



STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: 8

Report To: Open Space Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: August 16, 2021

Staff Contact: Lyndsey Boyer, Open Space Manager, lboyer@carson.org

Agenda Title: For Possible Action: Discussion and possible action regarding the annual monitoring report for the Horsecreek Ranch Conservation Easement for 2020.

Staff Summary: See below.

Agenda Action: Formal Action/Motion

Time Requested: 15 minutes

Proposed Motion

I move to approve the annual monitoring report as presented.

Board's Strategic Goal

Quality of Life

Previous Action

N/A

Background/Issues & Analysis

The Horsecreek Ranch conservation easement was purchased by Carson City in 2009 to protect the property from development. The conservation easement requires annual monitoring to ensure that the property is being maintained and continues to be in good condition. The initial assessment condition photos were taken in 2009 and each year staff has taken new photos at the same locations for comparison. The 2020 monitoring visit was conducted on October 9, 2020. The areas that require continued monitoring are the lower drainage area, the cattle loafing area, the channel headcut as well as a new lateral irrigation ditch.

In 2020, the property was sold by Mr. Michael Fagen to Mr. Frank Hochuli, and is being managed by Mr. Jeffrey Cosker. Mr. Hochuli has submitted plans to build a home and garage on the property in the next year, as well as make improvements to the access road and bring in electricity. Additionally, a future phase will include construction of a watchman's quarters. The proposed developments are located on the portion of the property that is outside the conservation easement and therefore not subject to the conditions and restrictions outlined in the conservation easement. However, developments should still be evaluated to confirm they will not impact adjacent parcels or the conservation value of the property. A copy of preliminary building plans and location maps are included for reference.

ATTACHMENT 1 – 2020 Horsecreek Ranch Conservation Easement Monitoring Report

ATTACHMENT 2 – Horsecreek Ranch Conservation Easement Map

ATTACHMENT 3 – Proposed Development Map and Plans

Applicable Statute, Code, Policy, Rule or Regulation

N/A

Financial Information

Is there a fiscal impact? Yes No

If yes, account name/number:

Is it currently budgeted? Yes No

Explanation of Fiscal Impact:

Alternatives

Provide comments or edits to the monitoring report prior to approval.

Board Action Taken:

Motion: _____

1) _____

2) _____

Aye/Nay

(Vote Recorded By)

Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring
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0Date: October 9, 2020

Start time: 8:15 a.m. depart from office

End time: 2:30 p.m. return to office

Monitor(s): Lyndsey Boyer & Jared Whitaker (Carson City)

Persons Attending Inspection (landowner or others): Jeffrey Cosker

Current Landowner(s): Frank Hochuli

Mailing Address: 2075 Long Hollow Dr, Reno, NV 89521

Easement Address: APNs 007-051-82, 007-051-83, and 007-051-84. Located approximately 2.5 miles west of the paved terminus of Kings Canyon Road.

Easement size: 175.33 acres

Parcel size: 3 parcels, 201 acres total

On-site land use(s): Agricultural in the meadow, open sagebrush and forest in the plan.

Surrounding land uses(s): On west, north, and east, the lands are under public ownership by Carson City Open Space and the U.S. Forest Service. The land use consists of undeveloped, dispersed recreation. On the south, the lands are under private ownership and the land use continues as agricultural.

Conservation Easement, Exhibit C, Prohibited Uses and Practices

1. Impairment of Protected Values

No change. The landowner is in compliance.

2. Commercial or Industrial Use

No change. The landowner is in compliance.

3. Construction

No change. The landowner is in compliance.

4. Subdivision

No change. The landowner is in compliance.

5. Motorized Vehicles

No change. The landowner is in compliance.

Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

6. Tree Cutting

No change. The landowner is in compliance.

7. Dumping

No change. The landowner is in compliance.

8. Soil Degradation

No change. The landowner is in compliance.

