

# Nye County

## 2011 Comprehensive/Master Plan



Nye County, Nevada  
Board of County Commissioners  
June 7, 2011

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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2011-18

**A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE NYE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, Nye County adopted the original Nye County Comprehensive Plan (county master plan) in accordance with NRS 278.150 to NRS 278.220, inclusive, on April 5, 1994; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners amended said plan by resolution on August 3, 2004, incorporating the Nye County Water Resource Plan; and

WHEREAS, Nye County, with the assistance of county residents, the State Lands Department and county staff, has developed a proposed update to the Nye County Comprehensive Plan in accordance with NRS 278.150 to NRS 278.220, inclusive; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners held a public hearing on June 7, 2011 and approved amendments to the plan as adopted by Resolution 2011-18 by an affirmative vote of not less than 2/3rds of the total membership of the board as follows:

Ayes: Borasky, Eastley, Hollis, Schinhofen, Wichman

Nays: None

Abstains: None

Absent: None

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the attached copy of the 2011 amendment of the Nye County Comprehensive Plan, with accompanying charts, drawings, diagrams, maps, reports and other descriptive materials covering the following subject matters or portions thereof as are appropriate to Nye County: Land Use Plan, Conservation Plan, Economic Plan, Historic Properties Preservation Plan and Recreation Plan, along with supporting references, maps and appendixes, is hereby amended and certified as the "Nye County

Nye County Comprehensive/Master Plan

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Comprehensive/Master Plan,” and that each of the attached materials contains the identifying signatures of the Chairperson and Ex Officio Clerk of the Board.

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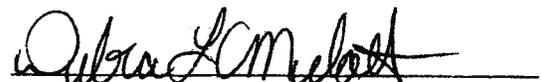
NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the certified copy of the document entitled “Nye County Comprehensive/Master Plan” is hereby adopted as amended, inclusive of the Nye County Water Resource Plan as adopted August 3, 2004, and adopting by reference the 2003 Master Plan Update for the Pahrump Regional Planning District and the Amargosa Valley Area Plan in their entirety along with exhibits and maps. The Nye County Comprehensive/Master Plan is hereby established to conserve and promote the public health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Nye County. The Nye County Comprehensive/Master Plan will guide future land use decisions without restricting the use of private property or placing any limitations on any current land uses or prohibit the county from entering into any development agreement or land use application that might modify this plan.

DATED this 7th day of June, 2011.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE COUNTY OF NYE, STATE OF NEVADA

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Hollis, Chairperson  
Board of County Commissioners

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sam Merlino, County Clerk and Ex-Officio  
Clerk of the Board.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### NYE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Gary Hollis, Chair, District III  
Lorinda Wichman, Vice-Chair, District I  
Andrew “Butch” Borasky, District IV  
Joni Eastley, District II  
Dan Schinhofen, District V

### COMPREHENSIVE/MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Gary Hollis, Chair, Commissioner	
Cheryl Beeman, Community Planner	Darrell Lacy, Community Development Director
Andrew “Butch” Borasky, Commissioner	Rick Osborne, County Manager
Greg T. Hafen, II	Steve Osborne, Planning Acting Director

### COMPREHENSIVE/MASTER PLAN SUPPORT TEAM

Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office staff for document inputs and support.

TerraSpectra Geomatics for map support.

The following are also gratefully acknowledged for their contributions to this plan:

The Esmeralda County Commissioners, whose Master Plan and Public Lands Policy Act were inspirational in the formulation of this document;

The citizen volunteers of the Beatty Town Advisory Board, Tonopah Town Board, Round Mountain Town Board, Gabbs Advisory Board, and the Railroad Valley Advisory Board, who participated in the public workshops to provide comments and insights; and

The members of the communities and other interested parties who participated in the various meetings, providing their input, thoughts, concerns and contributions;

All of whom have added insight and clarity to this plan.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Nye County Comprehensive/Master Plan is a long-range plan relating to public lands and how best to work collaboratively with the federal and state land management agencies. This plan is intended to provide effective planning, communication and coordination between Nye County and these agencies, taking into account the “consistency” requirement in Section 202(c)(9) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Section 202(c)(9) governs BLM planning and directs the BLM to give consideration to appropriate state, local and tribal lands in the development of land use plans for federal lands. This plan contains goals, objectives and policies that serve to protect the health, safety and welfare of Nye County residents, enhance their economic opportunities and preserve their quality of life.

The purpose of the Nye County Comprehensive/Master Plan is to guide the county’s growth, management of natural resources, provision of public services and facilities, and to ensure protection of the public health, safety and welfare. This is accomplished by implementing programs to accomplish the objectives. Under the health, safety and welfare provisions of the Nevada Revised Statutes, the county intends to address adverse impacts of specific actions and uses through a public hearing process to allow public the opportunity to comment on any such matter.

Consultation with the county commission regarding any interpretation of the policies outlined within this document is recommended. The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) believes that the public is best served when government affairs are conducted as close to the people as possible (i.e., at the county level). In support of the BOCC’s specified and inherent duties to operate the government of Nye County in the best interest of all its citizens and to protect and preserve the county’s tax base, the BOCC has developed and adopted this plan in order to participate equitably and fully with federal and state land management agencies.

## ACRONYMS

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
BID	Business Improvement District
BLM	U.S. Bureau of Land Management
BOCC	Board of County Commissioners
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
CNRWA	Central Nevada Regional Water Authority
CNTA	Central Nevada Test Area
CSP	Concentrating Solar Power
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
DOI	U.S. Department of Interior
DPW	Department of Public Works
DSIRE	Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency
DVNP	Death Valley National Park
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act of 1973
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
GID	General Improvement District
GIS	Geographic Information System
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HMA	Herd Management Area
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
ITP	Incidental Take Permit
LVVWD	Las Vegas Valley Water District
MTR	Military Training Routes
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NCC	Nye County Code
NCWDGB	Nye County Water District Governing Board
NCWRP	Nye County Water Resources Plan
NDEQ	Nevada Department of Environmental Quality
NDOT	Nevada Department of Transportation
NDOW	Nevada Department of Wildlife
NDWR	Nevada Division of Water Resources
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.
NNSS	Nevada National Security Site
NPS	National Park Service

NREL	National Renewable Energy Laboratory
NRS	Nevada Revised Statutes
NTS	Nevada Test Site
NTTR	Nevada Test and Training Range
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
PRPD	Pahrump Regional Planning District
PUD	Planned Unit Development
PV	Photovoltaic
ROD	Record of Decision
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RPS	Renewable Portfolio Standard
RTC	Regional Transportation Commission
RWMS	Radioactive Waste Management Site
SFHA	Special Flood Hazards Area
SHPO	State Historical Preservation Office
SID	Special Improvements District
SNWA	Southern Nevada Water Authority
SUA	Special Use Areas
SWMP	Solid Waste Management Plan
TTR	Tonopah Test Range
USC	United States Code
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
WA	Wilderness Area
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
YMP	Yucca Mountain Project

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Nye County Comprehensive/Master Plan (hereafter referred to as the plan) serves as Nye County's long-range plan relating to public lands and how best to work collaboratively with the federal and state land management agencies. This plan is intended to provide effective planning, communication and coordination between Nye County and these agencies, taking advantage of the "consistency" language in Section 202(c)(9) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Section 202(c)(9) governs BLM planning and directs the BLM to give consideration to appropriate state, local and tribal lands in the development of land use plans for federal lands.

The Nye County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted the original 1994 Nye County Comprehensive Plan as the county's master plan under the provisions of NRS 278.150. The BOCC amended said plan by resolution on August 3, 2004, incorporating the Nye County Water Resource Plan. Pursuant to direction from the BOCC, staff began review and revision to that plan in 2009. A draft document was presented to the Town Boards and Town Advisory Boards in a series of five public workshops held throughout the county.<sup>1</sup>

This document is a revision of the 1994 Nye County Comprehensive Plan. As particular areas of the county experience a need for more specific and detailed planning and growth management mechanisms, residents may request that the BOCC assist them in the development of community-specific or area plans. Any such area plan will be coordinated with this plan. Similarly, as the need develops and funds become available, it is anticipated that Nye County will prepare detailed functional plans (e.g., a countywide emergency management plan, capital improvement plans and habitat conservation plans) as may be necessary pursuant to the goals, objectives and policies outlined within this plan. The BOCC should be consulted on any interpretation of the policies outlined within this plan.

### **1.1 Statutory Authorization for a Comprehensive/Master Plan**

NRS 278.150 states: "The planning commission shall prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the city, county or region which in the commission's judgment bears relation to the planning thereof." The BOCC serves as the chief executive authority of the county government and is charged by law with performing all duties necessary to full discharge of those specified and implied executive duties including the duty of establishing a plan that identifies the county's environmental, social and economic goals as related to the management and use of the public lands.

### **1.2 Purpose for the Plan**

The purpose of this plan is to:

- Detail Nye County's intent concerning public lands and potential Congressional actions related to the public lands within Nye County.
- Define Nye County's public land-related issues and needs.

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<sup>1</sup> The workshops were held in Beatty on February 28, 2011; Tonopah on March 1, 2011; Round Mountain on March 2, 2011; Gabbs on March 3, 2011; and, Current Creek on March 4, 2011.

- Provide land management policies that enable the federal and state land management agencies to better understand and respond to the concerns and needs of Nye County in a collaborative process.
- Increase the role Nye County has in determining the management of the federal and state lands within the boundaries of the county.
- Provide an opportunity to address federal and state land use management issues positively, directly and proactively.
- Foster cooperation and coordination with federal and state agencies and all adjacent counties where there is a community of interests, including grazing, farming, mining, recreation, wildlife and all other activities related to and reliant upon the availability of natural resources on federal and state managed lands.
- Preserve, protect and enhance the county’s tax base.
- Address potential impacts from the proposed development of a high-level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain.
- Consider fiscal and economic impact when lands within the county are withdrawn from multiple use.
- Provide land management policies to help ensure the protection of Nye County’s water resources.

### **1.3 Subject Matters Included in the 2011 Amended Plan**

NRS 278.160 provides that the “master plan, with the accompanying charts, drawings, diagrams, schedules and reports, may include such of the following subject matter or portions thereof as are appropriate to the county and as may be made the basis for the physical development thereof.”

The 2011 amended plan includes the following subject matters:

Land Use Plan	Historic Properties Preservation Plan
Conservation Plan	Recreation Plan
Economic Plan	

### **1.4 Nye County Background**

Nye County is located in south central Nevada. The county’s southern border is shared with Inyo County, California. Eight other Nevada counties surround Nye County, with Esmeralda and Mineral Counties to the west, Churchill, Lander, Eureka and White Pine Counties to the north, and Lincoln and Clark Counties to the east (Figure 1). Nye County is the largest county in Nevada with a total area of 18,147 square miles.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> NACO “Nye County, Nevada.” National Association of Counties website at URL [http://www.naco.org/Counties/Pages/NACO\\_FindACounty.aspx](http://www.naco.org/Counties/Pages/NACO_FindACounty.aspx) accessed on 2/16/2011.

Nye County Comprehensive / Master Plan

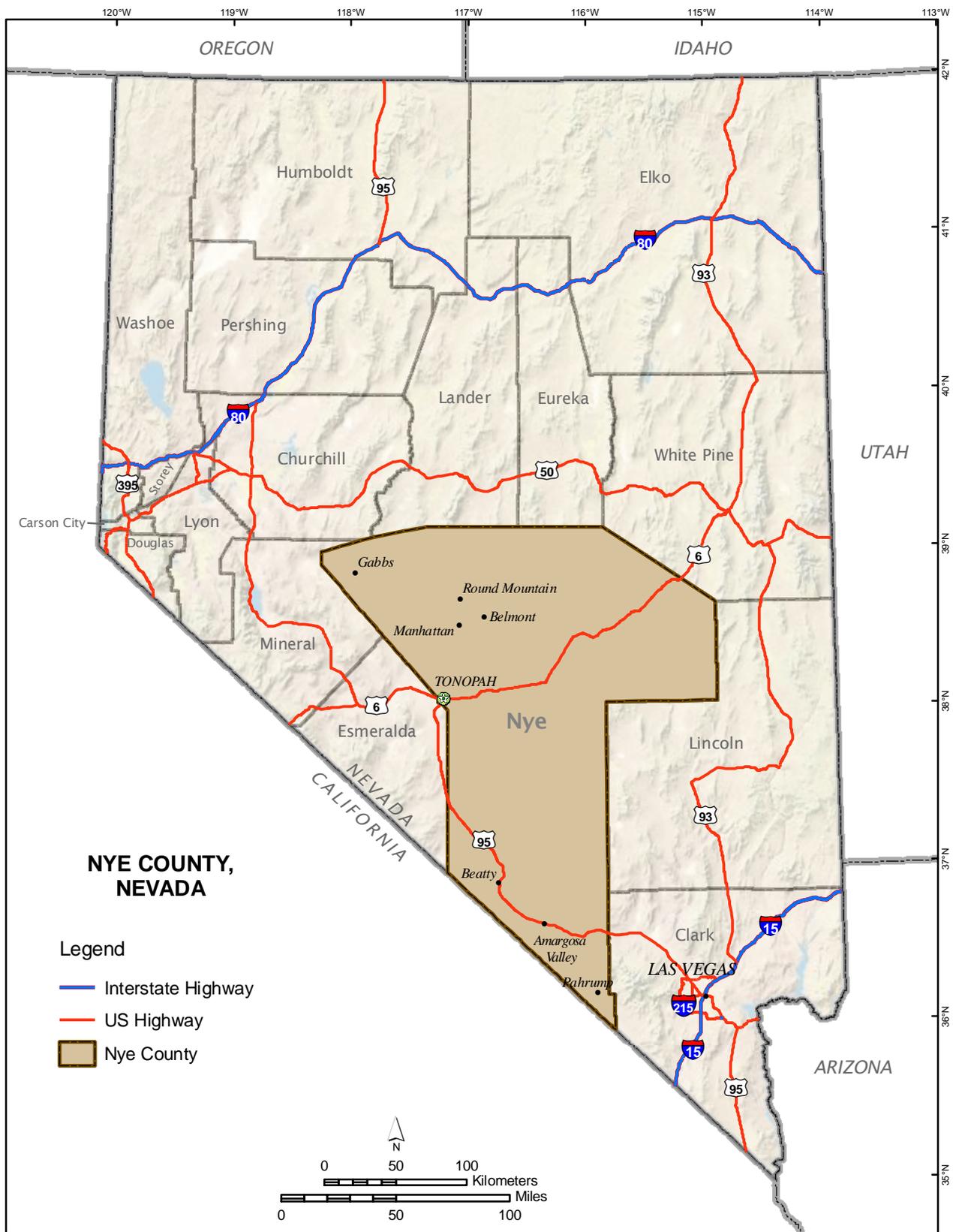


Figure 1. Nye County, Nevada.

Nye County was established in 1864 and the current county seat was established in Tonopah in 1905. Unincorporated towns (Figure 2) include Amargosa Valley, Beatty, Gabbs, Manhattan, Pahrump, Round Mountain and Tonopah.<sup>3</sup>

Nye County is primarily rural with an estimated population in 2010 of 46,200 persons. Pahrump has the largest number of residents at 38,243. The remaining residents are primarily located in small towns and communities. Outside towns and communities, Nye County is sparsely settled.

