

## OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

**MEETING DATE:** December 15, 2014

**AGENDA ITEM NUMBER:** 3B

**STAFF:** Ann Bollinger, Open Space Administrator

**REQUEST:** Presentation and discussion only on the BLM Resource Management Plan by Ms. Colleen Sievers.

### GENERAL DISCUSSION:

The BLM Carson City District began the planning process for the updated Resource Management Plan (RMP) in 2012. When approved, this RMP will replace the *2001 Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan* plus subsequent amendments and will guide the management of public lands administered by the Carson City District into the future.

While Carson City recently went through a fairly comprehensive process to identify lands for acquisition/exchange and disposal (the Carson City Lands Bill), this plan provides the City with another opportunity to review future needs, identify any lands that were missed in the Lands Bill, etc.

Carson City has been a participating agency throughout the process. Since BLM lands abut open space and parks, as well as lands managed by the Public Works Department and areas of residential and commercial use, staff encourages and anticipates submitting comments.

At present, four meetings are scheduled in Carson City:

- December 15 Open Space Advisory Committee
- January 6 Parks and Recreation Commission
- January 15 Board of Supervisors
- January 24 Hosted by the BLM: Public Scoping Meeting. Note the time has been extended from 2-6 p.m.

After the above meetings and time for review, it is staff's intention to return to the OSAC in February 2015 with a comment letter and request for recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Attached to this staff report are:

- Carson City District RMP – Public Meeting Dates
- Carson City District RMP – Presentation
- Carson City District RMP – Executive Summary

The RMP is available online at <http://on.doi.gov/1uYBNGT>. The 120-day public comment period will run from November 28, 2014 through March 27, 2015.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** This agenda item is for informational purposes only. No formal action can be taken at this time.

## Carson City District RMP Revision Draft RMP/EIS

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Carson City District (CCD) announces the request for public review and comments on the Draft Carson City District Resource Management Plan (RMP) revision. The revision process involves the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The BLM published a *Notice of Availability of the Draft RMP/EIS* to the *Federal Register* on November 28th, 2014, which kicks off the review and comment period. Members of the public, Tribal organizations, and other agencies and organizations are invited to submit comments during this period. Six public scoping meetings will be held across the region; details are provided below. Written comments may be submitted through **March 27th, 2015\***, by any of the following methods: e-mail: [BLM\\_NV\\_CCDO\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_NV_CCDO_RMP@blm.gov), Fax: 775-885-6147, or mail: BLM Carson City District, Attn: CCD RMP, 5665 Morgan Mill Rd, Carson City, NV 89701.

\* The end of the comment period has been extended beyond 120 days in consideration of the holidays.

### Public Meetings

John Ascuaga's Nugget	1100 Nugget Ave, Sparks, NV 89431	Tue Jan 13, 5-7pm
Fallon Convention Center	100 Campus Way, Fallon, NV 89406	Thurs Jan 15, 5-7pm
Mineral County Library	110 1st St, Hawthorne, NV 89415	Tue Jan 20, 5-7pm
Carson Valley Inn	1627 U.S. Highway 395 N, Minden, NV 89423	Thurs Jan 22, 5-7pm
Carson City Plaza Hotel	801 S. Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701	Sat Jan 24, <del>2-4pm</del> 2-6pm
Yerington Elementary	112 North California St, Yerington, NV 89447	Thurs Jan 29, 5-7pm

**BLM**

**US Department of the Interior**  
**Bureau of Land Management**  
c/o EMPSi\*  
4741 Caughlin Pkwy, Suite 4  
Reno, NV 89519

*\*Acting as contracted agent for the Bureau of Land Management*

#### **Add Your E-mail to the Mailing List**

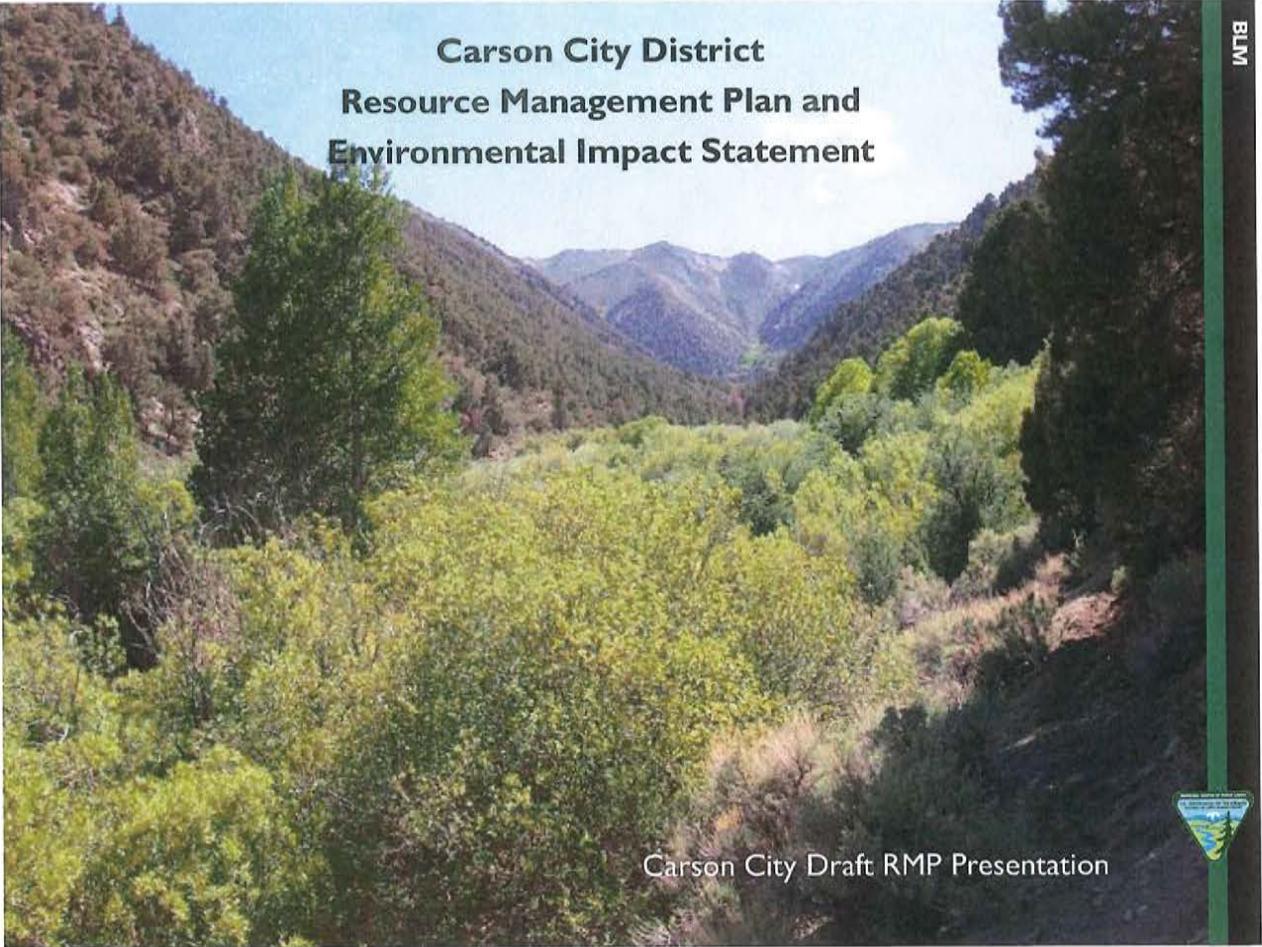
If you received this postcard and did not receive the electronic newsletter, we probably do not have your e-mail address. You can request to be added to our electronic mailing list by sending a message to [BLM\\_NV\\_CCDO\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_NV_CCDO_RMP@blm.gov).

November 2014



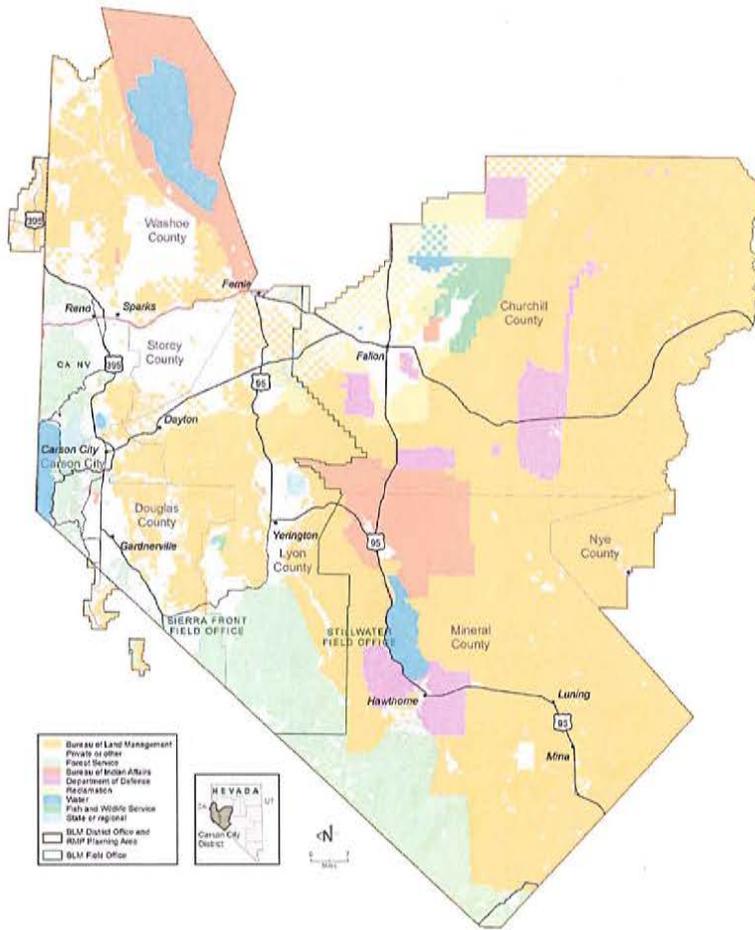
**Carson City District  
Resource Management Plan and  
Environmental Impact Statement**

