

# Mineral County 2022 Master Plan



# *America's Patriotic Home*

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through the FY 2021-2022 and 2021-2022 Budgets**



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(Photo by Betty Easley)

Corry Peak in Wassuk Range

## **SECTION I: INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to Mineral County, the patriotic home of the great state of Nevada. The Mineral County Board of Commissioners and its Regional Planning Commission views this 2021 Master Plan as our outline for planning for the County's future needs and growth.

It is the want of the Mineral County residents, the members of the Regional Planning Commission, and the governing body to have a pleasant and progressive County where people can live and work, without sacrificing the traditional rural atmosphere inherent in the unincorporated areas of the County and respect the rights of property owners.

This Master Plan will serve as a policy for the future by setting up goals and policy to direct growth responsibly, solve problems, and improve the welfare of life for County residents. Not only will this plan guide land use decisions but will also serve as a reference and blueprint for community decision, as well for public and private sector initiatives.



(Photo by Mike Trujillo)

Big Horn Sheep – Nevada State Animal

Economies are complex, tax breaks or other enticements could convince a large company to move to our area, but most new businesses will be small, and home-grown. Let us find out what they need, and then develop the physical and fiscal infrastructure that encourages entrepreneurship. Urban refugees seeking a higher quality of life away from sprawl, pollution, and congestion bring jobs with them, create new jobs for locals and help drive the demand for housing sales and construction. With the effect of telecommunications technology, we can create many new opportunities for growth. This urban economy in a rural setting requires that we put in place incentives to attract new

businesses. We have one of the most scenic valleys in Nevada. People are attracted to the most beautiful areas. There is a consensus among those that analyze and work in the world of economic development, it is simple. We need an educated and trained work force, high performing public schools, easy access to large regional markets, and available industrial and commercial real estate with adequate potable water resources. We have an airport, major highway transportations routes, and access to the railroad. We in the west have a tremendous entrepreneurial spirit and given the right incentives with the right information we have always been creative and competitive. We need to ask ourselves whether we have the education, infrastructure, and political will to capture the high paying, high skill jobs.

In this Master Plan, we will cover a multitude of subjects, many of which are directly hinged to diversify and expand on our natural resources; solar, and geothermal energy producing elements, all plentiful in our region, and every one of these energy producers fall within the parameters of a national objective of expansion. It is incumbent upon us to pursue every avenue toward development and production of these natural resources; they all have a capability to directly benefit our economy. Water issues are also a vital element to our past, present, and future. The matter of Walker Lake and its tributaries have long been a concern of Mineral County as Walker Lake, the Walker River, and Weber Reservoir all hinge on sustaining a volume of water sufficient to keep them at an acceptable level to serve our recreational needs. Our fisheries, aquatic life, scenic lakes, and river all help sustain our economy and give enjoyment for the citizens and visitors alike.

The Nevada Statutes (NRS) urges counties and cities within to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the county, which in the judgment of the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission bears relation to the planning thereof.

NRS278.150 specifies the preparation and adoption procedures by the Planning Commission and the adoption by the governing board.

NRS Chapter 278 amended in 2013 to include an amended section on Master Plan Elements as well as a new section requiring utility plans. Based upon our population this plan will cover Housing, Land use, transportation, an above ground utilities plan, and education.

The County may prepare and adopt, as part of the Master Plan, other and additional plans and reports dealing with such other subjects as may be in its judgment related to the physical development of the County within NRS 278.010 to 278.630 inclusive, prohibiting the preparation and adoption of any such subjects as a part of the Master Plan.

## **A. Compliance**

Provisions in the NRS refer to the required promotion of the public interest in NRS 278.190 and further outlines the procedure to prepare and adopt a Master Plan in NRS 278.210 to 278.225 inclusive. Mineral County will in this process follow those procedures toward adoption of this plan. The Mineral County Board of Commissioners have authorized the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission to prepare this 2021 Master Plan, funded through the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 fiscal years' budgets.

## **B. Land Capability Analysis**

Although many existing topographic and infrastructure location features tend to lead the way on the locating of human habitation, we are also confined by 95% federally managed lands. The land capability analysis system of identifying the most desirable lands for development is considered with this plan and provides future options should the occasion arise. The series of maps used in this analysis are Slope Analysis Map, Water Availability Map, Critical Vegetation Map, and Agricultural Lands Map. To ascertain the most desirable, developable areas in the County, this series of maps should be overlaid with one another to identify conflicts. The natural and environmental constraints are all thus combined to produce land areas most suitable to support and expand concentrations of people. The Land Capability Map is the result of lands most suited to develop.

## **C. Plan Development Process**

The planning process in terms of this section is to provide information on how the plan was compiled. That includes information and data used, how it is subjected to scrutiny, and how it is intended to be publicized and advertised. The public was urged to take part in the process. All required subject matter referenced in NRS Chapter 278.160 has been addressed in this plan, either directly or indirectly, and considered elements to the plan.

## D. Land Use and Zoning

Land use and zoning are often confused with one another. So that it is clear, the following descriptive definitions are provided:

- *LAND USE*: a term used when referring to the distinct types of uses on a Master Plan, and limited to the basics, such as residential, commercial, industrial, etc., with no definitive breakdown of each use.
- *ZONING*: a more definitive, placement of uses allowed or not allowed on a specific parcel or lot, usually defined by a line along property lines or rights of way. Zoning also breaks down the density of residential uses, and the type of commercial, such as, heavy or light, etc.

When using descriptive or graphic presentations of a land use, it is done in a generalized or random configuration. Zoning lines are much more specific and can readily determine the use between two contiguous lots or parcels.

To use the Master Plan designations (general in nature), one must decide, usually the Planning Administrator, if a specific parcel or lot is defined as a category allowable for the use intended. Once that is decided by the Administrator or Planning Commission, any further determinations then can be made. A question must be answered before any re-zoning is considered and that is, "Does the proposed zone change comply with the Master Plan?" If the answer is yes, the process may continue. If the answer is no, then there is a necessity to require a Master Plan amendment before the zone change shall be considered. This process is the essence of utilizing a Master Plan to meet the land use goals of a Master Plan.

The land use designations of this Master Plan are defined in the following categories: RESIDENTIAL, MULTIPLE RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, PUBLIC OWNED LAND, and RECREATIONAL. All of which shall be found in the legend of the real Master Plan Map attached herein.

The ZONING designations of Mineral County are specific to the Hawthorne general area, Mina, Luning, and Walker Lake Community area only and each has a recorded zoning map on file in the office of the County Recorder. The general provisions, definitions, districts, and general provisions of zoning are in the Mineral County Code, Title 17, and the list of allowable zone districts are as follows therein: (A-1) First Agricultural District, (A-2) Second Agricultural District, (R-1) Single Family District, (R-2) Limited Multiple Family Residential District, (R-3) Multiple Family Residential District, (TR) Trailer, (Mobile) Overlay Residential District, NC-R Neighborhood commercial/ rural District, RR Rural Ranchette District, (C-1) Commercial District, CD-1 Commercial, (M-1) Industrial District, DI Design Industrial, (P) Public District, and (M-3) Open Use District.

All areas in Mineral County that lie outside of the Hawthorne general area, Mina, Luning general area and the Walker Lake Community general area as found on each map thereof, is zoned M-3 Open Use District, which **REQUIRES ALL NON-RESIDENTIAL USES TO OBTAIN A SPECIAL USE PERMIT** (ref. MCC 1). This specific zone is unique to Mineral County and has a definite advantage over many other counties and cities in that all uses proposed beyond a farm, ranch, or single-family use, outside Hawthorne or the Walker Lake Community, require a public hearing before they may be allowed to commence improvements.



(Photo by Staci Emm)  
Cowboy riding the open spaces.

## **SECTION II: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND and FEATURES**

### **A. History and Features**

An inventory and research of ghost towns, old mines, old buildings, and railroad grades was prepared this year for Mineral County to complement our Public Lands Policy Plan. Considerable time and effort on the general issue of our public lands are addressed in this publication. Many of our historic features are on public lands with the disposition and all that is identifiable will be addressed as a part of the planning works herein. There are six (6) settlements in Mineral County: Hawthorne, Mina, Luning, Walker Lake, Schurz, and Montgomery Pass. The Hawthorne Weapons Army Depot, the largest of its kind in the world, which is at the south end of Walker Lake and near Hawthorne. At the north end of our County and Walker Lake is the Walker River Paiute Reservation with the community of Schurz.



(Photo by Mineral County Museum)  
Ghost Towns of Mineral County

In 1883, the legislature of Nevada approved an act to move the County government from Aurora to Hawthorne. The County at that time was Esmeralda County. The fast-growing town of Goldfield became the County seat in 1907. Mineral County, with the County seat in Hawthorne, was created by the Nevada State Legislature in 1911. Hawthorne, incorporated as a city in 1947, reverted to its unincorporated status in 1956. The ammunitions and manufacturing facility in New Jersey had a devastating explosion in 1928.

As a result, the U.S. Department of the Navy relocated by acquiring property in the more remote area of Mineral County, Nevada. The site nearly surrounds the town of Hawthorne. During World War II, the Hawthorne area was a large military town of about 10,000 residents. The town then included the housing area of Babbitt that adjoined the military depot administrative complex. Babbitt at that time was almost self-sufficient with its own school, bank, police, and fire department.

After the Korean conflict in 1950-53, the demand for munitions decreased substantially and the base operations began to decrease in kind. Prior to the current conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, the last conflicts of any magnitude were Vietnam in 1965-1975 and Desert Storm in 1990-91, the latter engagement using “hi-tech” weaponry not manufactured or stored here. This depot’s employees did however work a considerable amount of time on conventional munitions in support of Desert Storm.



(Photo provided by the Internet)  
Hawthorne Nevada in Mineral County

The Community of Mina established in 1904-05 when the railroad built the town for its employees and a railroad depot to serve the area’s needs. Many mines in the area used the rail to haul ore and other products out and bring supplies in. The cattle and sheep ranchers from Lander, Nye, Esmeralda, and Mineral Counties all used the rail for export and import. In the 1930s, the thriving community sold 365 Model A’s at the T.O. McKinnon Ford dealership. Then, during the 1980s, the railroad closed sparking Mina’s most recent decline.



(Photo by Betty Easley)  
Walker Lake Carp Boat

The Community of Luning, originally known as Deep Wells for its 80-foot water tables, established in the late 1860s. It was a watering and way station for freight teams hauling ore and supplies to and from Rawhide and Lone to water their teams that went to Columbus, New Boston, Soda Springs (now Sodaville), Candelaria, and Marietta. In 1883, the Carson and Colorado Railroad Company established a water and

freight station in the community and then changed the name from Deep Wells to Luning after Nicholas Luning, a large railroad investor and financier.

Luning was a major shipping point of copper ore from New York Canyon and other mines around the area. Then when World War II started, the government needed magnesium metal and Henderson, Nevada was making the metal for the war. The U.S. government hauled magnesium oxide from Gabbs to Henderson by trucks, and shipped it by rail all over the U.S.

A small trucking company called Wells Cargo, owned by Joe Wells of Elko, came down with its trucks and managed the trucks for the U.S. government. Sixty 100-ton ore cars were shipped from Luning every week during that time.

When the war was over, Wells bought the U.S. government trucks for pennies on the dollar. The company Basic Inc., in the late 1940s, brought in by rail a large rotary file to make material for refractory bricks for steel mills. Each section took three trucks to take it to Gabbs, two in front and one in the back. It was 300 feet long when finished, it is still at Gabbs. In the 1950s, the spur lines were abandoned, as not being economically feasible for operations and thereby substantially reduced activities of both Mina and Luning. After the Korean War, Luning was a big shipping port for iron ore to Japan. In the 1960s to 1986, they were shipping the 60 - 100-ton hopper rail cars plus about 10 box cars of bagged materials of magnesium products from Luning. The town was a major shipping port all the time the railroad was here, and the once thriving Luning had two grocery stores, two restaurants and bars, two fuel stations, a post office, 300 to 350 full-time residents, and a large two-story hotel.

The Community of Walker Lake located about 12 miles north of Hawthorne on U.S. Highway 95 and is a predominantly residential area at the base of the Wassuk Mountain Range along the west shore of Walker Lake. The community slopes toward the lake providing a breathtaking view for everyone in the area.

Settlement began in the early 1900s when early settlers and ranchers found potable runoff waters from the mountain and raised cattle. Resorts and recreational activities associated with the lake flourished through the 1970s.

The Community of Schurz is in the northwest portion of Mineral County, bisected with the Walker River and a railroad spur from Hazen, Nevada. Schurz is the core of the Walker River Paiute Reservation. Schurz is at intersection of Highway 95A, and Highway 95 and the reservation extends north and west beyond the boundary of Mineral County. The reservation established on November 29, 1859, by the Indian Affairs Commissioner to the General Land Office, and the reservation composed of 323,405 acres. Constitution of the Walker River Paiute Tribe ratified on May 8, 1937.

## **B. Historic Preservation Element**

Long before the county even existed, its wealth of minerals had already put it on the map — though that map was not always terribly accurate.

The discovery of gold in 1860 sparked a tug-of-war between California and what was then Utah Territory, both of which claimed the mining district that sprung up around the boom town of Aurora.

The boundary dispute continued the following year when the Nevada Territory was formed, and for a brief time Aurora served as the seat of government for both Esmeralda County, Nev., and for Mono County, Calif. Residents participated in both jurisdictions, picking a full slate of Nevada officials and a full slate of California officials in an election that featured separate polling places but the same voters.

One of the hopeful prospectors drawn to the area in 1862 was a 25-year-old named Samuel Clemens, but mining life did not agree with him. After a few months in what he would describe in a letter to his brother as “the d—dest country for disappointments the world ever saw,” Clemens moved north to Virginia City, where he wrote newspaper articles under the name “Mark Twain.”

A few years later, around the time of statehood in 1864, a boundary survey finally and officially placed Aurora squarely in Nevada, though it and all of what is now Mineral County would remain part of Esmeralda County for another 47 years.

Once again, minerals played a role in the change. When a major mining boom briefly turned Goldfield into the Nevada’s largest city, the county seat was moved there from Hawthorne in 1907.

Four years later, resentful Hawthorne residents persuaded state lawmakers to carve a new county out of the northern half of Esmeralda.

At a spry 103 years old, Mineral now ranks as Nevada’s third-youngest county and, with about 4,600 residents, its fourth smallest by population.

Where it once drew prospectors, the county now attracts visitors with a mix of history and recreation. But the budget is tight these days, and the county’s signature attraction, Walker Lake, keeps getting smaller and brinier as more of the Walker River is tapped upstream, squeezing out the once-healthy crop of fish and migratory birds.



(Photo by Mineral County Museum)  
Hawthorne County Seat

In 1928, the U.S. Navy selected the area south of Walker Lake for its West Coast ammunition depot. The facility ballooned during World War II, prompting the county’s population to more than double to 5,560 by 1950 and peak at more than 7,000 by the 1970s. The depot was transferred to U.S. Army control in 1977.

Today the Hawthorne Army Depot claims to be the largest munitions stockpile in the world with more than 400 buildings and 2,000 bunkers scattered across 147,000 acres.

And what of Aurora, the town that gave Mineral County its start? It has long since gone the way of Candelaria, Rawhide, Dutch Creek, and Lucky Boy — other mining camps that promised riches but delivered mostly disappointment.

All that is left are a few wrecked buildings, some old graves and an entry, 40 years old this year, on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Carson and Colorado Railroad connected Carson City and Hawthorne in 1881. Chinese labor was used in the construction of the railroad and Hawthorne contained a small "Chinatown". Most were single or married men whose wives were in China. By the late 1880's the Chinese population grew and was prominent in the main part of town. There were few women and children. One of the more prominent families was that of Chung Kee. Over time the cemetery boundaries were lost. The Mineral County Fair & Recreation Commission along with the Horseman's Association was trying to design a new fairgrounds and equestrian center. The area considered included a portion of land near the lost Chinese cemetery. On May 3, 2008, a survey was conducted using human remains detection dogs from the Institute of Canine Forensics. Several suspected grave sites were found, and the locations were plotted. There may be 100 graves. Further research continues.



(Photo by Mineral County Museum)  
**Chinese Cemetery Hawthorne**



**US Naval Ammunition Depot,  
Hawthorne, Nevada**

Part of the history of Hawthorne is the History of the Hawthorne Army Depot, as a US Army ammunition storage depot, Hawthorne Army Depot receives, stores and issues munitions that are conventional. It is also responsible for the demilitarization of obsolete, surplus, and unserviceable equipment and munitions. These are inspected and renovated to ensure that they are ready to support the Joint Forces.

Located near the town of Hawthorne in West Nevada, Hawthorne Army Depot is also south of Walker Lake and spans across 147,000 acres, approximately 230 square miles. There is an additional 600,000 square feet dedicated to storage bunkers. This is why Hawthorne claims the title of being the “World Largest Depot.”

The Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) was created after the Lake Denmark Naval Ammunition Depot disaster in New Jersey in 1926. The accident at the depot caused severe damage to the Picatinny Arsenal and killed 21 people while seriously injuring another 53 persons. The Navy lost \$84 million because of the accident, and it resulted in a full Congressional investigation into how the tragedy occurred and how it could have been prevented.

Construction began on Hawthorne in July 1928 and NAD received the first shipment of high explosives in October 1930. As the US entered the Second World War, Hawthorne became a maneuvering area for rockets, bombs and ammunition needed for the war. Nearly 6,000 people worked at Hawthorne in 1945, and it occupied 104 square miles under the Navy. Much of the land was declared excess and turned over to the Bureau of Land Management after the war.

Security was also needed for 3,000 bunkers in NAD that was provided by the US Marine Corps. Through the 1930s and World War II, there were Marines stationed at the Naval Depot. They only numbered about 600, but they were assigned to maintain and work the facility during the war effort. That number eventually decreased to only 117 after the war.