### **1.5 Unique Characteristics of Nye County**

While Nye County bears similarity to many rural counties throughout the United States, some characteristics, when considered in combination, set Nye County apart from the others. These unique characteristics, shown in Map 1, include the following:

- Nye County is the third-largest county in the continental United States in terms of land area.
- While one of the largest counties, it is sparsely populated with only about 1.8 persons per square mile (U.S. Census, 2011).
- Only about 2 percent of the land area in Nye County is privately owned.<sup>4</sup>
- Almost 98 percent of the land area in Nye County is currently managed by the federal government. The majority of these public lands are managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS).
- About 23 percent of these federal lands are currently withdrawn from multiple use. The Nevada National Security Site (NNSS) (formerly the Nevada Test Site (NTS)), Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR) and Tonopah Test Range (TTR) are large blocks of public land maintained as restricted access for classified activities. The Central Nevada Test Area (CNTA), an alternate site to the NTS, has several surface restricted areas (DOE, 2009). The large areas and locations of these activities limit transportation, define economic activities, and complicate planning for the population in the areas around them.
- Three potentially hazardous waste storage facilities are located in Nye County:
  - Low-level and mixed low-level radioactive waste disposal area in Area 5 on the NNSS.
  - Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Facility at Area 3 on the NNSS.
  - U.S. Ecology Low-Level Radioactive and Hazardous Waste Disposal Facility.
- A fourth potential site, the nation's first high-level civilian radioactive waste disposal site, has been proposed for construction at Yucca Mountain in Nye County.

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<sup>3</sup> From Nevada State Demographer, 2011. "2009 Population Estimates by County, City, and Unincorporated Town" accessed on 2/18/2011 from URL <http://nvdemography.org/data-and-publications/estimates/estimates-by-county-city-and-unincorporated-towns/>

<sup>4</sup> From BLM Nevada State Office, Mapping Sciences, GIS dataset `nv_landowner.shp` last modified on 8/20/2010 and accessed from URL [http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/prog/more\\_programs/geographic\\_sciences/gis/geospatial\\_data.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/prog/more_programs/geographic_sciences/gis/geospatial_data.html)

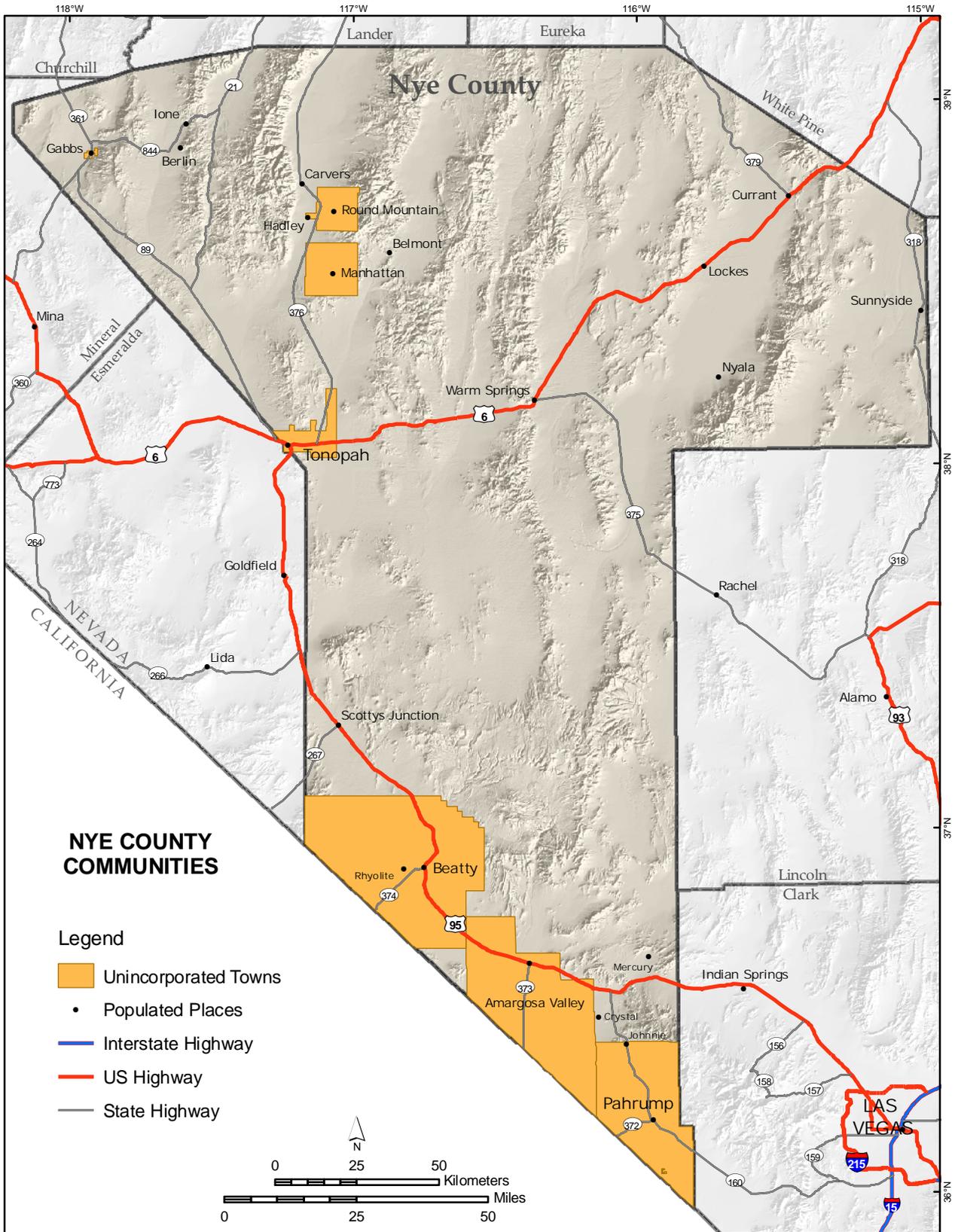


Figure 2. Nye County Communities.

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## 2.0 LAND USE PLAN

NRS 278.160 defines the Land Use Plan as “an inventory and classification of types of natural land and of existing land cover and uses, and comprehensive plans for the most desirable utilization of the land.”

This section of the plan is intended to provide goals, objectives and implementation strategies in order to guide public land management in a manner that is fiscally responsible and consistent with the vision of the BOCC and the citizens of the county. Federal and state land management policies and procedures, land transactions, and their compatibility with county and local land use plans, are of critical importance to the county’s residents.

### 2.1 Land Use Classifications

In order to translate the goals, objectives and policies of the plan into a map form (Map 2 – Nye County Future Land Use), land use classifications were established to serve as a guide for the management of public lands within Nye County.

#### 2.1.1 Exempt Classification

Some lands within Nye County are exempt from planning activities. Although the BOCC recognizes that activities on these lands can have extraordinary impacts on Nye County and its citizens, the following described lands are exempt from the provisions of this plan. The plan hereby establishes the following exempt categories:

**Federally Restricted Access:** This designation applies to NNSS, NTTR, TTR and the CNTA.

**Tribal Lands:** These are the historically recognized tribal lands or other significant properties that fall under tribal government authority and are generally not subject to state or local laws.

**Towns with Land Use Plans:** The county defers to those towns with an adopted or approved land use plan, for the goals, objectives and policies related to land use and planning activities for those areas, and adopts such plans by reference.

#### 2.1.2 Multiple Use Classification

The 1985 Nye County Policy for Publicly Managed Lands describes the policy for the management of federal and state lands as follows: “manage and utilize public land on the basis of multiple use and sustainable yield concepts, and in a manner that will conserve natural resources; protect and preserve the quality of the environment, and ecological, scenic, historical and archeological values; protect and preserve wildlife habitat, and certain lands in their natural condition; and provide for long-term benefit, including economic benefits, for the people of Nye County and future generations.”

Nye County supports “multiple use” as defined as follows:

- A balanced and diverse use of resources which takes into account the long-term needs of the residents of the county for renewable and non-renewable resources including but not

limited to recreational activities, range, timber, energy, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific and historic areas; and

- The coordinated management of public lands and their various resources without permanent impairment of the lands' productivity and the quality of the environment. Consideration should be given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will produce the greatest yield or economic return for each parcel of land.

Nye County also supports periodic adjustment to the use of public lands and resources as needed to conform to changing needs and conditions.

Nye County believes wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are not compatible with existing multiple uses of public lands in Nye County.

Nye County further believes BLM-managed lands within each community must be subject to the provisions of the multiple use classification unless otherwise classified, and all applicable goals, objectives and policies.

### *2.1.3 Recreation and Conservation Classification*

These lands contain scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, water resources or archeological resources and have been identified based on such characteristics in order to preserve and protect the lands close to their natural condition. These vast and remote lands provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife and domestic animals and provide for outdoor recreational opportunities such as hiking, mountain bicycling, hunting, fishing, off-road vehicle use and camping. Subcategories include:

#### Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

A BLM designation of lands that receive special recognition because of the quality, uniqueness and significance of its natural and cultural resources and are managed to conserve and protect those identified resources. Mineral and resource production, grazing and certain recreational activities are typically restricted.

#### Designated Forests

Forests are necessary for watershed protection, wildlife and fish habitat and recreation. Extreme conditions of climate, soil and topography require the maintenance of vegetative cover irrespective of use to provide development buffers, wind breaks, wildlife and fish habitat, livestock, scenic corridors and recreation use.

#### Designated Wilderness Areas (WA)

A protective overlay Congress applies to selected portions of national forests, parks, wildlife refuges and other public lands where they are free as much as possible from human manipulation. Although wilderness areas serve multiple uses, the land is managed to preserve the "wilderness character of the area" and motorized or mechanical vehicles are prohibited.

### National Parks

Managed by the National Park Service (NPS), these are generally large natural places set aside by an act of Congress because of their unique physical and/or cultural value to the nation as a whole, containing a wide variety of features including significant historic assets. Hunting, mining or any activities that “consume” park resources are not authorized in national parks.

### State Parks

Managed by the Nevada Division of State Parks, these lands provide open space, recreation and preservation of lands with significant scenic, historic and scientific resources.

### State Wildlife Management Areas

Nevada’s state-owned Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) are home to many resident and migratory birds and mammals. These lands are managed by the NDOW for conservation purposes while providing public access for hunting and various other outdoor recreational activities.

### Wetlands

Wetlands provide habitat for fish, animals and a variety of plants along with providing recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities. Wetlands under this sub-category have been mapped by the FWS “National Wetlands Inventory” (October 1, 2010) and wetland lakes and ponds have been mapped by the USGS in coordination with the EPA “National Hydrography Dataset Plus (NHDPlus).”

## **2.2 Public Lands**

The economy of the county has and continues to be largely dependent upon the availability and utilization of natural resources, reasonably accessible water supplies, and upon business activities that operate on the federal and state managed lands. Either directly or indirectly, the majority of the persons employed in Nye County are dependent upon ranching and farming, forest production, mining, recreation and other activities related to and reliant upon the availability of natural resources.

It is obvious that viable and effective use of the public lands is very dependent upon the management policies of the federal and state agencies that regulate mining, livestock grazing, commercial and recreational activities. The management policies used by the agencies should be compatible with the custom and culture of the county and be used to contribute to the economic stability of the county.

### *2.2.1 Public Land Issues*

Due to the crucial role that public lands play in the Nye County economy and quality of life, the BOCC has identified several key issues related to Nye County public lands:

- Nye County should have the opportunity to participate in the planning for the mitigation of economic impacts, environmental remediation and reuse of the NNSS facility.
- There is increasing concern for the viability of the ranching industry in Nye County. Ranching and grazing are traditional economic activities in Nye County and a source of both primary and secondary income for a number of Nye County residents. Moreover, the

ranching lifestyle is an important part of Nye County's culture. Nye County has a keen interest in protecting its agricultural and ranching heritage.

- Similarly, there is increasing concern for the viability of the mining industry in Nye County. Combined revenues generated from mining and net proceeds taxes have traditionally provided an average of one-quarter of Nye County's annual operating budget.

### *2.2.2 Goals, Objectives and Policies*

To address the above issues and other concerns, the BOCC adopts the following public land management goals, objectives and policies for public lands within Nye County. They are intended to further agriculture, mining and recreation as principal economic bases of the county as well as fostering the multiple use concept of the publicly managed lands within Nye County.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL -1:** To increase opportunities for local economic development by selectively increasing the amount of privately owned and locally managed land within the county. Map 3 represents lands in Nye County that are managed by BLM and have been identified as suitable for disposal, as of 2005.<sup>5</sup>

Objective 1 - Ensure that public lands with high recreational, wildlife, mineral and other public values remain open to multiple uses.

Objective 2 - Ensure that public lands within the service area of existing communities continue to be made available to the private sector for housing, industrial uses and other economic activities. These lands should be transferred only when local governments agree that the transfer is opportune and would not be a burden to local governments. Growth should be directed to these areas to the extent that it can be accommodated in a manner compatible with each area's character and without overburdening public facilities and services.

Objective 3 - Ensure public lands continue to be made available for state and local government purposes such as, but not limited to, schools, parks, public facilities, roads and trails. Land identified for public purposes should receive preference over disposal for private purposes.

Objective 4 - Ensure public land disposal be accomplished only in conformance with this plan or local area plans. The general public and state and local governments should be involved in public land disposals.

Objective 5 - Ensure that public lands be made available to local governments at a discounted price and allow those local governments to develop such lands or dispose of the lands to private interests.

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<sup>5</sup> Updates to the BLM Resource Management Plans for the Southern Nevada and Battle Mountain BLM Districts are in progress. BLM lands that have previously been identified as suitable for disposal are under review.

Objective 6 - Ensure federal and state land dispositions and acquisitions, including land adjustments and exchanges, be carried out to the benefit of the citizens of Nye County, and to specifically ensure the following:

- a) The county suffers no net loss in tax revenue.
- b) Private property interests are protected and/or enhanced.
- c) The citizens of Nye County suffer no adverse aggregate economic impacts.
- d) Opportunities for local economic development are increased by increasing the amount of private land within the county.
- e) Opportunities for local economic development are increased by increasing the private use and/or ownership of federal and/or state controlled land within the county.
- f) Federal and/or state land agencies will not acquire any private lands or rights on private lands within Nye County without first ensuring the items listed above.
- g) Federally and/or state managed lands that are difficult to manage or which lie in isolated tracts should be considered for exchange, disposal or sale.
- h) The BOCC will review and make recommendations on proposed public land withdrawals for hazardous and non-hazardous waste storage, use and/or disposal as well as the types of such waste.

Objective 7 - Ensure the general public and the BOCC are notified of and consulted about all federal and state land adjustments in Nye County. Nye County will review all proposed changes to determine if the proposal is in the best interest of the county.

Objective 8 - Designate county staff to review and make recommendations on proposed public land withdrawals for hazardous and non-hazardous waste storage, use and disposal as well as the types of such waste.

Objective 9 - Ensure that any federal or state land agency desiring to change land use conduct an impact study of uses at the expense of the agency proposing the change. Such study shall include mitigation measures developed in coordination with Nye County. Impact studies should address community stability, local custom and culture, grazing rights, flood prone areas, access and any other concerns to the local community.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-2:** To provide that public land be disposed of for private agricultural use, economic development or community needs.

Objective 1 - Ensure lands disposed of for agricultural uses have adequate water for irrigation and appropriate soils.