Near the southeast corner, one specific area is being monitored for landscape change. This low drainage area of the meadow appears to be vegetated and stable though a few isolated mounds or hummocks may be the result of cattle trampling. A qualitative assessment with the photo comparisons may be deceptive due to the time of year each photo was taken – either during the growing season or at the end of the season after grasses were grazed and/or senesced. However, monitoring completed in 2020 illustrates that the erosion is recovering naturally. Additionally, the new headcut observed in 2017 on the creek northeast of the cabins was monitored in 2020 and appears to be revegetating naturally as well. This site and associated reach of creek should continue to be monitored in future years to confirm successful revegetation of the headcut, or to document change in size or location, as it could migrate upstream. The previous owner of the property, Mr. Fagen had previously applied for USDA EQIP grants to fund the design and repair plan for the existing headcuts on the property. Access challenges and a lack of available contractors willing to complete the work prevented successful funding awards for this project. In the future, a conservation organization such as the Great Basin Institute or Nevada Division of Forestry could be contracted to complete the work through non-mechanized means, which would mitigate the access and contractor availability challenges. However, a repair design still needs to be completed.

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Photo Point: The photo of this drainage, located south of the cabins, has been included to document change and vegetation growth. N 39 07' 42.7" W 119 50' 10.2"

2010 Condition, photo taken November 1, 2010 (initial assessment – view west)



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020 (view west)



Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

2013 Condition, photo taken July 23, 2013 (initial assessment – view south)



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020 (view south)



Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

2013 Condition, photo taken July 23, 2013 (initial assessment – view south)



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020 (view south)



Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

Photo Point: The photo of this headcut, located northeast of the cabins, has been included to document stream channel changes and erosion. N 39 07' 51.0" W 119 50' 11.4"

2018 Condition, photo taken October 8, 2018 (view north)



Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

2020 Condition, site visit October 9, 2020 (view north)



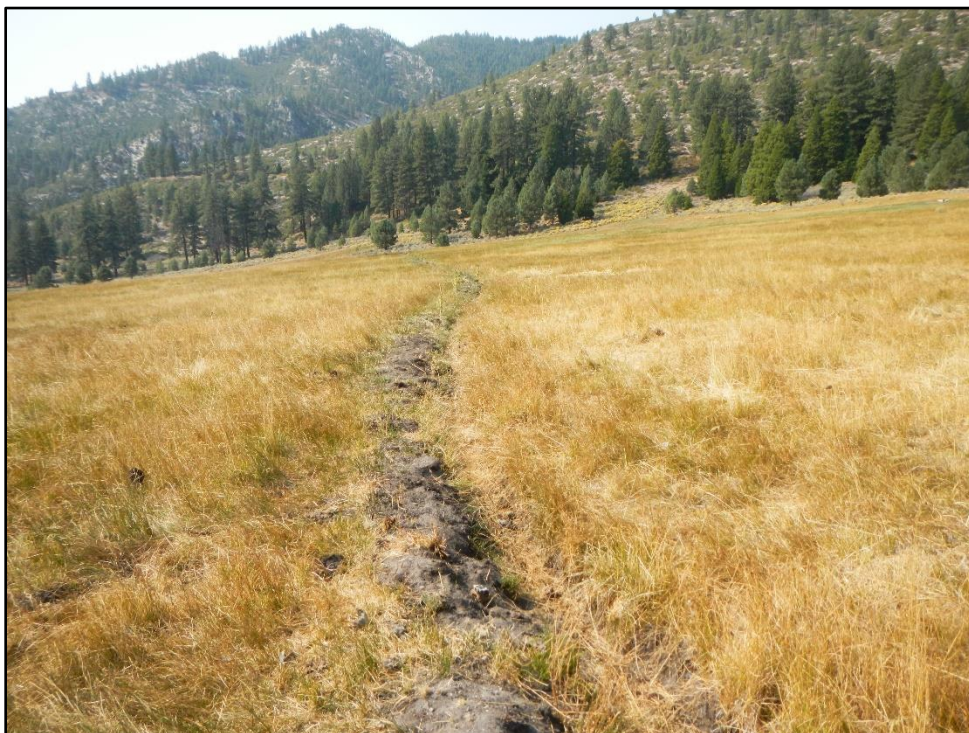
Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

Photo Point: The photo of this lateral irrigation ditch, located in the upper meadow, has been included to document site improvements. N 39° 7' 58.1196"W 119° 50' 14.0172"

2019 Condition, photo taken September 12, 2019 (view west)



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020 (view west)



Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

9. Water Quality Degradation

No change. The landowner is in compliance.