During World War II, there was also the nearby Civilian Conservation camp known as Camp Jumbo. There was another large adjoining construction camp.

The Depot did not see much action until 1962. Its mission was still the same, to receive, renovate or demilitarize ammunitions before issuing them to the Joint Forces. The Depot served as an important ammunition center throughout the Korean War and Vietnam War. In 1980, the depot was redesignated and became a government-owned facility that would be operated by contractors. Day & Zimmermann Hawthorne Corporation is the current operating contractor for the depot. The name was changed to Hawthorne Army Depot in 1994.

### **SECTION III: PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

#### **A. Topography**

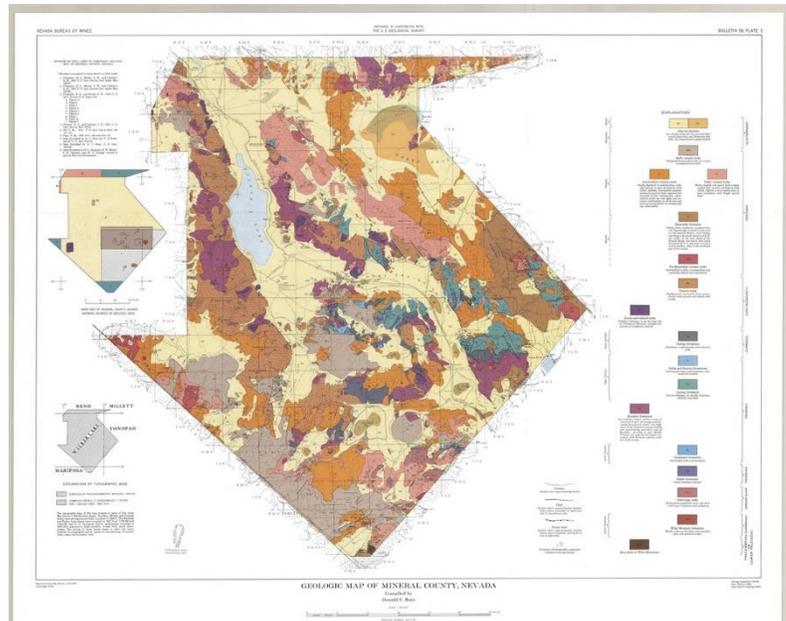
Mineral County, Nevada, 3,734 square miles in size, is in the west-central area of Nevada adjoining Mono County in California. Our County is mountainous with canyons and large plateaus. There is a natural lake (Walker Lake) at the terminus of the Walker River. The lake is about 15 miles long and about five miles wide. The lake elevation varies at about 4,100 feet above sea level. An abundance of fertile soils can be found throughout the county including Schurz, Gabbs Valley and Marietta. Weber Reservoir located upstream above Schurz, formed by a dam on the Walker River, and is located within the Paiute Indian Reservation.



(Photo by USGS)  
**Top of Mineral County**

#### **B. Soils and Geology**

Mineral County is aptly named because of the unique variety of minerals. It would be difficult to find an area in North America that has such a large variety of minerals. They include gold, silver, copper, tungsten, iron, andalusite, coal, perlite, sodium, diatomaceous earth, various gemstones, and many others not listed here.



(Photo by USGS)  
**Soils and Minerals of Mineral County**

## C. Climate

The high desert in northern Nevada gets an exceedingly small share of storm systems coming across the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range as they travel easterly. As a result, precipitation averages less than five inches per year across much of Mineral County. The 29-year mean annual average is 4.58 inches. The lack of precipitation is also exhibited in the minor amount of snowfall received in the County. The mean annual snow fall is less than six inches at lower elevations.

Summer temperatures in Mineral County, characterized by hot days and cool nights. Temperature swings between night and day are often 40 degrees Fahrenheit. July traditionally shows a high percentage of days with temperatures over 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Our growing season averages 135 days, extending from May through October. Winters are moderate as the Sierras and other ranges divert most of the extremely cold arctic storms from the area.

The 29-year average mean annual temperature in Mineral County is 55.9 degrees, with a normal January temperature of 47.7 degrees Fahrenheit, and normal July temperature of 78.7 degrees Fahrenheit. The recording station for the above temperatures is at elevation 4,186 near Hawthorne, Nevada.

## **SECTION IV: LAND USE, FEDERAL and STATE**

### **LU 1: Land Tenure**

#### **Goal:**

*Utilize, to the greatest extent possible, agricultural, or mining entry, land exchange, and or land sale for disposal of all public lands which by virtue of their size or location render them difficult and expensive to manage and do not serve a significant public need or where disposal will serve important public objectives. Authorize as needed the use of those lands, not currently authorized, for rights-of-way, leases and permits. Fully recognize and protect existing property rights including rights-of-way, easement, water rights, forage rights, mineral rights, and other such property.*

## Primary Planning Guidance Addressed:

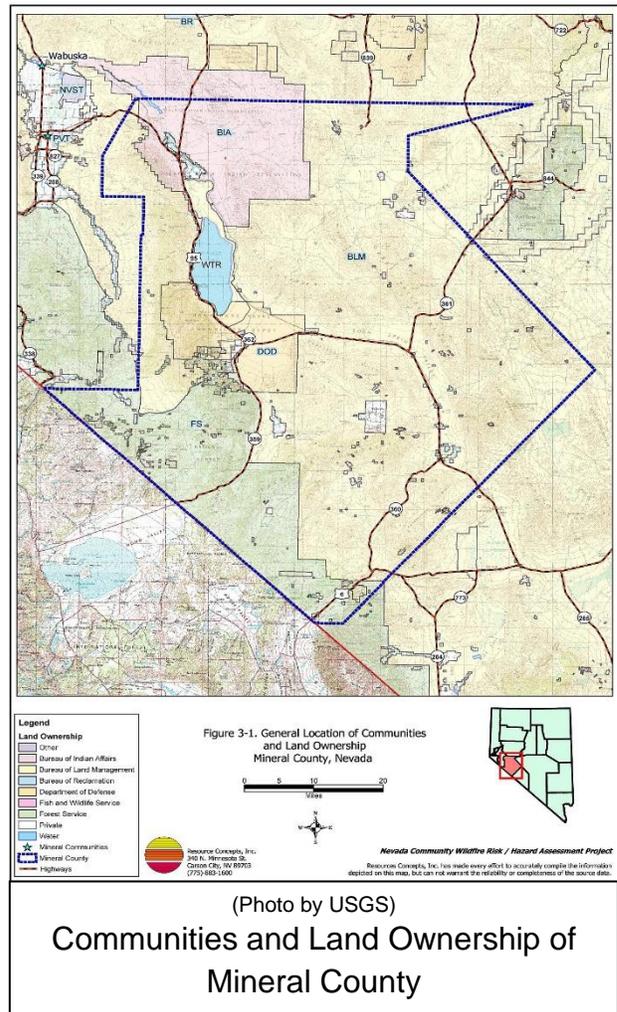
- Private Property and Property Rights
- Tax Base
- Mining
- Agriculture
- Utility Rights and Public Consumptions
- Land Disposition/Land Tenure Adjustments
- Access
- Other Federal Land Use Regulations
- Recreation

## Guidance:

Federal Land Policy & Management Act provides for effective use of the BLM administered lands by providing continuity of uses for roads, power, water, and natural gas. The Federal Land Policy & Management Act mandates multiple uses of the BLM administered lands, provides for continuing inventory and classification reviews of the BLM administered land, authorizes the Director to acquire lands when necessary to provide more efficient management through consolidation, and authorizes disposal of certain BLM administered lands. Lands currently under the jurisdiction of other agencies or lands currently withdrawn need a management plan to assure multiple use development when that existing withdrawal is revoked. The BLM is required to comply with federal, state, and local government laws relating to hazardous materials.

## Policies:

- Identify and give priority consideration to requests for exchanges or purchases from private landowners with fenced federal range, isolated tracts, or irregular boundary lines.
- Develop an inventory as needed of those BLM and FS administered lands which should be disposed of in the public good and make available for further application for agricultural or mining purposes those lands currently under DLE application or Patent application that are relinquished or rejected.



- Encourage property owners to identify and record existing property rights, particularly those that predate FLPMA. Mineral County recognizes the minimum width of rights of way to be 50 feet on either side of a water conveyance ditch, pipeline, or flume as established under the 1866 Mining Act and further recognizes that the width of rights-of-way established under R.S.2477 to be from 100 feet to several miles wide and limited only by practical conditions. All necessary actions for maintenance of ditches, pipelines, flumes, roads, trails, or other infrastructure for water conveyance or travel within these rights-of-ways is hereby approved by Mineral County.
- Seek legal administrative access only through purchase or exchange where significant administrative need exists, construct new roads around private lands where easement acquisition is not feasible, and consider significant public access needs in all land tenure adjustment transactions.
- Manage newly acquired lands and lands that have been returned to BLM management through revocation of withdrawals in accordance with existing land use plans for adjacent land.
- In coordination with the Mineral County Emergency Management Plan, federal agencies and state and local government planning agencies and in cooperation with interested members of the public through the NEPA process, develop and implement an Action Plan for management of hazardous materials on state and public lands.

**Reviewing:**

- review the procedures and acres of land classified for priority disposal.
- review all applications for rights-of-way, leases and permits and the actions taken on each.
- review access needs and procedures and methods utilized to achieve such access.

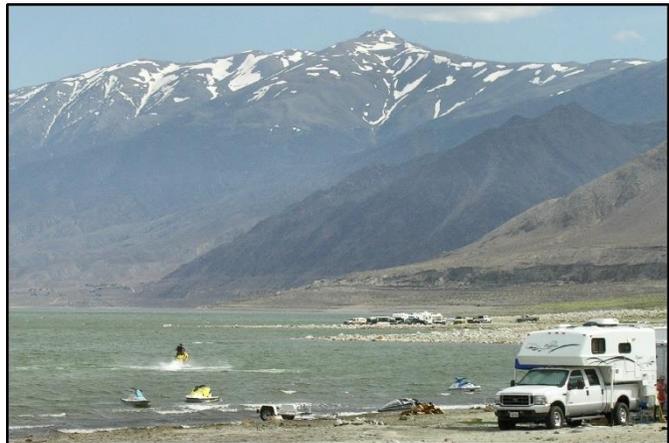
**Evaluation:**

- Determine annually the degree of progress in achieving disposal of lands classified for priority disposal.
- Evaluate the degree to which access needs are being met.

## LU 2: HUNTING, FISHING, AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

### Goals:

*Provide for multiple recreation uses on Mineral County federal and state administered lands located within its boundaries for residents and visitors to the County. Provide recreational uses including high quality recreational opportunities and experiences at developed and dispersed/undeveloped recreation sites by allowing historic uses and access while maintaining existing amenities and by providing new recreation sites for public enjoyment. Pursue increased public access opportunities in both motorized and non-motorized settings through the acquisition of rights-of-way or easements across federal*



(Photo by Betty Easley)

Walker Lake Activities

*administered lands and private lands at the invitation of the property owner. Recognize that multiple recreation uses are mandated by the multiple use concepts and that adequate outdoor recreation resources must be provided on the federal administered areas; keeping open all existing access roads and the ability to maintain those same roads or accesses.*

### Primary Planning Guidance Addressed:

- Private Property and Property Rights
- Tax Base
- Water Resources
- Air Resources
- Agriculture
- Wildlife
- Recreation
- Riparian Habitat
- Wild Horses and Burros
- Access
- Pinyon and Juniper Control
- Wildfire

## **Guidance:**

The Federal Land Policy & Management Act declares it to be the policy of the United States that BLM administered lands be managed based on multiple use in a manner which provides for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use, while at the same time protecting scenic, ecological, environmental, water, and archaeological values. The Act also mandates that outdoor recreation be considered one of the principles uses in the multiple use concept for the BLM administered lands. In 1963, Congress enacted the Outdoor Recreation Coordination Act declaring it "desirable that all American people of present and future generations be assured adequate outdoor recreation resources". See 16 U.S.C. ' 460L. The Secretary of Interior was authorized to prepare and maintain "a continuing inventory and evaluation of outdoor recreation needs and resources". 16 U.S.C. ' 460L-1. This Act also requires consideration of the plans of federal agencies, states, and the political subdivisions of states, and required the BLM to cooperate with states, political subdivisions of states and private interests with respect to outdoor recreation. ' 460L-1(c)(d). The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act 16 U.S.C. ' 1302; National Recreational Trails Fund, 26 U.S.C. ' 9511; and National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. ' 1241 provide for the preservation, development and funding of roads and trails for recreation use. These statutes mandate that trail for multiple recreation uses be made available for a diversity of motorized and non-motorized uses. Multiple recreation uses must also be provided for the elderly, physically challenged and incredibly young to provide diversity of recreation opportunities. See, Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. ' 12111 et seq. All areas historically accessed by off-road recreational vehicles, mechanized vehicles, horses, and boats should continue to be available for their historical uses. These historically accessed areas include roads, trails, sand washes, and waterways identified as NV Revised Statute 2477 rights-of-ways, including those areas where wild horses may be located.

## **Policies:**

- Encourage multiple recreation uses for residents and visitors to Mineral County, such as special and extensive recreation management areas. These areas include where state, federal and/or private funds and materials were or are used to provide for recreational facilities.
- In compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, cooperate with local, state, and federal agencies to plan trail head facilities for both motorized and non-motorized access, development and/or maintenance of roads and trails for both motorized and non-motorized access, restoration of those areas that are open to the public for historical recreational uses, e.g., motorized, and equestrian access for recreational and competitive events, hunting, fishing, and camping.
- Provide for adequate outdoor recreation resources to revise the designated areas to decrease or eliminate limitations and restrictions where the review and evaluation shows limitations and restrictions.

- Encourage the planning and establishment of designated equestrian, foot, and off-road vehicle trail systems for compatible recreational, agricultural, and other multiple uses so that such uses can continue unabated.
- Encourage local recreation groups to maintain existing facilities at developed recreational sites and upgrade, reconstruct and/or increase recreation facilities, when needs are indicated by reviewing data.

### **Reviewing:**

Review and analyze data relating to the demand for recreation use, the impact of the various recreation uses on land values, and any actual conflict or damage caused by each of the multiple recreation uses.

- In coordination with federal agencies and state and local planning agencies, review all data to determine whether temporary climatic conditions, wildlife activities, or range conditions require temporary or seasonal restrictions or limitations on historic and present recreation uses, and review data to determine the earliest point at which temporary restrictions or limitations can be removed.
- Provide recommendation from the data obtained during meetings and discussions with recreation users to the appropriate agencies.
- Provide recommendation from the data obtained from community business owners concerning business contacts, sales, and future expectations from recreationists to the appropriate agencies.
- Maintain records of all management actions taken specifically to meet requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and maintain records of use and requests for use from ADA eligible individuals.

### **Evaluation:**

- Meet when requested with interested hunters, fishermen and other recreation users and review the data regarding recreation demands, outdoor recreation resources, and multiple recreation uses and their impact.
- Coordinate with federal agencies and state and local government planning agencies, to review and analyze recreational inventory, classification, and designation information to validate the relevance and importance of criteria and the impact on land values and on recreation uses, historic and present.
- Review data on multiple recreational uses in areas with exclusive use designations or which are under study for such designation to identify any adverse impacts on multiple recreational uses.

- Review data regarding implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and whether ADA implementation actions are adequate.

### **LU 3: WILDERNESS, WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS (WSA), AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACEC), AND OTHER RESTRICTIVE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS**

#### **Goal:**

*Seek immediate Congressional designation or release actions on all WSAs and other restrictive land classifications based on Mineral County policy to release these areas for multiple use management and in the interim prevent, minimize, or mitigate impairment or degradation of such areas to the extent that Congressional actions are not preempted. Provide the amenities promised by wilderness designation through multiple use management that includes dispersed recreation where appropriate and opportunities for solitude.*

#### **Primary Planning Guidance Addressed:**

- Private Property and Property Rights
- Tax Base
- Water Resources
- Air Resources
- Mining
- Agriculture
- Wildlife
- Recreation
- Utility Rights and Public Consumptions
- Land Disposition/Land Tenure Adjustments
- Riparian Habitat
- Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, Parks, and Refuges
- Wild Horses and Burros
- Access
- Pinyon and Juniper Control
- Wildfire
- Other Federal Land Use Regulations

**Guidance:**

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act provide that the Secretary shall review BLM administered lands and recommend those which he finds to meet wilderness characteristics. Between submission of the Secretary's recommendations and final Congressional action, the Act provides that the lands be managed in such manner so as not to impair their wilderness characteristics, "subject, however, to the continuation of existing mining and grazing uses and mineral leasing in the manner and degree in which the same was being conducted on" October 21, 1976. The Act directs prevention of "unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands and their resources" and implementation of environmental protection. Enabling legislation will identify specific management direction for each



(Photo by Betty Easley)  
Walker Lake Wild Horse Herd

Wilderness Area or specify that these lands be placed under multiple use management. The Federal Lands Policy & Management Act declares as the policy of the United States that BLM administered lands will be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource and archaeological values, that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals, that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use, and, where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain BLM administered lands in their natural condition.

Existing land uses and pre-existing property rights are described in other sections of this Natural Resource and Land Use Plan. Every area of Mineral County includes pre-existing property rights and existing uses that are best served through multiple use management. Mineral County is committed to the protection of those existing rights.

As discussed within the Mineral County Master Plan, Mineral County is committed to future development of grazing, mining, communication, transportation infrastructure and energy production. Locations for many of the future developments cannot be identified at this time, therefore all currently available land must remain available and not included into Wilderness Areas, Roadless Areas, ACEC, or other restrictive designations.