Objective 2 - Ensure adverse impacts on existing uses are considered before public lands may be disposed of, including impacts upon important wildlife habitat, key seasonal

grazing rights, municipal watershed, flood prone areas, access, mining (including potential) and recreational use of the lands.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-3:** To retain existing access whenever the public lands are disposed of for recreational and other multiple use needs, or to provide that alternative routes of access be made available.

Objective 1 - Develop and maintain access to public lands with high recreational or other public values.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-4:** To promote the increased use of and adherence to comprehensive planning among all government entities in Nye County.

Objective 1 - Ensure state and local governments continue to develop land use plans identifying lands that should be released for private ownership and those lands that should remain in public ownership.

Objective 2 - Ensure federal planning processes include local involvement and the Resource Management Plan (RMP) process coordinates with all local planning documents and processes.

Objective 3 - Designate staff to research federal and state law and policies to enable the BOCC to develop an understanding of local responsibility regarding public lands.

Objective 4 - Provide the necessary tools and resources to implement the policies in this plan.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-5:** To provide maximum management flexibility.

Objective 1 - Ensure land exchanges that make private lands more manageable be given a high priority in federal real estate actions.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-6:** To have federal land management agencies expand their efforts to clarify the legal status and title to historically disposed of lands. This action should receive priority over other land action issues.

Objective 1 - Provide for public access to lands before public lands are released, exchanged, sold or contracted for sale.

Objective 2 - Recognize that public access to routes of travel are essential to the economic, social and political well-being of Nye County communities.

Objective 3 - Locate and determine the width of such rights-of-way and locate, open for public use and establish thereon county roads in accordance with Chapter 262, Section 8, 14 Statutes 253 (former 43 United States Code (USC) Section 932, commonly referred to as R.S. 2477).

Objective 4 - Recognize that public use alone is sufficient to evidence an acceptance of the grant of a public use right-of-way pursuant to former 43 USC Section 932.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-7:** To implement appropriate mitigation measures for the storage, use and/or disposal of hazardous waste in Nye County.

Objective 1 - Require entities desiring to store hazardous waste bear the total financial responsibility for the mitigation of all impacts associated with said storage.

Mitigation resources include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- a) Public health, including sufficient facilities and personnel for programs of water treatment and distribution, sewerage and sewage treatment, pest control, sanitary land fill and sanitation.
- b) Fire protection, including early location and construction of stations and sufficient firefighting equipment, communications equipment and trained personnel.
- c) Emergency medical services, including sufficient equipment, facilities and trained personnel to provide appropriate response to an emergency situation.
- d) Medical care, including sufficient hospitals, equipment and trained personnel.
- e) Transportation, including full responsibility for any roads or rail built for a project and assistance for the repair and maintenance of any local or state roads used and damaged by vehicles and equipment associated with the construction or operation of a project. Rail lines should be built to be utilized by the private sector for commercial activity in Nye County and the rail line should be located to maximize said utilization.
- f) Training and equipment for local and state public safety, emergency medical and firefighting personnel for the handling of radioactive or hazardous waste accidents.
- g) Establishment of appropriate best management practices/methods and equipment, including data processing, to observe and assess long-term effects of the waste projects over the entire life of the projects from construction, closure and to the point the waste is no longer radioactive or hazardous.
- h) Energy needs, including requisite facilities, created by all activity induced by waste storage, use or disposal projects, recognizing that the cost of such needs should not be subsidized by current residents of the area proposed for deployment of the system.
- i) Any such other facilities and personnel of state or local governments as may be required to meet needs that would be caused by the construction, operation and closure of a geologic repository for spent high-level radioactive waste and commercial spent nuclear fuel.

Objective 2 - Establish criteria for the evaluation of nuclear or hazardous waste storage, use and/or disposal facilities which explicitly weigh the tradeoffs between

environmental cost, the creation of jobs and other appropriate benefits to the county.

*Policy A. Mitigate all impacts of nuclear or hazardous waste storage facilities through a negotiated development agreement between the developer and Nye County.*

Objective 3 - Ensure transportation of nuclear or hazardous waste is accomplished by the safest means available and carefully controlled in accordance with pertinent federal and state regulations.

*Policy A. Train local fire, safety and emergency responders along transportation routes to deal with accidents.*

Objective 4 - Ensure records are kept in a publicly accessible location (including electronically) of all nuclear or hazardous waste materials stored to enable research into accidents and safety planning.

Objective 5 - Establish procedures for the notification of all fire, safety and emergency responders of all transports through Nye County.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-8:** To recognize that agricultural production in Nye County is necessary to help meet the requirements of future national populations and is significant to Nye County.

Objective 1 - Request public agencies formally recognize the value of and necessity for the retention and expansion of agricultural land.

Objective 2 - Request the federal government continue to make the public rangelands economically and realistically available for livestock grazing where compatible with other multiple use objectives.

Objective 3 - Ensure public land disposals are considered in areas with value to existing farm and ranch operations. These disposals should be identified through the community planning process.

*Policy A. Adequate planning and guarantees of Desert Land Entries should minimize adverse environmental impacts and economic cost to the existing community.*

Objective 4 - Ensure water supplies and sources for irrigation are protected. Water improvements should include access for wildlife.

Objective 5 - Ensure renewable energy projects are developed in conjunction with agricultural activities.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-9:** To preserve agricultural land uses on public lands and promote the continuation of agricultural pursuits in Nye County.

Objective 1 - Encourage and protect the continuance of existing agricultural practices.

Objective 2 - Designate staff to work with federal and state agencies to maintain rangeland and provide for the diversification of products from current agricultural operations.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-10:** To protect agricultural lands and minimize loss of productive farm and ranchlands, and to maintain and protect water recharge areas.

Objective 1 - Protect the interests of the citizens and economic welfare of the county.

*Policy A. Nye County will work with federal, state and local agencies and other groups to identify potential methods for protecting and maintaining agricultural lands. These methods may include: density transfers, tax relief, land banking, transfer of development rights, cluster developments and creation of agricultural districts.*

*Policy B. During development review, Nye County will discourage incompatible land uses in or adjacent to designated agricultural areas and protect agricultural areas from infringement by activities or land uses which would impair their physical and/or economic viability for continued agricultural use.*

*Policy C. The growth of developing areas will be managed to protect farm and ranch lands, farm and ranch operations, and lands that should remain in multiple use for other considerations. This includes lands that:*

- a) Are not planned to receive urban services.
- b) Are subject to safety risks such as flooding.
- c) Contribute to groundwater recharge and protection of the watershed.
- d) Serve the public good through the aesthetic, cultural and scenic benefits that open space and agricultural lands provide.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-11:** To provide that wilderness designations only be made where the values of wilderness designation are capable of balancing the other resource values and uses which would be foregone due to wilderness designation. The BOCC needs to be consulted and involved in the decision-making process prior to the creation of any future wilderness designated areas within the county.

Objective 1 - Ensure wildlife, fire control, mineral resources, visitor impacts, and grazing are considered when areas are being proposed for wilderness designation.

*Policy A. Documented mineral resources or area of known or expected economic potential are adequate reasons to disqualify the area as wilderness.*

*Policy B. The county shall work with federal land managers to identify and mitigate any adverse economic impacts that would arise from a wilderness designation on local governments.*

Objective 2 - Ensure wilderness area management plans be developed involving public and governmental consultation, preferably using a coordinated RMP process.

Objective 3 - Ensure only areas that can be managed as wilderness be considered for wilderness designation.

*Policy A. Boundaries of wilderness areas should be easily identifiable on the ground and should not restrict access.*

Objective 4 - Ensure wilderness study areas (WSA) are vetted by public and county government before inclusion as wilderness or returned to multiple use. In cooperation with other local and municipal representatives, Nye County will petition the congressional representatives of the state to sponsor legislation that will release the study areas back to multiple use status.

*Policy A. Any lands deemed unsuitable or otherwise ineligible as a wilderness area by a management agency must automatically be designated multiple-use status unless acted on within five (5) years (Figure 3).*

Objective 5 - Eliminate any consideration or application of “buffer” area concepts in enabling legislation for wilderness designation. Enabling legislation should also specifically support the Taylor Grazing Act.

Objective 6 - Restore lands damaged by fires, whether planned burns or not, as quickly as possible to protect and prevent land erosion and degradation of the watershed. Natural vegetation should be planted and land restrictions lifted as soon as possible to allow wildlife development and grazing permits with limited disruptions.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-12:** To conserve and protect buildings, historic districts, objects, sites, trails and structures of historical significance for the benefit of the present and future generations.

Objective 1 - Expand federal and state efforts in identifying, preserving and interpreting Nye County’s history.

Objective 2 - Protect cultural resources and historic sites to the fullest extent possible as set forth under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended.

Nye County Comprehensive / Master Plan

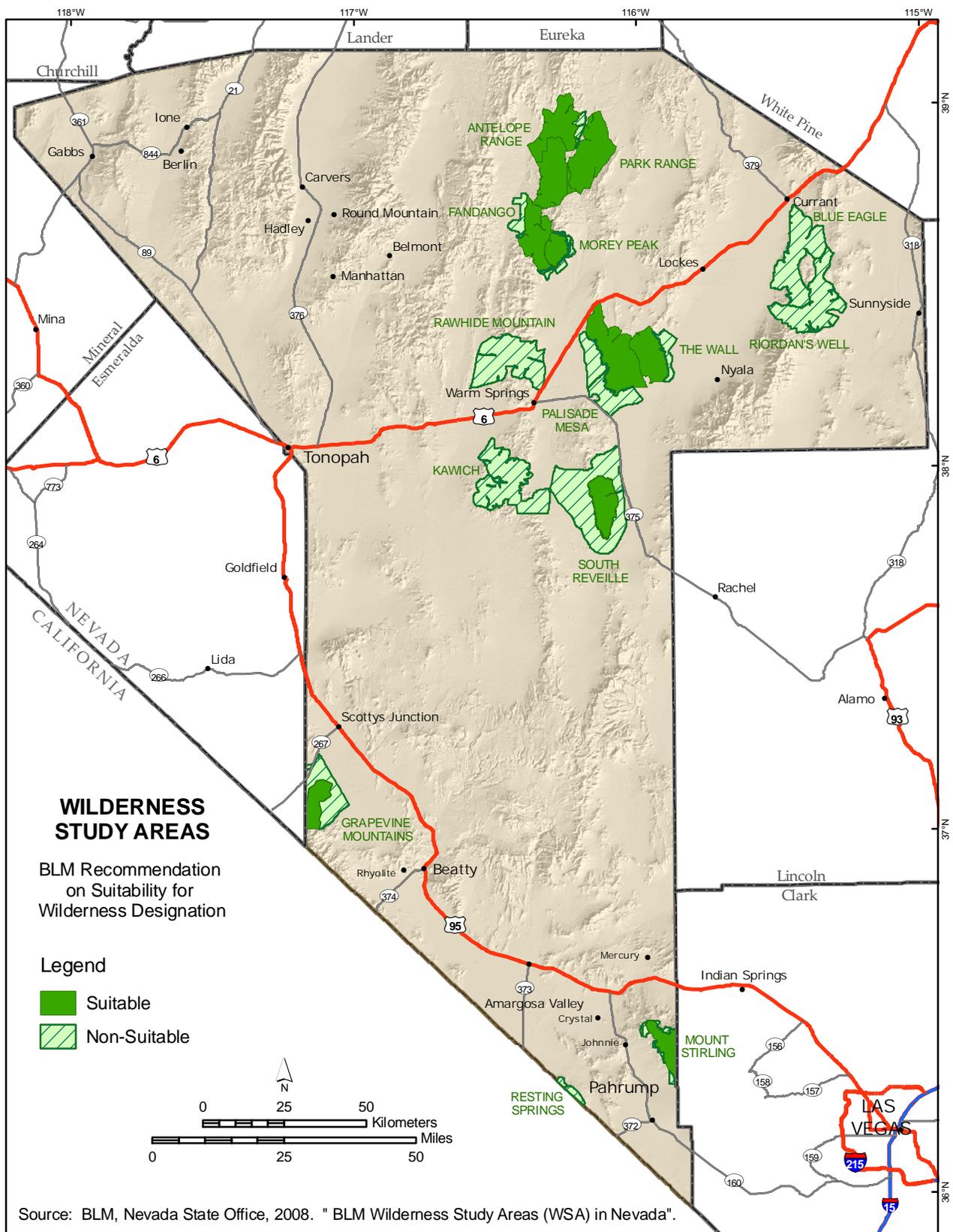


Figure 3. Wilderness Study Areas.

Objective 3 - Coordinate archeological studies required by the federal or state agencies with the county.

Objective 4 - Require archeological studies to be paid for by the agency requesting the study and that all studies are done in a timely manner.

Objective 5 - Ensure, at the discretion of Nye County, the county becomes an active coordinating participant in the performance of resource survey activities.

Objective 6 - Require consultation with the BOCC before any lands are set aside for preservation as a monument for their historical significance and involve the BOCC in the decision-making process.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-13:** To support and protect the inherent rights of the Native Americans in Nye County while still protecting private property rights.

Objective 1 - Continue opportunities for Native American activities at levels consistent with the historical customs and ensure the protection of property rights and sound resource management policies.

Objective 2 – Prevent federal, state and local governments from obstructing historic Native American cultural activities on their respective lands.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-14:** To manage wild horses and burros to minimize detrimental impacts on other multiple uses and pursue resource management where needed to correct wild horse and burro damage.

Objective 1 - Provide that the BLM manage wild horse and burro herds at levels established in the 1971 Wild Horse & Burro Act and consider the needs of other wildlife species and livestock grazing, in cooperation with the county.

*Policy A. Analysis of wild horse and burro populations and herd use areas and their management practices should be based on the best available information and input from local stakeholders.*

Objective 2 - Use a coordinated RMP process to solve wild horse and burro over-population and resource degradation.

Objective 3 - Mitigate wild horse and burro impacts on private lands and water sources and require managing agencies to provide compensation for any damage to private property the agency may cause.

Objective 4 - Require the federal or state government to provide fencing adjacent to federal or state highways in open range areas to prevent roadway accidents.

Objective 5 - Ensure the county, at its discretion, becomes an active coordinating participant in the performance of resource survey activities.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-15:** To identify, protect and preserve wildlife species and their habitats within Nye County.

Objective 1 - Identify the habitat needs of wildlife species and provide for those needs to attain reasonable population levels compatible with other multiple uses as determined by public involvement.

*Policy A. Critical wildlife habitats, such as streams, riparian zones and wetlands, be identified and receive special management.*

*Policy B. Wildlife habitat improvement projects, such as guzzlers, are continued as appropriate and are fiscally possible. The projects should take into consideration impacts on other uses.*

*Policy C. Retain and restore public wetlands for wildlife and tourism opportunities where fiscally possible.*

Objective 2 - Provide that federal land management agencies consult with local wildlife advocates and the BOCC in regard to public land planning related to wildlife.

Objective 3 - Provide that federal and state agencies prepare a plan in coordination with Nye County before the introduction or reintroduction of any species into public or private land which is likely to impact Nye County.

*Policy A. Develop a memorandum of understanding between Nye County and state and federal land managers that will address the introduction or reintroduction of any species that may affect Nye County.*

Objective 4 - Provide that threatened, rare and endangered species protections are adopted in coordination with other land use activities.

Objective 5 - Provide that federal and state land, wildlife and fishery management agencies coordinate with the BOCC.