It should be noted that specific measurements have never been taken to determine water quality. However, the average amount of surface water from Neal's Flume and two other springs is minimal and most of the water percolates into the ground to recharge the Carson City aquifer and/or reappear as groundwater discharge into Clear Creek. Due to these reasons, contamination from livestock grazing would be negligible.

10. Surface Alteration or Excavation

No change. The landowner is in compliance.

11. Fencing Restrictions

No change. The landowner is in compliance.

Additional Comments:

- Stewardship Account: There are no expenses to report. The account has a current balance of \$47,375.00.
- Ownership of the Horsecreek Ranch property changed in June 2020. The property was sold to Mr. Frank Hochuli, and is being managed by Mr. Jeffrey Cosker. The 2020 Conservation Easement monitoring site visit was completed by Carson City Open Space staff in conjunction with Mr. Cosker. Mr. Cosker indicated that Mr. Hochuli plans to build a home, garage, and watchman's quarters within the portion of the property that is outside the Conservation Easement, and therefore is not subject to the Conservation Easement restrictions. Phase 1 will include the home and garage, and the watchman's quarters will be constructed in a future phase. See attached maps for proposed locations and tentative building plans. Future construction plans also included working with NV Energy to run electrical lines to the property. This was anticipated to be completed in conjunction with the neighboring property, Schulz Ranch to reduce disturbance and lower installation costs. This work was anticipated to be completed in the summer or fall of 2021. Additionally, Mr. Hochuli intends to make modifications to the road/driveway to make the approach to the future home less steep and more accessible. Building plans for the proposed dwellings and outbuildings need to be submitted to Open Space Division staff for review and approval by the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) to ensure the proposed construction does not

Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

impact or violate tenets of the Conservation Easement. Once approved, the plans must be submitted to the Carson City Planning Department.

- The irrigation ditch known as “Neal’s Flume” was flowing during this field monitoring visit and appeared to be providing adequate flow to the upper meadow at Horsecreek Ranch; lateral ditches in the meadow were also flowing. While the lower portion of the Flume was maintained in spring 2018, upper portions of the Flume remain overgrown. This upper portion of the Flume will be monitored in the future and will be cleared if the vegetation begins to impact water flow and delivery.
- The Pasture Utilization and Condition Assessment was conducted by Carson City staff and included a visual observation of the monitoring plot as described in the Baseline Condition Report. A diversity of pasture, wetland associated (*Juncus*), and invasive grasses (cheatgrass) exhibited various utilization levels depending on species. It should be noted that cover of invasive grasses (cheatgrass) has reduced. Overall, grazing at this location appeared negligible and an average stubble height of 3 – 4” was recorded.
- Bull thistle remains present throughout the meadow. When speaking with Mr. Cosker, he indicated that he and Mr. Hochuli are committed to working with staff towards continuing the previous eradication efforts. Volunteer opportunities working with Boy Scouts or Muscle Powered to assist in the eradication effort are available; however, there is a short time frame for identification and removal (July-August). In the future, staff will continue work with Mr. Cosker and Mr. Hochuli to implement volunteer removal projects, with the potential to contract with conservation organizations such as the Great Basin Institute or Nevada Division of Forestry crew to complete large scale removal efforts.
- The previous reports recommended the monitoring of the cattle loafing area located just outside the gated entrance to the cabins with the goal to limit further expansion. The following documentation provides photo points and respective measurements. The disturbed area consists primarily of cheatgrass and foxtail barley although sagebrush is successfully re-establishing on both the north and east edge of the disturbed area. The disturbed area has shown an overall reduction in size over the last two monitoring cycles, however this monitoring period revealed that the extent of the loafing area north-south has decreased by 21 feet, while the extent east-west has increased by 3 feet since 2019. Lastly, it is important to note that depending on the timing of monitoring, cheatgrass abundance and cover varies indicating that cattle are likely grazing the cheatgrass.

Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

2013 Condition, photo taken July 23, 2013 (initial assessment – view south):
The bare area measures 157' north to south along the sagebrush.