BLM



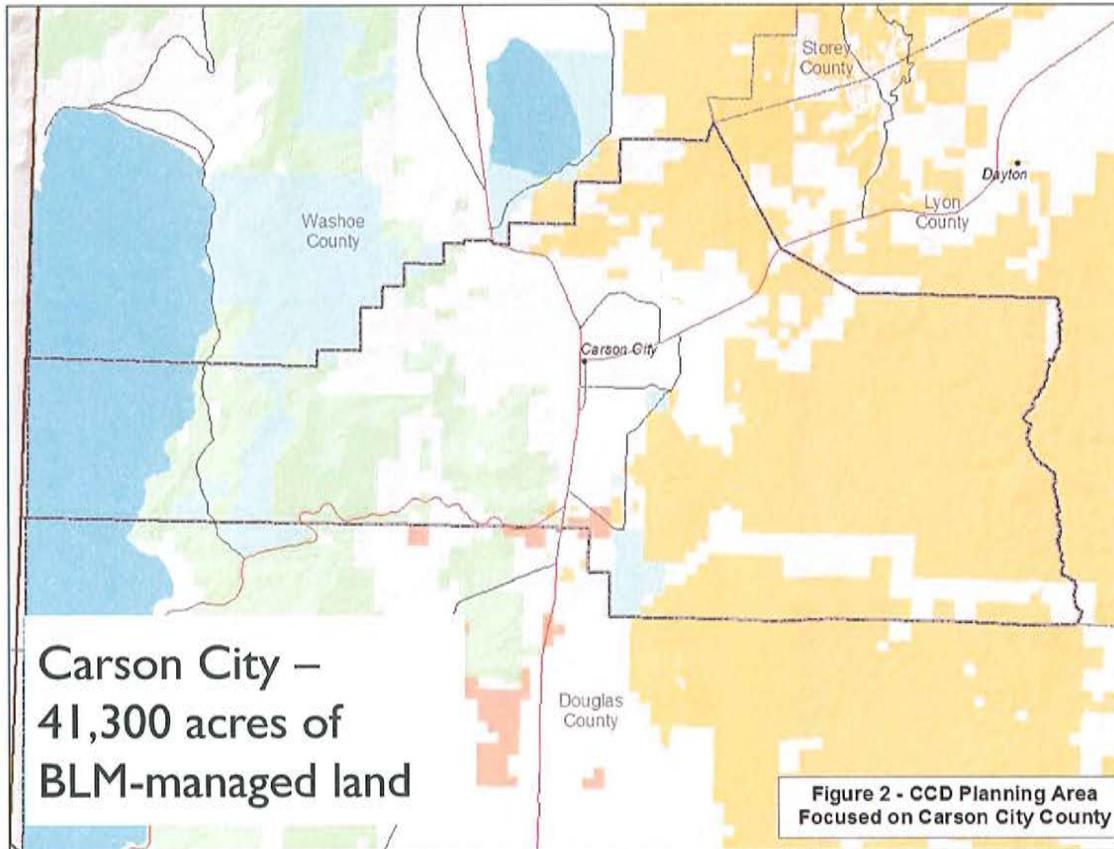
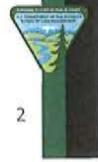
Carson City Draft RMP Presentation





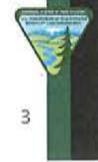
Planning Area – 8.9 million acres

Decision Area – 4.8 million acres



Carson City – 41,300 acres of BLM-managed land

Figure 2 - CCD Planning Area Focused on Carson City County



- **Scoping**
  - February 24, 2012 – April 29, 2012: 6 public meetings
  - Almost 1700 comments primarily on wild horse & burro, special designations, special status species, mineral resources and travel management
- **Cooperating Agencies**
  - 27 Memorandums of Understanding signed
    - 2 National Forests
    - 3 Federal Agencies
    - 4 Military Agencies
    - 9 Counties
    - 3 Nevada State Agencies
    - 6 Tribal Governments
- **Public Outreach**
  - More than 110 public meeting/presentations given on the RMP

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## Alternatives

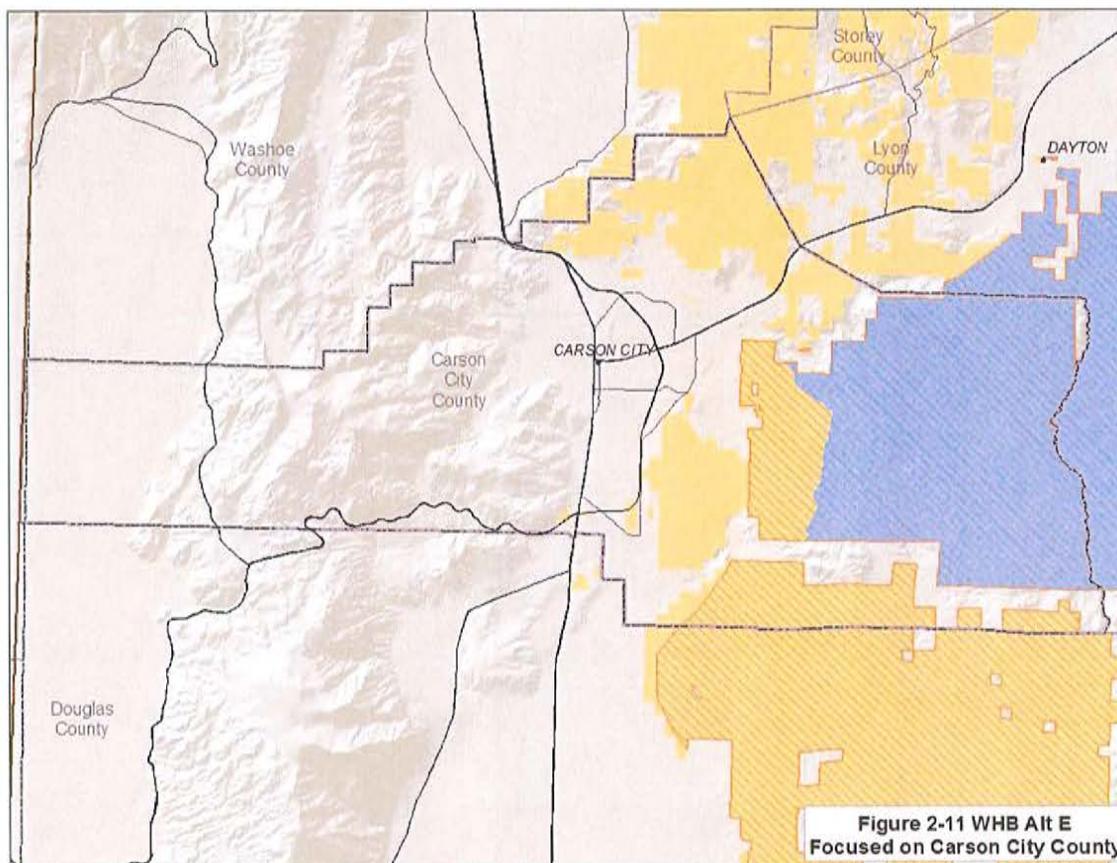
Alternative	Description
<b>A - No Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of existing management under the current RMP</li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource use-intensive</li> <li>• Provides for case-by-case mitigation</li> <li>• Fewest protected areas and restrictions to resource uses</li> </ul>
<b>C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation emphasis</li> <li>• Emphasis on special designations</li> <li>• Most protected areas and use restrictions</li> </ul>
<b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased management of recreational opportunities</li> <li>• Enhanced community development</li> <li>• Specific management prescriptions to address public uses on the lands within the urban interface</li> <li>• Where management not specified for urban interface, current management will continue</li> </ul>
<b>E – Agency Preferred</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of actions identified by public comments and cooperating agency input, and based on balancing ecosystem health and public use of the land</li> <li>• Intermediate level of protection, restoration, enhancements, and use of resources</li> <li>• Provides an array of proactive and prescriptive protection measures</li> </ul>



Wild Horse and Burro Management					
	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Preferred)
HMA (21 HAs)	19	13	12	13	13
Acres	1,235,200 (26%)	996,500 (21%)	1,090,000 (23%)	996,500 (21%)	1,070,200 (22%)



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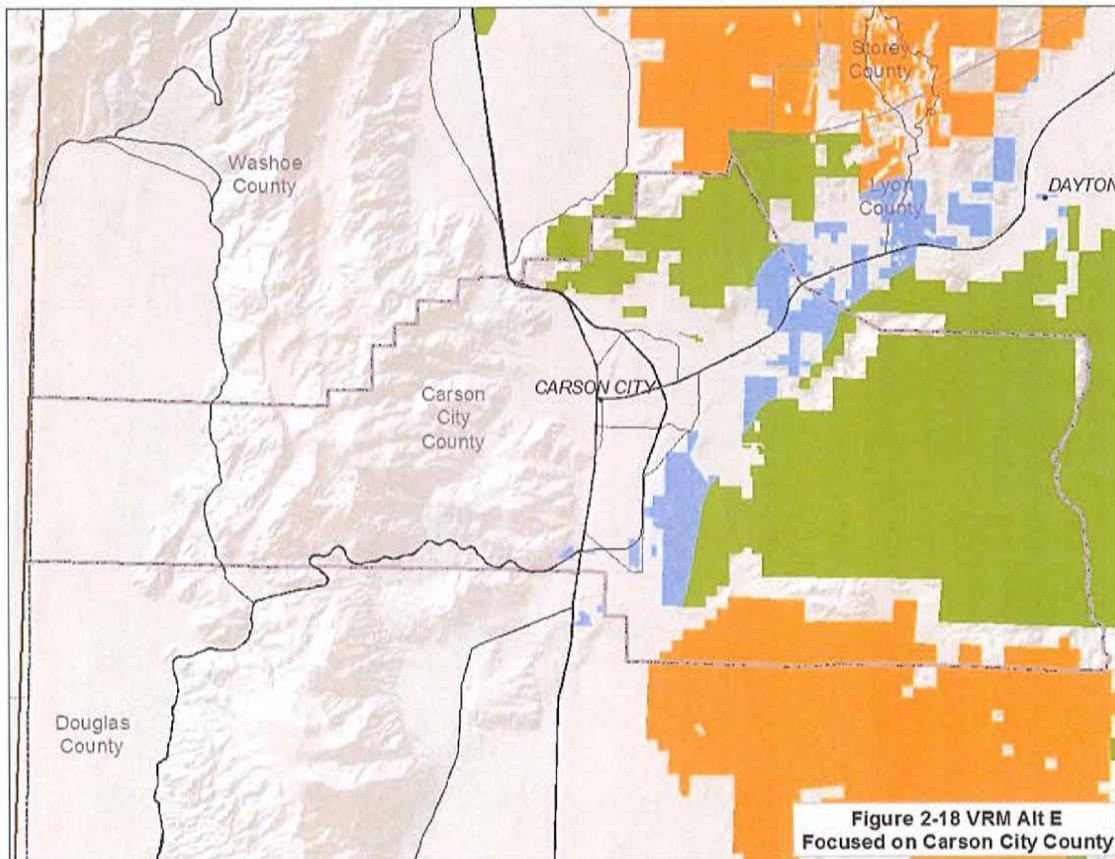


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Visual Resource Management					
VRM Class	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Preferred)
Class I	564,100 (12%)	564,100 (12%)	981,900 (20%)	564,100 (12%)	564,100 (12%)
Class II	38,300 (.8%)	56,800 (1.2%)	733,900 (15%)	66,400 (1.4%)	513,600 (11%)
Class III	320,600 (7%)	1,379,400 (29%)	213,400 (4%)	185,900 (4%)	1,383,900 (29%)
Class IV	385,700 (7%)	2,803,000 (58%)	2,874,100 (60%)	3,986,900 (83%)	2,341,700 (49%)
Undesignated	3,494,900 (73%)	----	----	----	----