### **Policies:**

- Request Congress take action to release all WSAs deemed by the Department of Interior to be unsuitable for wilderness designation to multiple use management.
- Upon Congressional release, return management policies for the affected area to those consistent with land use plans and the non-wilderness full multiple use concept mandated by Congress in the Federal Land Policy & Management Act and Public Rangelands Improvement Act.
- No additional Wilderness Areas will be permitted in Mineral County.

### **Reviewing:**

- Monitor Congressional recommendations and Congressional action on WSA recommendations.
- Use the data obtained from range land studies and review the location, pace, and extent, of trends in range land vegetation and soil stability.
- Monitor the implementation of multiple use management on lands released through Congressional action.
- Use data regarding the multiple recreation uses occurring in areas designated or being subjected to potentiality study for special designation such as ACEC or wilderness.

### **Evaluation:**

- Monitor the extent of change in condition class and trends for watershed uplands and riparian habitat.

## **LU 4: PUBLIC SERVICES**

### **Open Space:**

The Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) defines open space use in NRS 361A.050 as the current employment of land, the preservation of which use would conserve and enhance natural or scenic resources, protect streams and water supplies, maintain natural features which enhance control of floods or preserve sites designated by the Office of Historic Preservation of the Department of Cultural Affairs. The use of real property and the improvements on that real property as a golf course shall be deemed as open space use of the land.

Mineral County has identified the issues that are most important to the residents:

- Public Access to Public Lands:
- Access to Public Lands was the most important aspect to the quality of life for those persons that attended public meetings. This Includes roads and trails on BLM and USFS managed lands as well as DOD managed lands (I.E., golf course, sewer ponds, Army maintained wells and storage tanks) and private property.
- Wellhead and Spring Protection:
- Water quantity and quality of groundwater, springs, and streams critical in the County.
- Public Land Management:
- The County residents voiced some frustration regarding their dealings with the USFS and the BLM in that their voices are not heard by these land management agencies.

In response to the Agencies travel management plans Mineral County residents mapped critical roads and washes to document those that are important to Mineral County to keep open to public use. The roads and washes are illustrated in the maps with the master plan.

#### Watershed Protection, Water Sources, Wellheads, and springs

Wellhead protection areas have been identified and established in the inventory controlled by the Hawthorne Utility This would also include the well supplying the Mina and Luning area.

The Whisky Flat area is of particular interest to the County because of the water resources in the area. Also, the spring areas in Cory Canyon.

Mineral County is in the process of designating and developing wetlands using reclaimed water for use in irrigation at several areas of the county. Water derived from this process would be utilized for the golf course, cemetery, and green space on the frontage of the Babbitt property. Management of public lands is addressed in Section V of this Master Plan.

## **Parks and Recreations:**

The Mineral County Commission exercised its powers granted through the Nevada Revised Statutes and created the “Mineral County Parks and Recreation Commission” which is funded through a transient occupancy tax (room tax). This commission received authority and responsibility for all previously constructed and acquired recreation facilities in addition to future developed recreational facilities. Recreation opportunities, particularly outdoor recreation, have long been considered an extremely important aspect in maintaining the high quality of life Mineral County residents enjoy. Over the years the focus of recreational opportunities in Mineral County have centered on Walker Lake and the remote desert and mountainous terrain throughout the county.



(Photo by Harold Dimmick)

**Off-Road Motor Biking**

This unique lake and surrounding mountains have attracted many outdoor enthusiasts for years, and the trophy Lahontan Cutthroat Trout has been a major factor in the promotion of fishing and outdoor recreation. An extraordinarily strong effort to maintain the water levels and reduce salinity at Walker Lake has been led by Mineral County citizens. We will continue to do everything possible to keep this lake’s quantity and quality and maintain the high recreation standard it has provided us in the past. Fishing, hunting, pleasure boats, water skiing, and jet boat activities all contribute to fill campsites and outdoor facilities throughout the year.

The success of securing additional water to sustain Walker Lake is finally showing. It has been a long and tough struggle for those who have helped Mineral County over the years. Please review the status of this issue in, Section 5, Paragraph C, titled, “Walker Lake Issues”.

The Parks and Recreation Commission utilized several land and water conservation grants during the late 1970s to develop the Lion's Park Complex, which is on the west side of Hawthorne, along Armory Road. Grass picnic areas, shaded barbecue area, tennis courts, exercise walks and softball field were added later near the outdoor swimming pool area. During the 1980s and 1990s, most of the Commission’s direction and funding was concentrated on the maintenance of these facilities.

The financing of day-to-day operations and small improvement projects have been accomplished by the utilization of our room tax. Large projects have been accomplished through state grants, such as the Recreational Trails and Land and Water Conservation grants.

Health and safety projects are funded by request each fiscal year through the Board of Commissioners payment-in-lieu of taxes (PILT), as funds allow. Also, such programs utilize capital improvement funds, when available.

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) is an organization made up of park and recreational professionals throughout the nation. With extensive research, the NRPA developed broad range standards based upon per 1,000 residents to gauge a common recreational quality of life. These standards become important when Mineral County reviews proposed residential developments. They also provide an idea of costs involved so that associated fees for improvements may be shared by developers and may be applied through the review process. We are luck in many ways as the criteria for park acreage, swimming pools, and outdoor sports are predicated on a 1 per 6,000 population and with our current population at just over 4,000 gives us the edge considering park and recreation facilities per person. For



(Photo by Betty Easley)  
Picnicking at Lion's Park

instance, in grass park areas alone the national recommendation is 5 acres per 1,000 and Mineral County is estimated to be 10 acres per 1,000. It is important to point out that many additional recreational facilities were provided by the Hawthorne Weapons Army Depot at the time the Mineral County Parks and Recreation Commission was created. As many of those facilities were closed as the Depot reduced in size, the Parks Commission had their work cut out for them in providing alternative facilities and has done a remarkable job in doing so. The most important facility to many was the nine-hole golf course which was leased back to the County

and has been maintained for use ever since the transition.

Programs are offered at the Lion's Park swimming pool, which is a seasonal pool providing revenue for County Parks and Recreation. The Lion's Park little league field also is used seasonally as well as the softball park. The Young Citizen's Activities Center provides youth soccer, youth basketball, adult recreation, martial arts, aerobics, boxing, open gym play, dancing, and weightlifting.

The Lion's Park complex was created in the late 1970s. This mini park has proven to be one of Hawthorne's most popular outdoor facilities. This Park, including the different ball fields, contains about eight acres of grass and landscaping. It contains a tot and pre-teen play area, barbecue and picnic area with benches and shady areas, a skateboard park, an outdoor sand volleyball court (created in May 2005), 16 championship horseshoe pits, basketball court, one tennis court, restrooms, ball fields, par-course fitness circuit, 7/8 - mile walking and jogging cement pathway, tree farm, and outdoor pool. The outdoor pool is the only facility listed for which a user fee is sought.

Veterans Memorial Park (a.k.a. Lady Bird Park) is a roadside park at the north end of Hawthorne off Highway 95. This Park was created in the 1970s and has been maintained by a joint venture between Mineral County Parks and Recreation and the Nevada Department of Transportation. The Park has a half-acre of grass and landscaping, six canopy covered picnic benches, restrooms, and is the site of the new flagpole and U.S. flag which is a full 60 feet by 30 feet. This facility is fee free.

The Youth Citizen's Activity Center (YCAC) is a more recent facility added to Mineral County's inventory. The building was vacated

by the Mineral County School District in January of 1995. The Mineral County Board of Commissioners agreed to accept it as a County recreational facility and placed it under the authority of County Parks and Recreation. This 8,000 square foot building offers a gymnasium, weight room, office space, lounge area, receptionist office and restrooms. It is located on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and C Street. User fees are collected for select activities.

Several other County assets which directly or indirectly need to be considered related at least to public parks and/or recreation include the former Hawthorne landfill area located west of Armory Road. In December of 1999, a Brownsfield targeted assessment grant was received from EPA Region 9 out of San Francisco. The grant provided an environmental assessment of the former landfill area. The resulting cleanup of the area pursuant to recommendations of the EPA, now allows the County to consider it for potential recreation development.



(Photo by Betty Easley)

Lion's Park Swimming Pool

The County also has ownership of a hot water well capable of producing 5 gallons per minute of 204-degree water. The well has been considered for potential geothermal and/or hot springs development. Several other proposals for additional outdoor activities for Mineral County are still being considered, reflecting an ongoing commitment to recreational development.

## **LU 5: CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

### **Goal:**

*In coordination with federal state and local government planning agencies, tribal leadership and interested members of the public, determine the significance of cultural resource sites according to condition, content and relevance and increase the opportunity for educational, recreational, sociocultural, and scientific uses of cultural and Paleontological resources.*

### **Primary Planning Guidance Addressed:**

- Recreation
- Utility Rights and Public Consumptions
- Land Disposition/Land Tenure Adjustments
- Access
- Other Federal Land Use Regulations

### **Guidance:**

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act direct that the BLM administered lands be managed to protect archeological values. The Antiquities Act of 1906 and the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 require protection of Paleontological resources and require permits for excavation or appropriation of such resources. The National Environmental Policy Act directs preservation of important natural aspects of the national heritage. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 describes federal agency' responsibility to preserve prehistoric and historic cultural resources.

### **Policies:**

- Cooperate with BLM to determine where the data indicate adverse impacts of land uses to high-value sites, establish mitigation measures to reduce impacts and protect and conserve unique cultural and Paleontological resources.
- Review historic district designations in accordance with Section 1 10 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.
- Nominate appropriate site/areas to the national register of historic places only in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in NEPA and only upon approval of the Mineral County Board of Commissioners.

### **Reviewing:**

- The State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) will review, record, and make available to the Mineral County Museum all data that details conditions found at specific cultural and Paleontological sites during all site visits.
- SHPO will maintain, review, and make available to the public for analysis the data collected during annual reviewing site visits.
- SHPO will determine changes in historical, cultural, and Paleontological site designations.

### **Evaluation:**

- Analyze the site visit data to determine the degree of impact of multiple uses occurring on the site and develop mitigation measures.
- Track the progress of recommendations for additions to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Analyze the degree to which cultural resource management restrictions are affecting or limiting multiple uses of the public lands in Mineral County.
- Review the data provided to and on file with the Mineral County Historical Society and Mineral County Museum.

## **LU 6: NUISANCES, ABATEMENT**

### **Purpose and Scope**

It is determined and declared as follows:

- Mineral County has a substantial and legitimate interest in seeing that its communities, including property, buildings, and premises within its limits are kept in a healthy, safe condition.
- The keeping or maintaining of property, buildings, and premises at variance with the level of maintenance of surrounding properties will result in blighting and/or unsafe conditions and substantial reduction of and property values of such surrounding properties.
- The purpose of this ordinance is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of all townships of Mineral County and to promote the maintenance of the property, buildings, and premises to enhance the safety, livability, and community appearance, social and economic conditions of the community.

- Furthermore, the purpose of this ordinance is to provide for a regulatory framework to oversee nuisance-related issues that negatively impact the quality of life in all townships of Mineral County.

The Mineral County Commissioners shall uphold the nuisance ordinance Chapter 8.40 as written to help to promote a safe and healthy living environment in Mineral County. By promoting the nuisance ordinance within the county will invite new consumers to look at Mineral County as a permanent resident.

## **SECTION V: NATURAL RESOURCES & FEDERAL OR STATE LAND USE**

### **Introduction**

The Natural Resources & Federal or State Land Use Element of the Mineral County Master Plan (hereafter, Natural Resource and Land Use Plan) is an executable policy for natural resource management and land use on federal and state administered lands in Mineral County. This Natural Resource and Land Use Plan provides a scientifically and culturally sound framework for establishing community planning goals; and provides details of goals and actionable objectives for several high-priority issues. This chapter is not intended to regulate or otherwise reduce private or public property rights, as Mineral County seeks to protect the full exercise of property rights.



(Photo by Betty Easley)

**Great Basin Gold Mine and Mill**

Protection of private and public property such as water rights, rights-of-way, easements, forage rights, mineral rights, and other property within lands administered by federal or state agencies, requires that the Natural Resource and Land Use Plan discuss and propose actions that may indirectly affect private or public property rights. This Natural Resource and Land Use Plan has been developed, in part, because regulatory decisions that diminish the value of private property

or deprive citizens of access to natural resources are likely to have substantial effects on the culture and economy of Mineral County.

Introduction and development of the Mineral County Master Plan began in 2008. As detailed in the Mineral County Master Plan, there is currently limited language directly addressing the Natural Resource and Land Use Plan. The MCRPC Public Lands Use Policy Sub-Committee was convened to develop the Natural Resource and Land Use Plan to be implemented in 2019 in the Mineral County Master Plan. The Master Plan and this Natural Resource and Land Use Plan was expanded in response to legislative direction commonly known as SB40 which is codified within Nevada Revised Statute 321 (NRS 321). Each element of the Master Plan has included extensive public meetings and public input to seek the views and concerns of Mineral County citizens. In 2009 the Mineral/UNR Cooperative Extension completed a similar survey of local interests and needs. In general, most respondents favored local and private management of natural resources, an increase in private lands, and the continuation of traditional agricultural production while mining or other industrial enterprises increase.

This Natural Resources and Land Use Plan is designed to: (1) protect the human and natural environment of Mineral County, (2) facilitate federal agency efforts to resolve inconsistencies between federal land use decisions and County policy, (3) enable federal and state agency officials to coordinate their efforts with Mineral County, and (4) provide strategies, procedures, and policies for progressive land and resource management. Reference material is quoted within the text of various sections and includes detailed reference to laws, court cases, and written review that provide the basis for statements within the text.

The natural and human environment of Mineral County includes renewable natural resources such as air, water, soil, plants, fish, wildlife, and livestock including those referred to as domestic animals in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Non-renewable natural resources found in Mineral County include minerals, precious metals, sand, or gravel, geothermal and oil. Mineral County citizens place significant importance on features of the human environment that shape their community, its custom and its culture. These features include, but are not limited to:

- Economic stability, security and growth that contributes to a diverse economy including business and industry, crop and livestock production, mining, recreation and tourism, energy development, geothermal, wind and solar.
- Social stability as demonstrated by a civic-minded populace whose involvement and well-being are essential for successful functioning of the community.
- Business owners who invest their capital back into the community and provide jobs for the people of Mineral County.

- Private property as a component of a free-market economy and as a tax base that supports County services.
- Local and private management of resources for profit based on the community's traditional sense of responsibility, stewardship, and sustainability for future generations.
- Continued outdoor recreational opportunities including hunting and fishing, off-road vehicle uses on existing roads and trails.
- Transportation and utility infrastructure necessary for business and recreational activity.
- Easements and rights of way that support this infrastructure.
- Access for residents and visitors alike to enjoy and use the natural resources of the federal and state managed areas.

## **Background**

Since 1911, few changes in the distribution of land ownership and administration among private, federal, state, and local entities have occurred in Mineral County. Mineral County consists of 3,700 square miles, 95% is controlled by the Federal government, a key factor is that there is only 5% for public and private use. Public agencies continue to administer approximately 79% of land in the County; most of that non-patented land is administered by the United States Department of Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with a lesser amount of acreage administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service (FS). Intensively managed Federal land holdings consist of 147,000 acres controlled by the Army and Navy. Former railroad lands remain dormant throughout Mineral County. Throughout the county there are scattered patented mines, and homesteads separated by Federal land.

Passage of Assembly Bill 413 (A.B.413) in 1979 supported, among other issues, the allegation that Nevada was denied acceptance into the Union on an "equal footing" with other states in violation of the United States Constitution. A.B.413 is codified in NRS321.596 through NRS321.599. Nevada Revised Statutes 321 and NRS 328, as well as the federal laws, recognize the pre-existing property rights that had been established prior to the formation of the BLM or FS, and clearly explain that the non-patented lands are administered by federal agencies as proprietary interest that lack civil and criminal jurisdiction.

NRS 328 further indicates that no cession of authority has been made to federal authorities for lands within Mineral County. Related topics include definition of public land, territorial and subject matter authority, territorial nature of federal law, authority of federal magistrate, sovereignty, definition of “state,” possessory interests, pre-existing rights, and in the absence of a Constitutional grant of police powers to Congress. Detailed discussion of these issues is included in reviews listed within Chapter and on file with the Mineral County Public Land Use Policy Sub-Committee.

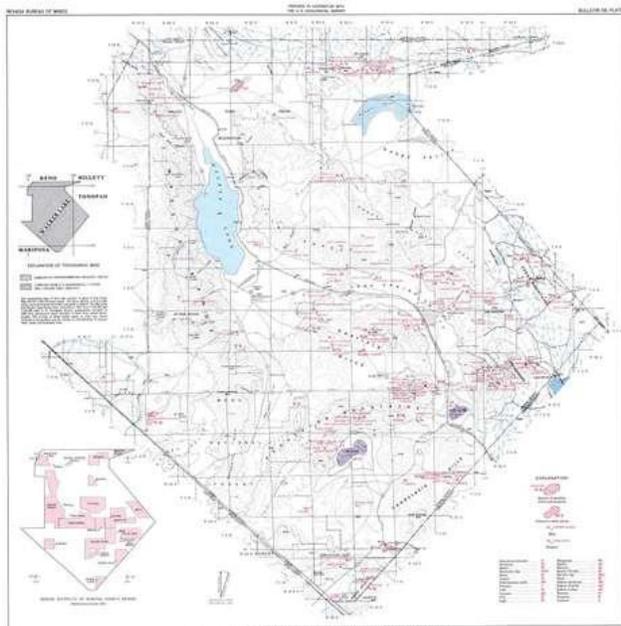
Substantial changes have occurred within Mineral County during the past twenty or more years that have benefited the economic base of the County: proposed electrical generation utilizing geothermal, wind, and solar technologies, transmission lines, expanding mining operations, ground water development and distribution, oil and gas leases, and other industrial land and natural resource uses have all seen an increase and occasionally conflict with traditional irrigated agriculture, livestock grazing, and recreational activities. Mineral County expects each of these enterprises to contribute to the economic diversity of Mineral County and do not see them as mutually exclusive. There are also federal and state regulatory actions that have been detrimental to the local economy and demand Mineral County’s attention. Onerous changes in federal and state regulations or laws have increased the regulatory burden on economic activities within Mineral County.