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020:
The bare area measures 140' north to south along the sagebrush.



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2013 Condition, photo taken July 23, 2013 (initial assessment – view west):
The bare area measures 145' east to west along the gravel road.



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020:
The bare area measures 111' east to west along the gravel road.



Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

Photo Point: The photo of western dwarf mistletoe, growing in a Jeffrey pine tree in a stand west of the cabins has been included to monitor the presence and spread of western dwarf mistletoe infestations on the property.

2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



- Western dwarf mistletoe, *Arceuthobium spp.* has been observed growing in the Jeffrey pine tree stand located west of the cabins. Western dwarf mistletoe is a parasitic plant and impacts growth rate and seed production and can ultimately lead to tree mortality. Infestations of Western dwarf mistletoe should be continually monitored annually, and removal of infected trees may need to be coordinated in conjunction with Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF).
- Mr. Cosker has inquired with Nevada Division of Forestry staff regarding the Forest Stewardship Program to fund selective thinning of tree stands on the property. Implementation of this program is pending funding release and availability of NDF field staff for site visit.

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- In addition to monitoring and evaluating the current conditions related to the terms of the conservation easement, staff believes that it is important to document external factors that could potentially affect the future condition of the property. Specifically, the endemic localized infestation of non-native insects around the alpine forests. About one mile above Horsecreek Ranch, the white satin moth has caused significant defoliation to the aspen trees around Spooner Summit and bark beetles have caused significant damage to the conifers between Spooner Summit and Glenbrook. Continued monitoring for this insect will be completed at each annual sit visit.

Summary:

The results of the 2020 audit of the Horsecreek Ranch Conservation Easement by Carson City demonstrate that the property generally continues to be in good condition and the landowner is in full compliance with both the letter and the spirit of the Easement. The report identifies two recommendations for active measures and likely coordination between Carson City and the landowner:

- 1) Prepare building plans and submit to Carson City Open Space staff for review and approval by the Open Space Advisory Committee, and subsequently the Carson City Planning Department.
- 2) Continue to work to identify a mitigation strategy and repair plan for existing headcuts to be implemented 2022.
- 3) Continued removal of bull thistle.

Landowner comments:

Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

The landowner is cooperative about addressing, over time and in consideration of available resources, additional improvements to the conditions on the property in a joint effort with Carson City and other local agencies.

Written by: Georgia Vasey 6/29/2021
Georgia Vasey Date

Reviewed by: Lyndsey Boyer 6/29/2021
Lyndsey Boyer Date

Landowner: Frank Hochuli 6-29-2021
Frank Hochuli Date

Carson City Open Space – Conservation Easement Monitoring

Please indicate the number of the following attachments to this report. Be sure to date and sign all materials and provide a description or map showing where on-site photos and illustrations were taken:

 X Aerial photos

 X Ground photos (digital or other)

- 11 ground photos – Within the Report
- 34 ground photos – Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation
- Digital photos taken, copied into a written report

 X Maps and illustrations

 Other:

Date Inspection Report Sent To Landowner: 7/23/2021

Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 1A (view northeast): A photo point located at the edge of the shrub dominated granitic fan and the irrigated meadow. This would be used to monitor shrub invasion into the meadow area indicating irrigation problems.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009:
(GPS coordinate: N39° 08' 02.3" W119° 50' 11.8")



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 1B (view northwest): A photo point located at the edge of the shrub dominated granitic fan and the irrigated meadow. This would be used to monitor shrub invasion into the meadow area indicating irrigation problems.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009:
(Photo possibly taken from the upper meadow, near the new GPS coordinate for Photo Point 2 updated in 2010: N39 07' 54.9" W119 50' 11.3")



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 2 (view south): A photo point located in bottom of the active stable drainage channel to the southeast of the house to monitor side slope stability.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009:
(GPS coordinate updated in 2010: N39 07' 54.9" W119 50' 11.3")