Objective 6 - Ensure the county, at its discretion, becomes an active coordinating participant in the performance of resource survey activities.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-16:** To control pests and noxious and invasive weeds on all state and federal lands.

Objective 1 - Establish an animal damage control plan for the protection of livestock and crops.

Objective 2 - Provide that government agencies coordinate their plans with Nye County with regard to pest control actions and regulations.

- Objective 3 - Provide that government agencies be required to prepare and implement plans for controlling predatory animals, rodents and noxious weeds in accordance with proven and recognized husbandry practices, not to exclude chemical controls.
- Objective 4 - Nye County recognizes trapping as a historical and environmentally sound method of controlling predatory animals to reduce property damage, and encourages its use.
- Objective 5 - Advocate the control of disease bearing vectors, as they are a recognized threat to public health.
- Objective 6 - Implement methods for the control of predators of desert tortoise through best available management practices.

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGMENT GOAL-17:** To promote development of mineralized lands, renewable and non-renewable energy projects, and provide adequate regulation to minimize or eliminate potential adverse impacts associated with project development and operation.

Objective 1 - Identify suitable areas throughout the county for renewable and non-renewable energy development and other industries not now represented in the Nye County economy.

*Policy A. Encourage and support development of renewable energy and geothermal activity which provides benefit to Nye County and its citizens without adversely impacting the surrounding community and environment.*

*Policy B. Ensure that renewable energy projects are viable, adequately maintained, compatible with surrounding environments, and that site rehabilitation will be completed once the project is terminated.*

*Policy C. Renewable energy projects shall consult with U.S. Air Force (USAF) to ensure such projects will not interfere with aircraft operations throughout Nye County.*

*Policy D. Renewable energy projects will not encroach upon residential development, and shall be located a suitable distance from existing homes and neighborhoods.*

*Policy E. Nye County shall work with energy providers and BLM to establish utility corridors.*

*Policy F. Nye County shall consult with Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) and/or FWS with regard to wildlife habitat and potential effects on wildlife populations.*

Objective 2 - Identify suitable areas for mining, industrial, and commercial development, as well as setting aside public lands for the location of future landfills and transfer facilities.

*Policy A. Public land should be identified by the county for disposal that are adjacent to the established communities and tribal lands where existing services and roads are available to ensure that adequate infrastructure is available.*

*Policy B. Any lands disposed of by BLM shall include the plan land use designations and all costs associated with applications and review for public facilities and or utilities shall be the burden of the applicant. The land disposals shall strive to diversify the local economy and meet land use needs of the community plans.*

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL-18:** To protect and preserve water rights and water supply in Nye County.

Objective 1 - Ensure the continuation of a lifestyle which assures the enjoyment of private property rights and property interests and assures the highest degree of protection of these rights.

*Policy A. Implement the recommendations of the Nye County Water Resources Plan.*

*Policy B. Nye County, working with the Water District, shall monitor water supply and water quality which satisfies all water resource goals, objectives, and policies contained in the plan, and that attains and maintains federal, state, and local water quality standards.*

**PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT GOAL - 19:** To work with the federal and state land management agencies to minimize potential public health threats and environmental impacts caused by illegal dumping on public lands.

Objective 1- Eliminate illegal waste disposal on public lands through cooperative educational programs.

*Policy A. The county will work with the appropriate agencies to encourage timely enforcement and clean-up of illegal dumping.*

## 2.3 Federally Restricted Access Lands

Approximately 23 percent of the total land area in Nye County is designated for federally restricted access for U.S. Government classified activities. This block of land includes: NNSS, NTTR and the TTR. The central location of these facilities shapes transportation and economic activities and impacts economic activity. For example, it is impossible to travel directly from any one corner of Nye County diagonally to another. Residents of the southern Nye County communities of Beatty, Amargosa Valley and Pahrump must travel through Esmeralda County to reach Tonopah, the county seat. The residents of Gabbs travel through Mineral and Esmeralda Counties before reaching the county seat in Tonopah.

The state legislature has established the method and procedure for transfer of jurisdiction of lands within Nevada to the federal government that will protect the interests of the state and its citizens. NRS Chapter 328 details the procedures and the conditions upon which lands in the state may be transferred to the federal government.

### 2.3.1 Goals, Objectives and Policies

The following goals, objectives and policies have been developed to address Federally Restricted Access land management.

**FEDERALLY RESTRICTED ACCESS LANDS GOAL-1:** Provide for the planned and orderly use of the public lands located within Nye County in a manner consistent with the constitutional rights of individuals and organizations.

Objective 1- Protect the interests of the citizens and the economic welfare of the county.

*Policy A. Reserve the right of Nye County to tax all the personal property, all activities of persons, and all buildings erected on the transferred land to the extent permitted by law.*

*Policy B. Reserve the right of the citizens of Nye County to prospect for, mine and remove all deposits of minerals, including oil and gas on transferred lands.*

*Policy C. Reserve such other legislative jurisdiction over the public land as does not interfere with the express purpose of the cession or consent of transfer.*

*Policy D. Coordinate with the state Legislative Bureau and the state Planning Agency all proposed transfers of lands to the federal government.*

*Policy E. Coordinate with all federal agencies that control lands within the county all proposed land use activities.*

*Policy F. The federal land planning agencies shall work with the BOCC to ensure that federal agencies inform the BOCC of all pending or proposed actions affecting the various communities of Nye County, and provide for coordination in planning and implementation of all such plans affecting Nye County.*

Objective 2 – Support the United States military and their activities in the provision of well-trained and prepared armed forces.

*Policy A. Nye County supports a collaborative dialogue with the Department of defense on planned training or other exercises taking place within the county.*

*Policy B. Nye County will work closely with the BLM to ensure that development on properties released for disposal do not interfere with military aircraft flight patterns (Figure 4 – DoD Airspace Consultation Areas).*

## 2.4 Private Lands

Land use on private lands in Nye County consists of ranching, residential, commercial and industrial uses largely but not exclusively within the boundaries of unincorporated towns, and agricultural and mining uses both within and outside the boundaries of unincorporated towns. The Nye County Assessor land use records and the county’s Geographic Information System (GIS) parcel database have been used extensively in the development of the Existing Land Use map (Map 4 – Existing Land Use). Much of the private lands are a mix of uses. It is common to find residential, commercial, industrial and even agricultural uses on adjacent properties and, at times, on the same parcel of property.



Downtown Beatty. (Photo courtesy of Richard Stephens).

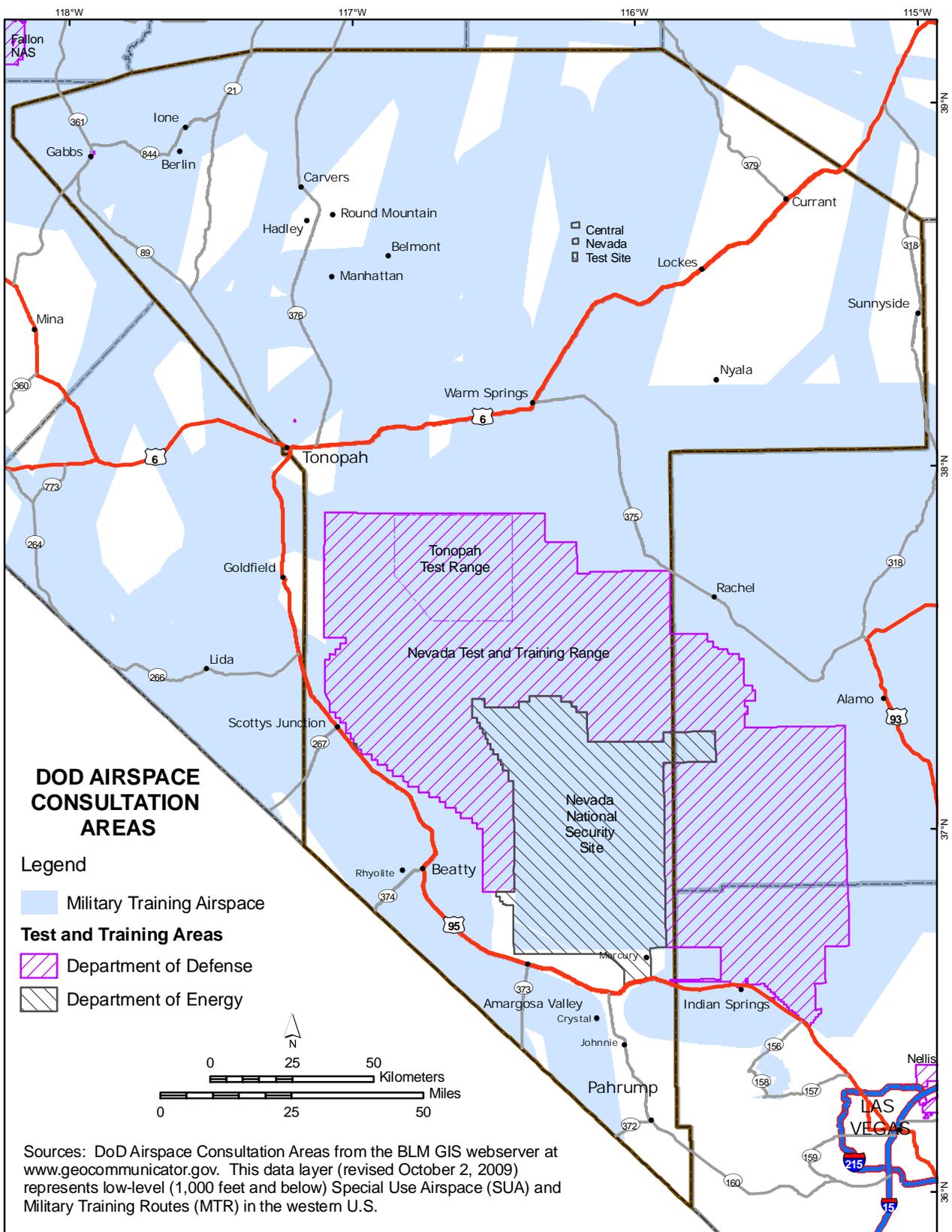


Figure 4. DoD Airspace Consultation Areas.

### 3.0 CONSERVATION PLAN

NRS 278.160 describes this topic as “the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, including water and its hydraulic force, underground water, water supply, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, flood control, prevention and control of the pollution of streams and other waters, regulation of the use of land in stream channels and other areas required for the accomplishment of the conservation plan, preservation control and correction of the erosion of soils through proper clearing, grading and landscaping, beaches and shores, and protection of watersheds, the plan must also indicate the maximum tolerable level of air pollution.”

#### 3.1 Introduction

Conservation subject matter covered within this section includes:

Water	Minerals & Energy Resources
Habitat Conservation Plans	Renewable Energy
Energy Conservation	Flood Control

Nye County commits itself to ensuring that all natural resource decisions affecting the county shall be guided by the following principles (NCC 7.01.030 – Legislative Intent):

- The maintenance and revitalization of various uses of federal and state managed lands.
- The protection of private property rights and private property interests, including investment-backed expectations.
- The protection of local historical custom and culture.
- The protection of traditional economic structures which form the basis for economic stability of the county.
- The development of new economic opportunities through free market enterprise.
- The protection of the right to enjoyment of natural resources by all citizens of the county and those communities utilizing those natural resources within the county.

Nye County may adopt additional ordinances to resolve concerns not addressed by federal or state regulations.

#### 3.2 Water

Nye County recognizes the need for water resource planning and management; therefore, in 2007, the Nevada Legislature established legislation for the creation of the Nye County Water District (NCWD) pursuant to NRS 542. The mission of the NCWD is to develop a long-term sustainability plan for the county’s water resources, evaluate and mitigate the environmental impacts associated with resource use, better define the groundwater and surface water resources conditions, and define alternative approaches for the management of the water resources in Nye County

Nye County recognizes the critical nature of the county’s limited water resources and the increasing demands placed on these resources as the population of the county grows, and also acknowledges that surface and groundwater resources are committed to existing uses under

existing water rights. Therefore, the importance of water resource planning must be based upon identifying current and future needs for water along with the quantity and quality of the water. The BOCC affirms its position of support of NRS 533.025 which states that all sources of water supply within the boundaries of the state, whether above or beneath the surface of the ground, belongs to the public.

On August 3, 2004, the BOCC adopted the 1994 Nye County Water Resources Plan (NCWRP) in cooperation with the Nevada Division of Water Planning and the Nevada Division of Water Resources. The NCWRP is a tool to help guide the development, management and use of the county's water resources. The plan sets forth the goals and guidelines for planning, defines the water resources and issues related to those resources, and provides specific alternatives and recommendations for the long-term (50-year) management of those resources.

### *3.2.1 Ground Water - Existing Conditions*

There are several hydrographic areas within Nye County that have been classified by the State of Nevada as "designated groundwater basins (area or sub-area)." Designated groundwater basins are basins where permitted groundwater rights approach or exceed the estimated average annual recharge and the water resources are being depleted or require additional administration (Figure 5). However, "designation" of a water basin by the State Engineer does not necessarily mean that the groundwater resources are being depleted, only that the appropriated water rights exceed the estimated perennial yield. Actual groundwater use may be considerably less than perennial yield, which is the case for most of the basins in Nye County.

### *3.2.2 Competition for Water Rights*

A significant amount of Nye County's water resources have been appropriated via water rights and that water is a prerequisite for economic development and community survival/development. It is necessary that Nye County pursue all available means to ensure an adequate water supply.

### *3.2.3 Goals, Objectives, and Policies*

**WATER GOAL -1:** To identify, develop and maintain adequate water supplies throughout the county to ensure public health, safety and welfare and accommodate future economic development needs.

Objective 1 - Participate in ongoing efforts to develop accurate assessments of water supply and demand in each basin by participating in the Nevada State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of Water Resources work program.

Objective 2 - Identify future water demand based on: 1) locally developed economic and population projections; 2) historic use; 3) an inventory of the county's natural resources; and 4) estimates of water necessary to develop those resources. This information will be coordinated with the Division of Water Planning's objective to define future water needs.