Economic contributions of mining, tourism, outdoor recreation, business, industry, irrigated agriculture, and livestock production are discussed in detail within the Master Plan. Even though mining and tourism have increased and brought substantial economic activity to Mineral County, the agricultural sector of the economy has declined. Recent studies have shown the direct correlation between reductions of livestock numbers and the loss of jobs and business throughout the State including Mineral County. This has impacted Mineral County directly with the loss of revenue circulating each year. Livestock numbers in Mineral County have decreased because of several factors including federal regulations. Wealth produced from every form of non-renewable and renewable natural resource is necessary for the long-term economic stability of Mineral County and is among the goals and objectives identified in this natural resource strategy.

## Authority

Authority for the Mineral County Master Plan is found in NRS 278.150 through 278.220. Additional authority is derived from passage of SB40 by the Nevada Legislature in 1983 and the resulting portions of NRS 321, particularly NRS 321.640 through NRS 321.770. Nevada law directs counties to develop plans and strategies for resources that occur within lands managed by federal and state agencies. Mineral County Master Plan, including *Natural Resources & Federal or State Land Use Element* allows federal agencies to fully comply with the intent of Congress as specified in the various federal laws referenced herein, by coordinating their proposals with the policies of Mineral County, incorporating the policies of Mineral County into agency reviews and activities, and resolving inconsistencies between federal proposals and County plans. This Natural Resource & Federal or State Land Use Element, together with the Mineral County Master Plan satisfies the requirements of NRS 278.243 and NRS 278.246 regarding local determination.

## Natural Resource and Land Use Planning as a Continuing Process



(Photo by USGS)

### Mineral Resources of Mineral County

A plan is variously defined as "a detailed and systematic formulation of a large-scale program" and "an orderly arrangement of parts in terms of an overall design or objective."

The Board of Mineral County Commissioners and the Mineral County PLUP-SC recognize that formulating planning for a community is a continuing process. As Mineral County's effort continues, scientific studies and reports, empirical data, expertise offered by committee members and consultants, reports of subcommittees tasked with review and research of specific issues, team evaluations, and other information will be compiled and added to this review. When approved by the Board of Mineral County Commissioners, this information will be used to support a growing county presence in state and federal decision-making.

Mineral County expects that all decisions regarding natural resource management and land-use and all goals and objectives incorporated into this plan and, by extension, into state and federal agency plans, will be realistic and attainable. Solutions to problems and recognition of opportunities require factual and dependable information, which is a key part of this plan. Individual opinions, feelings, visions, and hunches may form a basis to justify more intensive and objective study but will rarely, if ever, be acceptable as a basis for establishing a policy or deciding a course of regulatory action. Analysis and interpretation of facts is an important part of the process; so important that the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has issued an instruction to all federal agencies specifying the minimum standards for acceptable peer review of data or publications. Mineral County expects every federal employee to adhere to the OMB standards for Peer Review. Interpretation of facts allows citizens to choose a successful course of action, specify a strategy to be followed until a need for more specific action arises, or to evaluate the success of actions already completed.

Analysis of technical information requires that managers, elected officials, and community members have adequate council and practical experience at their disposal. The present review reflects such an analysis, drawing on numerous outside experts but always vetting expert recommendations back through the local community. The result is a strong and resilient vision of Mineral County's relationship with its natural resources and publicly managed lands.

Finally, successful implementation of this Plan requires that the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission Public Land Use Policy Sub-Committee and the Board of Mineral County Commissioners stay involved with analysis and evaluation through all stages of federal, state, and local planning efforts. County involvement may include review of data for scientific and factual soundness, plan development, implementation, Reviewing, and evaluation of plan implementation.

### **Adoption and Implementation of the Mineral County Natural Resource and Land Use Plan**

In 2016, the Board of County Commissioners directed the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission to develop a Natural Resource and Land Use Plan. In 2018, the Mineral County Planning Commission began updating the Mineral County Master Plan to include this Natural Resource and Federal or State Land Use Element. This plan will provide policy direction and ordinances where appropriate, specific management objectives, as the basis for County-preferred land uses and management practice on federal and state administered lands.

Through the adoption of this Natural Resource and Land Use Plan as a chapter of the Master Plan in accordance with NRS 278.020 and NRS 278.150-220, the Board of Mineral County Commissioners hereby records its intention to engage in decision making that pertains to all non-patented publicly managed lands and natural resources within its authority, as provided for under the law. The statement of purpose includes the recognition of the duties of state and federal agencies to comply with plans adopted under the concept of a local comprehensive plan; this also facilitates the coordination of state and federal planning efforts with the local planning efforts of Mineral County.

Per this plan, it is the policy of Mineral County that Federal and State programs make progress towards improved resource quality, greater multiple uses of the federal lands, preservation of custom, culture and economic stability of Mineral County, and protection of the rights of its citizens. Mineral County will continue to encourage state and federal agencies to participate in this effort to coordinate to resolve inconsistencies between federal proposals and County policy. Should hesitance on the part of federal or state agencies interfere with this progress, then Mineral County may seek judicial intervention to compel agencies to obey the mandates of Congress.

This Natural Resource and Land Use Plan of the Mineral County Master Plan will be implemented as follows:

- The plan will be provided to each federal agency as a formal notice that the plan exists and is available for reference by the respective agencies. This is necessary to enable the agencies to formally coordinate and seek consistency with the policies of Mineral County when proposing management or regulation of resources.
- When agency plans and reviews are presented to the Board of Mineral County Commissioners, the material will be read or reviewed first by the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission PLUP-SC. This Commission will provide comments and recommendations to the Board of Mineral County Commissioners. Agencies may deliver their material directly to the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission PLUP-SC, knowing that the Board of Mineral County Commissioners will not consider their proposal without a prior review by the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission PLUP-SC.

Successful implementation of this Plan requires that the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission PLUP-SC and the Board of Mineral County Commissioners stay involved with analysis and evaluation through all stages of federal, state, and local planning efforts. County involvement must include, at minimum, review of data for scientific and factual soundness, plan development, implementation, Reviewing, and evaluation of plan implementation.

This procedure may, from time to time, impose substantial burden on members of the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission PLUP-SC and other county advisory boards. To promote adequate and timely review of land use plans and to obtain current information needed for sound decisions, the Board of Mineral County Commissioners will, as necessary and within reasonable limits, provide financial support for the implementation of this plan.

## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, REVIEWING, AND EVALUATION BY TOPIC**

### **NR 1: PRIMARY RESOURCES: SOIL, VEGETATION, AND WATERSHEDS**

#### **Goal:**

*Maintain or improve the soil, vegetation, and watershed resources to sustain a diversity of uses which support the economic stability of Mineral County.*

#### **Primary Planning Guidance Addressed:**

- Private Property and Property Rights
- Water Resources
- Air Resources
- Mining
- Agriculture
- Wildlife
- Recreation
- Riparian Habitat
- Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, Parks, and Refuges
- Wild Horses and Burros
- Pinyon, Juniper, and Tamarisk Control
- Wildfire
- Government Lands

#### **Guidance:**

The BLM and Forest Service must comply with the multiple use goals and objectives of the Congress as stated in the various statutory laws, such as: Taylor Grazing Act, Federal Lands Policy & Management Act, Public Rangelands Improvement Act, Forest and Rangelands Renewable Resources Act, Mining Laws of 1866 and 1872, Mining & Mineral Policy Act of 1970, National Materials and Minerals Policy, Research & Development Act of 1980, and other related federal and state laws concerning recreational and other multiple use of natural resources which impact the soils, vegetation, and watersheds. The National Environmental Policy Act requires consideration of all environmental actions on the culture, heritage, and custom of local government (16 U.S.C. sec. 4331 (a) (4)).

Development of Allotment Management Plans (AMPs), as an objective, will include completion of technically sound inventories; ecological status inventory (ESI) is a minimum, with other techniques as appropriate such as use pattern mapping as a measure of animal distribution, actual use records, detailed weather records, stream channel morphology, woodland features including age structure and density of trees, and other studies using standardized techniques. A fundamental resource to achieve these goals and objectives shall be based on the 1980 NRCS and the BLM Mineral County soil books, "Soil Survey of Mineral County Area," US Government Printing Office, published October 1991, 304-407.

Goals and objectives will be set relative to the ecological potential of each location and will include descriptions of future ecological status, desired plant communities, livestock productivity and health, wildlife habitat attributes, wildlife population levels, acceptable levels of soil erosion, stream channel stability, and additional items specific to various land uses. Rangeland Health ratings, Riparian Functional Condition ratings, stubble height, and utilization levels are not suitable for goals or objectives that measure management success. Completion of each of these limited techniques as a precursor to design of additional studies is a reasonable objective within an AMP.

Wildfire and the period for recovery from fires could become a regulatory issue in Mineral County that could cause unreasonable economic hardship to Mineral County livestock producers. Effectively managed grazing provides a substantial advantage for native plant recovery following fire. Prohibition of grazing following wildfire is not necessary for the recovery of rangeland vegetation. Managed grazing is beneficial in preventing excessive damage to plants by wildfire and prohibition of grazing prior to a fire result in unnecessary damage to the plants.

Selection of the proper inventory or reviewing techniques and interpretation of the data will only be acceptable when performed by people whose judgment is the result of successful experience and well-developed skills. Technical guidance as found within peer-reviewed scientific publications and various agency, or inter-agency handbooks and manuals serves as reference material and may be incorporated into this review upon approval by the Board of Mineral County Commissioners. Suitable reference material is included as attachments to this plan or by reference within the text. Reference material includes, for example: the *Nevada Best Management Practices*, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Range and Pasture Handbook, Nevada Rangeland Reviewing *Handbook* (1984 First Edition or 2006 Second Edition), *Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration* as written by the Association of Rangeland Consultants, March 12, 1996, *Standards and Guidelines* as written by the Northeast Great Basin Resource Advisory Council. Section is reserved for a Water Quality Strategy, Endangered or Threatened Species Strategy and similar reviews as directed by the Board of Mineral County Commissioners. Section includes reference material citations, extracted portions of texts, and summaries of cited references.

## **Policies:**

- Review the systematic procedure to coordinate all federal and state land use inventory, planning, and management activities with Mineral County, to assure that consideration is given to the County natural resource strategies and the County land use plans, and to assure that agency land use plans are consistent with the Mineral County Natural Resource and Land Use Plan of the Master Plan to the extent required by Federal law.
- Monitor Allotment vegetative community to assure that the AMP objectives are met.
- Review livestock (grazing) stocking levels at five-year intervals in accordance with developed AMPs and/or trend in ecological status before changes are made. Data obtained from standardized rangeland studies such as ecological status inventory and frequency/trend will be required for stocking level adjustments. Other studies such as Rangeland Health evaluation, Riparian Functional condition, stubble height, and livestock utilization may be useful as indicators of the need for additional examination and objective reviewing techniques.
- Assure adjudicated grazing preference held by permittees is authorized according to the governing Federal statutes and that Temporary Non-Renewable use is authorized in a manner that allows for use of excess forage when available.
- Review prescribed fire and wildfire management plans for infrastructure protection and appropriate vegetation types including plans for livestock grazing techniques as a tool for fire fuel management related to both wildfires and prescribed fires.
- Review fire line and site rehabilitation plans include identification, utility, and limitations of native or exotic vegetation capable of supporting watershed function and habitat for wildlife and livestock.
- Assure grazing management plans following wild or prescribed fire through careful and considered consultation, coordination and cooperation with all affected permittees and affected landowners to provide for use of grazing animal management to enhance recovery.

- Restrict the implementation of pinyon pine, juniper and shrub abatement to Phase 1 and suitable Phase 2 woodlands. Suitability of Phase 2 sites would include factors such as senescence due to age of a stand adversely affecting desirable vegetation and/or wildlife. All plans will emphasize removal and use of the material for firewood, posts, or commercial products including chips for energy production. This item depends on continued motorized access to all areas that are subject to future woodland manipulations.
- Review surface disturbance plans on soils with a high or extremely high erosion hazard rating within plans for multiple recreation use, infra-structure, timber harvest, mechanical range treatments, prescribed fires, range improvements, resource development and vegetation manipulation to minimize environmental impacts.
- Keep wildlife plans at levels (population numbers) that preclude adverse impacts to soil, water and vegetation until studies and allotment evaluations demonstrate that population adjustments are warranted by changing resource conditions. Seek to restore mule deer and sage grouse population numbers to the levels observed in the mid-1900s.
- Keep wild horse and burro populations within Herd Management Areas (HMAs) at levels (population numbers) that preclude adverse impacts to soil, water and vegetation until studies and allotment evaluations demonstrate that population adjustments are warranted by changing resource conditions.
- Integrate recreational uses into all planning efforts to preclude adverse impacts to soil, water, and vegetation.

Discourage the introduction, invasion or expansion of undesirable plants and noxious weeds into native rangelands and improve the ecological status of sites that are currently invaded by undesirable plants or noxious weeds by integrating, through consultation with Mineral County, appropriate control methods into all planning efforts. Prescriptions for control of undesirable plants and noxious weeds may include, but are not limited to burning, grazing, mechanical, manual, biological and chemical methods.

### **Reviewing:**

- Cooperative reviewing completed by permittees is fully endorsed by Mineral County. Reviewing completed by agency officials should always include the participation of the permittee.
- Review ecological status and trend data obtained through rangeland studies supplemented with actual use, utilization (use pattern mapping), and climatic data in accordance with the Nevada *Range Land Reviewing Handbook*.

- Review ecological sites or forage suitability groups, and ecological similarities index as defined by NRCS *National Range and Pasture Handbook*, with specific reference to ecological status and trend data and “State and Transition” interpretations of ecological status.
- Review progress in the development and implementation of Allotment Management Plans.
- Review the development and implementation of Pinyon pine, juniper, and shrub abatement, control, or harvest plan(s).
- Review the development and implementation of Management Plan(s) for control of noxious weeds and other undesirable species.
- Mineral County code enforcer shall inspect mining activities and other significant surface disturbing activities for compliance with statutory law and the relevant reclamation plan.
- Review wild horse and burro herd population inventories, and conduct inventories when necessary, including reports of wild horse movement, grazing habits, numbers, and other data provided by permittees, lessees, and landowners.

**Evaluation:**

- Review the AMP's and other activity plans that are developed and implemented as necessary to achieve objectives.
- Review the degree to which data indicates Desired Plant Community features that have been attained, or significant progress made towards that goal (i.e., high seral plant communities are remaining stable, lower seral communities are improving, etc.). Recommend modification to management plans, as necessary.
- Review the degree to which surface disturbance activities are occurring and their impact on reclamation actions.
- Review the degree to which wild horse, burro, livestock and/or wildlife use is impacting soil and vegetation resources and review management plans accordingly.

## **NR 2: FORAGE AND LIVESTOCK GRAZING**

Substantial changes have occurred in Mineral County's economic base because of market fluctuation, increasing costs of production, and regulatory actions against livestock grazing on federal lands. At a time when the community should benefit from the combined wealth created by all sectors of the economy, decreases in the economic contribution from the livestock industry have been egregious. The direct impact to the Mineral County is a reduction (loss) of cash circulating within the local economy.

As discussed below "Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat"), losses to Mineral County natural resources include the loss of benefits to wildlife populations and wildlife habitat that had previously been provided because of livestock grazing practices and predator controls.

During the mid-1900's, hunting for mule deer, sage grouse and other game birds provided important benefits to the Mineral County economy, but income from hunting and other outdoor recreation has declined during the same period of livestock removal.

With fewer cattle and sheep producing marketable products, Mineral County jobs have been lost, economic activity has been reduced. The resulting reduction in cash purchases each year, and substantial reductions of tax revenues have affected Mineral County's long-term ability to meet the obligations of the County.

### **Goal:**

*Encourage landscape vegetation maintenance and improvement that will: 1) support restoration of suspended AUMs; 2) support allocation of forage produced more than the original adjudicated amounts where greater amounts of forage are demonstrated to be present; 3) restore livestock numbers of individual ranches to at least the full levels at the time of grazing allotment adjudications; and 4) restore wildlife populations to those peak levels of the mid-1990's.*

### **Primary Planning Guidance Addressed:**

- Private Property and Property Rights
- Tax Base, Mineral County Clerk and Treasurer
- Water Resources, Mineral County Utilities
- Agriculture
- Wildlife
- Riparian Habitat
- Wild Horses and Burros
- Pinyon, Juniper, and Tamarisk Control
- Wildfire

## **Guidance:**

Congress mandates stabilization of the local livestock industry in such laws as the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA) and the Forest Service Organic Act (FSOA) by providing for the orderly use, improvement, and development of the range in a manner which safeguards property rights including rights-of-way, easements, vested grazing, and water rights. Regulation under these laws will not impair the value of the grazing unit of the permittee when such unit is pledged as debt security by the permittee.

Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Public Rangeland Improvement Act (PRIA) provide that the Bureau of Land Management administered lands be managed in accordance with the Taylor Grazing Act. PRIA further provides that the range should be made "as productive as feasible" in accordance with the Congressional objective of preventing "economic disruption and harm to the western livestock industry." PRIA mandates improvement of the rangelands to expand the forage resource and increase the resulting benefits to livestock and wildlife production.