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Photo Point 3 (view south): A photo point located immediately east of the house in the active channel where rip-rap has been placed for stabilization.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 4A (view north): A photo point located at the most northern active headcut after required stabilization to monitor effectiveness.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 4B (detail): A photo point located at the most northern active headcut after required stabilization to monitor effectiveness.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 4C (detail): A photo point located at the most northern active headcut after required stabilization to monitor effectiveness.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 5 (view east): A photo point on the hillside conveyance ditch at a location where a previous washout has occurred to monitor ditch maintenance.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Photo Point 6A (view north): A photo point from the Kings Canyon Road that would provide panoramic views of the ranch from a west to east perspective.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 6B (view center): A photo point from the Kings Canyon Road that would provide panoramic views of the ranch from a west to east perspective.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Photo Point 6C (view south): A photo point from the Kings Canyon Road that would provide panoramic views of the ranch from a west to east perspective.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



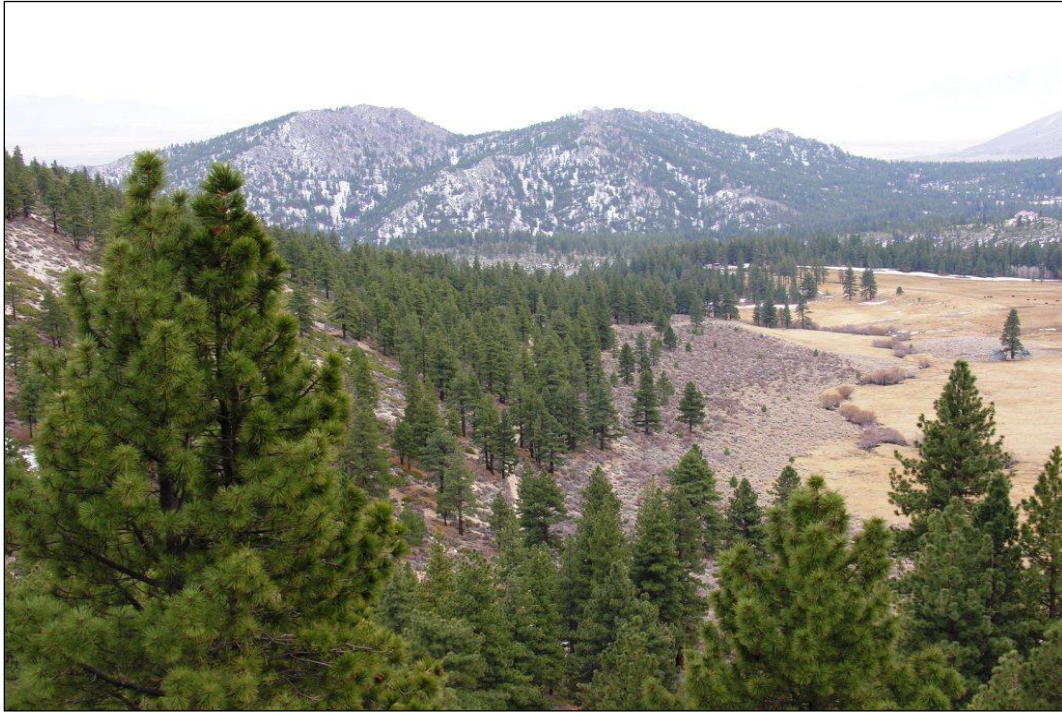
2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 7A (view southeast): A photo point from Kings Canyon Road that would provide panoramic views of the ranch from a north to south perspective.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Photo Point 7B (view south): A photo point from Kings Canyon Road that would provide panoramic views of the ranch from a north to south perspective.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 7C (view southwest): A photo point from Kings Canyon Road that would provide panoramic views of the ranch from a north to south perspective.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 8A (view northwest): A photo point overlooking the meadow from the east to the west located next to the property corner along the new road.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



