



U.S. Department of the Interior  
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# News Release

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## **Tonopah Field Office to Host Public Tours of Historic Rhyolite**

BATTLE MOUNTAIN, Nev. – On Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup>, the Bureau of Land Management, Tonopah Field Office, will be hosting public walking tours of Rhyolite, Nevada. The tours will be split into two sessions held at **10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.**

The walking tours will be hosted by a BLM Archaeologist who will cover the history of the area, the buildings and sites left behind and the steps the BLM is taking to actively manage this important cultural resource.

Rhyolite was once a booming gold rush town in Southern Nevada that drew thousands of people to the area after Frank “Shorty” Harris and Ernest “Ed” Cross discovered quartz in the surrounding county in 1904. It did not take long for word to get out and in just a short time several camps were established including Bullfrog, Amargosa, and Jumpertown. The name Bullfrog was coined by Shorty Harris who explained the reasoning behind his choice several years later, “The rock was green, almost like Turquoise, spotted with big chunks of yellow metal, and looked a lot like the back of a frog” (*Westways Magazine, 1930*).

By 1905 the town had running water and by 1907 Rhyolite was in full swing with electricity, telephone lines, a bank, and at one point, 50 saloons! Experts estimate that at its peak Rhyolite had a population of 5,000-8,000 people. As we all know, what goes up must come down; Rhyolite’s quick influx of businesses, residents, and financial success was short lived. The San Francisco earthquake of 1906 hit California’s financial district hard which reduced funding for Nevada mines and mining production declined. On March 14, 1911 residents began to leave the town site in large numbers, many of them heading back to California, and in 1916 the power was turned off and the lights went out in Rhyolite.

Tours will be held at **10:00 a.m and 1:00 p.m. on October 14th**. The tour will cover even terrain with some moderate inclines. Closed-toed shoes, weather-appropriate clothing, and water are recommended. Those interested in attending one of the two tours should meet at the Tom Kelly Bottle House at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time for the tour. The Tom Kelly Bottle House will be one of the first buildings you see on the right hand side as you pull up to historic Rhyolite. Parking is readily available. For additional information on this event or for assistance with driving directions to Rhyolite, please contact BLM Archeologist Jonah Blustain at 775-482-7843 or by email at [jblustain@blm.gov](mailto:jblustain@blm.gov).

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*The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any federal agency. This land is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield.*