

Petition Would Take Gold Butte From BLM

June 25, 2014 5:29 PM



photo: Center for Biological Diversity

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(LAS VEGAS, KXNT)—An environmental group has started a petition drive to make Nevada's pristine, 350,000 acre Gold Butte area a National Monument, putting it under National Parks Service control and removing it from the Bureau of Land Management.

The designation needs only a presidential proclamation, according to Rob Mrowka of the Center For Biological Diversity.

He notes there was a previous petition drive that raised 38,000 signatures when former Nevada Congresswoman Shelley Berkley lobbied for such a designation.

Mrowka says BLM "has let the Gold Butte area down for a number of years, and it perhaps culminated in the biggest way with its failed roundup of Cliven Bundy's trespassed cattle", referring to the controversial showdown between the agency and the Nevada rancher who has ignored court orders and fines for his failure to pay grazing fees for two decades.

He noted other criticisms of BLM: six years of “foot dragging” in coming up with an overall plan for the area, the failure to restrict roadways in the area that threaten biological life, and rampant off-road vehicle use.

Mrowka concluded there is “just a real general lack of proper [management](#) by BLM which just leads us to give up hope that they can really do the job. Its time to turn it over to somebody that can protect Gold Butte.”

The Center’s [news release](#) states “The area has a long history of being the homeland for American Indian peoples and is still the homeland for the Moapa Band of southern Paiutes, whose ancestors left a rich treasure trove of rock art and other artifacts that are now in jeopardy of being plundered and lost forever.”