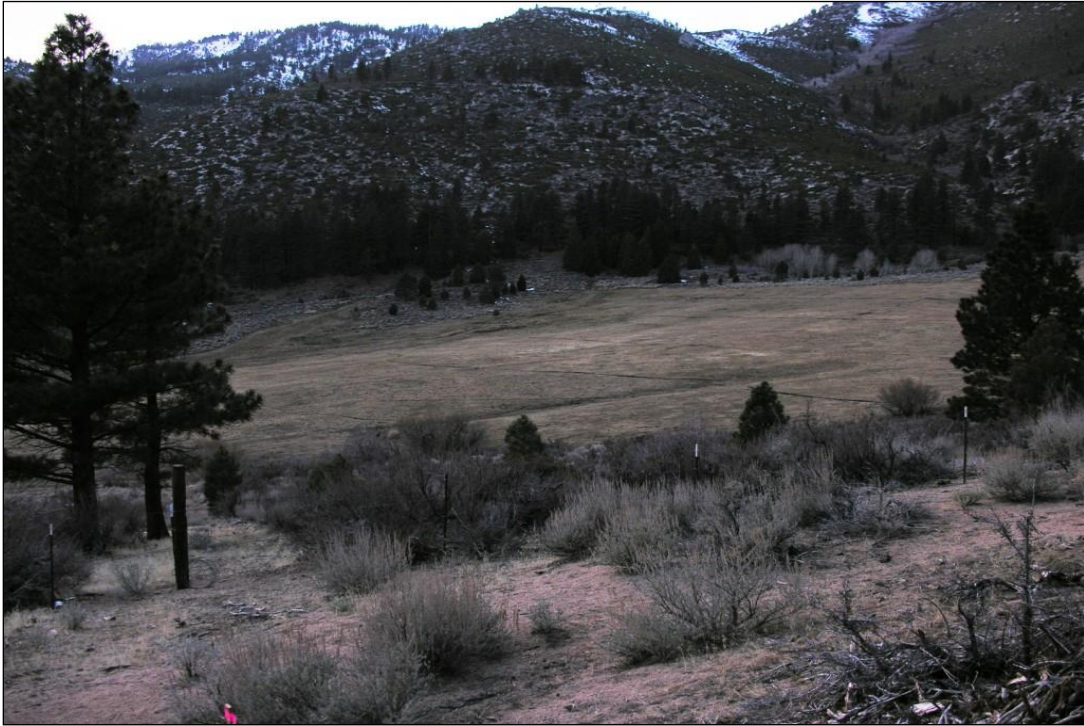
2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

Photo Point 8B (view west): A photo point overlooking the meadow from the east to the west located next to the property corner along the new road.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020