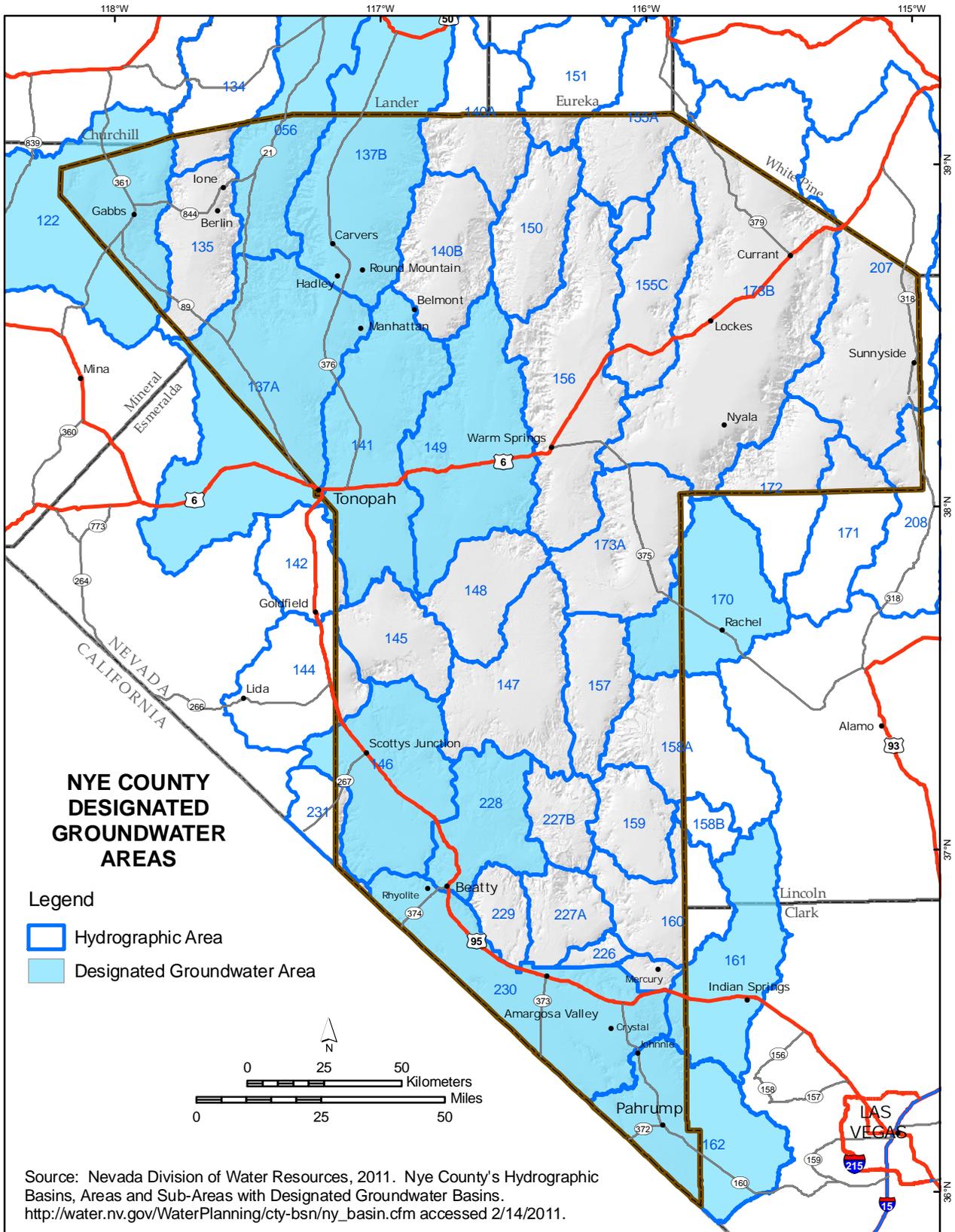


Figure 5. Designated Groundwater Areas.

*Policy A. Require that all Nye County area land use plans include projections of water demand analysis to support future land use and economic development needs.*

*Policy B. Research and develop possible water sources for future recreation potential.*

*Policy C. Review the output of the Division of Water Planning's forecast models regarding Nye County to ensure that they are compatible with Nye County's demand forecasts and acceptable to the BOCC.*

*Policy D. Develop a process for evaluating proposed interbasin transfer of water for use outside of Nye County*

*Policy E. Develop and implement mechanisms, such as development review requirements and building standards, to ensure the availability of water supply for future Nye County economic and community development needs.*

*Policy F. Recognize established and granted state water rights in support of state law.*

*Policy G. Encourage efficient and non-wasteful use of limited resources through public awareness.*

**WATER GOAL-2:** To protect and develop water resources that are essential to the county's short-term and long-term economic and cultural viability.

Objective 1 - Ensure transfers in water use be carefully considered in relationship to the history, traditions, customs and culture of Nye County.

Objective 2 - Provide that federally proposed designation of wild and scenic rivers and all federal policies regarding riparian management in Nye County be coordinated with the BOCC.

Objective 3 - Prepare plans for the protection of all threatened and endangered species within its boundaries and that federal agencies managing land, waterways and wetlands containing such species shall coordinate their management activities and plans with the BOCC.

Objective 4 - Consider, in consultation with the State Engineer, water markets for existing and future water rights for agricultural, municipal, industrial and domestic purposes.

Objective 5 - Consider alternative uses of water such recreation and hydroelectric power.

Objective 6 - Ensure regional water plans be assessed and considered for inclusion as part of this plan.

Objective 7 - Promote and be actively engaged in providing opportunity for the development of water-based recreation within the county.

Objective 8 - Review all water policies to determine if they are appropriate and adequate.

Objective 9 - Request notification of all state, regional, interstate and federal actions that have any impact on the water of the county prior to such actions being initiated. Request all proposed actions be coordinated with the BOCC prior to adoption and implementation.

*Policy A. The county will develop, plan, implement and be part of the management of the county's water resources and all other natural, cultural and economic resources in concert with federal and state planning and management agendas.*

Objective 10 - Implement the county's Water Resource Plan to safeguard both water quantity and water quality and to ensure that any new course of action by the federal government does not adversely impact water users inside the county.

Objective 11 - Implement the county's Water Resource Plan in concert and coordination with landowners, ranchers and the appropriate state and federal agencies.

**WATER GOAL-3:** To implement an aggressive public information program to educate the public on how to reduce consumption of water through conservation practices.

**WATER GOAL-4:** To implement system controls and procedures that will minimize water loss.

### **3.3 Habitat Conservation Plans**

As the population continues to grow in the towns of Nye County, it is important to balance growth and development and to meet the minimum regulations imposed by the federal government regarding the needs of existing species of plants and animals. On April 2, 1990, the desert tortoise was listed as threatened by the FWS, thereby bringing it under full protection of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA). At the time of the development of this update to the plan, a single-species Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the desert tortoise in southern Nye County has begun. It is anticipated that the HCP will be approved by the FWS and result in the issuance by FWS of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) for desert tortoise. This will ultimately reduce the burden on future development within the plan boundary by allowing projects to apply (to Nye County) to be covered by Nye County's ITP, rather than having to develop their own HCPs on an individual basis.

Habitat conservation and mitigation measures for desert tortoise and any other identified species will be implemented through development and passage of Nye County ordinances that incorporate the mitigation measures into the county's site development process. Combining ESA compliance measures with the county's existing planning and development process reduces the burden on covered projected and significantly shortens project schedule, as project proponents would not have to apply for an ITP from the FWS for each individual project. Additionally, establishing compliance with the HCPs at the county level would ensure that future

development on private land in would not risk federal law enforcement actions for violations of the ESA.

### 3.3.1 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

**HABITAT AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION GOAL-1:** To work with appropriate federal, state and local agencies to identify wildlife resources and habitat areas that exist within the county.

Objective 1 - Coordinate with other government entities and agencies in regards to habitats and wildlife in a timely fashion.

*Policy A. The county may determine it necessary to protect and preserve desert flora and fauna to the extent practicable.*

*Policy B. Develop and implement HCP planning that balances the need for growth with protection of threatened and endangered species.*

Objective 2 - Sensitive species of native plants and animals will receive special management emphasis to ensure their viability and to preclude the need for federal listing.

*Policy A. The county will promote long-term conservation of species and habitats through education and management strategies.*

## 3.4 Mineral and Energy Resources

The mineral resources industry is the second largest employer and the largest tax payer in Nye County. For example, in 2010 over 1,379 workers (over 12.9 percent of Nye County resident employment) were employed by the industry. Additionally, companies supporting purchases from mineral resource companies or their employees employ substantial numbers of workers in the Nye County construction, retail and service sectors either directly or indirectly. In 2009, the mining industry in Nye County paid an estimated \$5,970,000.00 in net proceeds tax. The State Department of taxation calculates the net proceeds by deducting allowable expenses from gross yield. During 2009 Nye County's mineral activities saw net proceeds of \$160,724,331.00. Mineral resource companies also pay substantial property taxes on facilities and equipment. During fiscal year 2007-2008, \$78,032,570.00 was paid in property tax on mining facilities and improvements in the state of Nevada. In fiscal year 2008, the Nevada mining industry saw an estimated \$3,637,504.00, and oil and gas activities saw \$255,387.00 in taxable sales.

Mineral reserves are a finite resource; consequently, the life of mineral resource projects is also finite. When mineral resource companies cease operations prematurely or without adequate planning, communities often face falling property values and must bear the cost of funding excess capacity in local government facilities and services. Conversely, when mineral resource companies plan for closure and provide opportunities for workers and the community to make the necessary transition, community disruption is minimized and community infrastructure can be preserved as a resource for other economic and community development opportunities, including further mineral resource development.

### 3.4.1 Minerals, Oil and Gas

Nye County has an abundance of mineral resources, including but not limited to the following:

Gold	Borate	Silver	Bentonite	Molybdenum
Copper	Saponite	Lead	Hectorite	Sand & Gravel
Mercury	Marble	Magnesite	Cinnabar	Brucite
Barite	Turquoise	Sepiolite	Fluorspar	Diatomaceous Earth
Cinders	Zinc			

Oil production in Nye County is located in Railroad Valley. The total annual oil production from Nye County (gross valuation if \$14.9 million in 2009) is a minor portion of U.S. production. Nevada's oil production in 2009 was 454,593 barrels (0.023 percent of total U.S. production). Minor amounts of natural gas are also produced in association with the oil production.

### 3.4.2 Goals, Objectives and Policies

**MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES GOAL-1:** To ensure mineral operations are consistent with best management practices for the protection of the environmental qualities and the multiple use of public lands.

Objective 1 - Allow economically viable mineral formations in the county to be developed.

Objective 2 - Identify areas of valuable mineral resources for future resource development.

**MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES GOAL-2:** To accommodate mineral resource industry and maximize benefits for Nye County, such as co-development of necessary infrastructure.

Objective 1 - Encourage mineral resource industry development while maintaining quality of life for existing residents and the employees and families of new mineral resource development companies.

Objective 2 - Accommodate mineral resource development without undue financial burden for county taxpayers.

Objective 3 - Develop a process that allows Nye County and the mineral resource industry to learn from past successes and failures.

Objective 4 - Ensure the development review and entitlement process is not unduly costly or time consuming for the mineral resource industry yet adequately addresses the health, safety and welfare of residents and safeguards the environment.

*Policy A. Nye County shall coordinate with federal and state land management and permitting agencies in order to ascertain impacts on local government, including, but not limited to:*

- 1) Provide estimates of the construction and/or operations work force and associated population.
- 2) Describe how the work force would be accommodated with existing and planned housing resources.
- 3) Identify the effects of mineral resource project employees on local government infrastructure facilities and services such as schools, roads, municipal sewer and water services (where appropriate), emergency response, fire protection and other county and community services.

Objective 5 - Plan mineral resource project closures in a manner which minimizes community disruption and costs to county taxpayers.

*Policy A. As an element of the permitting process described above, new mineral resource operations will be required to prepare and implement a plan that will prepare employees and affected communities for ultimate cessation of operations.*

Objective 6 – Ensure mineral resource operations are developed in a manner compatible with other land uses.

*Policy A. Development of operation plans for new mineral resources will provide a description of the proposed operation and identify any potential impacts on public health, safety and infrastructure including any proposed mitigation measures. An analysis prepared for a federal or state permit may be used to satisfy all or any part of this requirement.*

**MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES GOAL-3:** To retain existing mining areas and promote the expansion of mining operations and promote exploration and development of potential mineral deposits.

Objective 1 - Ensure full and reasonable access to land where the mineral estate is in federal ownership.

Objective 2 – Encourage and support mineral development of the public domain lands consistent with multiple use guidelines.

Objective 3 – Ensure the Federal Mining Law of 1872 remains in effect as the basic law relating to mining activities.

Objective 4 - Eliminate unreasonable barriers, prohibitions and impediments to exploration and development, except for those that arise naturally from a regime of secured private property rights, free market conditions, and the protection of the health, safety and general welfare of citizens and the environment.

Objective 5 - Encourage state and federal agencies to coordinate reclamation plans with Nye County.

Figure 6 shows the major operational sites for mineral extraction including, oil and natural gas operations.

### **3.5 Renewable Energy - Solar, Geothermal, Wind and Biomass**

With the increasing focus on renewable resources, clean energy is the fastest growing industry in the State of Nevada according to the Nevada Commission on Economic Development.<sup>6</sup> Nevada is rich in renewable energy resources and leads the nation in geothermal and solar power potential, with suitable areas for wind power development in many portions of the state (U.S. Energy Information Administration).<sup>7</sup> The state of Nevada has an aggressive Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) that requires all public utilities to generate 25 percent of their electricity from renewable energy resources by 2025, with at least 6 percent from solar energy through 2016 – 2025 (Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency).<sup>8</sup>

With its abundant renewable energy resources and ample open land, Nye County is well-suited for renewable energy projects (Figure 7). Nye County encourages responsible development of renewable energy projects. The sections below describe the most abundant renewable energy resources in Nye County: solar, geothermal, wind and biomass.

#### **3.5.1 Solar Energy**

Solar resources in Nye County are among the best in the nation for both concentrating solar power (CSP) and photovoltaic (PV) systems. In March 2010 Nye County performed an analysis titled “Suitability Analysis for Nye County Solar Generation, Transmission and Related Support Facilities.” The suitability model included primary variables of solar resources, slope and land exclusions (federally protected lands). Secondary variables included proximity to flood and seismic hazards, proximity to roads and power transmission corridors, visual resources and desert tortoise and sage grouse habitats. The analysis results were presented in a map (Figure 8) showing the locations of “good, better and best” suitable lands in Nye County for solar development.

Currently, several solar projects are being considered for development in Nye County. These projects continue to contribute an annual lease option fee per acre prior to development. Two solar projects, the Solar Millennium project in Amargosa Valley and the Solar Reserve project near Tonopah, received the final Record of Decision (ROD) from the BLM in 2010 to proceed with development. Nye County supports the continued development of additional solar plants where they are deemed economically and environmentally desirable.

