BLM requests 10,240 acres east of Las Vegas to be released by Congress

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The federal Bureau of Land Management is again asking Congress to release 10,240 acres of federal land east of Las Vegas from a wilderness study to make it easier to remove trash and manage sprawl on Sunrise Mountain.

The request gained little attention Wednesday on Capitol Hill but drew criticism from leaders of several Nevada environmental groups.

John Wallin, director of the Nevada Wilderness Project, said the BLM was giving up on its job to manage the land and protect wilderness study areas until Congress decides

BLM Assistant Director Michael Nedd told Congress that the mountain area east of Las Vegas has been reached by sprawl, will never be mistaken for pristine, and should be released from wilderness study.

The Senate public lands subcommittee is considering a bill to release 65 acres from Sunrise Mountain wilderness study for flood control in foothill neighborhoods.

Nedd said BLM wants senators go ahead and release the entire area — and enable trash trucks to remove litter and to allow "fencing off areas to protect sensitive resources."