Baseline Report Repeat Photo Documentation

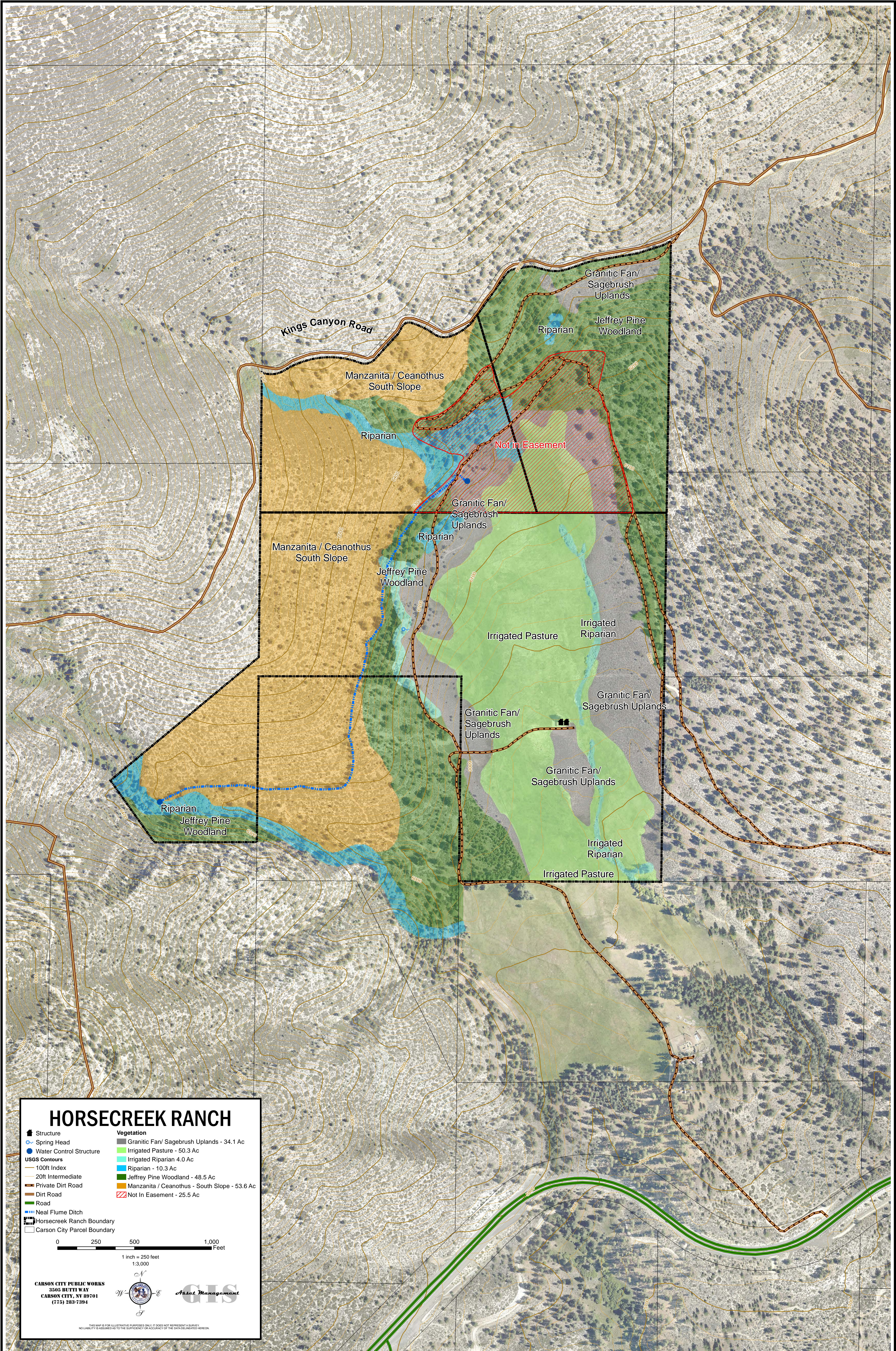
Photo Point 9: A permanently marked 100' x 100' area to monitor pasture condition. This annual inventory will be used to monitor not only pasture condition but irrigation efficiency, vegetative response to drought and appropriate livestock utilization.

2009 Baseline Condition, photo taken February 4, 2009



2020 Condition, photo taken October 9, 2020





Kings Canyon Road

Granitic Fan/
Sagebrush
Uplands

Riparian

Jeffrey Pine
Woodland

Manzanita / Ceanothus
South Slope

Riparian

Not in Easement

Granitic Fan/
Sagebrush
Uplands

Riparian

Manzanita / Ceanothus
South Slope

Jeffrey Pine
Woodland

Irrigated Pasture

Irrigated
Riparian

Granitic Fan/
Sagebrush
Uplands

Granitic Fan/
Sagebrush
Uplands

Riparian

Jeffrey Pine
Woodland

Granitic Fan/
Sagebrush
Uplands

Irrigated
Riparian

Irrigated Pasture

HORSECREEK RANCH

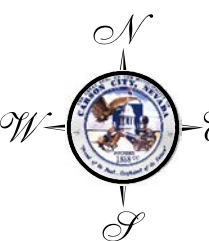
- Structure
- Spring Head
- Water Control Structure
- USGS Contours
- 100ft Index
- 20ft Intermediate
- Private Dirt Road
- Dirt Road
- Road
- Neal Flume Ditch
- Horsecreek Ranch Boundary
- Carson City Parcel Boundary

- Vegetation**
- Granitic Fan/ Sagebrush Uplands - 34.1 Ac
 - Irrigated Pasture - 50.3 Ac
 - Irrigated Riparian 4.0 Ac
 - Riparian - 10.3 Ac
 - Jeffrey Pine Woodland - 48.5 Ac
 - Manzanita / Ceanothus - South Slope - 53.6 Ac
 - Not in Easement - 25.5 Ac