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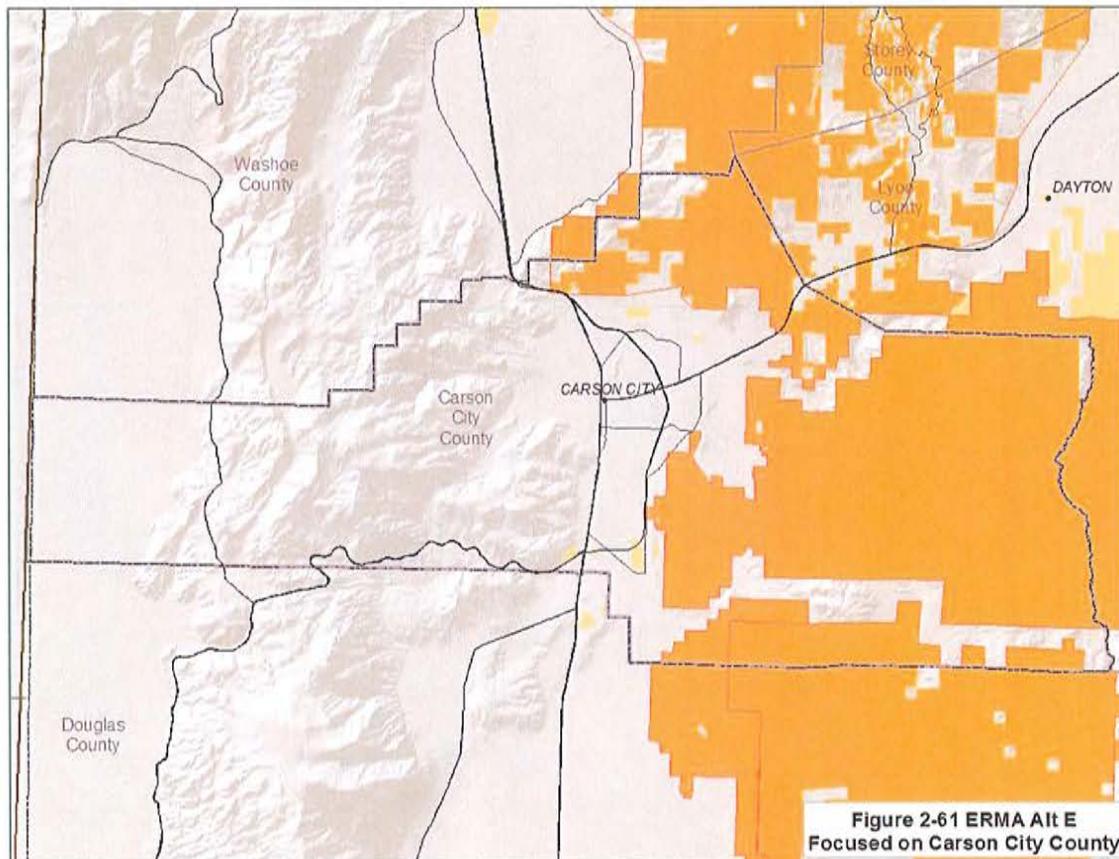
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## Recreation and Travel Management

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Preferred)
Recreation Management Areas					
SRMAs	2 67,700 (1%)	6 76,100 (2%)	3 74,700 (2%)	4 67,100 (1%)	6 106,100 (2%)
ERMAs	----	8 1,678,320 (35%)	15 1,528,760 (32%)	6 292,620 (6%)	15 2,085,730 (43%)
Lands not designated RMA	----	3,050,080 (64%)	3,201,040 (67%)	4,444,780 (93%)	2,612,670 (54%)



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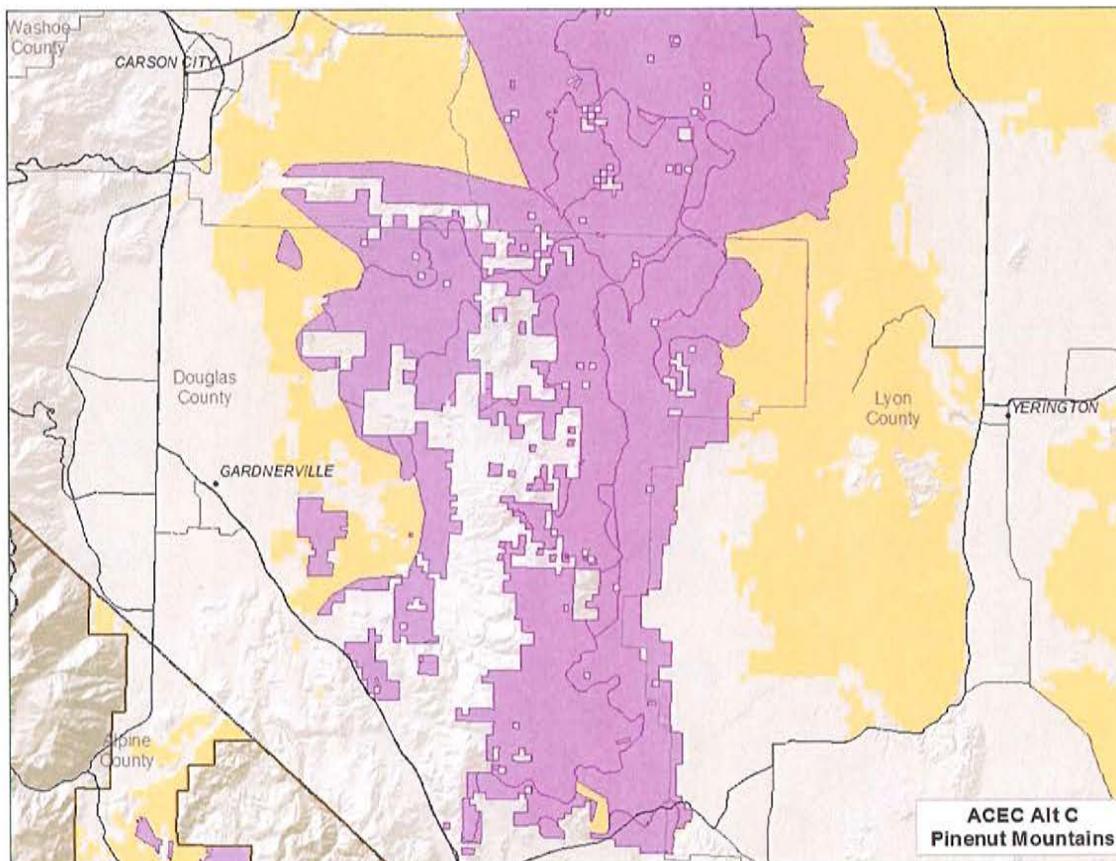
Recreation and Travel Management					
	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Preferred)
Travel Management Areas					
Open	3,840,300 (80%)	95,300 (2%)	1,300 (0%)	22,700 (.5%)	55,700 (1%)
Closed to motorized and mechanized	6,900 (.1%)	4,300 (0%)	598,000 (12%)	1,600 (0%)	6,200 (.1%)
Closed to motorized (mechanized limited to existing)	31,800 (.6%)	26,700 (.5%)	1,190,500 (25%)	30,600 (.6%)	24,100 (.5%)
Limited	924,300 (19%)	4,677,00 (97%)	3,013,500 (63%)	4,748,400 (99%)	4,717,300 (98%)

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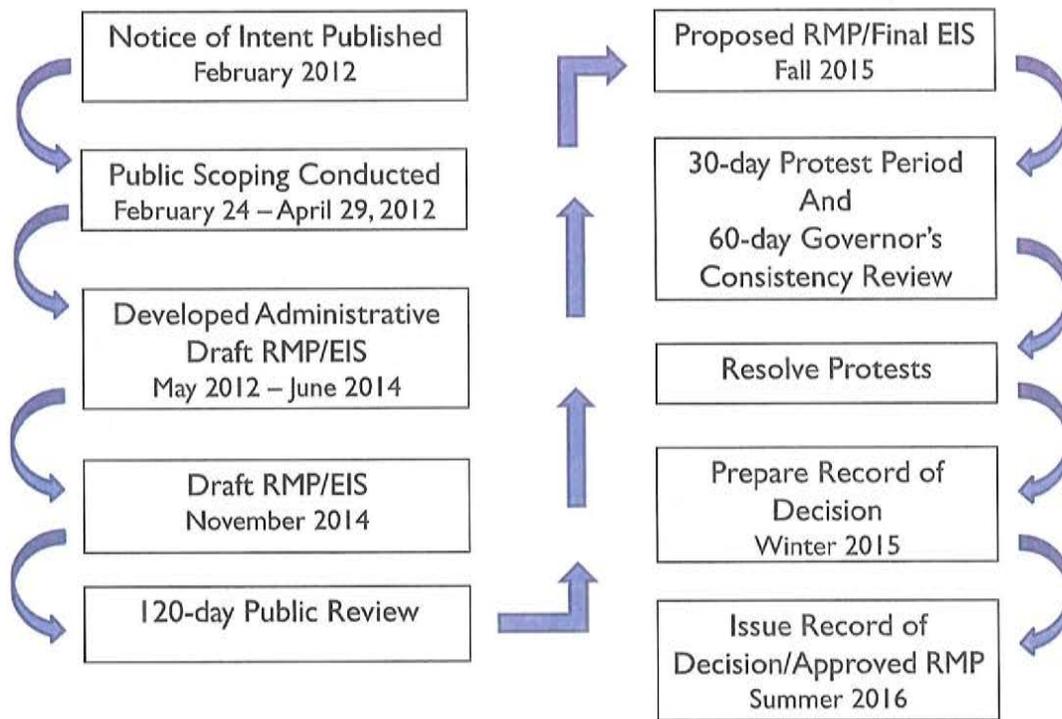
Proposed Lands and Realty					
	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Preferred)
Identified for Disposal	179,700 (.4%)	273,300 (6%)	----	332,500 (7%)	267,200 (6%)
ROW Exclusion	564,100 (12%)	580,000 (12%)	2,675,800 (56%)	564,100 (12%)	605,900 (13%)
ROW Avoidance	----	1,195,800 (25%)	369,300 (8%)	1,226,100 (26%)	1,448,200 (30%)
Wind Exclusion	----	----	2,073,200 (43%)	----	629,900 (13%)
Wind Avoidance	----	1,220,200 (25%)	----	1,228,100 (26%)	956,900 (20%)
Solar Variance	905,900 (19%)	773,400 (16%)	578,400 (12%)	672,100 (14%)	629,900 (13%)

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Areas of Critical Environmental Concern					
	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Preferred)
# of ACECs	6	13	23	11	8
Acres	21,800 (.5%)	371,170 (7.7%)	786,270 (16.4%)	180,000 (3.8%)	82,770 (1.7%)



# Planning Process Steps – Estimated Timeline and Schedule





**US Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Carson City District, Nevada**

Draft Resource Management Plan and  
Environmental Impact Statement



**VOLUME I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND  
CHAPTERS 1, 2 AND 3**

**NOVEMBER 2014**



Nevada • Carson City District Office



It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Publication Number: BLM/NV/CC/ES/15-04+1793



## United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Nevada State Office  
1340 Financial Boulevard  
Reno, Nevada 89502-7147  
<http://www.blm.gov/nv>

OCT 22 2014

In Reply Refer To:  
LLNVC0000.1610

Dear Reader:

Attached for your review and comment is the Draft Resource Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft RMP/EIS) for the Nevada Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Carson City District, Sierra Front and Stillwater Field Offices. BLM prepared this document in consultation with cooperating agencies, and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, implementing regulations, the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), and other applicable law and policy.

The planning area consists of about 9 million acres of land which includes about 4.8 million acres of public lands managed by the Sierra Front and Stillwater Field Offices in Carson City, Churchill, Douglas, Lyon, Mineral, Nye, Storey and Washoe Counties in western Nevada, and portions of Alpine, Lassen and Plumas Counties in eastern California. When approved, this RMP will replace the *2001 Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan* plus subsequent amendments and will guide the management of public lands administered by the Carson City District into the future. The *Carson City District Draft Resource Management Plan* and supporting information is available on the project web site at: [http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/carson\\_city\\_field.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/carson_city_field.html).

The BLM encourages the public to provide information and comments pertaining to the analysis presented in the Draft RMP/EIS. We are particularly interested in feedback concerning the adequacy and accuracy of the proposed alternatives, the analysis of their respective management decisions, and any new information that would help the BLM as it develops the plan. In developing the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, which is the next phase of the planning process, the decision maker may select various management decisions from each of the alternatives analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS for the purpose of creating a management strategy that best meets the needs of the resources and values in this area under the BLM multiple use and sustained yield mandate. As a member of the public, your timely comments on the *Carson City District Draft Resource Management Plan* will help formulate the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Comments will be accepted for one hundred twenty (120) calendar days following the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) publication of its Notice of Availability in the Federal Register. The BLM can best utilize your comments and resource information submissions if received within the review period.