In the Federal Land Policy & Management Act (FLPMA) Congress directs that the BLM administered lands be managed in a manner which "recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands". The National Environmental Policy Act requires consideration of all environmental actions on the culture, heritage, and custom of local government (16 U.S.C. sec. 4331 (a)(4). Current active preference and continuously available supplemental use is considered the established allowable use for livestock grazing. The Forest Service is obligated to consider and provide for "community stability" in accordance with the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and other National Forest related legislation dating back to the 1890's.

All rangeland uses, and value is dependent upon maintenance and enhancement of the primary landscape resources of soils, vegetation, and watersheds. August L. Hormay states that "...all renewable rangeland values stem directly or indirectly from vegetation. Sustained high-level production of these values therefore depends on proper management of the vegetation. The principal tool the rangeland manager has for managing vegetation is livestock grazing. It is the only force under firm control of the manager that can be applied on practically the entire range area....desirable vegetation and the overall productive capacity of rangelands can be increased more rapidly with livestock grazing than without....Livestock can be used to trample seed into the soil thereby promoting more forage and a better soil cover; to remove stifling old growth on plants, thus increasing plant vigor and production of useable herbage; to stimulate adventitious growth and higher quality forage; and to reduce fire hazard." (Emphasis added) Hormay explained that grazing management that is based on the physiological status and phenological development of the plants is the basis for keeping plants healthy and vigorous. Utilization levels have no bearing on the longevity of the plants and extraordinarily little value in management decisions.

The principles of plant physiology as the basis for vegetation management taught by Hormay and other experts are a sound basis for grazing management in Mineral County. Mineral County natural resource strategy includes management based on the renewable nature of Mineral County's vegetation resources.

**Policies:**

- Encourage range land improvement programs, including but not limited to water developments, range land restoration, pinyon-juniper, tamarisk, and shrub control, and weed control to increase forage production; improve livestock grazing management, raise stocking rates, and achieve other multiple use goals. It is the policy of Mineral County that water rights for livestock uses are to be held solely in the name of the permittee and not held jointly with a federal or state agency.
- Encourage off-stream water sources where such opportunities exist in all allotment pastures with sensitive riparian areas and in all allotments where improved livestock distribution will result from such development.
- Encourage all economically and technically feasible livestock distribution, forage production enhancement, and weed control programs before seeking changes in livestock stocking rates.
- Review reductions in stocking levels only after data demonstrates that grazing management including range improvements and specialized grazing systems are not supporting basic soil, vegetation, and watershed goals.
- Review all grazing management actions and strategies that impact property rights of in-holders and adjacent private landowners and consider the potential impacts of such actions on grazing animal health and productivity.
- Where history, actual use, or authorization of Temporary Non-renewable grazing (TNR) demonstrates that supplemental use is continuously available and can or should be used to improve or protect range lands (e.g., reduction of fuel loads to prevent recurring wildfire), encourage a process to permanently allocate such use to permittees as active grazing preference.
- Review use of supplemental forage during those years when climatic conditions result in additional forage availability.
- Temporary "voluntary non-use" of all or a portion of adjudicated forage is necessary on occasion due to drought, economic difficulties, animal health, etc., and is an acceptable management strategy. "Voluntary non-use" for the purpose of long-term or permanent retirement of a grazing allotment is detrimental to the economic stability of Mineral County. Use of "Voluntary non-use" should not be used to penalize the grazing permittee.

## **Reviewing:**

- Cooperative reviewing completed by permittees is fully endorsed by Mineral County. Reviewing completed by agency officials should include the participation of the permittee.
- Review the amount of livestock use through review of actual use, authorized active use, suspended use, and temporary nonrenewable use.
- Review livestock production or performance when available.
- Review all range land and livestock management improvement programs as to acres affected by vegetation manipulation, water development, specialized grazing systems and weed control.
- Review the direction of range land trend and seral class acreage changes that support changes in the amount of use being authorized or denied.
- Review grazing use in each allotment through use pattern mapping for the purpose of recording livestock or wildlife distribution patterns and identifying additional reviewing techniques that are needed. Utilization reviewing is not a suitable measure for calculating stocking rates.
- Review all decisions or agreements resulting in changes in active preference and approvals or denial of applications for supplemental use.

## **Evaluation:**

- Use data, trend studies and ecological status range land studies, to assure the amount of authorized use that can be sustained.
- Evaluate the degree to which, data supported requests for increases in active preference, return of voluntary non-use, and applications for supplemental use are approved and authorized.
- Review the degree to which identified vegetation manipulation projects, range improvement practices, specialized grazing systems, and weed control projects are being authorized and implemented.

*It is the goal of this Plan that management activities be instituted which prevent such "taking" and which fosters effective implementation of the "right" to adjudicated grazing preferences.*

- Mineral County may protect the property and persons of Mineral County from agency officials who attempt to enforce regulations based on unproven facts or conclusive presumptions.

- Mineral County may plan for and take positive action to assure that private property rights and private property interests including, investment backed expectations, are protected considering the standard set forth above.
- Mineral County opposes the practice of federal agencies demanding a portion of the water rights from either above ground or underground sources that are held as private property and may protest or object to any attempt by federal agents to obtain ownership of water rights currently owned privately.

### **NR 3: WATER QUALITY, RIPARIAN AREAS, AND AQUATIC HABITATS**

#### **Goals:**

*Meet the requirements for water quality contained in the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) Section 445, to the extent they can be met while complying with constitutional and statutory law as to vested water rights, maintain, or improve riparian areas and aquatic habitat that represents a range of variability for functioning condition.*

#### **Primary Planning Guidance Addressed:**

- Private Property and Property Rights
- Water Resources
- Mining
- Agriculture
- Wildlife
- Recreation
- Riparian Habitat
- Wild Horses and Burros
- Pinyon and Juniper Control
- Wildfire

#### **Guidance:**

Determination of proper functioning condition, stream channel morphology, and quality of riparian and aquatic habitats will always include a technically accurate determination of stream flows being perennial, ephemeral, or intermittent. Determination of water quality or riparian evaluation based on water quality means water quality as suited to the beneficial use for which the water is designated. Streams or springs that provide irrigation water and livestock water do not require human drinking water quality standards. Water quality laws that are legally enforceable still depend on authority under the Clean Water Act and several related laws.

Water quality standards must be realistic and attainable for the specific location that the regulation will be applied. Water quality standards for naturally occurring streams or lakes, reservoirs, or other impoundments are based on mean water quality determined throughout the course of entire years, over multiple year time frames. Point in time measurements of water quality may provide an indication that more sampling and analysis is warranted, but such limited samples will not provide sufficient evidence to justify regulatory action on a basis that water quality has been impaired.

Stream morphology developed by Rosgen, and his associates is the acceptable technique; any other approach requires evaluation and approval of the PLUP-SC. Identification of goals for riparian vegetation attributes must be realistic and attainable based on the dependability of surface or subsurface water regimes, climate as determined by elevations, soil and substrate characteristics, and the likelihood of unacceptable impacts on other uses within the riparian area and surrounding uplands. For example, quaking aspen reproduction is desirable in Mineral County and aspen reproduction that replaces an aspen stand in increments over about 100 years while grazing, wildlife populations, and recreation continue in the vicinity is preferable to techniques of riparian wide aspen stand regeneration that excludes customary uses.

### **Policies:**

- Select site specific Best Management Practices (BMP's) through allotment management plans for those riparian areas and aquatic habitats which have been specifically identified and reviewed as exceeding State water quality standards for the actual use the water is intended for.
- BMP's include but are not limited to prescribed grazing systems, off-site water development, shrub and pinyon/juniper control, livestock salting plans, establishment of riparian pastures and herding.
- Utilize standardized forms and procedures for all Reviewing data related to riparian and aquatic habitat, condition, and trend.
- Assure management plans for multiple recreation uses in high erosion hazard watersheds are formulated through coordination with the PLUP-SC which includes representatives of recreational groups.
- Encourage a management plan for wild horses, livestock, and wildlife to enhance watershed and riparian areas.
- Encourage the development and maintenance of water conveyance systems (i.e., provide for livestock watering systems, irrigation diversions, and domestic or municipal uses).

### **Reviewing:**

- Assure site specific **BMPs** are implemented in the development of **AMP's**.
- Assure the development and implementation of multiple recreational use plans for specific high erosion areas.

### **Evaluation:**

- Evaluate the development of AMP's and implementation of BMPs to determine their impact on improvement of riparian areas and water quality. Identify the need to re-evaluate the design and effectiveness of BMP's.
- Review the degree of use and effectiveness of standardized procedures to obtain and record data to determine the condition and trend of riparian and aquatic habitat in areas identified as being adversely affected by wild horses, wildlife, and recreational use.
- Evaluate the records of grazing permit renewal for their impact on private property rights, including water rights.
- Interpret riparian monitoring data in view of technical limitations that may be present such as intermittent or ephemeral stream flows, soils, or substrate susceptibility to erosion, expected stream flow of perennial waters, and site-specific base data for water quality.

## **NR 4: WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT**

### **Goal:**

*Maintain, improve, or mitigate wildlife impacts to habitat to sustain viable and viable populations of big game and upland game species as well as wetland/riparian habitat for waterfowl, fur bearers and a diversity of other game and non-game species.*

### **Primary Planning Guidance Addressed:**

- Private Property and Property Rights
- Agriculture
- Wildlife
- Recreation
- Water Resources
- Riparian Habitat

## **Guidance:**

The FLPMA provides that it is the policy of the United States that BLM administered lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of multiple resources, will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals, and will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use. The PRIA directs improvement of rangeland conditions and provides for rangeland improvements which include habitat for wildlife. The authority for management of wildlife rests solely with Nevada by virtue of the equal footing doctrine set forth in Article One of the Admissions Act, and the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

## **Historical Perspective:**

Experience and scientific observations in other areas support preference for mule deer and sage grouse as the species that are the objective of wildlife management with the understanding that a variety of non-game species will be present as well. Declines in both sage grouse and mule deer population numbers have been well reviewed following peak populations from the 1930s to the late 1960s. Population changes are discussed in the Nevada Wildlife Action Plan, but habitat descriptions in that report do not seem to be scientifically supported. Declines in both species parallel the decline in livestock numbers and the loss of ranch families who lived and worked where their livestock grazed.

Mule deer benefit from managed livestock grazing that has the effect of pruning and stimulating growth of browse plants such as antelope bitterbrush as well as perennial grasses and forbs. Sage Grouse benefit from spring grazing on meadows prior to the arrival of sage grouse broods, the early grazing improves the sage grouse food supply because the plants that had been consumed are re-growing and very palatable when the sage grouse arrive, and insects are also readily accessible for the sage grouse chicks.

As livestock and ranching declined there has been an observed increase in predators of both mule deer and sage grouse. Between about 1940 and 1970, several chemicals were developed and used to control coyote populations to protect livestock, and the mule deer and sage grouse also benefited. After the use of chemicals such as 1080 were banned, sheep ranchers returned to trapping or shooting as predator management which continued to benefit wildlife populations. However most Mineral County sheep ranchers are no longer in business and the benefit of predator management by those ranchers.

Adult sage grouse are believed to depend on their ability to see predators approaching to escape, which is one of the benefits thought to be provided by grazing meadows that are also used to raise sage grouse broods. As discussed in the Society for Range Management paper “Ecology and Management of Sage Grouse and Sage Grouse Habitat” (2006), predation of adult sage grouse has a substantial effect on populations, but it has been demonstrated in recent years that depredation of sage grouse nests by common ravens can prevent successful reproduction of sage grouse over wide areas.

Realistic and attainable wildlife population goals have as a baseline, the historical observations of wildlife populations at the time of European settlement, which indicate that wildlife populations were sparse with very few deer, bighorn sheep, or sage grouse being observed by early explorers.<sup>1</sup> Archeological interpretations support this scarcity of animals and birds. Wildlife populations at levels of those existing at the time of European settlement is the best that natural Mineral County habitats can provide. Wildlife populations increased in the pre-1900s, following the establishment of ranches and farms, and the continuation of the preferred wildlife populations will require positive management actions in response to local community concerns.

**Policies:**

- Coordinate with the Mineral County Wildlife Advisory Board, Mineral County Natural Resources Advisory Commission, Nevada Department of Wildlife, affected private property interests, lessees, and permittees to develop specific wildlife population targets, harvest guidelines, depredation mitigation and guidelines for future site-specific management plans affecting upland, waterfowl, and big game habitat.
- Where it is in the best interest of the local community for wildlife populations to exceed pre-settlement conditions, population management plans should analyze and, where necessary mitigate, harmful impacts to rangelands, woodlands, native wildlife species and economically desirable non-native wildlife species. Mitigation must accommodate impacts that have accumulated since initial resource allocation.

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<sup>1</sup> Summary of journals of early explorers that describe the absence of game as a serious handicap are summarized by Cliff Gardner and available on [www.gardnerfiles.com](http://www.gardnerfiles.com). NDOW also notes the reports of the Society of Game Animals in the early 1800's in the Ruby Butte Herd” Nevada Department of Fish and Game, March 1976 (page 19)

- Assure wildlife populations and wildlife habitat enhance species native to Mineral County. Exceptions to this objective must be founded on a clear public benefit attributed to the introduction, enhancement or propagation of a non-native species or a species native to Nevada, but not historically found in Mineral County. Public benefit is demonstrated through affirmation by the Mineral County Wildlife Advisory Board and Mineral County Natural Resources Advisory Commission.
- Use rangeland studies, pellet group plots, breeding bird transects and other appropriate studies to monitor wildlife relationships to available habitat as well as impacts of vegetation manipulation projects on wildlife.
- Assure NDOW uses specific wildlife habitat attributes that are required by various wildlife species. Employ objective techniques to measure and record habitat characteristics of wildlife species; assume that the wildlife select habitat that best meets the needs of the species. Develop technical descriptions of habitat attribute requirements for each species and for each season of the year.
- Prioritize the planning, approval and completion of multiple-use water developments, rangeland treatment projects and prescribed burns that include objectives for enhancement of big game and other wildlife habitat. Wildlife developments must be cooperative in nature, respecting the rights and interests of existing resource users.
- Assure considerations of wildlife habitat requirements in the design and reclamation of mineral development projects through approved Plan(s) of Operations.
- Management agencies shall provide all necessary maintenance of enclosure fences not specifically placed for improved management of livestock.
- Encourage cooperative studies with willing private landowners, of wildlife depredation and related concerns regarding wildlife habitat on private land.
- Review NDOW records of wildlife losses to predators and support predator control efforts designed to protect specified wildlife species.

**Reviewing:**

- Encourage the participation of affected parties in the development and establishment of population targets and management guidelines for upland game, waterfowl, and big game species.

- BLM shall include wildlife habitat objectives in activity plans and approved Reclamation Plans.
- BLM shall provide the location and extent of water developments and vegetation manipulation projects and prescribed fires for wildlife habitat improvement and provide timely notification to all affected parties.
- Review range improvement projects, rights-of-way, woodcuts, mining activities, multiple recreation uses, and materials leases for habitat improvement or disturbance.
- Review visitor use of wildlife and fish in terms of hunter or fisherman questionnaire content as well as other recreation use, business reports of sales to visitors to the area, etc.

**Evaluation:**

- Encourage the participation of agencies, landowners and sportsmen and their progress in development of designated management area plans.
- NDOW shall provide wildlife population fluctuation data related to both habitat condition and non-habitat impacts on reproduction and survival.
- NDOW and the BLM shall provide the numbers and time required for the initiation and completion of water developments, prescribed burns, and range treatment projects for wildlife habitat improvement.
- Report the incidents and disposition of wildlife depredation on private lands and property to the Mineral County Wildlife Board.

**NR 5: WOODLAND RESOURCES**

**Goal:**

*Maintain or improve aspen and conifer tree health, vegetation diversity, wildlife, and watershed values through active management of sites with the ecological potential for aspen, pinyon, or juniper woodlands and initiate thinning, removal, or other management measures.*

### **Primary Planning Guidance Addressed:**

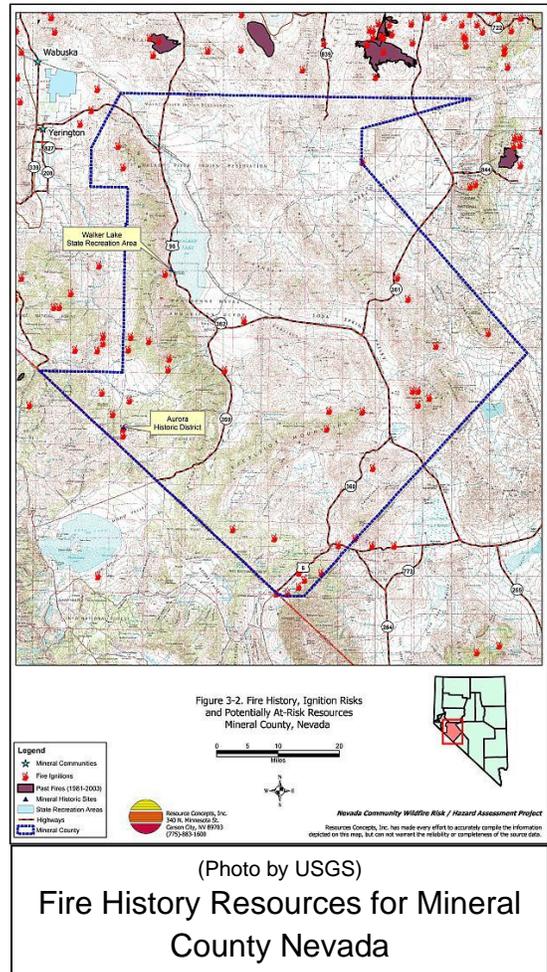
- Private Property and Property Rights
- Tax Base
- Water Resources
- Air Resources
- Agriculture
- Wildlife
- Recreation
- Riparian Habitat
- Pinyon and Juniper Control
- Wildfire

### **Guidance:**

The Public Rangelands Improvement Act directs that the condition of the BLM administered rangelands be improved so that they become as productive as feasible for all range land values. The Federal Land Policy Management Act mandates that BLM administered lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of ecological and other resource values and provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals and recognizes the nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the BLM administered lands. Forest Reserves and later National Forests are directed to conserve water flows, furnish timber for the people, and support the local economy in accordance with the Forest Service Organic Act and the National Forest Management Act. It is well demonstrated that unrestricted invasion of Pinyon and Juniper into plant communities that have the ecological potential of rangeland results in loss of wildlife habitat, loss of livestock forage, reduced water flow from springs and streams, and increased soil erosion.

