



BLACK ROCK DESERT  
HIGH ROCK CANYON  
EMIGRANT TRAILS



NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

### The Interpretation of the Playa: “Welcome to the Beach! Where’s the Water?”

Our goal with the Playa kit is to spike the imagination of the visitors and make them think about the dry desert that they are standing on was once a gigantic lake over 800 feet deep in some places. This goal will be achieved through numerous interpretive tools and interactive activities. We hope that with education on the area, it will foster a sense of ownership for these public lands and will encourage visitors to treat the land with respect. We have used the principles of Tread Lightly and Leave No Trace in this kit to encourage and invite visitors to leave the site as it was when they arrived.

To interpret the theme “Welcome to the Beach! Where’s the Water?”, we have come up with a couple of ideas. We have created a “What Happened to the Lake?” page that includes the formation of the lake, facts about the water cycle: evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and collection, a water cycle diagram, facts on Lake Lahontan, and everyday evaporation. This will serve as a tool to educate the visitors on the process which caused the drying of Lake Lahontan, and how it is still occurring today. We have also included an evaporation experiment in the kit, which will need to be completed at home. This will further the education process and increase the visitors understanding of the evaporation process. There will be several unlaminated copies of the evaporation experiment in the kit, which will enable visitors to take it home and try the experiment on their own time.

Also included in the kit will be a 3-D model of the Playa, which will have a piece that can be placed on top to recreate what Lake Lahontan would have looked like. This model will be made out of foam core and will be to scale, but not completely accurate of the major mountain ranges and land marks on the Playa. The “lake cover” will show just how deep the water was in the area, and be used to show how the shoreline and ridges could still be left today.

Another tool that will be useful in showing where the ancient shorelines and ridges are will be the maps that will be placed in the kit. There will be two maps: one of the entire ancient lake, and one of the lake in the NCA. This will help the visitors to imagine the Playa covered with water, and help to explain the occurrence of shorelines and ridges in the area.

An overall theme that has been developed for every kit is the usage of the Applegate – Lassen trail by the emigrants. To interpret this theme, an Emigrant game has been developed. This game consists of two “spinner game boards”, an emigrant facts sheet, and an answer sheet. The visitor will be able to imagine how long it would have taken them to reach their destination through a variety of conditions. There are six different outcomes for each spinner board, which could lead to numerous outcomes of the game.

The last way in which we plan to interpret the Playa site, is with the use of a word search game. This will be helpful in engaging a younger population, while still helping them to understand the major concepts of the site. These games are laminated and will be able to be cleaned and reused at each visit.