Comments may be submitted electronically at: [blm\\_nv\\_ccdo\\_rmp@blm.gov](mailto:blm_nv_ccdo_rmp@blm.gov). Comments may also be submitted by mail to: Carson City RMP, BLM Carson City District Office, 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, NV 89701. To facilitate analysis of comments and information submitted, we strongly encourage you to submit comments in an electronic format.

Your review and comments on the content of this document are critical to the success of this planning effort. If you wish to submit comments on the Draft RMP/EIS, we request that you make your comments

as specific as possible. Comments will be more helpful if they include suggested changes, sources, or methodologies, and reference to a section or page number. Comments containing only opinion or preferences will be considered and included as part of the decision making process, although they will not receive a formal response from the BLM.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment - including your personal identifying information - may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Public meetings to provide an overview of the document, respond to questions, and take public comments will be announced by local media, website, and/or public mailings at least 15 days in advance. Public meetings are currently scheduled for 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., on January 13, at the John Ascuaga's Nugget (1100 Nugget Ave.) in Sparks, Nev., on January 15, at the Fallon Convention Center (100 Campus Way) in Fallon, Nev., on January 20, at the Mineral County Library (First & A Street) in Hawthorne, Nev., on January 22, at the Carson Valley Inn (1627 US Hwy 395 N) in Minden, Nev., and on January 29, at the Yerington Elementary School (112 N. California St.) in Yerington, Nev. An additional public meeting will be held from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., on January 24, at the Carson City Plaza Hotel and Event Center located at 801 South Carson Street, Carson City, NV.

Copies of the Draft RMP/EIS have been sent to affected Federal, state and local government agencies (USFS Plumas National Forest, USFS Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Bureau of Reclamation, Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge Complex, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Naval Air Station Fallon, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Hawthorne Army Depot, Carson City, Alpine, Churchill, Douglas, Lyon, Mineral, Nye, Storey, and Washoe Counties, NV Department of Wildlife, NV Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bridgeport Paiute Indian Colony, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Walker River Paiute Tribe, and the Washoe Tribe of NV and CA). Copies of the Draft RMP/EIS are available for public inspection at the Alpine, Churchill, Douglas, Mineral, Storey and Washoe County planning departments, Lyon County public libraries, Mineral County Public Library, Gabbs Town Hall and on the BLM website at [http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/carson\\_city\\_field.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/carson_city_field.html). Copies are also available for public inspection at the following BLM locations:

Carson City District Office, 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, NV 89701  
Nevada State Office, 1340 Financial Boulevard, Reno, NV 89502

Thank you for your continued interest in the *Carson City District Resource Management Plan*. We appreciate the information and suggestions you contribute to the planning process. For additional information or clarification regarding this document or the planning process, please contact Colleen Sievers, RMP Project Manager at 775-885-6168.

Sincerely,



for Amy L. Lueders  
State Director

/s/ Raul Morales

Acting

**CARSON CITY DISTRICT DRAFT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## ES.1 INTRODUCTION

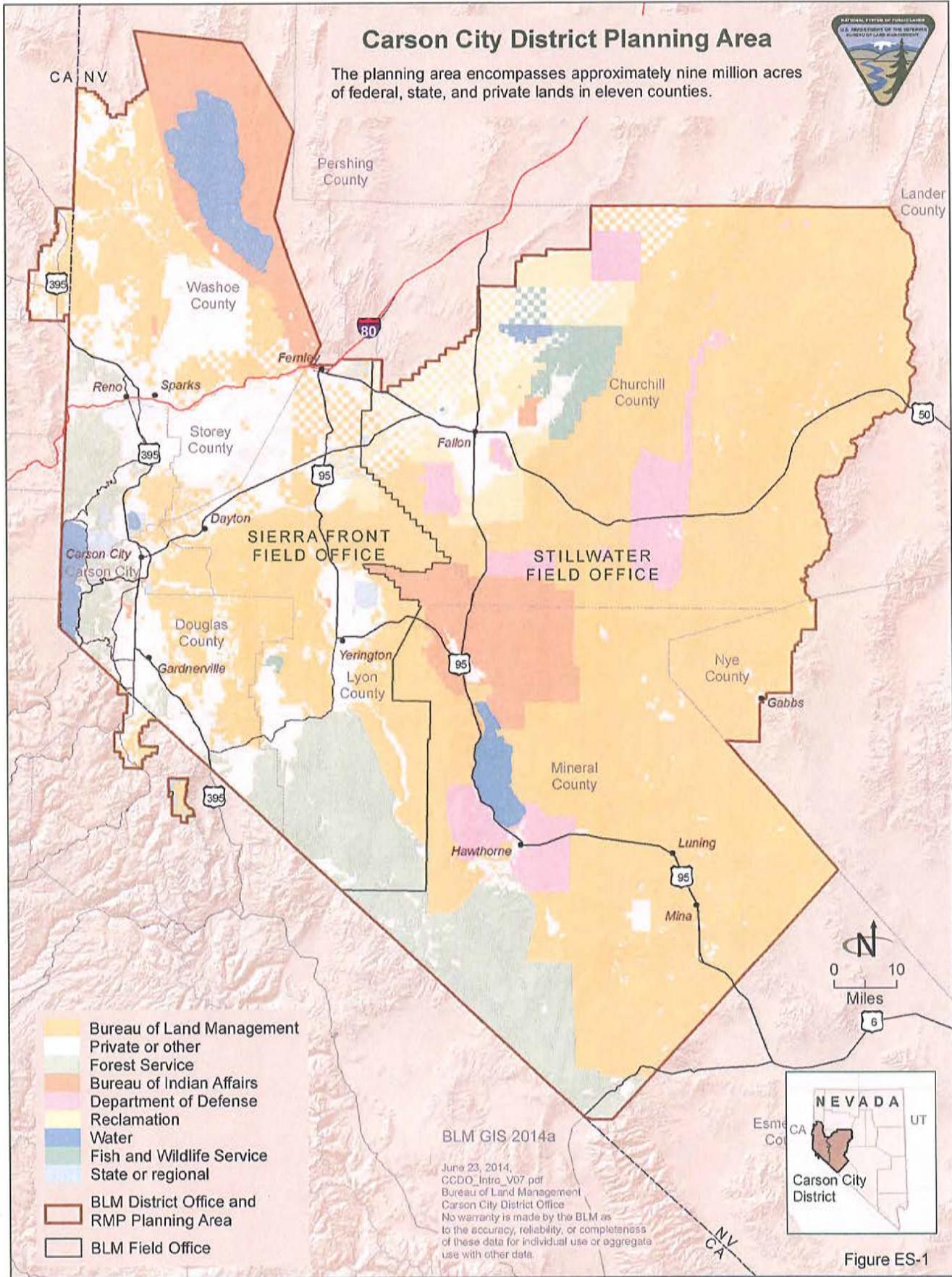
The United States (US) Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Carson City District (CCD) has prepared this draft resource management plan (RMP) and environmental impact statement (EIS) for managing public lands administered by the CCD. This document provides:

- Consolidated direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the CCD
- An analysis of the environmental effects that could result from the implementation of the alternatives addressed in the RMP

This RMP will replace the 2001 Carson City District Consolidated RMP (BLM 2001c), including amendments.

## ES.2 PLANNING AND DECISION AREA

The CCD RMP/EIS planning area is composed of approximately 9 million acres of public and private lands in Carson City, Churchill, Douglas, Lyon, Mineral, Nye, Storey, and Washoe Counties in western Nevada, and portions of Alpine, Lassen, and Plumas Counties in eastern California. The BLM administers nearly half (4.8 million acres) of the land in the planning area. The remaining area is composed of US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service), Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Department of Defense (DOD), State of Nevada, State of California, and private lands as well as tribal lands governed by sovereign Native American tribes in consultation with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). See **Figure ES-1**, Carson City District RMP Planning Area, and **Table ES-1**, Land Status within the Carson City District RMP Planning Area.



**Table ES-1**  
**Land Status within the Carson City District RMP**  
**Planning Area**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Bureau of Land Management	4,803,300
Forest Service (Nevada and California)	866,900
Bureau of Reclamation	304,000
Bureau of Indian Affairs	653,900
US Fish and Wildlife Service	103,900
Department of Defense	360,100
State of Nevada (including Nevada	24,200
Department of Wildlife)	
State of California	2,300
Private	1,507,900
Other (local, regional, water bodies)	312,600
<i>Total</i>	<i>8,939,100</i>

Source: BLM GIS 2014a

Management direction and actions provided in the RMP apply only to the decision area, which includes BLM-administered surface lands in the planning area and federal mineral estate lying beneath other surface ownership but administered by the BLM (split estate). A split estate can be either federal surface overlying private minerals or private surface overlying federal minerals. When it comes to BLM-administered surface and private minerals, the BLM has limited authority relating to public access for mineral exploration and development. On split estates where the surface is managed by another federal agency, the surface-managing agency establishes the mineral leasing requirements, which the BLM subsequently adopts.

### **ES.3 AUTHORITIES**

The RMP is being prepared in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 US Code [USC] 1701 et seq.), BLM Planning Regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1601-1610), and BLM Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-1 (BLM 2005a). This RMP provides planning-level guidance for the management of resources and designation of uses on BLM-administered lands. The RMP was developed in coordination with federal, state, and local governments, Native American tribes, and interested members of the public. Rather than providing entirely new management direction, this RMP carries forward existing management strategies where appropriate, while incorporating updated information and regulatory guidance made available since the adoption of the previous RMP. New management direction in the RMP also addresses land use issues and conflicts that have emerged since the previous RMP and RMP amendments were adopted.

The EIS incorporated as part of this document meets the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), the BLM's

Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-I (BLM 2005a), and the requirements of BLM NEPA Handbook, H-1790-I (BLM 2008a).

#### **ES.4 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

According to the FLPMA, the BLM shall “develop, maintain, and, when appropriate, revise land use plans” (43 USC 1712 [a]). Accordingly, the purpose of this RMP is to ensure that BLM-administered lands in the planning area are managed in accordance with the multiple use and sustained yield principles mandated by the FLPMA. With the support of new data, this RMP provides planning-level management strategies that are expressed in the form of goals, objectives, allowable uses, and management actions necessary to achieve the preferred conditions for resources and resource uses. The need for the RMP is to address policies and resource issues that have arisen since the adoption of the previous RMP and amendments. Major issues prompting the need for this RMP include the following:

- Management of energy resources, including renewable resources such as geothermal, wind, and solar
- Management of resources for which there is a high demand but limited supply, such as water or fish and wildlife
- Management for the protection of sensitive resources, such as cultural or paleontological artifacts
- Management of increased conflicts between competing resource values and land uses, particularly as a result of increased off-highway vehicle (OHV) use
- Management of the urban interface in light of expanding urban areas throughout the planning area

The BLM prepared this document using a collaborative planning process that included an interdisciplinary approach for fulfilling the need for new planning data. The BLM prepared the following plans, studies, and reports to support this RMP:

- CCD RMP/EIS Preparation Plan (March 2012)
- CCD RMP/EIS Collaboration and Communication Plan (May 2012)
- Scoping Summary Report (December 2012)
- Travel Management Workshop Report (January 2013)
- Socioeconomic Baseline Report (January 2013)
- Socioeconomic Report and Addendum (February 2013)
- Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report (February 2013)
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern Report (March 2013)

- Analysis of the Management Situation (April 2013)
- Mineral Potential Report (June 2013)
- Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) Scenario for Solar, Wind, and Biomass Report (June 2013)
- Air Analysis Framework Report (June 2013)
- Ethnographic Report (December 2013)
- Cultural Overview/Synthesis Report (draft; April 2014)
- Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Report (July 2014)

As new policy requirements, planning issues, and scientific information emerge over time, the BLM may review the RMP and consider the need for updated management prescriptions and resource allocations. Per 43 CFR 1610.4-9, the BLM is required to monitor and evaluate land use plans (LUPs) such as RMPs to determine if LUP decisions remain relevant, remain effective, need revision, should be dropped, or require new decisions. The LUP evaluation process is described in BLM Planning Handbook H-1601-1. The BLM may only change adopted LUP decisions through the amendment or revision process, which includes adherence to the environmental review requirements under the NEPA.