### **Policies:**

- Support and encourage a partnership with Federal agencies concerning necessary and useful, programs to improve Pinion and juniper woodland health, e.g.: selective fence post and firewood harvesting, or other operations such as green cuts.
- Insist upon the reclamation of disturbed forest sites.
- Support and encourage the removal of pinyon or juniper from plant communities that are identified as non-woodland (rangeland) ecological sites and restore the vegetation that is appropriate for those respective sites.



- Review woodland product harvest activities on the BLM and FS administered lands as necessary to promote customary economic use of woodland resources (i.e., pine nuts, firewood, posts, Christmas trees, etc.)
- Support and encourage a partnership with Federal agencies and local Wildlife agencies to make wildlife habitat improvements and grazing management strategies designed to enhance woodland or forest goals for aspen, pinyon-juniper, or other woodland types.
- Review reports from those responsible agencies to ensure mitigating management actions for the occurrence of insects and diseases that threaten the health of woodland resources.

**Reviewing:**

- Report the presence of insects or diseases that threaten woodland health.
- Identify old and decadent stands of trees and the management actions applied in each individual case.
- Identify the acres and severity of pinyon-juniper encroachment into range land ecological sites as identified by soil survey, aerial photo interpretation, or other techniques.

**Evaluation:**

- Evaluate reports to determine the degree to which woodlands are affected by insect damage or disease and harvest activities.
- Correlate aspen stands characteristics with recreational use, wildlife populations, wild horses, livestock grazing and other multiple use activities.

**NR 6: AIR QUALITY**

**Goal:**

*Prevent and remediate significant deterioration of the superior air quality found in Mineral County.*

**Primary Planning Guidance Addressed:**

The Federal Clean Air Act and State of Nevada air quality regulations establish standards and provide guidance to management agencies regarding parameters affecting air quality. Smoke management is one element (both prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) and total suspended particulate (TSP)) of several elements in the National Ambient Air Quality Standards established in the Clean Air Act (1967) and amendments to the Act (1972, 1977).

### **Policies:**

- Engage the State of Nevada and federal agencies in their industrial air quality permitting process for proposed developments that are likely to diminish air quality in Mineral County.
- Engage federal land management agencies in burn planning.
- Agencies shall conduct prescribed burning at or below maximum allowed by Clean Air Act.

### **Reviewing:**

- Have access to records of both acreage and tonnage burned and compare to allowable values.
- Review compliance with best management practices for point source emissions.

### **Evaluation:**

- Assure prescribed burning plans meet the requirements and guidelines for air quality and smoke management developed by the State of Nevada.
- Review, when necessary, the backlog of prescribed burns and applications and requests for additional prescribed burns to incorporate them into the following year annual plan.

## **NR 7: LOCATABLE MINERALS, FLUID MINERALS, AND MINERAL MATERIALS**

### **Goal:**

*Facilitate environmentally responsible exploration, development and reclamation of oil, gas, geothermal, locatable minerals, aggregate, and similar resources on federal lands.*

### **Primary Planning Guidance Addressed:**

- Tax Base
- Water Resources
- Air Resources
- Mining
- Utility Rights and Public Consumptions
- Land Disposition/Land Tenure Adjustments
- Access
- Other Federal Land Use Regulations

## **Guidance:**

The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 as amended, Geothermal Steam Act of 1970, as amended, the Mining and Mineral Policy Act of 1970, all declare that it is the continuing policy of the federal government to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of domestic mineral resources. The 1872 Mining Law along with the Mining and Mineral Policy Act of 1970 declares that it is the continuing policy of the United States to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of domestic mineral resources. The Federal Land Policy & Management Act reiterates that the Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970 is to be implemented and directs that the BLM administered lands are to be managed in a manner which recognizes the nation's need for domestic sources of minerals and other resources. The National Materials and Minerals Policy, Research and Development Act of 1980 restates the need to implement the 1970 Act and requires the Secretary of the Interior to improve the quality of minerals data in land use decision making. The Mining Law of 1866 guaranteed certain rights which allow for orderly and efficient use of the public lands for commerce.

## **Policies:**

- Coordinate with federal agencies and state and local government planning agencies and in cooperation with interested members of the public, develop a land management mineral classification plan to evaluate, classify and inventory the potential for locatable mineral, oil, gas and geothermal, and material mineral exploration or development, to insure those lands shall remain open and available unless withdrawn by Congress or federal administrative action. To the extent practicable, land with high mineral or oil and gas values will remain open for economic use.
- Encourage the donation of exploration data to the Bureau of Mines. Use all available data, including, but not limited to existing hydrological data, geochemical and geophysical testing, geological mapping, and sampling, and where appropriate, drilling and testing.
- Encourage mineral material needs through negotiated sales, free use permits and community pits.
- Review as needed the NEPA analysis of environmental and community impacts related to proposed mineral, oil, and gas development, including social, economic, and fiscal impacts.

## **Reviewing:**

- Review all exploration data and requests for and the issuance of patents through a system of tracking paperwork associated with such activity.

**Evaluation:**

- Determine the degree to which mineral exploration and development are occurring as compared to needs and potential for the County.
- Determine whether the time required to obtain necessary permits and approvals is reasonable.

**NR 8: FEDERALLY MANAGED LANDS**

Mineral County consists of approximately 3700 square miles of which 95% are controlled by the Federal Government. A large part of Mineral County is federally withdrawn land currently occupied by the military base, and land classified as federally managed lands that are controlled by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. Mineral



(Photo by Betty Easley)

Range Cattle South of Hawthorne

County's greatest asset is the land that it contains. Throughout the history of the County, the economic growth has been dependent upon the land for mining, agriculture, recreation, and revenue derived from the base and the personnel that are employed there. Most recently, the training activities at Hawthorne Weapons Ammunition Depot have been economically good for Mineral County.

There have been many periods of boom and bust in Mineral County because of a failure



(Photo by Betty Easley)  
Walker Lake Pelican

to expand our horizons and fully utilize the land that we live on. Those that study the West know that the culture of this region, the people, and the sense of place are influenced by the economic history of the period that views the land as a primary source of wealth. Even the name of the County, Mineral, depicts the vast mineral resources that are available in the County. But all too often, as is evidenced in Mineral County by the name of ghost towns from the mining industry, relying on any one industry severely weakens our ability to compete in a global economy and impoverishes our communities.

Another example is the recent BRAC crisis that this County narrowly survived. Once again Mineral County had its entire economic future based on the use of land and jobs available at the local military base. We must look toward the future and embrace the trend in the world today. There are many industries that can be classified as white collar or

brainpower industries: microelectronics, biotechnology, the new materials industry, aviation, telecommunications, computers, and software. These sample industries are all “footloose” industries as they can locate anywhere in the world. There are many places in the West that have attracted these industries because of organizations and forward-thinking people that worked to attract them. Mineral County has several important assets to use in a plan to develop and attract industry, the most important being the land and resources contained in the County.

Mineral County has some of the most scenic areas in Nevada, from the high mountain ranges and high valleys to the basin of the Walker River and Walker Lake. The mountainous area, west of the town of Walker Lake, is rich in wildlife and photography enthusiasts enjoy observing the natural habitat. Mountain goats often can be seen sunning themselves at the higher elevations. There are many areas rich in mining history that have become popular tourist attractions. Roy Romer, the former governor of Colorado, phrased it: “America’s brightest people are attracted to America’s most beautiful places.”

Mineral County is rich in natural resources, minerals, geothermal, solar, wind power and recreation. We have the military base and can utilize the technological opportunities that follow it, all of which can be developed to generate employment, new technology, and service industry opportunities. Instead of waiting for the new mine to open or the military to expand operations at the local base, we need to pay attention to the global economy and carve out our own niche. We support the Multiple Use Concept of federally managed lands as a philosophy for management. We can create an urban economy in our very rural setting instead of losing the opportunity to make sure we benefit from the new growth. We can develop our natural resources for the economic health of our communities, creating jobs that will develop from the various industries, and put in place incentives to preserve wildlife habitat and the fragile ecosystems for the land we are responsible. We need to plan our transportation systems. We also need to ensure that youth get the training they need to obtain the good jobs we can generate. We need to participate and take a position of ownership in all aspects of federal land management in Mineral County from watershed restoration, mining, development of alternative energy sources, and preservation of the land for future generations.

Mineral County recognizes that water is critical for the survival of the communities and the habitat for wildlife. Therefore, watershed restoration efforts need to be addressed. We need to develop a comprehensive plan for watershed restoration in cooperation with federal and state agencies. Restoration is critical in the survival of communities in the Walker Lake area, failure to address this issue can result in a serious health issue for the residents of Walker Lake.

Mineral County requests to be recognized by the Bureau of Land Management as a joint lead or cooperating agency in actions affecting the environment and economic need within the County with federal land management. Mineral County will work under the directives of FLPMA and NEPA and join with the federal agencies to coordinate public land use planning and ensure that federal land use plans are consistent with local plans to the maximum extent possible. When properly conducted, the lead agency/cooperating agency relationship provides mutual benefits. The goals of the cooperating agency relationship include:

- Gaining early and consistent involvement of key governmental partners
- Incorporating local knowledge of economic, social, and political conditions
- Addressing intergovernmental issues
- Avoiding duplication of efforts
- Enhancing the credibility of the review process
- Building relationships of trust and collaboration for long term mutual gain

Last year, Mineral County passed a resolution establishing a renewable energy policy into the Mineral County Master Plan. As part of this resolution, Mineral County pledged to develop and enact a local land use and management plan of public lands which comprehensively lists natural resource priorities in terms of the economic, social and the political customs and culture of the communities in the County. Also, Mineral County committed to develop policies described under the Federal Land Management Act, NEPA and all other federal mandates that allow local government to coordinate with federal agencies in land use inventories, planning and management action in land use planning for the federal lands management by all federal agencies. A committee has been formed in Mineral County to develop a public land use policy and upon completion it will become part of this Master Plan.

Mineral County recognizes Presidential Order 12866 that emphasized the need for federal agencies to develop close working relationship with state and local government. It states: “The American people deserve a regulatory system that works for them, not against them, a regulatory system that protects and improves the health, safety, environment, and wellbeing and improves the performance of the economy without imposing unacceptable or unreasonable costs on society; regulatory policies that recognize that the private sector and private markets as the best engine for economic growth; regulatory policies that respect the role of state, local and tribal government; and regulations that are effective, consistent, sensible, and understandable.”

Mineral County is dedicated to working together for responsible management. We must now shoulder greater responsibilities to our citizens and for our environments. We can no longer ignore our prescribed roles in the land planning process. This should not be an adversarial role, but a fulfillment of the Constitutional principles of checks, balances, and above all protection of the inalienable rights of the citizens. The terms cooperate, coordinate, and consult denote a desire by Congress that federal, state, and local governments work together for the general welfare of all citizens with special emphasis on localized needs. Mineral County’s participation as a joint lead agency, or at a minimum, cooperating agency in the federal decision-making process can only produce positive benefits.

## **SECTION VI: POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EDUCATION**

### **Population:**

Mineral County, located in the west/southwest portion of Nevada is home to the United States Army’s largest ammunition storage depot just west of the town of Hawthorne. Hawthorne, the county’s largest city along with smaller townships, accounts for the population of Mineral County (See Table 1). In the 2000 Census, Mineral County’s population of 5071, which accounted for .002% of the population for the State of Nevada. In the 2010 Census, Mineral County’s population of 4772 accounted for .0017% of the population for the State of Nevada.

As of the 2020 Census, Mineral County's Population is 4638 (Appendix 1). This is a -0.28% decrease since the 2010 Census. The five-year outlook for the population is projecting a -0.46% population decrease; however, this does not consider the current increase in mining activity within Mineral County, nor does it project the current and future affairs of the Hawthorne Weapons Army Depot.

(Table 1)

Population Center	July 1, 2015	July 1, 2016	Percent Change	July 1, 2017	Percent Change	July 1, 2018	Percent Change
Mineral County	4539	4578	0.90%	4674	2.10%	4690	0.30%
Hawthorne	3035	2868	-5.50%	3066	6.90%	3065	0.00%
Luning	101	123	22.10%	105	-15.20%	106	1.60%
Mina	153	173	13.60%	173	-0.20%	174	0.70%
Walker Lake	378	403	6.80%	322	-20.10%	327	1.60%

Population Estimates from NV State demographer

Although the population of Mineral County has shown a decrease over the years, the expectation is that Mineral County will project a growth of 2% which could be accelerated based on economic growth Mineral County has the potential for.

Sustaining the population around Hawthorne, Hawthorne Army Depot is the largest employer for Mineral County. Mineral County also contains numerous mining ventures, county government, educational, and private/commercial as employment opportunities. However, Mineral County does face similar social and economic hurdles, which the county has experienced both increases and decreases in the employment force figures (See Table 3). As a vital link to Mineral County, Hawthorne Army Depot is extremely important for the United States Government and United States Army meet the ever-changing role this country faces abroad. It is expected the Hawthorne Army Depot's mission will grow to meet those demands and will require a higher, diverse population base to meet those needs.

Year	Population	School Enrollment	Labor Force	Employment Type				
				Covered	Total	Private	Govt	Farm
2000-2018 Percent Change	-7.5%	-36.6%	-19.9%	-14.5%	-9.3%	-10.0%	-16.0%	127.5%
2017-2018 Percent Change	0.3%	-1.8%	-0.9%	-0.7%	2.3%	3.1%	0.0%	2.2%

Over the past 10 years, the current trend has shown the population decreasing in all categories based on Mineral County estimates and projections. These projections show an overall decrease in all major age brackets; however, the forecast shows a slight increase boosting Mineral County’s population (See Table 3).

There are many factors that contribute to the fluctuations in the population count for Mineral County. Employment opportunities are a major factor for population adjustments within the county. Additionally, higher educational/Training opportunities, access to essential services, access to more urban areas, to name a few, also contribute to the increase/decrease of Mineral County’s population.

(Table 3)

Year	Age 0-19	Age 18-64	Age 65 and over
2010	815	2727	962
2011	751	2635	955
2012	775	2684	956
2013	689	2507	980
2014	602	2405	983
2015	568	2316	979
2016	548	2272	965
2017	541	2261	948
2018	557	2235	947
2019	562	2233	942
2020	590	2219	936
2021	616	2199	943
2022	645	2196	939
2023	666	2206	931
2024	691	2203	930
2025	710	2204	940

Mineral County Clerk Estimates/Projections

Even though growth has stagnated within Mineral County over the years due to the lack of additional industrial/employment opportunities, Mineral County has seen employment increases within certain areas to include the mining industry over the last few years. This increase has provided additional opportunities, however, as the population has stagnated, these industries are selecting employment candidates outside of Mineral County to meet their employment needs.

Growth in Mineral County depends on many varied factors to include influx of employment opportunities, access to additional services within Mineral County, and adequate facilities/housing. Mineral County is forecasting growth over the next decade as state/federal projects such as construction of the I-11 Corridor will provide the potential for a new industrial base to centralize within the boundaries of Mineral County which will bring in the need for more population and requirements for adequate housing needs.

**Population Goals:**

Goal #1: Prepare a report detailing the population estimate, number of housing units, well and septic count.

Goal #2: Identify the elderly population requiring assistance in the area of social and housing needs and work with federal, state, and local jurisdictions to improve health and safety concerns.

**Housing:**

Housing units within Mineral County are single-family structures, mostly located in the population center of Hawthorne Nevada. The townships of Mina, Luning, and Walker Lake encompass most of the rest of the housing units with various areas of mineral county containing small pockets housing units.

Most of the housing units in Mineral County are single family detached structures, which encompasses 45% of the total housing units within Mineral County. Manufactured and mobile homes are comprised of 34% of the housing unit followed by multifamily structures at 21%. Mobile and Manufactured homes figures contain what is considered both real and personal property. Multi-Family Housing figures contain both Single Family attached units and apartments. Additionally, the breakdown of housing figures also show what percentage of residences are located within Mineral County. Hawthorne, being the population center, accounts for 75% of housing units, Mina accounts for 9%, Walker Lake accounts for 7%, Luning accounts for 2%, Schurz – 2% and County Wide (Not considered a part of any city or township\_ – 5%. (See Table 4)

(Table 4)

Name of Tax District, City or Town	Name of City, or Town within the Tax District (If Any)	Single Family Detached	Manufactured/ Mobile Home	Multi-Family Home	Percent of Residences
Hawthorne	Hawthorne	849	402	395	75%
Mina/ Mina Sinnot Addn	Mina	60	103	27	9%
Luning	Luning	22	30	0	2%
Walker Lake	Walker Lake	30	10	114	7%
Schurz	Schurz	4	48	0	2%
County Wide		24	55	13	5%

New home construction is limited or non-existent due to the lack of population influx and resources. Hawthorne has room for new construction growth, however, the infrastructure in place is limited in areas. Mina, Luning, and Walker Lake also have limitations on infrastructure and resources which limits growth.

Home Sales: (Need more information from the assessor's office.) Housing sales within Mineral County are a combination of real property and manufactured (mobile) home sales.