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<sup>6</sup> Nevada Commission on Economic Development website at URL [http://www.diversifynevada.com/industry/renewable\\_energy/](http://www.diversifynevada.com/industry/renewable_energy/)

<sup>7</sup> Energy Information Administration – Nevada Quick Facts website at URL [http://www.eia.gov/cfapps/state/state\\_energy\\_profiles.cfm?sid=NV](http://www.eia.gov/cfapps/state/state_energy_profiles.cfm?sid=NV)

<sup>8</sup> Database of State Incentives for Renewable and Efficiency (DSIRE) website at URL <http://www.dsireusa.org/>

Nye County Comprehensive / Master Plan

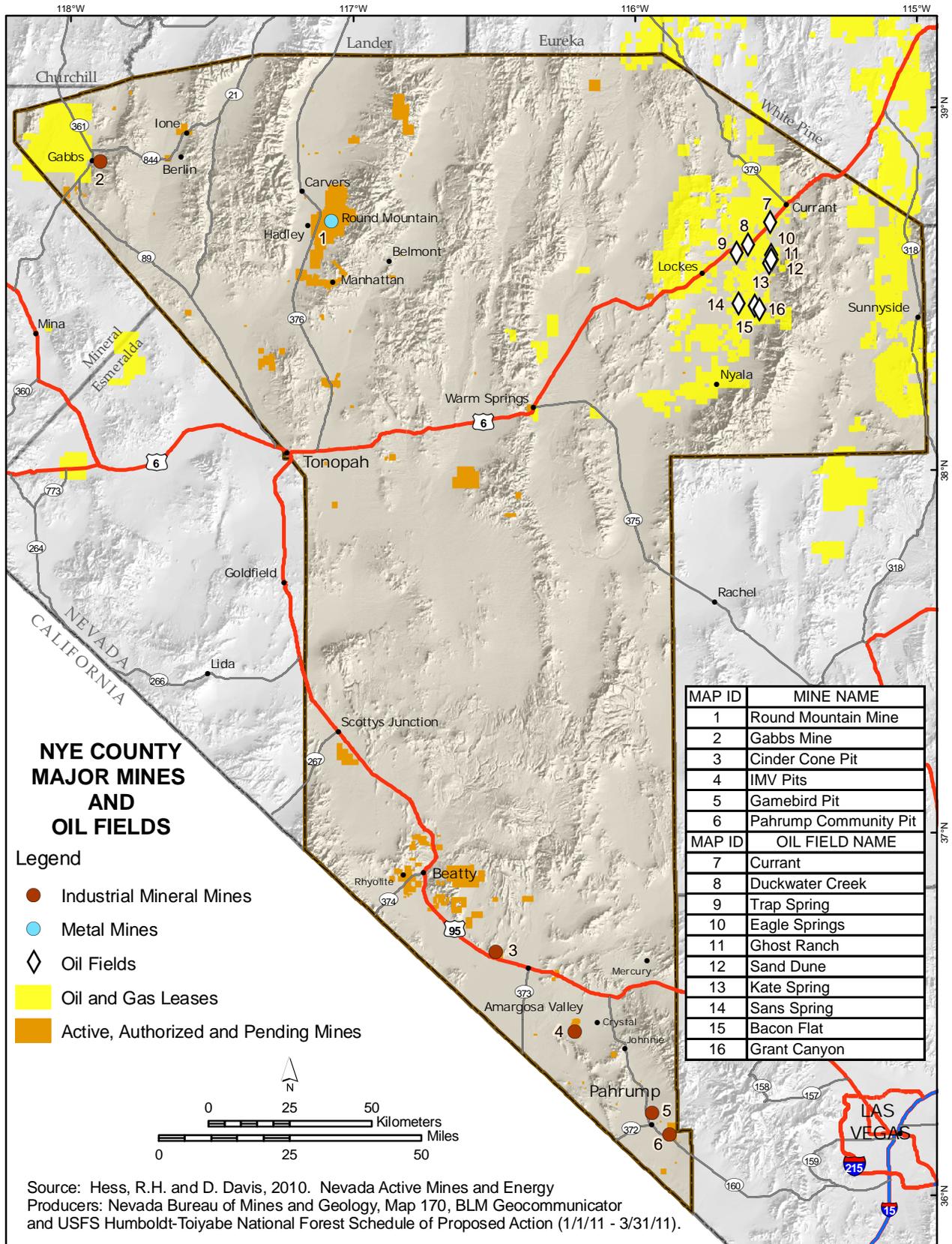


Figure 6. Major Mines and Oil Fields

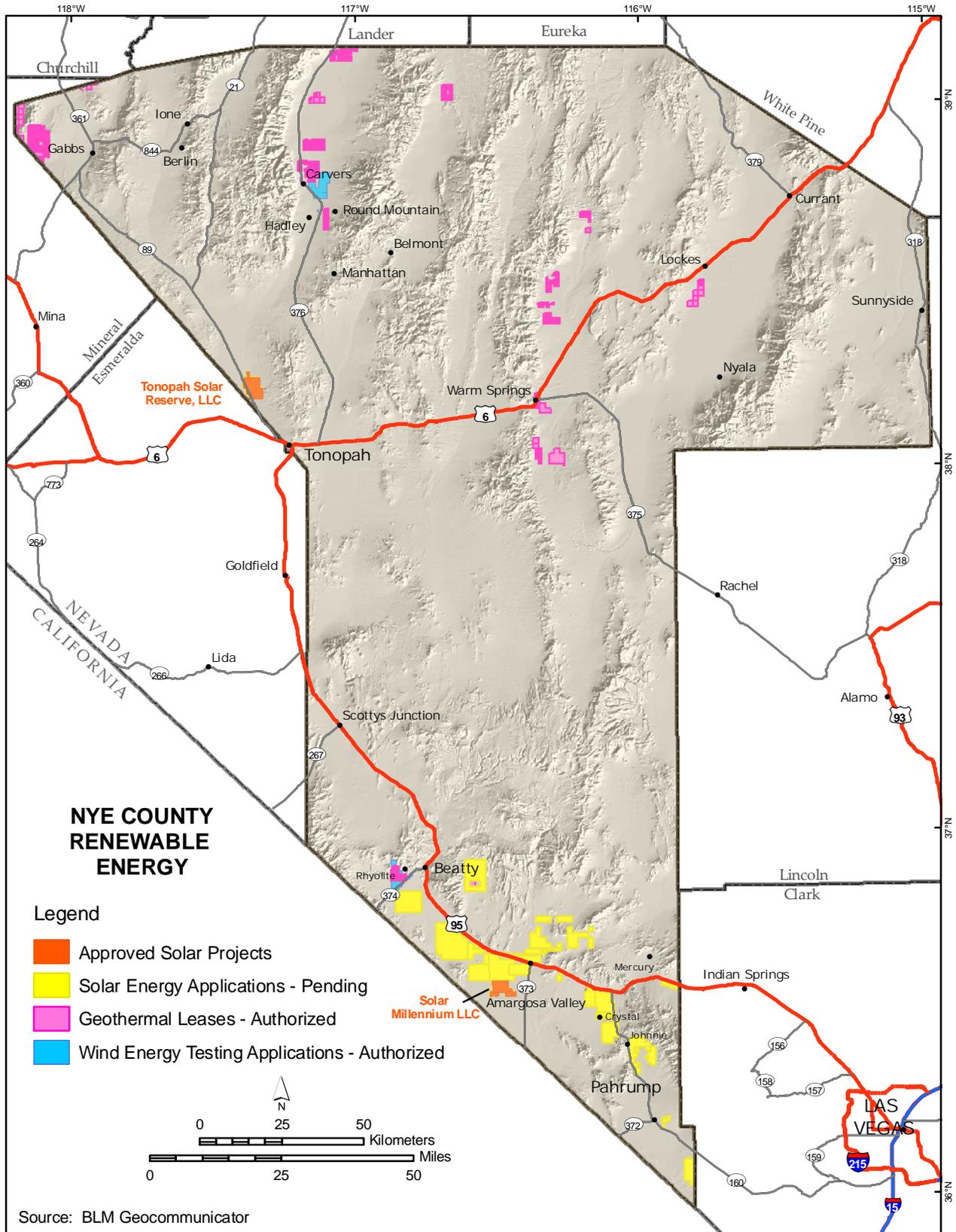


Figure 7. Potential Renewable Energy Development Areas.

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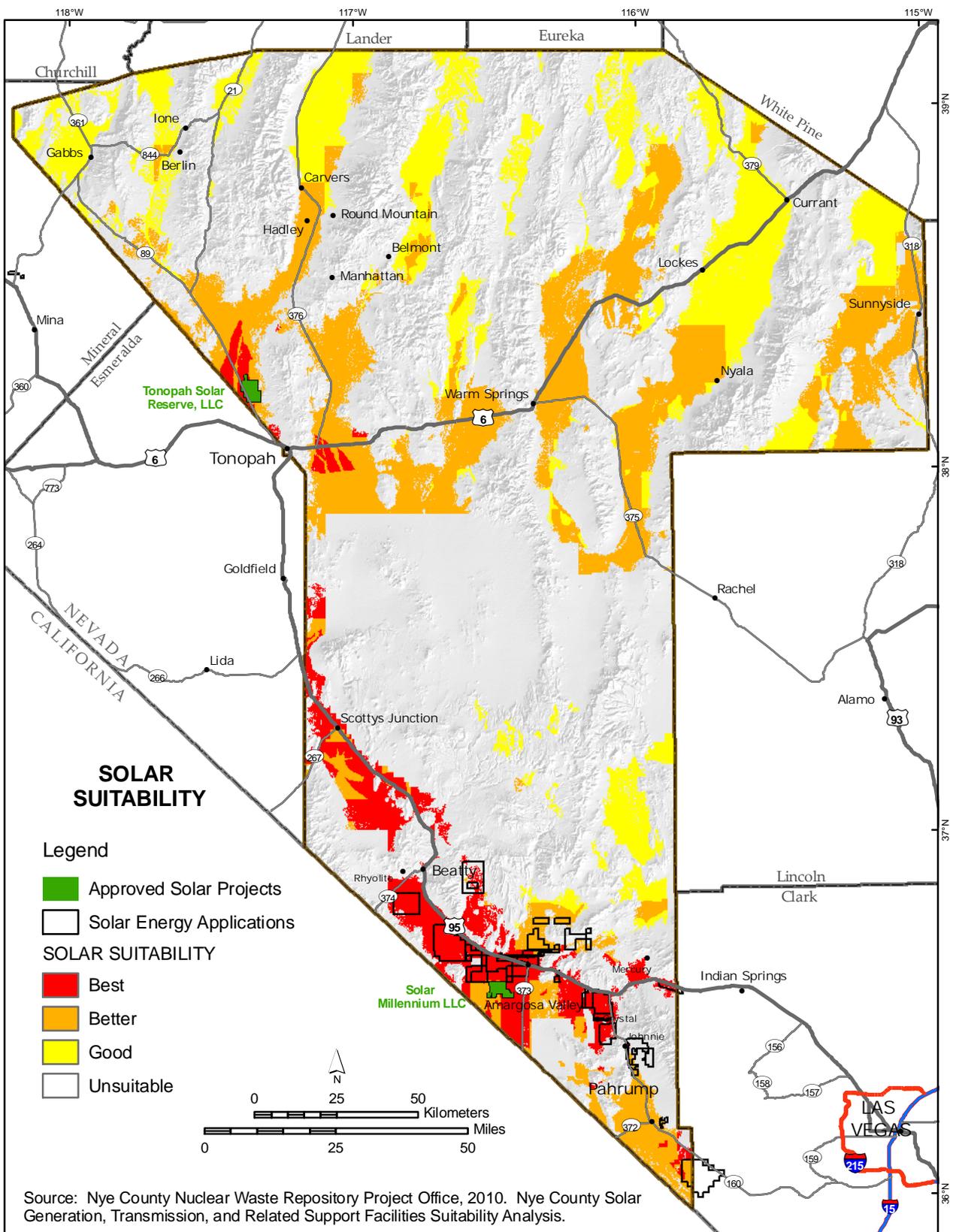


Figure 8. Solar Suitability in Nye County

### *3.5.2 Geothermal Resources*

Nevada has some of the richest geothermal resources in the world and is second in the nation in generating electricity from its geothermal power plants (U.S. Energy Information Administration). Nevada has the potential to become one of the most productive resource areas for geothermal energy generation. In a 2008 report, the USGS estimated that for identified geothermal resources in Nevada, during the next 30 years electrical power generation will range from 515 to 2,551 megawatts, with a mean probability of 1,391 megawatts. Additional electric power generation potentials are estimated for undiscovered geothermal resources and enhanced geothermal systems.

A large portion of Nye County is considered very favorable for development of enhanced geothermal systems. Several new geothermal plants are planned to meet Nevada's renewable energy portfolio standard. Map 5 – Nye County Geothermal Resources shows that Gabbs, Railroad, Monitor and Hot Springs valleys within Nye County have the potential for high-temperature (>150°C) geothermal systems. The site in Nye County that is being investigated as a location for development of a production facility is the Darroughs Hot Springs Area. Currently, Nye County receives \$561,815 from geothermal lease payments annually.

### *3.5.3 Wind Resources*

Nye County has abundant wind resources, although wind power is the youngest of the alternative energy sources used in the state (Nevada Commission on Economic Development). Areas with annual average wind speeds around 6.5 meters/second and greater at the 80 meter height are generally considered to have suitable wind resource for wind development. The DOE's Wind Program and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) developed an updated wind resource map for the state of Nevada in January 2010. This map indicates that Nevada has wind resources consistent with utility-scale production. Good-to-excellent wind resources are located on the higher ridge crests throughout Nye County and the state (Figure 9).

### *3.5.4 Biomass*

Biomass is a renewable source of energy derived from biological materials such as wood and waste used to generate electricity. Over many decades the expansion of pinyon-juniper woodlands in Nye County have resulted in ecosystems that are less resilient to fire, more prone to erosion, provide poorer habitat for wildlife, and are at higher risk for invasion of insects, noxious weeds and undesirable vegetation. These are the forests that are the subject of study for potential biomass utilization.

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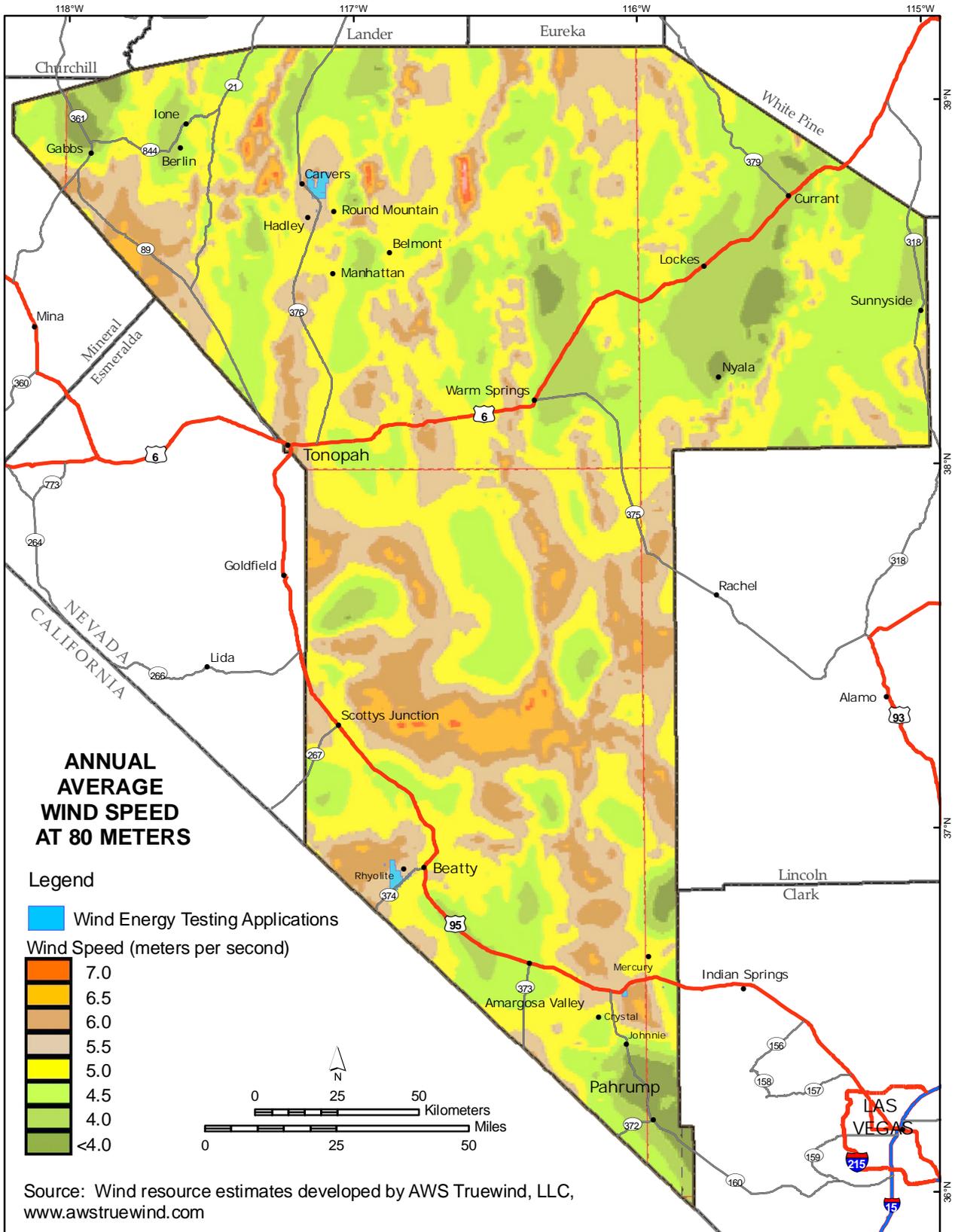


Figure 9. Wind Resource Estimates

### 3.5.5 Goals, Objectives and Policies

**RENEWABLE ENERGY GOAL-1:** To maximize the use of freely available alternative energy resources in Nye County.

Objective 1 - Promote the use of environmentally responsible alternative energy sources.