The planning process consists of developing, approving, maintaining, and amending or revising an RMP. The BLM carries out this process under the authority of Section 202(f) of the FLPMA and Section 202(c) of the NEPA. The process, which includes a land use planning tier and implementation tier, follows BLM planning regulations codified in 43 CFR 1600 and the CEQ regulations codified in 40 CFR 1500.

Making decisions on land use planning involves identifying and clearly defining goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for resources and resource uses, followed by developing the allowable uses and management actions necessary to achieve the goals and objectives. These critical determinations guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation actions to meet multiple use and sustained yield mandates while sustaining land health. Adaptive management may result in adjustments of goals, objectives, management area prescriptions, and standards and guidelines constraining land uses. This process is discussed in more detail in **Section 1.8.4**, Adaptive Management and Regional Mitigation Strategies. The BLM may also establish criteria in the LUP to guide the identification of site-specific use levels for activities during plan implementation.

The BLM develops and maintains the RMP, which will guide BLM management decisions for BLM-administered lands in the CCD planning area. Subsequent site-specific management decisions will require implementation plan decisions at a smaller geographic scale. Accordingly, implementation consists of the more detailed activity- or implementation-level planning that takes place as part of the

BLM's daily operations. Activity planning can include the development of recreation management plans, allotment management plans (AMPs), and the implementation of other similar plans that authorize, limit, or restrict the use of resources on BLM-administered lands. Implementation planning requires public outreach and NEPA compliance. Unlike LUP decisions, implementation decisions are not subject to protest under the planning regulations. Instead, implementation decisions are subject to various administrative remedies, particularly appeals to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS will outline LUP and implementation decisions, if necessary (and clearly distinguish between the two types of decisions).

This Draft RMP/EIS includes sage-grouse habitat management allocations consistent with the Nevada and Northeastern California Greater Sage-Grouse Draft LUP Amendment/EIS and the Bi-State Sage Grouse Draft Forest Plan/LUP Amendment. These plan amendment documents have been released as public drafts and no decisions have been made. Decisions on these documents are expected prior to issuance of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, and decisions for the Greater Sage-Grouse and bi-state sage grouse efforts will help inform the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. To facilitate district-level planning during the interim period, the CCD has developed a range of alternatives for analysis.

## **ES.5 ALTERNATIVES**

RMP decisions consist of identifying and clearly defining goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for resources and resource uses, followed by developing allowable uses and management actions necessary for achieving the goals and objectives. In accordance with the FLPMA, these determinations guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation actions to meet multiple use and sustained yield mandates while sustaining land health.

### **ES.5.1 Purpose of Alternative Development**

Alternative development is the cornerstone of the RMP/EIS process. Land use planning and NEPA regulations require the BLM to formulate a reasonable range of alternatives. Established planning criteria, as outlined in 43 CFR Section 1610, guide the alternative development process.

The basic goal of alternative development is to produce distinct potential management scenarios that:

- Address the identified major planning issues
- Explore opportunities to enhance management of resources and resource uses
- Resolve conflicts among resources and resource uses
- Meet the purpose of and need for the RMP

The NEPA regulation at 40 CFR 1501.2(c) states in part that federal agencies shall, “study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal which involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.” Alternative development provides the BLM and the public with an understanding of the diverse ways in which conflicts regarding resources and resource uses might be resolved, and offers the BLM State Director a reasonable range of alternatives from which to make informed decisions. The components and broad aim of each alternative considered for the Carson City District RMP are discussed below.

### ES.5.2 Alternative Development Process

Between January 16, 2013, and May 9, 2013, the BLM interdisciplinary team met to develop management goals while small teams met to identify objectives and actions to address the goals within their fields of expertise. The various groups met numerous times throughout this period to refine their work. The interdisciplinary team developed one no action alternative (Alternative A) and four action alternatives. The action alternatives were designed to:

- Address the 27 planning issues compiled from public input, cooperating agency feedback, and Resource Advisory Council input
- Fulfill the purpose and need for the RMP (outlined in **Section 1.1**, Purpose of and Need for the Resource Management Plan)
- Meet the multiple use and sustained yield mandates of the FLPMA

### ES.5.3 Alternatives Considered for Detailed Analysis

#### **Summary of Alternatives**

The four action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, D, and E) offer a range of possible management approaches. Alternative B generally emphasizes resource use and economic development. Alternative C emphasizes strategies to preserve and protect ecosystem health and resource values. Alternative D includes strategies that address increased demand on BLM-administered lands within urban interface areas. Alternative E is the agency preferred alternative and includes a mix of management actions to resolve issues and offers an intermediate level of protection, restoration, and enhancement of resources. While the goals are the same across alternatives, each alternative contains a discrete set of objectives and management actions constituting separate RMP management scenarios. Each alternative addresses resource program goals to varying degrees, with the potential for different long-range outcomes and conditions. **Table 2-2**, Description of Alternatives A, B, C, D, and E, describes the proposed decisions for each alternative, including goals, objectives, management actions, and allowable uses for individual resource programs (see **Chapter 2**, Alternatives). Figures in **Appendix A**, Alternatives A, B, C, D, and E Figures, provide a visual representation of each alternative.

The relative emphasis given to particular resources and resource uses differs as well, including allowable uses, restoration measures, and specific direction pertaining to individual resource programs. When resources or resource uses are mandated by law or are not tied to planning issues, there are typically few or no distinctions between alternatives.

In some instances, varying levels of management from different resource programs overlap. For example, the BLM proposes management for Hidden Cave, which is within the proposed Grimes Point Archeological Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The ACEC management prescribes a no surface occupancy stipulation for fluid mineral leasing under Alternative B; however, the Hidden Cave prescription calls for a controlled surface use stipulation. In such instances where varying management levels overlap, the stricter management prescriptions would apply. However, if the Authorized Officer makes an exception to the stricter prescription, then the less strict management prescription would prevail.

## **ES.6 MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES**

Certain allowable uses and management actions from the existing RMPs remain valid and do not require revision. All of the proposed alternatives carry these forward, while other decisions are common only to the action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, D, and E).

Although each alternative is distinct in the resources and resource uses it emphasizes, all five alternatives do the following:

- Comply with state and federal laws, regulations, policies, and standards, including the FLPMA multiple use and sustained yield mandates.
- Implement actions originating from laws, regulations, and policies and conform to day-to-day management, monitoring, and administrative functions not specifically addressed.
- Preserve valid existing rights, which include any leases, claims, or other use authorizations established before a new or modified authorization, change in land designation, or new or modified regulation is approved. Existing fluid mineral leases are managed through Conditions of Approval outlined in the RMP.
- Offer diverse recreational opportunities that foster outdoor-oriented lifestyles and enhance quality of life.
- Apply best management practices (BMPs), standard operating procedures (shown in **Appendix B**, Best Management Practices and Standard Operating Procedures), and other site-specific mitigation measures to all resource uses to promote rapid reclamation, maximize resource protection, and minimize soil erosion.

- Make every effort to avoid adverse impacts if cultural or paleontological sites are found at project locations. Consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in accordance with the State Protocol Agreement between the BLM and the SHPO, dated January 2012.
- Seek to enhance collaborative opportunities, partnerships, and communications with other agencies and interested parties to implement the RMP, including education and outreach and project-specific activities.
- Follow the procedures outlined in the Air Quality Memorandum of Understanding Among the US Department of Agriculture, US Department of the Interior, and US Environmental Protection Agency, Regarding Air Quality Analyses and Mitigation for Federal Oil and Gas Decisions Through the National Environmental Policy Act Process.
- Apply the exceptions, modifications, and waivers for fluid mineral leasing stipulations outlined in **Appendix C**, Fluid Mineral Leasing Stipulations, unless otherwise stated under a specific action.
- Identify and apply mitigation measures and conservation actions in order to achieve land use plan goals and objectives. The sequence of mitigation action will be the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce or eliminate over time, compensate), as identified by CEQ (40 CFR 1508.20) and the BLM's Draft Manual Section 1794, Regional Mitigation.
- The ROW avoidance and exclusion areas for renewable energy in this plan are in conformance with the Final Programmatic EIS for Solar Energy Development in Six Southwestern States, as reflected in the acres below in **Table ES-2**, Comparative Summary of Alternatives.

## **ES.7 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES**

### **ES.7.1 Alternative A: No Action**

Alternative A meets the NEPA requirement in 40 CFR 1502.14 that the BLM consider a no action alternative. This alternative provides the baseline against which to compare the other alternatives. This alternative would continue present management direction and practices based on existing LUPs and LUP amendments. Direction contained in existing laws, regulations, policies, and standards would also continue to be implemented, sometimes superseding provisions of the 2001 Consolidated RMP and subsequent LUP amendments. The current levels, methods, and mix of multiple use and sustained yield management of BLM-administered lands in the CCD decision area would

continue, and resource values would continue to receive attention at present levels.

#### **ES.7.2 Alternative B**

Alternative B emphasizes resource use and economic development (e.g., livestock grazing, energy, mineral development, and recreation) in the planning area. This alternative has the fewest restrictions to development and land use. Potential impacts on sensitive resources (e.g., soils and sensitive plant habitat) would be mitigated on a case-by-case basis. Sustainable development concepts are included to maintain economic productivity.

#### **ES.7.3 Alternative C**

Alternative C would develop management strategies to preserve and protect ecosystem health and resource values across the planning area, while providing multiple use and sustained yield. Resource development would be more constrained than under Alternatives B, D, or E, and in some cases and in some areas, uses would be excluded to protect sensitive resources. This alternative includes the most special designations, with specific measures to protect or enhance resource values within these areas. This alternative emphasizes active and specific measures to protect and enhance vegetation and habitat for special status species, fish, and wildlife. Likewise, this alternative would reflect a reduction in resource production goals for forage, renewable energy, and minerals. Resource production would generally be secondary to restoring and protecting important habitats, such as sagebrush and riparian areas. Sustainable development principles would focus on preserving ecological functions and environmental values.

#### **ES.7.4 Alternative D**

Alternative D emphasizes the increased demand on BLM-administered lands within the urban interface area. The interface is a set of conditions that affect resources and how they can be managed, rather than a geographic place. It is an area or zone where human infrastructure and urban development meet or intermingle with undeveloped BLM-administered land. Enhanced community development through a change in land tenure would be reflected. Alternative D provides for increased management of recreational opportunities in areas of high use while reducing conflict between use of the BLM-administered land and adjacent private landowners. Specific measures would also be applied to manage for increased pressures on the land and a higher demand from the public while minimizing adverse effects on the local communities. Where management is not specified for the urban interface areas, the current management (represented by Alternative A) would continue.