0 250 500 1,000 Feet

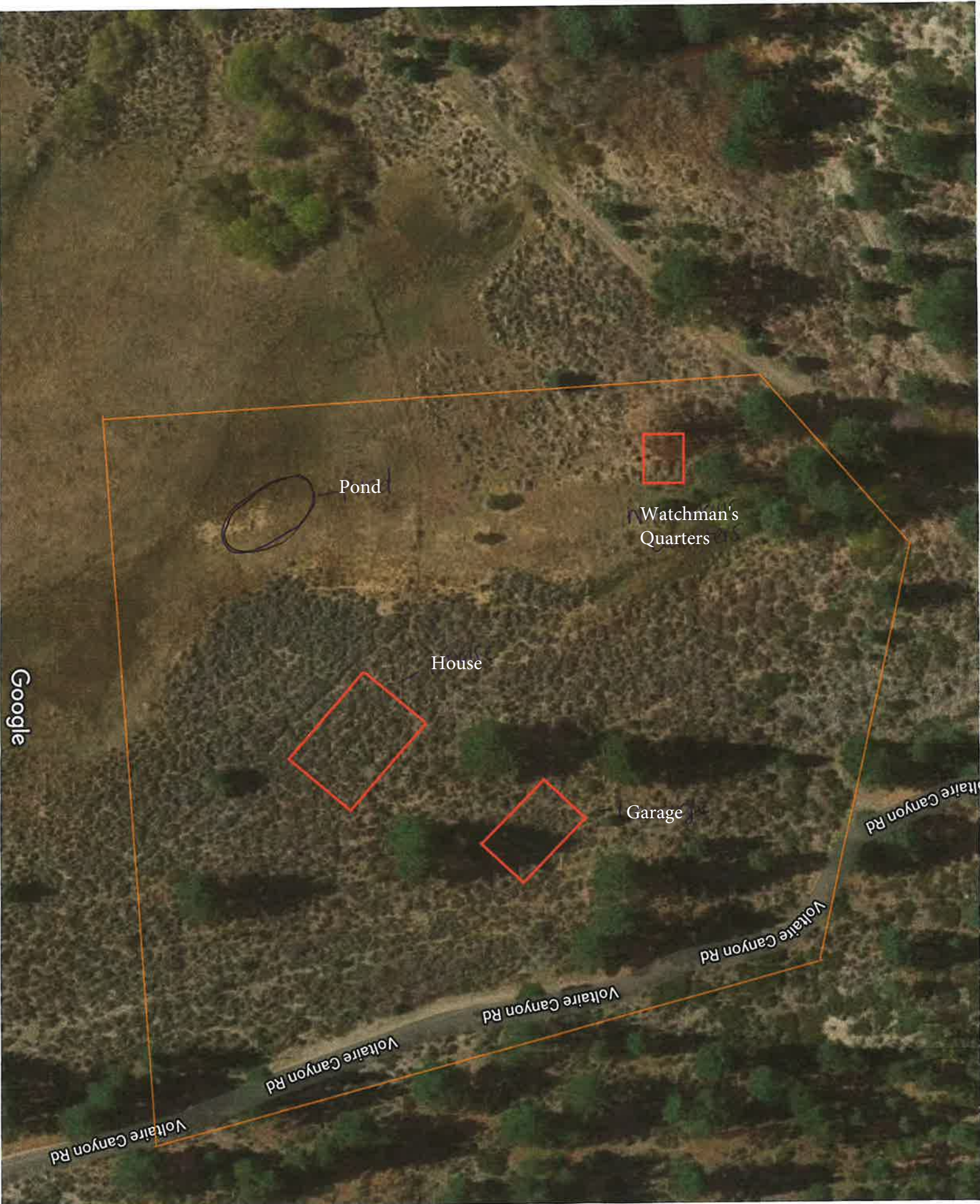
1 inch = 250 feet
1:3,000

CARSON CITY PUBLIC WORKS
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GIS
Asset Management

THIS MAP IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY. IT DOES NOT REPRESENT AN SURVEY. NO LIABILITY IS ASSUMED AS TO THE SUFFICIENCY OR ACCURACY OF THE DATA RELATED HEREON.



Google

Pond

Watchman's Quarters

House

Garage

Voltaire Canyon Rd

Voltaire Canyon Rd

Voltaire Canyon Rd

Voltaire Canyon Rd

Voltaire Canyon Rd

SOUTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

