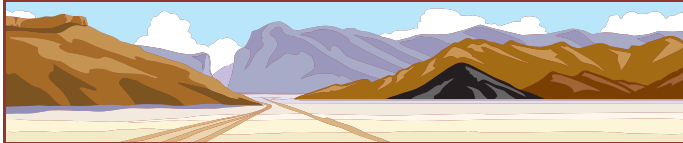
Vehicle Use

All mechanized vehicle traffic is limited to designated roads and trails. This includes motor vehicles such as trucks, all terrain vehicles, and motorcycles, and also includes bicycles. In the adjacent wilderness areas, mechanized vehicles may not be used. Some roads that remain designated for continued public use are parallel to wilderness boundaries, such as the road through High Rock Canyon. Other roads may be used to approach, but not enter designated wilderness areas at many locations. Careless off-highway vehicle (OHV) use is the major cause of negative publicity towards OHV users and can cause damage to resources and jeopardize safety. Inconsiderate OHV use can cause thousands of acres to be closed to the enjoyment of all visitors.

- **Leave no trace. Pack out all your trash—AND any trash you find.**
- **Respect road closures. Decommissioned roads take years to recover and are usually redundant.**
- **Respect private property.**
- **Leave gates the way you find them or as posted.**
- **Carry one gallon of water per person per day.**
- **Stay with your vehicle if lost or stranded.**

Please visit <http://blackrockdesert.org> to check current conditions or to report conditions or damage within the NCA.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



BLACK ROCK DESERT HIGH ROCK CANYON EMIGRANT TRAILS

NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

Soldier Meadows Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

In 1982, 307 acres were designated as the Soldier Meadows Area of Critical Environmental Concern to protect special natural heritage resources. The ACEC now contains 2,077 acres to protect these rare natural and cultural resources. Special rules apply to recreation and commercial uses in the ACEC.

National Landscape Conservation System

The Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trail 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.

Friends of Black Rock / High Rock

<http://blackrockdesert.org> (775) 557-2900

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

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

Soldier Meadows

Area of Critical Environmental Concern

BLM
NEVADA



A Unique and Sensitive Place

The 2,077 acre Soldier Meadows Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) was designated to protect rare wildlife, plants and cultural resources. The popularity of the hot springs for recreation use caused impacts to these special resources. Camping and vehicle use combined with bathing and the introduction of chemicals into the springs took its toll on this sensitive ecosystem.

Aquatic Life Abounds

Soldier Meadows is a spring fed wetland inhabited by fish and springsnails that do not live anywhere else. These animals were isolated from their ancestors when warming climates caused Lake Lahontan to dry up about 9,000 years ago.



Desert Dace close up

Desert Dace is a threatened fish species found only in the hot springs at Soldier Meadows. The fish live to be 1-3 years old and grow to approximately 2 inches. They prefer warmer waters of the large springs, but can also be seen alongside the common Speckled Dace in the cooler downstream waters.

The **Soldier Meadows Springsnails** were recently discovered and are among approximately 100 aquatic mollusks known only to exist in the Great Basin. There are several species of snails living in the springs at Soldier Meadows. The construction of rock dams to make hot pools for bathing destroys springsnail habitat.



Hand covered with hundreds of tiny springsnails

Rare Wildflowers in a Desert Refuge

Basalt Cinquefoil is a low growing wildflower living on the gentle slopes and alkaline soils that surround the springs. The small yellow flowers bloom in abundance during May and June. Many of the existing roads and campsites caused negative impacts in Cinquefoil habitat.



Basalt Cinquefoil in bloom (yellow flowers)

Reminders of the Past

The first people to use these springs have occupied the Great Basin for over 10,000 years. The Northern Paiute band in this region is called Aga'ipanadokado or "fish lake eaters."



Examples of prehistoric projectile point

The Native people used the plants, animals and rocks that you might see near these springs for food, fiber and tools. Stone artifacts are the reminders of their ancient culture and traditions. **Please respect their heritage and leave artifacts in place.**



Northern Paiute Chief Ocheo in front of Paiute tule mat house



Wagon train family

In the mid-nineteenth century, emigrant wagon trains also camped in great numbers around these springs allowing animals to graze after the arduous crossing of the Black Rock Desert. The springs must have been a welcome retreat from the harsh and monotonous dry lake bed.



U.S. Cavalry ca 1865

The U.S. Army built a cavalry post named Camp McGarry near Summit Lake to protect emigrants as they traveled along the Applegate Lassen Trail. Officer's quarters, mess barracks and a 100-horse stone barn were constructed at the current Soldier Meadows Ranch site around then. After the post was abandoned in 1868, various small ranches were started and operated by individuals who eventually sold out to the cattle barons Miller and Lux. Cattle ranching at Soldier Meadows Ranch continues to this day.