#### **ES.7.5 Alternative E: Agency Preferred**

Alternative E, Agency Preferred, represents a mix of management actions that best resolve the issues identified from the assessment of need for changing management, concerns raised during public scoping, and future management

considerations. This alternative would reflect a combination of goals and objectives for all values and programs. This alternative emphasizes an intermediate level of protection, restoration, enhancement, and use of resources and services to meet ongoing programs and land uses. The management strategy would be accomplished by using a variety of proactive and prescriptive measures that would protect vegetation and habitat and would promote the continuation of multiple-use management. Vegetation and special status species habitat would be restored and enhanced to provide for the continued presence of an ecologically healthy ecosystem using a suite of proactive and specific prescriptive management tools and implementation measures. Commodity and development-based resources such as livestock grazing and minerals production would be maintained on BLM-administered lands through specific actions to meet resource goals and protect ecosystem health. Management strategies would continue to provide for recreational opportunities on and access to BLM-administered lands and would take into consideration the result of management actions on the economies of communities within the region and user conflicts.

## ES.8 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

**Table ES-2**, Comparative Summary of Alternatives, provides a comparative summary of alternatives and compares meaningful differences in allocations among the five alternatives. Figures in **Appendix A** provide a visual representation of the differences between alternatives.

**Table ES-2**  
**Comparative Summary of Alternatives<sup>1</sup>**

Resource or Resource Use	Alt A	Alt B	Alt C	Alt D	Alt E
<b>Resources</b>					
<b>Wild Horses and Burros</b>					
Herd Areas/Herd Management Areas	1,235,200	996,500	1,090,000	996,500	1,070,200
<b>Visual Resource Management (VRM) (acres)</b>					
VRM Class I	564,100	564,100	981,900	564,100	564,100
VRM Class II	38,300	56,800	733,900	66,400	513,600
VRM Class III	320,600	1,379,400	213,400	185,900	1,383,900
VRM Class IV	385,700	2,803,000	2,874,100	3,986,900	2,341,700
Undesignated	3,494,900	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,803,300</b>	<b>4,803,300</b>	<b>4,803,300</b>	<b>4,803,300</b>	<b>4,803,300</b>
<b>Resource Uses</b>					
<b>Livestock Grazing (acres)</b>					
Available for livestock grazing	4,796,600	4,797,200	2,101,300	4,792,600	4,797,200
Not available for livestock grazing	6,700	6,100	2,702,000	10,700	6,100
<b>Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) (acres)</b>					
Alpine	7,600	5,800	10,700	7,400	7,700
Dead Camel Mountain	N/A	16,800	N/A	37,400	37,400
Hungry Valley	N/A	21,600	N/A	21,800	16,200
Sand Mountain	N/A	7,400	3,900	N/A	19,700

**Table ES-2  
Comparative Summary of Alternatives<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Alt A</b>	<b>Alt B</b>	<b>Alt C</b>	<b>Alt D</b>	<b>Alt E</b>
Walker Lake	60,100	24,000	60,100	N/A	24,600
Wilson Canyon	N/A	500	N/A	500	520
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,700</b>	<b>76,100</b>	<b>74,700</b>	<b>67,100</b>	<b>106,100</b>
<b>Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs) (acres)</b>					
Bagley Valley	N/A	N/A	2,600	N/A	2,600
Dry Valley	N/A	N/A	84,100	N/A	83,000
Faye-Luther	N/A	N/A	40	600	110
Middlegate	N/A	268,700	195,300	N/A	268,700
Mina	N/A	824,700	486,400	N/A	824,700
Mustang	N/A	400	400	400	400
Pah Rah	N/A	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Peterson	N/A	N/A	42,200	N/A	42,200
Pine Nut	N/A	201,100	201,100	201,100	201,100
Reno Urban Interface	N/A	70,600	91,000	70,400	70,600
Salt Wells	N/A	292,700	113,700	N/A	280,400
Singatse	N/A	N/A	174,900	N/A	174,900
Virginia Mountains	N/A	N/A	68,100	N/A	68,100
Virginia Range	N/A	N/A	48,800	N/A	48,800
102 Ranch	N/A	120	120	120	120
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,678,320</b>	<b>1,528,760</b>	<b>292,620</b>	<b>2,085,730</b>
<b>Comprehensive Travel and Transportation (acres)</b>					
Open to motorized and mechanized travel	3,840,300	95,300	1,300	22,700	55,700
Closed to motorized and mechanized travel	6,900	4,300	598,000	1,600	6,200
Closed to motorized travel (mechanized limited to existing routes)	31,800	26,700	1,190,500	30,600	24,100
Limited to existing routes for motorized and mechanized travel	924,300	4,677,000	3,013,500	4,748,400	4,717,300
<b>Fluid Mineral Leasing (acres)</b>					
Closed to fluid mineral leasing	839,100	768,500	2,081,700	737,000	1,007,200
Open to fluid mineral leasing	3,964,200	4,034,700	2,721,500	4,066,200	3,796,000
Open with no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulations	700	404,600	1,039,200	864,800	935,900
Open with controlled surface use (CSU) stipulations	N/A	2,120,200	1,242,800	2,071,400	1,844,900
<b>Nonenergy Leasable Minerals (acres)</b>					
Closed to nonenergy leasable mineral exploration and development	738,800	981,900	2,960,800	981,900	1,785,900
Open for consideration of nonenergy leasable mineral exploration or development	4,064,500	3,821,300	1,842,400	3,821,300	3,017,400
<b>Locatable Minerals (acres)</b>					
Withdrawn from locatable mineral entry	194,900	194,900	194,900	194,900	194,900
Petitioned for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry	3,700	439,600	117,500	440,800	470,600

**Table ES-2  
Comparative Summary of Alternatives<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Alt A</b>	<b>Alt B</b>	<b>Alt C</b>	<b>Alt D</b>	<b>Alt E</b>
<b>Mineral Materials (acres)</b>					
Closed to mineral material entry	564,200	807,200	3,004,800	807,700	1,778,700
Open to mineral material entry	4,239,100	3,996,100	1,798,400	3,995,600	3,024,600
<b>Lands and Realty (acres)</b>					
Right-of-way (ROW) exclusion areas	564,100	580,000	2,675,800	564,100	605,900
ROW avoidance areas	N/A	1,195,800	369,300	1,226,100	1,448,200
Identified for disposal	179,700	273,500	0	332,500	267,200
<b>Renewable Energy (Solar and Wind) (acres)</b>					
Variance areas for utility-scale solar (greater than 20 megawatts)	905,900	773,400	578,400	672,100	629,900
Exclusion areas for wind energy development	N/A	N/A	2,073,200	N/A	629,900
Avoidance areas for wind energy development	N/A	1,220,200	0	1,228,100	956,900
<b>Special Designations</b>					
<b>Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) (acres)</b>					
Black Mountain/Pistone Archaeological District ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	3,400	3,400	3,100	N/A
Carson Wandering Skipper ACEC (Existing)	330	N/A	330	N/A	N/A
Churchill Narrows Buckwheat Botanical ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	6,600	6,600	6,600	6,600
Clan Alpine Greater Sage-Grouse ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	N/A	98,400	N/A	N/A
Desatoya Greater Sage-Grouse ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	N/A	105,100	N/A	N/A
Dixie Valley Toad ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	N/A	410	N/A	N/A
Fox Peak Cultural ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	48,400	48,400	48,400	49,000
Greater Sand Mountain ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	17,000	17,000	N/A	N/A
Grimes Point Archaeological District ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	15,900	15,900	15,900	2,100
Incandescent Rocks Scenic ACEC (Existing)	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
Lassen Red Rock Scenic ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	N/A	800	N/A	N/A
Namazii Wunu Cultural ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	158,300	158,300	N/A	N/A
Pah Rah High Basin Petroglyph ACEC (Existing)	3,900	5,300	5,300	5,300	5,300
Pine Nut Bi-State Sage-Grouse ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	N/A	100,400	N/A	N/A
Ruhenstroth Paleontological ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300
Pine Nut Mountains Williams Combleaf Botanical ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	N/A	330	330	N/A
Sand Springs Desert Study Area ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	N/A	50	N/A	N/A
Steamboat Buckwheat Botanical (Proposed)	N/A	N/A	80	N/A	N/A
Steamboat Hot Springs Geyser Basin (Existing)	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stewart Valley Paleontological (Existing)	15,900	15,900	15,900	N/A	15,900

**Table ES-2  
Comparative Summary of Alternatives<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Alt A</b>	<b>Alt B</b>	<b>Alt C</b>	<b>Alt D</b>	<b>Alt E</b>
Tagim aša Cultural ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	81,800	81,800	81,800	N/A
Virginia City National Landmark Historic District (Proposed)	N/A	14,700	14,700	14,700	N/A
Virginia Mountains Greater Sage-Grouse ACEC (Proposed)	N/A	N/A	109,200	N/A	N/A
Virginia Range Williams Combleaf Botanical (Existing)	470	470	470	470	470
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,800</b>	<b>371,170</b>	<b>786,270</b>	<b>180,000</b>	<b>82,770</b>
<b>Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) (acres)</b>					
Augusta Mountains	46,400	46,400	46,400	46,400	46,400
Burbank Canyons	12,700	12,700	12,700	12,700	12,700
Carson Iceberg	500	500	500	500	500
Clan Alpine	195,700	195,700	195,700	195,700	195,700
Desatoya Mountains	42,200	42,200	42,200	42,200	42,200
Gabbs Valley Range	80,500	80,500	80,500	80,500	80,500
Job Peak	89,400	89,400	89,400	89,400	89,400
Slinkard	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400
Stillwater Range	94,200	94,200	94,200	94,200	94,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>564,000</b>	<b>564,000</b>	<b>564,000</b>	<b>564,000</b>	<b>564,000</b>
<b>National Trails on BLM -administered land (miles)</b>					
Pony Express National Historic Trail	92	92	92	92	92
California National Historic Trail	25	25	25	25	25
<b>Eligible or Suitable Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Study Segments (acres crossing BLM-administered land)<sup>2</sup></b>					
East Fork Carson River Segment 1	N/A	N/A	400	400	400
East Fork Carson River Segment 2	N/A	N/A	400	400	400
East Fork Carson River Segment 3	N/A	N/A	600	600	600
<b>Total</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>1,400</b>
<b>Back Country Wildlife Conservation Areas (acres)</b>					
Gillis West	N/A	N/A	42,500	N/A	N/A
Gillis East	N/A	N/A	63,900	N/A	N/A
Gabbs Valley Range North	N/A	N/A	50,800	N/A	N/A
Gabbs Valley Range South	N/A	N/A	154,400	N/A	N/A
Pilot Mountains	N/A	N/A	93,700	N/A	N/A
Excelsiors	N/A	N/A	125,800	N/A	N/A
Fairview	N/A	N/A	131,400	N/A	N/A
Sand Springs	N/A	N/A	53,700	N/A	N/A
Clan Alpine	N/A	N/A	101,600	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>817,800</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (acres)</b>					
Agai Pah Hills	N/A	N/A	27,200	N/A	27,200
Chukar Ridge	N/A	N/A	29,100	N/A	29,100
Excelsior North	N/A	N/A	54,400	N/A	54,400
Excelsior South	N/A	N/A	49,200	N/A	49,200

**Table ES-2  
Comparative Summary of Alternatives<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Alt A</b>	<b>Alt B</b>	<b>Alt C</b>	<b>Alt D</b>	<b>Alt E</b>
Finger Rock	N/A	N/A	41,500	N/A	N/A
Job South	N/A	N/A	77,400	N/A	77,400
Lyon Peak	N/A	N/A	16,300	N/A	N/A
Monte Cristo North	N/A	N/A	9,800	N/A	N/A
Peterson Mountain	N/A	N/A	16,300	N/A	N/A
Rawe Peak	N/A	N/A	39,800	N/A	39,800
Stillwater Additions	N/A	N/A	19,100	N/A	19,100
Tule Peak	N/A	N/A	36,400	N/A	36,400
<b>Total</b>	N/A	N/A	416,500	N/A	332,600

<sup>1</sup>Acres were GIS generated and rounded to the nearest hundred acres. Includes BLM-administered and non-BLM-administered land in the CCD and outside of the CCD where the associations make up larger geographic areas for managing wild horses and burros.