Housing Market: A number of factors affect the housing market in Mineral County which include but not limited to low inventory, lack of real property, lack of multifamily units, and affordable structures.

Flood Zone Areas: Portions of Mineral County and the town of Hawthorne are subject to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood zone regulations. Not all areas of Mineral County are located within a FEMA designated flood zone, however, the property owner is responsible to ensure they are aware if the property is located within the designated flood zones.

Flood Zone Property Construction and Improvements: Property Owners of parcels located within FEMA designated flood zones will be required to follow all regulations and guidance from FEMA when constructing buildings or making substantial improvements that may change the topography of the parcel prior to beginning construction.

**Goals:**

Housing Goal #1: Conduct a housing analysis every year with data received from state and local resources to identify current trends.

Housing Goal #2: Conduct an analysis for the elderly and special needs population and the availability for affordable housing.

Housing Goal #3: Promote housing for elderly/special needs population through various federal, state, and local assistance programs.

Housing Goal #4: Promote housing rehabilitation for housing that is considered uninhabitable and provide direction for assistance through federal, state, and local programs for homeowners to rehabilitate decaying residential structures.

Housing Goal #5: Through established state and local ordinances, identify residences and parcels to improve health and safety conditions throughout Mineral County.

Housing Goal #6: Conduct an analysis on the utility infrastructure and identify shortfalls that would impede expansion within Hawthorne, Mina, Luning, Walker Lake, and within Mineral County.

### **Education:**

Mineral County School District comprises of two elementary schools, a junior high school, and high school. Hawthorne Elementary School, Mineral County Junior High School, and Mineral County High School are located within the city of Hawthorne. Schurz Elementary School is located thirty-three miles north of Hawthorne, NV., on Highway 95 in Schurz, NV. Schurz Elementary is a part of Mineral County School District located on the Walker River Paiute Tribe Reservation and serves students from within the reservation and Mineral County. All students attending post-secondary classes attend at local colleges and universities outside of Mineral County.

Mineral County School District comprises of administrative support staff and educational staff. Mineral County School District employs approximately 149 personnel in positions of Educators and Support personnel.

Mineral County School District had 618 students enrolled for the 2018-2019 school year which was a 5% decline in the student population from the previous school year. Hawthorne Elementary traditionally comprises majority of the students followed by the Junior High School, High School, then Schurz Elementary School.

### **Goals:**

Education Goal #1: Identify the number of students enrolled within the Mineral County School District who are considered homeless on an annual basis and provide guidance/assistance in reducing student homeless population

Education Goal #2: In cooperation with the Mineral County School district, assist in the development of a work force/vocational study course that will improve quality of life conditions for the residents of Mineral County.

Education Goal #3: Provide assistance to the Mineral County School District for identification of residential areas that can be dedicated housing for educators relocating to Mineral County. Provide guidance on rehabilitation options for residences identified as potential ownership.

(Table 5)

	Pre-K Enrollment	Elementary Enrollment	Secondary Enrollment	Total Enrollment	Percent Increase or Decrease
2011-2012	38	342	107	487	
2012-2013	29	348	119	496	2%
2013-2014	35	296	155	486	-2%
2014-2015	36	305	169	510	5%
2015-2016	40	329	199	568	10%
2016-2017	57	353	207	617	8%
2017-2018	42	379	228	649	5%
2018-2019	42	354	222	618	-5%
2019-2020	31	328	208	567	-8%
2020-2021	31	338	204	573	1%

Mineral County School District Enrollment Numbers

As of this writing, the last known population assigned to Mineral County was about 4,596 persons. This was a number estimated by the State of Nevada Demographer. Just to get this picture right, the U.S. Census last taken in the year 2000 assigned a 5,071 population to Mineral County, a drop of 597 over an approximate time of 10 years. The reduction in our population is not unique, and for that matter has little to do with trends across America or Nevada. It reflects the volatility of our employment base, an issue we have been trying to overcome for the last 20 years at least. We are however on the cusp of solving our static or reduced population doldrums with a promotional plan through economic development.

The density of population in Mineral County is estimated in 2009 by the State Demographer's office as follows: Hawthorne, 3028; Luning, 79; Mina, 316; Walker Lake, 329; and Schurz, 844. This comes to an estimated total of 4,596. Schurz is not listed by the state and although we cannot substantiate the Schurz number, we can deduct from the numbers assigned to each community excluding Schurz, and the totals are short 844 persons to balance. Montgomery Pass's population is unknown. The concentration of population into these communities are influenced by factors, not hard to recognize, when considering the availability of water supply, utilities, town services, land ownership patterns, employment base, and highway access. Of course, the key factor for concentrated populations lies



(Photo by Betty Easley)  
Quads in Aurora Area

in the fact that 95% of the lands in Mineral County are public lands, primarily federal and state-owned, leaving 5% for community settlement.

Settlements within Mineral County are unique in their characteristics because they are isolated geographically from surrounding towns. All are linked by the highway system. Lyon County to the west has rapidly gained in population from 2009 state estimates of 53,825, Nye County to the southeast was estimated in 2009 at 46,360, Churchill County to our north at 26,859, and Esmeralda County to our south at 1,187. It is about an hour's driving time from Hawthorne to the closest towns of Yerington (Lyon County) and Fallon (Churchill County). The size of Mineral County is 3,734 square miles and, with our estimated population of 4,596, the density of the county is about 8/10 of a section per person or 627 acres per person.

The primary concern of Mineral County's population over the years always has been attributed to the fact that our employment base is tied directly to the Hawthorne Army Depot and mining operations as primary employers. They both expand and contract dramatically from time to time and recovery from job losses impacts all services of the county, both public and private. This alone is cause for enough concern with respect to this plan. If we do anything, we need to expand and diversify our employment base at least enough to keep from sharp declines in employment and resulting population loss. It is not an easy task when considering all the issues that face us today. Somehow, we must find a way to capitalize on our uniqueness. One of the ways is to promote our remote location from heavily populated areas, just as they did back in the late 1920's and early 1930's when they relocated the munitions plant from New Jersey to Hawthorne. An industry which conflicts with urbanization always is being challenged by over regulated government entity(s) and, with the inflated costs of operational services and land, business and industry would have none of that to deal with in Mineral County. All the necessary pieces to accommodate these types of industries, being put into place by the current Mineral County Board of Commissioners. With this plan, and a continually active economic development strategy, this is the answer we need.

Another factor that has not been completely implemented is the federal government's willingness to fund stimulus plans to get Americans back to work and assist the stagnant economy. Our location and circumstances are ideal for qualifying us in large part because of the enormity of U.S. Government property and improvements within a stone's throw from Hawthorne. If assistance through the stimulus plan flows from federal to state, we should be in the hunt for funds, or if we are aggressive and persistent enough, we might consider direct grant funds from the federal government on the assumption alone that conditions here are ideal for expansion of government facilities, and/or private industry. All our infrastructure for such services is in place and/or expandable. Just a reminder of what we once had during World War II is an infrastructure sufficient to sustain a population of 10,000 persons in Babbitt alone! A testimonial many would find hard to believe, even some of our own citizens.

The 2020 census of Mineral County has a population of approximately 4638, this is a decrease of -0.28% since the 2010 census. The future five-year plan from the housing section for the population is showing a projection of -0.46 population decrease. However, this does not take into effect the future prospects of new mining opening up within Mineral County or nearby Counties. This also does not take into relative effects of the future for the Hawthorne Army Depot going under a new contract with a new employer that may employ more personnel or less personnel depend on how they plan to operate the depot.

With the effects of the mining and future Army Depot, Mineral County could see an increase in population. There has been a small growth fluctuation in Hawthorne, Mina, and Walker Lake within the last year.

Nevada Census & Demographic Data – July 1, 2020, Mineral County

POPULATION (Table 1)				HOUSING (Table 4)			
Total Population			4,638 (100%)	Total HU (Housing Units)			2,830 (100%)
Population in Households			4,586 (98.9%)	Owner Occupied HU			1,292 (45.7%)
Population in Families			3,282 (70.8%)	Renter Occupied HU			923 (32.6%)
Population in Group Quarters <sup>1</sup>			52 (1.1%)	Vacant Housing Units			615 (21.7%)
Population Density			1	Median Home Value			\$95,119
Diversity Index <sup>2</sup>			63	Average Home Value			\$117,879
				Housing Affordability Index <sup>3</sup>			215
INCOME (Table 2)				HOUSEHOLDS (Table 3)			
Median Household Income			\$38,180	Total Households			2,215
Average Household Income			\$53,846	Average Households Size			207
% of Income for Mortgage <sup>4</sup>			10%	Family Households			1,227
Per Capita Income			\$25,728	Average Family Size			3
Wealth Index <sup>5</sup>			48				

❖ NOTES

1. **Group Quarters** - a place where people live or stay in a group living arrangement. Includes college residents' halls, nursing facilities, military barracks, and prisons.
2. The **Diversity Index** is a scale of 0 to 100 that represents the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different races or ethnic groups. If an area's entire population belongs to one race AND one ethnic group, then the area has zero diversity. An area's diversity index increases to 100 when the population is evenly divided into two or more race/ethnic groups.
3. The **Housing Affordability Index** base is 100 and represents a balance point where a resident with a median household income can normally qualify to purchase a median price home. Values above 100 indicate increased affordability, while values below 100 indicate decreased affordability.
4. The **% of Income for Mortgage** quantifies the percentage of median household income dedicated to mortgage payments on a home priced at the median value (assuming a 30-year mortgage and a 20% down payment).
5. The **Wealth Index** is based on several indicators of affluence including average household income and average net worth, but it also includes the value of material possessions and resources. It represents the wealth of the area relative to the national level. Values above or below 100 represent above-average wealth or below-average wealth compared to the national level.

GROWTH RATE / YEAR		2010-2020		2020-2025
Population		-0.28%		-0.46%
Households		-0.11%		-0.26%
Families		-0.24%		-0.31%
Median Household Income				0.68%
Per Capita Income				1.25%
Owner Occupied				-0.06%

VARIABLE DESCRIPTION		RANK		PERCENTILE
Total Population		#14		24th
Population Density		#11		41st
Median Household Income		#17		6th
Housing Affordability Index		#13		76th
Per Capita Income		#13		29th
Diversity Index		#4		82nd

## **SECTION VII: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Introduction**

Economic development is the goal for residents of Mineral County. After the Base Realignment and Closure Commission considered closing our weapons depot, the community recognized the urgent need to diversify our economy. The dependence upon one large employer and our isolated location mean that the community must be extremely competitive in its economic development strategies in our attempts to diversify.

County government has been granted large acreages from the military adjacent to the community of Hawthorne for development of industrial/commercial space and new residential areas. The County has invested resources in putting in updated sewer and water distribution facilities for the acreages that the county owns.

Mineral County works with State and Federal Government Economic Development agencies to collaborate and facilitate Economic opportunities for private enterprise investments in our County.



(Photo by Betty Easley)

Hawthorne Industrial Airport (HTH)

It is important to have the ability to quickly and effectively enable a project's special use permit, conditional use permit and any other planning efforts necessary, to develop a project in a timely manner. While the community is not willing to take just any industry, they are interested in being known for being a user-friendly place to bring industry for job creation. The object of this Master Plan is to clearly

define the means for effective and timely development of entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for the citizens of Mineral County.

This Master Plan demonstrates a well thought out strategy for growth adopted by Mineral County citizens, both in the Master Plan and in other policies and procedures. It conveys to the potential client that Mineral County has assessed its opportunities, set goals for achieving our objectives, and that the community is committed to making Mineral County a great place to live and work.

### **Mineral County Economic Development Assets:**

- Hawthorne Weapons and Ammunition Depot
- Geothermal, wind and solar resources
- Minerals: gold, silver, lithium, uranium, and semi-precious stones
- People: cross trained workforce
- Lots of developable land: county owned, army owned, and privately owned.
- New water and sewer to airport industrial park and Hawthorne commercial development (previously called Babbitt) areas.
- Walker Lake
- Proximity to Yosemite and Mammoth Mountains
- Ability to reach all western markets within 12 hours.

### **Proposed Developments County Wide:**

- Luning Solar proposed expansion
- 30 MW geothermal plant
- Future subdivisions Hawthorne, Luning, Mina, Walker Lake

### **Target Markets:**

Commercial partners for research and development on and off the army depot. Training, product manufacturing, military related support industry, renewable energy production, and equipment manufacturing.

### **Northern Nevada Development Authority (NNDA):**

**Northern Nevada Development Authority (NNDA) is the state-designated Regional Development Authority (RDA) for the Sierra Region of Nevada: Carson City (state capital), Douglas County, Lyon County, Mineral County, and Storey County.**

Established in 1981, the organization is a Nevada domestic nonprofit corporation. NNDA helps to grow and strengthen the region's economic ecosystem and facilitates business-to-business resources to support existing businesses.

## **Our Vision**

A Prosperous, Resilient and Sustainable Economy for Northern Nevada

NNDA Business Development since 2010:

- Reduced the Sierra Region's industrial vacancy rate from 26% to 3%
- Developed a pipeline of 900+ companies.
- Assisted over 100 relocating and expanding companies.
- Generated more than 5,000 new jobs (direct and indirect)
- Created over \$2 Billion in total Economic Impact.

## **What We Do**

- **OUR VISION:** A Prosperous, Resilient and Sustainable Economy for Northern Nevada
- **OUR MISSION:** To influence, facilitate and support the ongoing growth and prosperity of the economic ecosystem of the Sierra Region of Nevada
- **OUR ROLE:** The **connector, navigator** and **problem solver** between the Sierra Region's business communities, government, and the many resources to support business growth.
- Nevada's Sierra Region is the Silver State's third largest metropolitan area, includes Lake Tahoe's south shore and encompasses a diverse set of industry sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, mining, health care, aerospace, rail, logistics, tourism, and many others. It has a land mass of 7,009 square miles and a population over 165,450.
- Though the Sierra Region is exceptionally large geographically, its communities are all interconnected and interdependent. What affects one area, town, city, or county, affects the entire region. This is quite different from traditional urban areas where economic impacts tend to be concentrated within a more compact geographic area. It is the reason that NNDA takes a regional approach to economic development for achieving successful growth of the region's the economic ecosystem.

## **Proximity to Other Western U.S. Cities:**

For Hawthorne to be considered as the central intermodal transportation hub to the western United States it must be in an area where it can move freight in all directions North, South, East, and West in a timely matter. If you look at all the major towns below Hawthorne could transport freight in all directions to most major cities within a 24-hour timeline.

- Reno, Nv. -133 miles
- Sacramento, Ca. -262 miles
- Las Vegas, Nv. -313 miles
- San Francisco, Ca. -348 miles

- Los Angeles, Ca. -389 miles
- Boise, Id. -464 miles
- Salt Lake City, UT. -550 miles
- Phoenix, AZ. -602 miles
- Portland, OR. -709 miles
- Seattle, WA. -881 miles
- Helena, MT. -926 miles
- Denver, CO. -940 miles
- Santa Fe, NM. -947 miles
- Cheyenne, WY. -985 miles

**Hawthorne Technology and Industrial Center Diversified Nevada Certified Sites Program:**

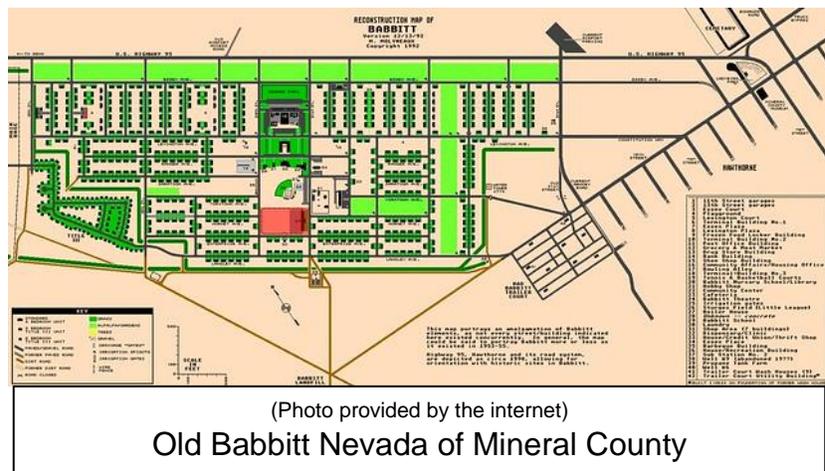
Mineral County to work in conjunction with the Hawthorne Army Depot to develop the Hawthorne Technology and Industrial Center with both industrial and utility divisions.

The future Technology and Industrial Center has six zones of different types of available multiple use from commercial property off a major highway to a utility zone next to a power substation, (see the map in the exhibits sections mark exhibit?).

**Babbitt Development Plan:**

Babbitt Nevada was a populated place established as a 1941 government housing facility for workers of the neighboring Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot.

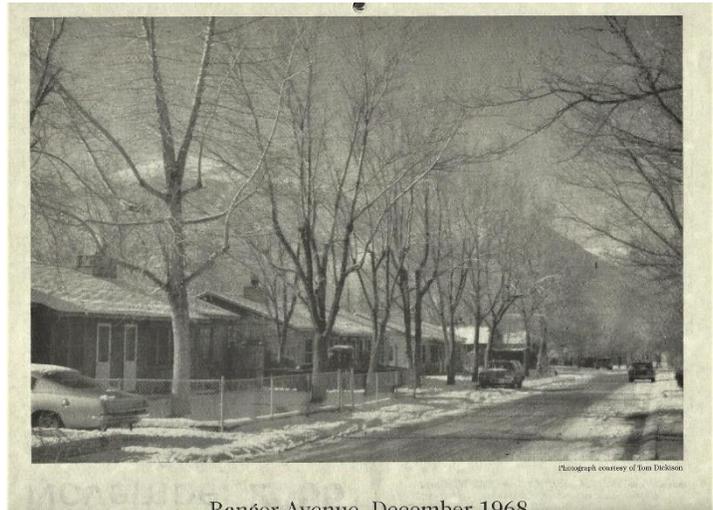
Subsequently, used as a cold war radar station (Hawthorne Bomb Plot), remaining town structures include the school building at the intersection of 21<sup>st</sup> street and Yorktown Avenue and numerous concrete building foundations.



