

# Gauging the Trump effect on land in the West

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

On a brisk day in late February, we pulled off a one-way, unpaved loop and watched cattle dogs guide five cows across a flat basin. Weeks of heavy winter storms meant the Southern Nevada desert's iconic drive-by shrubbery appeared greener and fuller.

Two months after then-President Barack Obama designated this 300,000-acre expanse the Gold Butte National Monument, little else had changed. The cattle remained controversial. The Bureau of Land Management continued saying it had no immediate plans to round them up. In nearby Mesquite, the designation continued to inflame the question: Where does the federal government's power begin and end?

A BLM official explained that while the agency still had a court order to remove livestock grazing illegally on public land, it would wait for word from Washington, D.C.. The Trump administration was in charge.

President Trump promises to take a hard turn away from Obama's environmental policies, from the management of public lands to the direction of the energy industry. But what the Trump administration means for the 11 contiguous Western states, in practical terms, is unclear.

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