*Policy A. The county should examine alternate energy sources, such as wind and solar power, and determine the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of harnessing and utilizing these resources in county facilities.*

**RENEWABLE ENERGY GOAL-2:** To encourage new residential developments to include environmentally responsible energy conservation measures.

Objective 1 - Improve the level of energy efficiency in local building projects in order to reduce the overall demand for electric power and natural gas resources.

*Policy A. The county should endorse building practices that include energy-efficiencies.*

**RENEWABLE ENERGY GOAL-3:** To promote energy and resource conservation in existing developments and facilities.

Objective 1 - Demonstrate Nye County's commitment to energy and resource conservation and encourage others to follow the county's example.

*Policy A. Retrofit existing county facilities to be more energy and resource efficient. Examples include installation of low water-use toilets, installation of energy efficient windows and lighting, and efficient heating/cooling systems.*

*Policy B. Implement education programs and policies that encourage conservation of energy.*

**RENEWABLE ENERGY GOAL-4:** To provide for Nevada's energy needs through coordinated resource planning and management between private enterprise and government to plan for development of energy resources.

Objective 1 - Ensure federal land management agencies develop an inventory of possible sites for solar, wind, geothermal and biomass power facilities.

Objective 2 - Inventory oil and gas resources and encourage development of those resources. Public lands with a high potential for oil or gas resources should not be withdrawn from exploration.

Objective 3 - Plan future energy transmission corridors in conjunction with other uses on public and private lands.

### 3.6 Nye County Flood Prone Areas

The most readily available source of information regarding the 100-year flood is the system of Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) prepared by FEMA. These maps are used to support the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The FIRM maps show 100-year floodplain boundaries for identified flood hazards. These areas are also referred to as Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) and are the basis for flood insurance and floodplain management requirements. The FIRMs also show floodplain boundaries for the 500-year flood, which is the flood having a 0.2 percent chance of occurrence in any given year. The most recent FIRM map for Nye County is dated February 17, 2010 (Map 6 – Nye County Flood Zones).

In order to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate damage or destruction due to flooding, the BOCC developed goals, policies and objectives and passed Nye County Ordinance No. 149. This ordinance, known as the Nye County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, is in effect as of February 1, 1993.

#### 3.6.1 Goals, Objectives and Policies

**FLOOD CONTROL AND DRAINAGE GOAL-1:** To promote public health, safety and welfare and minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas.

Objective 1 - Protect human life and health and public and private investment.

Objective 2 - Minimize expenditures of public money for costly flood control projects.

Objective 3 - Minimize the need for rescue and relief efforts associated with flooding.

Objective 4 - Minimize damage to public facilities and utilities located in areas of special flood hazard.

Objective 5 - Develop a process whereby property owners and potential buyers can readily ascertain if property is in an area of special flood hazard.

Objective 6 - Require those who occupy the areas of special flood hazard to assume responsibility for their actions.

*Policy A. Restrict or prohibit uses that are dangerous to health, safety and property due to water or erosion hazards or that result in damaging increases in erosion or flood heights or velocities.*

*Policy B. Require that uses vulnerable to flood damage are properly protected against flood damage at the time of initial construction.*

*Policy C. Control the alteration of natural flood plains, stream channels and natural protective barriers which help accommodate or channel floodwaters. Construct flood control facilities to reduce storm water runoff.*

*Policy D. Control filling, grading, dredging and other development that may increase flood damage. Discourage the disruption of natural flow patterns and encourage the maximum use of natural drainage ways for runoff control, trails and open space.*

*Policy E. Prevent or regulate the construction of flood barriers that will unnaturally divert floodwaters onto other areas.*

*Policy F. Require engineered flood plain and hydrologic analysis to be prepared for new large development projects within the 100-year flood plain.*



Flooding in the Amargosa River drainage basin, February 1998 along State Line Road. (Photo courtesy of Walter E. Nylund, U.S. Geological Survey).

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#### **4.0 ECONOMIC PLAN**

This topic, as described by NRS 278.160, should “show recommended schedules for the allocation and expenditure of public money in order to provide for the economical and timely execution of the various components of the plan.”

The appropriation, allocation and scheduling of funds for infrastructure and improvement projects is of critical importance for the continued growth and vitality of Nye County. The prioritization of capital improvement projects establishes a hierarchy of need coordinated with the availability of funds.

Sound infrastructure and public facilities are essential for the safety and convenience of residents and the provision of high quality services to residents and visitors alike. The purpose of this element is to describe revenue sources, infrastructure and improvement funding needs and provide a schedule of expenditures for Nye County. The element also sets forth goals, policies and programs that encourage decision-makers to provide support for the maintenance and expansion of infrastructure and the continued improvements that will benefit the residents and businesses within Nye County as well as visitors to the county.

#### **4.1 Capital Improvement Plans**

A capital improvement plan, or CIP, is a short-range plan, usually four to ten years, which identifies capital projects and equipment purchases, provides a planning schedule and identifies options for financing the plan. Essentially, the plan provides a link between a municipality, school district, parks and recreation department and/or other local government entity and a comprehensive and strategic plans and the entity’s annual budget.

#### **4.2 Capital Improvement Funding Sources**

Impact fees imposed on new development is one method to finance costs for constructing capital improvements or facility expansions necessitated by new development. As a result of fluctuations in economic conditions and population growth, that annual amount of funding can vary from year to year.

#### **4.3 Future Capital Improvement Funding Sources**

For the county to fund the necessary expansion of facilities over the next several years, the county will need to consider alternative finding sources in addition to those in current use. Additional funding sources may be:

- Bonds – General obligation bonds or revenue bonds may be used for parks and recreation projects, public safety facilities and County facility projects.
- Public land sales – Proceeds from the sales of public lands may fund the development of parks, trails and natural areas.
- Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) Bonds – Reimbursements for street construction and flood control projects may be received from RTC bond proceeds. The debt would be repaid with gasoline taxes.

- Fire Safety Tax – A property tax may be used to improve the county’s fire protection facilities and staffing.
- Sales Tax increase – Reimbursement received from a sales tax increase may be used to repay bonds issued to design and construct flood control projects.
- Contributions – Businesses or individuals who either wish to fund special projects or want a particular benefit, e.g., road surfacing and drainage projects are partially funded with contributions to have the project completed.
- Fund Balance – Reserve monies accumulated from prior years’ appropriations for work-in-progress projects.
- Future Bonds – General obligations bonds or revenue bonds to be issued in the future per the CIP recommendation.
- Grants – Federal monies received from:
  - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs.
  - HOME Grant programs.
- Local Governments – Reimbursements from other government entities per interlocal agreements.
- Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) – Reimbursements received from NDOT paid from tax revenue for traffic safety programs, as well as gasoline tax revenues for roadway maintenance.
- Room Tax – Monies received from the State of Nevada for a legislatively imposed one percent motel/hotel room tax to be used exclusively for transportation projects.
- Service Fees – Charges to individuals based on their usage on special services.
- Special Assessments – Amounts received from certain property owners to defray all or part of the cost of capital improvement projects deemed to benefit those owners’ properties.

#### **4.4 Restricted Funds**

Restricted funds are those that are limited in some manner such as a specific geographic area like a neighborhood or town. Examples of these funds are:

##### Special Improvement Districts (SID)

A SID is a device whereby the county acts as the agent for property owners to construct streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, sewer and water lines, streetlights and other local improvements. It is the only mechanism the law provides for having public improvements made in an area when 1) the property owners in the area desire the improvement, but some or all of them cannot pay in cash, or 2) when the majority of property owners in the area want an improvement and the minority does not want to pay its fair share. The basic purpose of a SID is to afford a property owner the opportunity of using their property as collateral for financing their prorated share of the proposed improvement and allows payment of this indebtedness at a low rate of interest which is based on the Bond Buyers Index of 20 Municipal Bonds most recent publication of

rates. Property owners have the option of paying for the costs of the improvement within 30 days or may extend their payments over a period of 2 to 30 years.

#### Business Improvement District (BID)

A BID provides improvements and activities such as sidewalk cleaning, trash collection, graffiti removal, security, marketing and events to a commercial district. Its purpose is to supplement, not replace, government services. BIDS are based on a benefit assessment model whereby property owners in a given area agree to assess themselves additional revenues that will be used for services in that area. These revenues are not managed by the county but by property owners themselves. A BID is formed by the private sector, which in most cities must show that a majority of those who will pay the assessment are in support, usually through filing a positive petition with the county Commission. The BID board of directors is made up of district property and business owners who set the policies and oversee operations. The board hires professional staff to manage the district on a daily basis.

#### Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

CDBG is a grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on a formula basis for entitlement communities. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development. Nye County is an entitlement community grantee which utilizes CDBG funding to develop viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment and opportunities to expand economic opportunities principally for low and moderate income persons. HUD awards grants to entitlement community grantees to carry out a wide range of community development activities directed toward revitalizing neighborhoods, economic development and providing improved community facilities and services.

#### General Improvement District (GID)

The GID is a quasi-public agency established under NRS 318 authorized to construct, acquire, operate and maintain public facilities in the district. The GID can be formed by any county commissioners or an elected board of trustees. The GID may set rates, tolls and fees to be charged for the provision of the facilities and services that it determines to preserve or enhance the general health, safety and welfare of the community. The GID may also borrow or raise funds to acquire, construct and/or provide those facilities and services to the community. The GID has the power to levy and collect taxes necessary to sustain its operations.

Within the limits of the statutes, the GID is empowered to provide certain facilities and services to the community, which gives it more control over the level of facilities and services offered as well as their maintenance. The GID is authorized to issue various types of securities to fund facilities, services, maintenance and its operations, such as Revenue Bonds, GO Bonds and Assessment Bonds, all of which offer more public financing options for the developers and builders.

*4.4.1 Goals, Objectives and Policies*

**ECONOMIC GOAL-1:** To develop a countywide CIP program.

Objective 1- Determine the optimal funding method to finance future CIP projects.

Objective 2 - Plans for the service and facility needs of the county as a whole.

*Policy A. County will investigate the alternatives for funding the county's CIP needs.*

**ECONOMIC GOAL-2:** To evaluate the CIP on an annual basis.

Objective 1 - Ensure projects that maintain public welfare and/or essential services and infrastructure such as roadways, flood control and sanitary sewer systems are given the highest priority and are adequately funded.

## 5.0 HISTORIC PROPERTIES PRESERVATION PLAN

Per NRS 278.160, this topic involves “an inventory of significant historical archeological and architectural properties as defined by a city, county or region, and statement of methods to encourage preservation of those properties.”

This section of the plan establishes goals, objectives and policies for the protection of historic properties located within Nye County. Nye County has many buildings, objects, districts and sites that have historic, archaeological, cultural and/or architectural significance that should be preserved in order to appreciate the early development of the county.

The positive economic value of preserving historic urban areas for cultural and heritage tourism has long been substantiated. Preservation not only has intrinsic value but can also stabilize and improve the value of adjacent buildings and promote neighborhood enhancement. An additional economic rationale for historic preservation includes the benefits of rehabilitating and reusing older buildings, since the existing investment in the structure and servicing of a building reduces material and labor costs. In addition, special local, state and/or federal tax incentives and grant funding may also be available. The National Register of Historic Places, a division of the NPS, is the nation’s inventory of historic places worthy of preservation.

### 5.1 National Register of Historic Places

Nye County has 51 designated historic resources, which include buildings, structures, sites, districts and objects. These resources are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Each designated resource in Nye County has an association with Nye County history. Of the 51 historic resources, the Belmont Courthouse and Berlin are owned and maintained by Nevada State Parks. Ownership of most of the sites are private, particularly those sites in Tonopah. Places and buildings in Nye County that have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places are shown in Table 1.



Curtis House in Tonopah, Nevada – National Register #82003227. (Photo accessed from URL <http://www.noehill.com> on April 28, 2011).

**Table 1. National Register of Historic Places for Nye County.**

NAME	ADDRESS	DATE ENTERED
Bartlett, George A., House	123 Stewart Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Bass Building	119 St. Patrick, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Belmont Historic District	46 miles NE of Tonopah, off NV 82, Tonopah vicinity	6/13/1972
Berg, William H., House	Mariposa and Davis Streets, Round Mountain	1/11/1984
Berlin Historic District	Off Nevada 23, Berlin	11/5/1971
Boak, Cada C., House	Ellis Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Board and Batten Cottage	Prospect Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Board and Batten Miners Cabin	Oddie Avenue, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Brann Boardinghouse	Bryan Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Brokers Exchange	209-251 Brougner Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Brown, Hugh H., House	129 Ellis Street, Tonopah vicinity	5/20/1982
Burdick, E.E., House	248 Prospect Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Butler, Jim, Mining Company; Stone Row Houses	314 Everett Avenue, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Campbell and Kelly Building	Corona and Main Streets, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Clinton, Charles, Stone Row House	151 Central Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Combella Adobe Row House	Central Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Curtis, Uri B., House/Tasker L.; Oddie House	Ellis Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Dunham, Samuel C., House	Belmont Avenue, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Frame Cottage	183 Prospect Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Gatecliff Rockshelter	SE of Austin, Austin vicinity	4/27/1979
Golden, Frank, Block	Brougner and Main Streets, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Gregovich, John, House	101 Summit Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
James Wild Horse Trap	About 5 miles E. of Fish Springs, Fish Springs vicinity	11/19/1974
Kendall, Zeb, House	159 University Avenue, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Manhattan School	Gold Street between Mineral Street and Dexter Avenue, Manhattan	3/8/2006
Masterson, Dr. J.R., House	Ohio Avenue and Second Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
McDonald, Irving, House	191 Booker Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982

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NAME	ADDRESS	DATE ENTERED
McKim, H.A., Building	Main and Oddie Streets, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Mizpah Hotel	100 Main Street, Tonopah	7/7/1978
Nevada-California Power Company; Substation & Auxiliary Power Building	Corner of Knapp and Cutting Streets, Tonopah	7/26/1982
Nye County Courthouse	McCulloch Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Nye County Mercantile Company Building	147 Main Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Raycraft, Arthur, House	Booker Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Sawle, Judge W.A., House	155 Central Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Sedan Crater	Area 10, Nevada Test Site, Mercury vicinity	3/21/1994
Shaw, Cal, Stone Row House	Central Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Shields, E.R., House	351 St. Patrick, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Saint Marks P.E. Church	210 University Avenue, Tonopah	5/20/1982
State Bank and Trust Company	102 Brouher, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Stone Jail Building and Row House	Water Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Tonopah Liquor Company Building	Main Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Tonopah Main Post Office	201 Main Street, Tonopah	2/28/1990
Tonopah Mining Company Cottage	Queen Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Tonopah Mining Company House	Queen Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Tonopah Public Library	171 Central Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Tonopah Volunteer Firehouse and Gymnasium	Brouher and Burro Streets, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Tonopah-Extension Mining Company Power Building	Main Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Tybo Charcoal Kilns	About 55 miles NE of Tonopah, Off US 6, Tonopah vicinity	11/19/1974
Verdi Lumber Company Bldg	Main Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Water Company of Tonopah Building	Burro and Brouher Avenues, Tonopah	5/20/1982
Wieland Brewery Building	Mineral Street, Tonopah	5/20/1982

## 5.2 Towns with Historical Significance

**Beatty** - This historical community once served by three railroads, was founded as the central supply hub of the "Bullfrog Mining District." Beatty is located near the border of Death Valley National Park and is known as "the seen throughout the community. The Exchange Club built in 1906 still stands, old railroad beds are located on the edge of town, and mines and mining Ghost Towns, such as Rhyolite, dot the area.