<sup>2</sup>Alternative A identifies three segments of the East Fork Carson River as eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System (NWSRS) whereas Alternatives C, D, and E would determine these three river segments as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. Alternative B would determine that the eligible segments are not suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS and release them from interim management afforded to eligible segments.

## **ES.9 ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS**

The following alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed study because they do not meet the purpose of and need for the RMP (see **Section I.1**) or because they do not fall within technical, legal, or policy constraints for BLM resources and resource uses.

### ***Implement Recreation-Centered Alternative***

An alternative that proposes to meet increased demand for motorized recreation on BLM-administered lands within the planning area was considered but dismissed from detailed analysis. Because the FLPMA mandates that BLM-administered lands be managed for multiple use and sustained yield, alternatives that promote exclusive use or maximum development, production, or protection of one resource at the expense of other resources or resource uses were eliminated from further consideration.

Each proposed alternative allows for some level of support, protection, or use of all resources in the planning area. In some instances, the alternatives include various considerations for eliminating or maximizing individual resource values or uses in specific areas where conditions warrant. In addition, one of the main considerations for Alternative D is enhanced recreational opportunities within the urban interface area where the majority of the recreation use is occurring in the CCD.

### ***Close Entire Decision Area to Livestock Grazing***

The BLM considered but did not analyze in detail an alternative that would make all acres of BLM-administered land in the planning area unavailable for livestock grazing because such an alternative is not reasonable, viable, or necessary in light

of resource conditions and BLM's consideration of a range of alternatives that includes a meaningful reduction in livestock grazing. Livestock grazing is a well-established use within the BLM's multiple-use mandate under the FLPMA and a traditional use of the planning area. The BLM issues and administers grazing leases or permits in the planning area in accordance with the laws applicable to the issuance and administration of such leases and permits on other lands under the jurisdiction of the BLM.

Management of livestock grazing in the RMP, including proposed reductions and closures, were based on criteria developed for each alternative. The criteria outlined include, but are not limited to, allotments not meeting land health standards, allotments containing sage-grouse habitat (when habitat makes up 50 percent or more of the allotment), ACECs, and habitat for threatened and endangered species. Additional criteria were outlined to adjust forage allocations for livestock. Some of these criteria include areas not accessible to livestock, unstable or highly erodible soils, areas more than 2 miles from water, unique habitats such as jurisdictional wetlands and springs, and areas that receive high levels of recreational use.

During this planning process, including public scoping, the BLM did not identify issues or conflicts that can only be resolved through the elimination of all livestock grazing throughout the decision area. Where appropriate, the preclusion or adjustment of livestock use within an allotment or area was incorporated into the alternatives to address issues noted above. This resulted in a reduction in animal unit months (AUMs) and the amount of BLM-administered land available for livestock grazing in all alternatives, with the greatest meaningful reduction in Alternative C.

In all alternatives, the BLM would be able to adjust livestock grazing permits (e.g., AUMs, acres, and period of use) based on monitoring, land health assessments, and Land Health Standards. Permit terms and conditions could also be modified in all alternatives. For these reasons, the no grazing alternative for the entire planning area was dismissed from further consideration.

## **ES.10 COMPARISON AND SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

### **ES.10.1 Resources**

#### ***Air***

RMP air quality management objectives and actions under all alternatives include maintaining compliance with state and federal requirements and programs. This includes Nevada Bureau of Air Quality Planning rules, which prohibit the use, maintenance, or construction of roadways without taking appropriate dust abatement measures (Nevada Administrative Code 445B.22037); the Smoke Management Memorandum of Agreement, which requires reporting size, date of burn, fuel type, and estimated air emissions for each prescribed burn (USDA, US

DOI, and State of Nevada 2010); and Nevada and California prescribed burn permitting requirements. Alternatives B through E would implement BMPs and mitigation measures on a case-by-case basis to minimize adverse impacts on air quality from BLM and BLM-authorized activities.

### ***Climate***

Compared to Alternative A, Alternatives B, C, D, and E would be more proactive in assessing current and potential climate change-induced threats on BLM special status species and ecosystems functions by prioritizing and conserving habitat to ensure adequate conditions. Alternatives B and D would implement adaptive management strategies to maintain ecosystem resiliency where human-caused ecosystem stressors have crossed thresholds, while Alternatives C and E would manage to reduce human-caused ecosystem stressors and promote habitat connectivity and integrity by working cooperatively with multiple agencies and stakeholders to establish and maintain a network of climate monitoring sites and stations.

### ***Soils and Water Resources***

#### *Soils*

Alternatives C, D, and E would prohibit surface disturbance on slopes greater than 40 percent. Alternative B would require an erosion control strategy. Alternative C provides for improving biological crusts and vegetation and would possibly restrict uses to minimize breaking up or shearing of crusts.

#### *Water Resources*

Under all alternatives, water resources would receive various levels of protection due to management in accordance with the Clean Water Act and other applicable state and federal water quality standards. Site-specific mitigation and BMPs for surface-disturbing activities would further reduce impacts on water resources. Alternatives A and B would not manage priority watersheds to include use restrictions that would protect resource values. Alternatives C, D, and E would protect priority watersheds through implementation of use restrictions applicable to certain minerals and rights-of-way. Alternative C would emphasize the most use restrictions by closing priority watersheds to mineral material disposals and nonenergy solid mineral leasing, applying no surface occupancy to fluid mineral leasing, and closing areas to rights-of-way. Alternatives D and E would provide similar protective measures but would allow some uses based on a set of management criteria.

### ***Vegetation***

#### *Vegetation – Forest and Woodlands*

Alternative B proposes to treat the most acres annually by removing up to 8,500 acres of low density pinyon-juniper and thinning up to 6,500 acres of medium and high density pinyon-juniper. Alternative C would have the fewest acres of pinyon-juniper management, removing up to 3,500 acres of low density

pinyon-juniper and thinning up to 1,500 acres of medium and high density pinyon-juniper. The potential to improve woodland health in the short term would be higher under Alternatives B and E. However, these alternatives would create more disturbances to wildlife habitat.

#### *Vegetation – Rangeland*

Alternatives C, D, and E would prioritize vegetative treatment in areas that are in the “at-risk” community phase and have not yet passed an ecological threshold. Treatment would maintain and improve healthy diverse vegetative communities with species appropriate to the site potential, while providing for multiple use and sustained yield. Alternative C would require use of native species for revegetation efforts, which could result in lower revegetation success rates in the short term. Overall rangeland health would improve under these alternatives. Alternative B would focus vegetative treatment in areas that have the greatest potential to produce higher yields. Higher yields would increase potential for livestock forage but may decrease vegetation diversity. Alternatives C, D, and E would promote maintenance of large, intact sagebrush stands to varying degrees, while Alternative B would allow for removal of stands, resulting in fewer large stands and habitat fragmentation within sagebrush vegetation communities.

#### *Vegetation – Restoration and Rehabilitation*

Alternative C would focus stabilization and rehabilitation efforts to reestablish high-value wildlife habitat, improving the potential of wildlife habitat recovery. Alternative C would also have lower rehabilitation success potential in the short term, as only native plant species would be used. Alternative D would focus efforts to reestablish vegetation near urban interface areas in order to protect these areas from future wildfire events by using fire-resistant species. The potential for protection of urban interface areas would be improved. Alternative E would serve to protect urban interface areas, while providing wildlife habitat. Rehabilitation success would potentially be higher under this alternative depending on the site and other conditions. Alternative B would focus rehabilitation efforts on preventing the establishment and spread of invasive species. Potential revegetation success in the short term would be the highest under this alternative; however, species diversity may be limited and efforts may not provide for restoration of wildlife habitat.

#### *Vegetation – Riparian Wetlands*

Alternatives C, D, and E would improve riparian and wetland lotic and lentic areas (Proper Functioning Condition [PFC] and functioning at risk with an upward trend) to 85 percent to attain PFC over the next 20 years. Riparian areas would improve; however, certain use restrictions would be implemented to reach PFC objectives. Alternative C would propose the most use restrictions. Alternative B would improve riparian and wetland lotic and lentic areas by managing PFC and functioning at risk with an upward trend to 75

percent, progressing towards or attaining PFC. The BLM would implement fewer use restrictions under Alternative B than under Alternatives C, D, and E.

#### *Vegetation – Invasive, Nonnative Species, and Noxious Weeds*

All alternatives would coordinate with local governments and weed districts and would utilize multiple control methods to control invasive and noxious species, increasing the potential to improve rangeland health and achieve resource goals and objectives. Alternative C would have more restrictive control measures.

#### ***Fish and Wildlife***

Alternatives C, D, and E would ensure wildlife habitat would be maintained and improved. Alternative B would focus on maintaining existing wildlife habitat values. Alternatives C and E would also apply a no surface occupancy stipulation for fluid mineral leasing within 500 feet of lentic and lotic habitats occupied by federally listed and BLM sensitive aquatic and semi-aquatic species, increasing the potential to protect these areas. Alternatives B and D would apply a controlled surface use stipulation for fluid mineral leasing within 500 feet of lentic and lotic habitats occupied by federally listed aquatic and semi-aquatic species. Alternatives B and D would provide a lower degree of protection but would allow flexibility for fluid minerals leasing. Alternatives B, D, and E would manage fish and wildlife priority habitat as rights-of-way avoidance areas, while Alternative C would manage priority habitat as exclusion areas, affording a higher degree of protection of resource values by precluding rights-of-way development.

#### ***Special Status Species***

Alternatives B, C, D, and E would protect special status species and their habitat to varying degrees by implementing use restrictions, seasonal restrictions, and buffer zones, and by designating ACECs specifically for protection of special status species habitat. Alternatives B and D propose three ACECs, Alternative C proposes five ACECs and Alternative E proposes two ACECs. Special status species and related habitat would receive the highest degree of protection under Alternative C due to more stringent use restrictions. Alternative B would provide the fewest protections as compared to the other alternatives.

#### ***Wild Horses and Burros***

Each alternative would manage differing acreages as herd areas and herd management areas. Alternative A would manage 1,235,200 acres, the highest number of acres. Alternatives B and D would manage 996,500 acres, the lowest number of acres. Alternatives C and D would manage 1,090,000 and 1,070,200 acres, respectively. The number HMAs is reduced under all alternatives compared to Alternative A.

#### ***Wildland Fire Ecology and Management***

All alternatives propose to conduct fire management actions in a manner that is consistent with the primary objective of firefighter and public safety, regardless of whether they are related to fire suppression, fuels treatment, community

education and assistance, or emergency stabilization and rehabilitation. Alternatives B and D would apply a full range of fire management activities as outlined in the fire management plan, and options would be utilized to protect all identified values at risk. Alternative C proposes minimum impact suppression tactics such that the environmental impacts of emergency fire management methods would be no greater than necessary to meet fire management objectives. Alternative E would be similar to Alternatives B and D; however, values at risk would also include efforts to sustain healthy ecosystems within acceptable risk levels. The potential for wildland fire spread and loss of resource values would be lower under Alternatives B, D, and E.

#### ***Cultural Resources***

Alternatives B and D would protect cultural and historic values of rock art sites within 0.125 mile by prohibiting surface disturbance and visual intrusions that adversely affect values through the evaluation of eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Alternative E would protect these areas with a 0.5 mile buffer, while Alternative C would protect these areas within 1 mile. Prohibiting disturbance would limit the potential for uses on public lands within these distances. Alternatives B, D, and E would protect National Register-listed properties and districts, National Historic Landmarks, and Traditional Cultural Properties that are listed, eligible, or known but not yet formally designated for the National Register as right-of-way avoidance areas. Alternative C would manage these areas as right-of-way exclusion areas. Alternative A proposes one cultural ACEC, Alternative B proposes eight cultural ACECs, Alternative C proposes nine cultural ACECs, Alternative D proposes six cultural ACECs, and Alternative E proposes three cultural ACECs. All ACECs would be managed with varying degrees of use restrictions.

#### ***Paleontological Resources***

All action alternatives would manage paleontological resources to prioritize research needs, facilitate educational needs, and protect significant sites through designation of ACECs. Alternatives A and D propose one ACEC, while the other alternatives propose two ACECs to protect paleontological resources. Resource uses would be restricted within designated ACECs.

#### ***Visual Resources***

Alternative C would have the most acres managed as VRM Classes I and II. These areas would have a greater number of use restrictions applied to achieve VRM objectives. Alternative D would propose the most acres under VRM Class IV; this alternative would have the fewest use restrictions, resulting in the potential for more intrusions within landscape settings.

#### ***Lands with Wilderness Characteristics***

Actions for managing areas identified as having lands with wilderness characteristics apply under Alternatives C and E only. The BLM would manage 416,500 acres within 12 inventoried units specifically for wilderness

characteristics under Alternative C and 332,600 acres within 8 inventoried units under Alternative E. Under Alternatives C and E, the actions outlined for management of these areas would provide protection for the indicators of wilderness characteristics by limiting or closing activities and development within these areas.

#### ***Cave and Cave Resources***

Alternatives C, D, and E would protect culturally significant caves by implementing fuel treatment programs. Alternatives A and B propose fewer protective measures, making culturally significant caves more vulnerable to wildfire.

### **ES.10.2 Resource Uses**

#### ***Livestock Grazing***

Alternative C proposes the highest number of acres (2,702,000) as not available for livestock grazing. Alternatives B and E each propose 6,100 acres as not available. Rangeland not available for grazing would reduce the income potential and increase operational costs to livestock producers. Other impacts on grazing would include loss of forage from wildfire, wild horse and burro management, and surface disturbance from minerals and energy development. Emergency stabilization and rehabilitation efforts following wildfires would close burned areas to livestock grazing while seeding and/or natural vegetation recovery of areas burned become established.

#### ***Geology and Minerals***

##### ***Locatable Minerals***

All alternatives propose 194,900 acres as withdrawn from locatable mineral entry. Alternative C proposes to petition 117,500 acres for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry. Alternative E proposes to petition 470,600 acres for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry. Areas withdrawn from locatable mineral entry would not be available for locatable exploration and development. Acres proposed for petition are in addition to currently withdrawn lands.

##### ***Nonenergy Leasable Minerals***

Alternative C proposes 2,960,800 acres be managed as closed to nonenergy leasable exploration and development and is, therefore, the most restrictive for development of nonenergy leasable minerals. Alternative E proposes the second highest number of acres (1,785,900 acres) be managed as closed to nonenergy leasable exploration and development.

##### ***Leasable (Fluid Minerals)***

Alternative D proposes the highest number of acres (4,066,200 acres) be managed as open to fluid mineral leasing, representing the highest number of acres available as open. Alternative B proposes the second highest acreage (4,034,700 acres) be managed as open. Alternative C would close 2,081,700

acres to fluid mineral leasing to protect resource values, and Alternative E would close 1,007,200 acres

#### *Mineral Materials*

Alternatives A, B, and D propose the highest number of acres as available for mineral entry (4,239,100 acres, 3,996,100 acres, and 3,995,600 acres, respectively). Proposed closed areas are highest under Alternatives C and E (3,004,800 acres and 1,778,700 acres, respectively). Alternative C would be the most restrictive for mineral material development.

#### **Recreation and Visitor Services**

Maintaining existing and designating new Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) would protect recreation resources and would encourage appropriate recreation use in these areas. Alternatives A and D propose the lowest acreage for designation as SRMAs. Recreational experiences and opportunities would be more limited in these areas. Alternative E proposes the highest number of acres as SRMAs and the most areas to be designated as SRMAs. Alternative E also proposes the highest number of acres to be managed as Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs) and the most areas to be designated as ERMAs. Recreation user experiences would potentially increase under this alternative.

#### **Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management**

Motorized and mechanized travel use would be open on the greatest number of acres (3,840,300) under Alternative A. More areas would be available to unrestricted travel under this alternative, resulting in more surface disturbance and resource damage. Alternative C would close the highest number of acres (598,000) to motorized and mechanized use in order to protect resource values. Under Alternatives B through D, the majority of the planning area is proposed to be managed as limited to existing routes for motorized and mechanized travel. Alternatives D and E propose 4,748,400 and 4,717,300 acres, respectively, to be managed as limited to existing routes for motorized and mechanized travel.

#### **Lands and Realty**

Alternative C proposes the highest acreage as right-of-way exclusion areas (2,675,800 acres) followed by Alternative E (605,900 acres). Alternatives A, B, and D propose a similar number of acres delineated as exclusion areas; rights-of-way would not be allowed in these areas. Alternative E proposes the highest number of avoidance acres (1,448,200 acres), followed by Alternatives D and B. The lands identified for disposal are similar under alternatives and range from 179,700 acres under Alternative A to 332,500 acres under Alternative D (except for Alternative C where no lands are identified for disposal).

#### **Renewable Energy**

Alternative A identifies 905,900 acres as variance areas for utility-scale (greater than 20 megawatts) solar development, followed by Alternative B with 773,400 acres identified. Alternative C represents the lowest number of acres (578,400)

as solar variances areas. Alternatives A, B, and D propose no wind energy exclusion areas, while Alternatives C and E propose 2,073,200 acres and 629,000 acres, respectively, as exclusion areas. Alternatives B and D propose similar acreages (1,220,200 and 1,228,100, respectively) as avoidance areas for wind energy development. Alternative E proposes the fewest acres as avoidance areas (956,900 acres).

### **ES.10.3 Special Designations**

#### ***Areas of Critical Environmental Concern***

In general, alternatives that propose a higher number of ACECs or ACEC acreage would provide more protection of resource values within these areas. Nevertheless, management restrictions vary for each ACEC and each alternative, and protections may already be in place (e.g., Endangered Species Act) to protect a sensitive resource so the number of ACECs or number of acres managed as ACECs may not convey the actual level of protection. Alternative A proposes 5 ACECs and 21,800 acres for ACEC designation, which is the fewest number and lowest acreage of all alternatives. Alternative C proposes 23 ACECs and 786,270 acres, followed by Alternative B with 13 ACECs and 371,170 acres. Alternative C proposes the greatest number of ACECs and the most restrictions on uses within the ACECs. Therefore, Alternative C provides the highest level of protection of resource values. Alternatives D and E offer an intermediate level of protection of resources.

#### ***Back Country Byways***

Alternatives B, D, and E would modify the designation of the Fort Churchill Back Country Byway, while Alternative C would rescind the designation. Alternatives B, C, and E propose to designate the Marietta Back Country Byway and the New Pass to Hawthorne Back Country Byway; however, Alternative C would focus management to maintain natural settings for visitor viewing, while the other alternatives would include historical uses.

#### ***National Trails***

All alternatives would protect National Historic and Recreation Trails. Alternatives B and D would manage National Historic Trails utilizing a National Historic Trail management corridor of 0.25 miles from the center line of the trail. Alternative C proposes a 2.5-mile management corridor, while Alternative E proposes a 1-mile management corridor. Potential impacts on the trail setting would be higher under Alternatives B and D as compared to Alternatives C and E. The National Historic Trail corridor would be open to mineral material sales under Alternatives B and D and closed under Alternative C. Alternative E would close high potential historic sites and high potential route segments to mineral material sales. Alternatives B and D would have a higher potential for disturbance to National Historic Trails compared to other alternatives. The BLM will maintain a list of trails that have been authorized by Congress which

are under study and trails that have undergone the study process and are either recommended as suitable or not suitable.

***Wild and Scenic Rivers***

Alternatives C, D, and E would manage identified Wild and Scenic River segments to preserve and enhance outstandingly remarkable values as suitable for Congressional designation as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System. Use restrictions would be implemented to preserve outstandingly remarkable values. Alternative B would identify segments as not suitable and would allow for more multiple use and sustained yield.

***Wilderness Study Areas***

Management of all nine designated WSAs would be the same under all alternatives. Wilderness values would be protected in accordance to the BLM wilderness policy and handbook.

***Back Country Wildlife Conservation Areas***

Alternative C would delineate nine areas totaling 817,800 acres as Back Country Wildlife Conservation Areas to provide for high quality fish and wildlife habitat or for significant recreational opportunities, such as hunting and fishing. Proposed management would include safeguarding fish and wildlife habitat. Proposed management under Alternative C would include restricting livestock grazing to prescriptive grazing and closing delineated areas to mineral materials and non-energy mineral leasing, as well as applying no surface occupancy restrictions for fluid minerals. Back Country Wildlife Conservation Areas are not proposed under any other alternatives.

**ES.10.4 Social and Economic Features**

***Tribal Interests***

All alternatives propose actions that ensure tribal issues and concerns are given consideration and that continue the BLM's ongoing working relationship with Native American tribes. All alternatives contain actions that would protect cultural properties, places, or objects important to the tribes to the degree possible under law, regulations, and guidance. Alternatives C and E would evaluate areas that qualify as Traditional Cultural Properties and nominate National Register of Historic Places-eligible properties. Alternative D would be similar to Alternatives C and E but would only evaluate areas within the urban interface area. Alternative B would not evaluate areas to determine if they qualify as Traditional Cultural Properties. Protection of Native American values would be higher under Alternatives C and E.

***Social and Economic Conditions***

Alternative A would maintain current management practices and would not induce new changes to socioeconomic indicators. Actions proposed under Alternative B would promote the use of public lands by proposing fewer use restrictions, special stipulations, and exclusion or closed areas. Alternative B

would provide the highest potential and opportunity for economic development. Alternative C would include the most use restrictions to protect sensitive resources, which would limit economic growth and development. Alternatives D and E would provide a mix of management strategies in order to provide for multiple use and sustained yield while protecting important resource values. Potential for economic development and improved socioeconomic health under these alternatives would be higher than Alternative C but would not be as robust as Alternative B.

***Public Health and Safety***

All alternatives would protect public safety by providing public safety information, signage, and protection from unexploded ordnance, and by working with the Abandoned Mine Land program and the Nevada Division of Minerals. All alternatives would also prohibit the discharge of firearms at the American Flat Mill, Pine Nut Road #2, and Moonrocks.