**Gabbs** - The community of Gabbs, is located about 100 miles east of Carson City. Gabbs began as the early mining camp named for the mineral brucite before being founded around December of 1941 as a company town for a magnesium production plant. The town then became known as Gabbs in honor of a paleontologist who had studied fossils in the area. World War II increased the demand for magnesium, and the tiny community swelled with workers. However, the plant soon closed its doors and the population dwindled accordingly.

**Tonopah** - The community of Tonopah has a history that began about 1900 with the discovery of gold and silver ore by prospector Jim Butler; this discovery sparked one of the biggest mining booms in the state. The Tonopah Historic Mining Park, on the hillside above the town, offers a chance to explore the actual mines that created this mining juggernaut. Tonopah's Central Nevada Museum contains displays describing not only local mining history but also other cultural and social aspects of the region. Many of the town's buildings, such as the Mizpah Hotel and the Nye County Courthouse, were built in the early 20th century.

**Rhyolite** - Shorty Harris and E. L. Cross were prospecting in the area in 1904 and found quartz full of gold. Several mining camps were established and a town site was laid out and given the name Rhyolite from the silica-rich volcanic rock in the area. Today visitors can find several remnants of Rhyolite's glory days. Some of the walls of the three-story bank building are still standing, as is part of the old jail. The train depot (privately owned) is one of the few complete buildings left in the town, as is the Bottle House. Paramount pictures restored the Bottle House in January 1925.



Exchange Club in 1930. (Photo courtesy Beatty Museum & Historical Society).



Premier Magnesia, LLC in Gabbs. (Photo courtesy Gabbs Town Office).



Tonopah Scenic Mining Park. (Photo courtesy Richard Stephens).



Cook Bank Building in 1906, Rhyolite, Nevada. (Photo accessed from URL [http:// www.rhyolitenevada.com](http://www.rhyolitenevada.com) on April 28, 2011.

**Belmont** - From 1865 to 1890, the Belmont area produced about \$15 million in gold and silver. The Belmont Courthouse, built in 1876 approximately 11 years after the town was founded, served as the Nye County seat; it has been partially restored by the Nevada Division of State Parks.



The town of Belmont, Nevada in 1871. (Photo courtesy of NARA).

**Round Mountain** - Early in 1906, when substantial amounts of high-grade ore were discovered, the town of Round Mountain was established. The population rose to 400 by mid-year and by 1907 there were daily stages running between Round Mountain and Tonopah. By 1909 the town was host to hotels, stores, banks, a school, a library and a hospital. Over the years, mining has continued to be the main industry in Round Mountain.



Round Mountain circa 1910's. (Photo courtesy NV Historical Society).

### 5.2.1 Goal, Objectives, and Policies

**HISTORIC PROPERTIES PRESERVATION GOAL-1:** To promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation, maintenance and protection of structures, sites and districts of significant historic, architectural and archaeological interest within Nye County.

Objective 1 - Promote the preservation, maintenance and protection of structures, sites and districts of historic interest within Nye County.

*Policy A. Pursue all available state and federal grant funding pertaining to historic preservation.*

*Policy B. Promote the identification and preservation of significant cultural resources within communities.*

*Policy C. Promote a stewardship program to oversee historic resources.*

Objective 2 - Encourage community participation in the preservation planning process to achieve public understanding and support of preservation concepts and the value of cultural resources to the community.

*Policy A. Promote public education of historic preservation by distribution of information through media releases, publications and events.*

Objective 3 - Promote and encourage the stability of designated historic neighborhoods, sites and landmarks by preserving their historical and architectural integrity.

*Policy A. Promote design guidelines for historic preservation as developed by federal agencies such as the NPS.*

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## 6.0 RECREATION PLAN

NRS 278.160 states that this topic includes maps and text "showing a comprehensive system of recreation areas, including natural reservations, parks, parkways, reserved riverbank strips, beaches, play grounds and other recreation areas, including, when practicable, the locations and proposed development thereof."

A wide variety of recreational opportunities are available on public lands within Nye County. Activities include motorcycle and OHV riding, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, mountain bicycling, camping, collecting and harvesting, driving for pleasure, hiking and star-gazing. Visitors need to be prepared for wide temperature changes and alert for fire/fuels conditions and seasonal restrictions. Locations for some of these recreation areas are shown in Map 7.

### 6.1 Points of Interest

#### 6.1.1 National Recreation Trails<sup>9</sup>

National Recreation Trails are existing trails that include river routes, historic and nature trails. Of the five trails in Nevada that are included in the National Trails System; one is partially located in Nye County. The Toiyabe Crest National Recreation Trail is 72 miles long trail and runs down the spine of the Toiyabe Range. Thirty miles of the trail lie in the Arc Dome Wilderness, Nevada's largest Wilderness Area. There are hundreds of miles of trails that cross Nevada's public lands, offering access to a wide spectrum of recreational opportunities.

#### 6.1.2 National Parks

##### Death Valley National Park (DVNP)

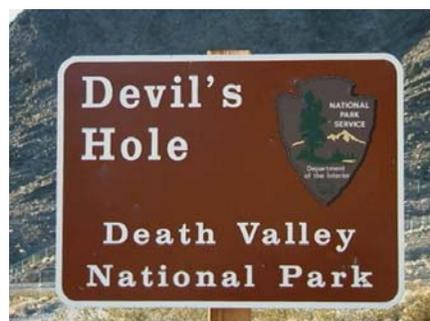
A small portion of DVNP is located in Nye County, just 13 miles from the Town of Beatty. DVNP is a "land of extremes," hosting the hottest, driest and lowest areas in the U.S; it is also the largest national park in the contiguous U.S. DVNP is a world famous tourist destination. There are a wide variety of recreational opportunities including: sightseeing, bicycling, hiking, backpacking, camping, four-wheel driving, stargazing, bird-watching, photography and guided tours (e.g., Scotty's Castle, historic mining sites, and flora and fauna).



Artist's pallet. (Photo courtesy NPS).

##### Devils Hole

Devils Hole is administered by the National Park Service as part of the DVNP and is located within the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. Devils Hole is a water-filled cavern cut into the side of a hill that is over 500 feet deep. The 93° F water of Devils Hole is the only natural habitat of the endangered Devils Hole Pupfish.



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<sup>9</sup> From the Public Lands Information Center website at URL <http://publiclands.org>

### 6.1.3 National Forests

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest covers 6.3 million acres, making it the largest national forest in the contiguous U.S. Located in Nevada and a small portion of eastern California, the forest offers year-round recreation of all types, including camping, fishing, hiking, OHV riding, picnicking, scenic driving and winter sports. The forest contains an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. The various types of heritage resources range from prehistoric rock art to the ghost towns of the 19th century to Euro-American emigrant trails and roads. Evidence of both historic Native American camps and prehistoric occupations are abundant throughout the forest.



Toquima Range. (Photo courtesy U.S. Forest Service).

### 6.1.4 Wildlife Refuges and Management areas

#### Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is located at the southern end of the Amargosa Valley, encompassing 23,000 acres of spring-fed wetlands and alkaline desert uplands managed by the FWS. Ash Meadows is a desert oasis, which is extremely rare in the southwest U.S. The refuge provides habitat for at least 24 plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. There are numerous recreational opportunities available at Ash Meadows, including wildlife observation, picnicking, hiking and hunting.



Longstreet Spring. (Photo courtesy U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service).

#### Railroad Valley Wildlife Management Area (WMA)

Located in northeastern Nye County is home to over 147 species of birds. The Railroad Valley WMA is accessible from U.S.-6 the area provides habitat for migratory and nesting waterfowl, non-game birds, mammals and fish.

#### Wayne E. Kirch WMA

Located in the White River Valley in northeastern Nye County, State Route 318 is the major access route to the area. Wayne Kirch is composed of a total of 14,815 acres, including five major reservoirs that support an abundance of fish and wildlife that contribute significantly to the biological diversity of central Nevada. Public wildlife-related recreation uses include hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, sightseeing, photography, horseback riding, camping, educational activities, swimming and hiking.

### 6.1.5 State Parks

#### Berlin - Ichthyosaur State Park<sup>10</sup>

Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park is located 23 miles east of Gabbs, on State Route 844. The Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park was first established in 1957 to protect and display North America's most abundant concentration and largest known ichthyosaur fossils. Ichthyosaurs were prehistoric marine reptiles, and those found at the Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park are among the largest specimen known, with most being about 50 feet long.

The nearby mining claims of Berlin were purchased in 1970 and incorporated into the state park. The park offers a unique look into the life and times of the early 20th century mining town of Berlin. A trail through the town site tells the story of Berlin and its mine. Remains of ichthyosaurs are on display at the park's Fossil House.

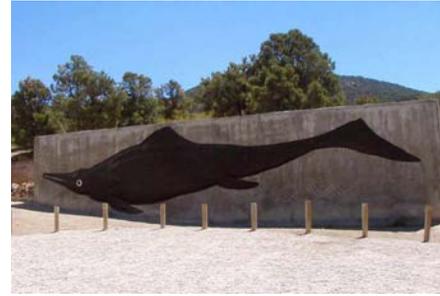
The park provides several recreational opportunities including nature trails, hiking, camping, picnicking, a self-guided tour of the Berlin town site, and guided tours of the fossil shelter and Diana Mine.

#### Belmont Courthouse State Historic Park<sup>11</sup>

Built in 1876, the Belmont Courthouse was the seat of Nye County's government until 1905. The building is partially restored and a short, self-guided trail highlights historic features of the site. The ghost town of Belmont is located 45 miles northeast of Tonopah.

### 6.1.6 Wilderness Areas

Federally designated wilderness areas can only be created by an act of Congress. Generally, a wide variety of activities are permitted in wilderness areas, such as hunting, fishing, grazing, camping, backpacking, horseback riding, and cross-county skiing, but no permanent facilities or new roads can be built. Motorized vehicles are prohibited except for special purposes such as search and rescue missions.



Ichthyosaur. (Photo courtesy Nevada Division of State Parks).



Berlin town site. (Photo courtesy Nevada Division of State Parks).



Belmont Courthouse. (Photo courtesy Nevada Division of State Parks).

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<sup>10</sup> From Nevada Division of State Parks, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park website at URL <http://parks.nv.gov/bi.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> From Nevada Division of State Parks, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Belmont Courthouse State Historic Park website at URL <http://parks.nv.gov/bc.htm>.

There are eight wilderness areas within or partially within Nye County: Alta Toquima Wilderness, Arc Dome Wilderness, Current Mountain Wilderness, Grant Range Wilderness, Quinn Canyon Wilderness, South Egan Range Wilderness, Table Mountain Wilderness and Weepah Spring Wilderness (Map 7).

### 6.1.7 Scenic Drives

Scenic roads throughout the county offer unique combinations of recreation adventures, scenic attractions and many photo opportunities.

#### Lunar Crater Back Country Byway<sup>12</sup>

Located 75 miles east of Tonopah, the 24-mile byway meanders through the volcanic features of the Lunar Crater Volcanic Field. Maars, cinder cones, mesas, cuerdas, ash flows, lava flows, fault ridges and alkali playas can be viewed along the route. The Lunar Crater Volcanic Field is comprised of cinder cones, outcrops of lava, elongated fissures, ash hills and, most visible, the 430 foot deep Lunar Crater. The crater is designated a National Natural Landmark, one of six in Nevada.

#### NV 375, The Extraterrestrial Highway<sup>13</sup>

NV 375 has become internationally known as “The Extraterrestrial Highway” on account of the high incidence of UFOs reportedly seen in the skies above. The road is also notable because of its proximity to the vast NTTR and NNSS, where many top-secret missiles, aircraft and weaponry have been trialed since the 1950s, though the fame is due in particular to one small part of the base known as Area 51.

#### Tonopah Star Trails<sup>14</sup>

Tonopah has the unique distinction of having one of the darkest nighttime skies in the county, making it among the best places to stargaze. “Tonopah Star Trails” have been identified for stargazers to travel to experience the opportunity where the brightest lights around are those in the sky.



Cliffs along Mt. Jefferson, in the Alta Toquima Wilderness. (Photo courtesy Wikimedia).



Lunar Crater Volcanic Field. (Photo courtesy BLM).

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<sup>12</sup> From Bureau of Land Management Favorite Scenic Drives: Lunar Crater Back Country Byway website URL [http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/res/Education\\_in\\_BLM/Learning\\_Landscapes/For\\_Travelers/go/scenic\\_drives/lunar\\_crater.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/res/Education_in_BLM/Learning_Landscapes/For_Travelers/go/scenic_drives/lunar_crater.html)

<sup>13</sup> From The American Southwest, Scenic Drives: NV 375, The Extraterrestrial Highway website at URL [http://www.americansouthwest.net/nevada/scenic\\_drives/nv375.html](http://www.americansouthwest.net/nevada/scenic_drives/nv375.html)

<sup>14</sup> From Tonopah Star Trails website at URL <http://www.tonopahstartrails.com>

## 6.2 Goals, Objectives and Policies

The following goals, objectives and policies have been developed to address recreation.

**RECREATION GOAL-1:** To encourage the use and enjoyment of the many recreational opportunities available within Nye County.

Objective 1 - Encourage responsible use of the resources of the back country.

*Policy A. Manage backcountry travel and use to preserve cultural, historical, archaeological, and paleontological resources.*

*Policy B. Work closely with local, state, tribal and other affected parties and other resource users in OHV planning.*

*Policy C. Establish and maintain an inventory of existing routes and trails as part of the land use planning process.*

*Policy D. Promote educational programs for the responsible use of public lands.*

**RECREATION GOAL -2:** To conserve and protect scenic, historical and recreational resources.

Objective 1 - Encourage recreational opportunities on public lands.

*Policy A. Work to improve opportunities for unstructured recreation such as camping, fishing, hunting and OHV activities in Nye County on public lands.*

Objective 2 - Identify and develop public lands for concentrated recreational use (e.g., campgrounds, historic sites, water recreational sites).

*Policy A. Work with the Division of State Parks, to designate and plan future recreational sites within Nye County.*

*Policy B. Acquire public lands for parks where economically feasible for the county to maintain in order to retain popular recreation areas.*

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## 7.0 REFERENCES

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**8.0 MAP FIGURES**

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