An RV Park is located at the east side of the former community. The school is being converted into a new project and is getting a second chance in life.

Mineral County is in the process of developing plans for the sale and development of the property referred to as the Babbitt area. The area is the site of abandoned Military Housing and Commercial area that was acquired by Mineral County.

The Commercial Subdivision as described in document No. 150621 Mineral County records will be reverted to acreage except for the already developed properties. Essex Avenue will be abandoned from 21<sup>st</sup> St. east to Armory Road, 22<sup>nd</sup> Court and 23 rd. St. will be abandoned.



Ranger Avenue, December 1968  
(Photo provided by internet)  
Babbitt Nevada Housing of Mineral County

Essex St. from 21<sup>st</sup> ST. west to 10<sup>th</sup> St. will become a frontage road to access the large parcels. It will be extended to 60 ft width built to orange book standards. Ingress- egress from Highway 95 will be 21<sup>st</sup> St. and 10<sup>th</sup> St. The section between the Highway right of way and

Essex St. will become green space. Existing utility easements will remain.



(Photo provided by Internet)  
Old Shopping Center Babbitt Nevada of Mineral County

The Babbitt commercial subdivision development and the airport industrial development has to be tied together with a new electrical substation to be able to provide the required power for the future growth of both areas. See Section VIII: Public Facilities & Services for the section on power substations.

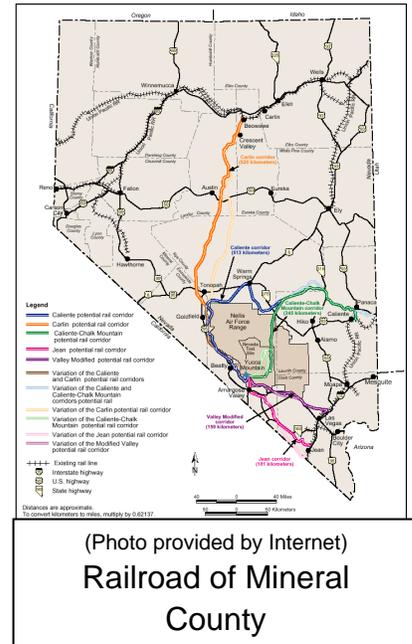
**Future I-11:**

Mineral County to work in conjunction with the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) on the continuing alignment of the I-11 through Mineral County. The I-11 is a vital portion of the economic development of the commercial property north of Hawthorne (formerly known as Babbitt).

**Future Railroad Development:**

Mineral County to work in conjunction with Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) on the continuing participation of the rail plan to Connect Rail Nevada.

Many participants suggested the opportunity of rebuilding rail connections for freight and passengers between Reno and Clark County. Our thinking is to begin by re-instituting commercial rail service on the Hazen to Hawthorne Branch line that is already in place. That can become the anchor for then extending the line to Mina and Tonopah, to serve commercial development in Esmeralda and Nye Counties, and then eventually extend the line south to Clark County. Freight right-of-way can become the right-of-way for passenger rail as well.



**SECTION VIII: PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES**

**PUBLIC SAFETY:**

**Emergency Management:**

Mineral County has an Emergency Management Department that deals with the county disasters that are required by the state. The Mineral County Emergency Department has a Planning Committee that meets once a month and is committed to the safety of Mineral County’s citizens by assuring proper resources and planning for emergencies of all types. Their team is a group of emergency responders, planners, business and industry representatives, health care providers and media that all work together to provide the best service for this community.

**Sheriff’s Department:**

The mission of the Sheriff is to provide Mineral County Sheriff’s Office with a set of values, principals, and beliefs in order to strive for unity and success. The sheriff has implemented department policy to lead all staff to a common vision and purpose. The principals and guidelines in this policy will serve as a foundation to excellence.

The Mineral County Sheriff is an organization that functions to **Serve and to Protect** its citizens. The citizens in all cases are our first priority. We will exhibit respect and lawfulness at all times. We will set ourselves to the highest of standards to perform our duties through proactive and ethical behaviors. The single most factor for success is our commitment. Our commitment is to serve the Department by working to support each other as a team, to serve the people of this community to ensure their safety and to provide the services for their needs. It is as important to commit ourselves to strive for success, constant self-improvement for personal integrity, leadership, and to achieve our goals.

The sheriff's department does respond to all outside areas Luning, Mina, Corey Canyon and Walker Lake and any place in between. Schurz has its own police department that also assists as needed.

### **Fire Department/Emergency Medical Services (EMS):**

The Mineral County Fire Department main fire station is located in Hawthorne, Nevada. We also have volunteer stations in Mina, Luning, Walker Lake, and Schurz. We run a 24/7 Ambulance Service staffed with Basic or Advanced EMT's

### **Electric Utilities:**

Nevada revised Statute 278.0103 defines an above ground Utility as an electric transmission line which is designated to operate at 200 kilovolts or more and which has been approved for construction after October 1, 1991. By the State and Federal Government or a governing body. NRS 278.165 requires each county to adopt an above ground utility plan that must: provide a process for the designation of corridors for the construction of above ground utility project. Be consistent with plans prepared by the Nevada State Office of Energy, ensure continuity of transmission corridors, are consistent with above ground utility plans of adjacent jurisdictions, and be consistent with the Bureau of Land Management's resource management plan.

Mineral County adopts as part of this Master Plan the maps on file with the Nevada State Office of Energy and the Bureau of Land Management depicting corridors for above ground electric transmission lines as presently depicted and as may amended. Transmission lines under 200 kV or not recognized by the Nevada Office of Energy, or the Bureau of Land Management are required to follow the special use permit process as defined in Mineral County code Chapter 17.

Mineral County has developed a detailed Regional Water Plan that can serve as a planning document for water system improvements for three water public water systems in Mineral County. This plan addresses the population and environmental information for the region, lists characterization of water resources (supply, quality, use and total capacity), analysis of held water rights in the region and a summary of existing water system infrastructure and opportunity for improvement. This plan is available by contacting Hawthorne Utilities.

Mineral County has an abundance of public services considering its size, beginning with senior citizen services. We have a large proportion of seniors served by programs funded through the State and County. The local organization Care and Share provides the administration of their W.A.N.T.S. (wellness, activities, nutrition, transportation, and socialization) and needs. Other services provided to citizens of Hawthorne are a hospital, shopping, multi-purpose community center, a clinic, dentistry, public library, museums, parks, and recreation facilities (see section B below), and an animal shelter. Hawthorne being the business center of the County has a bank, a credit union, several restaurants, bars, a casino, motels, and many smaller businesses and stores. Mineral County also has many active church denominations and community service organizations.

All the usual emergency services are available to the various communities. In the case of Schurz, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Western Nevada Agency, and the Walker River Tribal Council provide many other essential services to the native population therein. The Walker Lake community has some limited services which includes a fire station, a church, and a domestic water service entity. The Walker Lake General Improvement District functions as an arm of Mineral County government and operates the water storage and distribution system. The community has an advisory board that reports local issues to the Mineral County Board of Commissioners.

### **Power Substations:**

Mineral County Commercial and Industrial areas are getting developed and as the area grows it will require a new substation to be able to manage the utility growth. Mineral County commissioner's shall work with NV Energy to provide all the specifications required for planning and designing a substation for both present and future growth. Mineral County will collaborate with all parties needed to acquire the needed real estate for the substation and right of way access.

The area that should be consider for the substation to be placed is in the northwest corner of the babbitt commercial site close to the U.S. Army substation. This way the ROW and power line easement can be shared. A survey should be conducted to make sure the proposed substation is not encroaching on government property and has the land needed to properly size a substation for today's use and the future needs.

Mineral County should work with NV Energy to consider an upgrade to the substation at the top of town for all the antiquated equipment. This upgrade would be done to modernize an old substation and help with future power issues.

Ryan canyon substation should have any modernization upgrades done for future power requirement needs such as car charging station within the county as required in the presidential emissions reduction plan. The power upgrades will become an important part of Mineral County as more infrastructure moves into Mineral County.

**Schools:**

Today, the most important function of local government is education. Compulsory school attendance laws and the expenditures of local and state governments demonstrate the importance of education to our society. Education is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities. It is a critical component of good citizenship. High quality education can be the greatest asset for public economic development, the lack can be the biggest hindrance.

High performing public schools can be the single most important asset to a community's economic development plan. Education is the tool for awakening our children to cultural values, to prepare them for future professional training, and to adjust to today's environment. Elected and appointed officials that are responsible for our student's education have the power to change the world. Education reform has the potential be the deciding factor in many political races. Society needs to take this task very seriously.

**Airport:**

The Hawthorne Industrial Airport (HTH) is an integral part of our County as it expands in industrial activity as well as aircraft operations.

The location itself is north of and adjacent to the town of Hawthorne, and within walking distance from our commercial hub. The acreage of the airport is more than nine hundred acres. The elevation of the airport is 4,230.4 feet (surveyed). HTH is an uncontrolled airport serving both general aviation and military and has two runways, a 6,000 foot long by 100-foot-wide paved runway, and a 3,250 foot long by 130-foot-wide dirt runway.

The HTH is a dual usage airport with general aviation being the main user, the military also uses it for passenger traffic, training and occasionally for fueling. General aviation pilots are the biggest percentage of users. A vital service is the air ambulance capability the airport provides with a total of 189 ambulance flights in 2009. Although HTH does not provide regular passenger service, it receives many charter flights each year.



(Photo by Roger Kubeck)  
**Hawthorne Airport**

Throughout the year the military utilizes the airport for part of their training. In 2009 and 2010, the airport provided a vital role in the Marine Reserve training called Javelin Thrust.

The airport is owned and operated by Mineral County; the current manager is also the Director of Mineral County Public Works. Advisory input is received from the Mineral County Airport Land Advisory Board. In 2009 the Mineral County Board of Commissioners adopted the Hawthorne Industrial Airport Layout Plan developed by Armstrong Consultants, Inc., the airport engineers.

Facilities include a pilot's lounge with computer, Wi-Fi access and other amenities, a beacon, pilot-controlled runway lighting, a UNICOM (Universal Communications) frequency, an AWOS (Automated Weather Observation System) accessed from the air and by phone, a self-serve fueling system for both 100LL and Jet A, and tie downs.

The entire acreage of the airport is zoned Industrial and Mineral County is seeking economic growth through actively soliciting new business leases in the industrial area along Highway 95.

The 2010 upgrades to HTH were a security fence fronting Highway 95 and a security camera system. Future improvements in the Hawthorne Industrial Airport Layout Plan include upgrading the ramp area, moving, and upgrading the taxiway, extending the runway, and adding additional hangars and a new fuel system.

The main taxiway tied to runway 10/28 has just been updated in the year 2021, moved one hundred feet to the south of the runway and new pavement. This is to accommodate wider wing planes to pass by each other.

The HTH Airport has an industrial subdivision within its boundary with eighteen parcels that are for lease or are leased. The Hawthorne Industrial Airport Subdivision is in portion of E2, section 21 & section 22, T8N, R30E, M.D.B.&M. all within the airport boundaries.

Mineral County has a second airport located in Mina Nevada approximately 35 miles to the south of Hawthorne. This Airport is a dirt runway approximately 3,000 feet long located at the southeast side of Mina. This airstrip is part of the Multi Modal Transportation Hub for future mining and/or industrial/commercial business. The property around the airstrip is owned by BLM but there is a resource Management Plan (RMP) to trade BLM land by the airport for development.

## **SECTION IX: TRANSPORTATION**

### **Introduction:**

The purpose of the Transportation Element is to provide for the development of transportation improvements in Mineral County through 2030. The recommendations and proposed activities in this transportation element driven by the Mineral County Master Plan for Mineral County Nevada for the transportation plan adopted by the Mineral County Planning Commission in 2020.

The Mineral County Road Department is responsible for the maintenance of roads that have been approved and adopted into the County Road maintenance program. A 5-year maintenance plan is adopted by the County Commissioners each year and implemented as funding is made available through gas tax revenues and road impact fees.

The best planning and plans involve an ongoing, dynamic process that allows choice, accommodates change, and responds to growth and the development of the community. The transportation plan is not a commitment or promise to implement any of the recommendations. This plan provides justification for the expenditure of funds from various sources. Future implementation of any plan recommendations will be based on periodic review and decision-making, and on the availability of federal, state, and local funding specifically approved and committed on time by the proper public officials. Ideally, this plan will be updated periodically to ensure that it is responsive to the transportation needs of Mineral County.

The purpose of the Mineral County 2477 Master Plan Public Roads was:

- To analyze the Mineral County area transportation system, including the roadway network, main roads, auxiliary roads, off-road trails, and other roads needed to attract visitors to Mineral County.
- To identify future travel demand and transportation needs for the future years this includes but not limited to all major roads coming into Mineral County, transit, para transit services, pedestrian/bikeway facilities, airport facilities, and future freight movement system including trucking and rail.
- To evaluate alternative transportation improvements.
- To recommend short-range and long-range transportation system improvements.
- To identify funding sources and opportunities; and to develop a fiscally constrained, multi-modal transportation plan for the Mineral County Urban Areas.

The intent is to develop the most appropriate long-range transportation plan, given expected growth and development patterns, as well as desired travel patterns.

This Transportation Plan is not intended to address all the small-scale transportation issues such as pothole problems, snowplowing, sign placement, speed limits, etc. This plan also does not dictate project priorities for implementation but rather, provides input to the annual process of developing the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

The Transportation Plan contains key principal elements:

- public transportation element
- pedestrian and bicycle element
- airport, rail, and freight movement
- street and highway element
- electric vehicle charging action plan

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:**

### **Commuter Rail Service:**

There is currently no commuter rail service in Mineral County. Mineral County to work in conjunction with Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) on the continuing participation of the rail plan to Connect Rail Nevada. This will connect Hazen to Mina and Tonopah and eventually to Clark County.

**GOAL T1: Continue to explore and evaluate alternative modes of transportation, including public transportation and pedestrian & bicycle.**

**Policy T1.1** Continue to explore the possibility of commuter rail ferry service through Mineral County, with a terminal in Mineral County.

**Policy T1.2** Mineral County needs to work with NDOT railroad transportation department to explore the implementation of re-using the existing railroad bed that currently exist in Mineral County.

**Policy T1.3** Work with local non-profit and State, County, and other businesses to establish public transportation for residents and employees that currently do not have access to transportation. The public transportation should include both within and out of town for those who have doctors' appointments outside of Mineral County.

**Policy T1.4** Improve the pedestrian network and connectivity to the downtown areas including improvement as identified in goal 2.3. Crosswalks shall be on all major intersection to downtown areas. Crosswalks shall also be required from schools to any non-profit after school program businesses.

**Policy T1.6** Improve the sidewalk from fifth street to 8th street on the school side of A street for student safety.

**Policy T1.7** Improvements to pedestrian facilities should be targeted toward the safety and convenience of the user. Amenities for pedestrians such as light, benches, and adequate signage as required.

**Policy T1.8** Provides a dedicated trail system within Mineral County for both bicycles and pedestrians.

**GOAL T2: Ensure safe and connected access to public facilities, recreation facilities, and commercial centers for pedestrians and mobility devices within Mineral County.**

**Policy T2.1** Continue to review sidewalk standards regarding widths per the orange book.

**Policy T2.2** Review and improve coordination of multi-use trail crossings of roadways identified on the trail system in goal T3.

**Policy T2.3** Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current pedestrian network that evaluates existing facilities and identifies recommended improvements. Particular attention should be given to the areas around schools, parks, and the high traffic areas.

**Policy T2.4** Incorporate appropriate pedestrian crossings signs, striping, and signal crossing lights and buttons to facilitate safe crossing.

**Policy T2.5** Implement a process by which additional improvements can be constructed with available funds.

**Policy T2.6** Develop design policies for pedestrian circulation and access in developing areas of Mineral County consistent with established Federal and State design standards and regulations, including American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

**GOAL T3: Develop a safe and functional bicycle network that promotes bicycling as an alternative mode of transportation.**

**Policy T3.1** Continue to implement the trail program throughout the County. This is to include both pedestrian walking trails, biking trails both on-road and off-road, and creating motorbike trails.

**Policy T3.2** Continue to create and install signage and marking programs to identify the bicycle system as well as alert motorists to the presence of bicyclists and the necessity of sharing the road.

**Policy T3.3** Promote safe on-street routes along all streets and highways by removing portions of on-street parking or widening sections of the roadway to safely accommodate bicycles.

**Policy T3.4** Ensure maintenance of all streets and highways for safe bicycle riding.

**Policy T3.5** Continue to consider adding bike lanes or widened shoulders to County-maintained roads when improvements are done.

**Policy T3.6** Continue to collaborate with Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) to build awareness of trails and ensure bike routes, lanes and facilities are incorporated into NDOT's highway maintenance and construction program.

**Policy T3.7** Ensure that facilities are equipped with secure bike racks.

**Policy T3.8** Consult with Mineral County Cyclists to determine priorities regarding bicycle issues.

## **AIRPORT, RAIL AND FREIGHT MOVEMENT:**

### **Airport Facilities/Roadway Access**

The Mineral County Airport is ½ mile from the end of town on Highway 95 heading north. This is the only airport in Mineral County that is operated by the County under the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The airport covers nine hundred acres and has an airport development within the property that encompasses 50 acres. The runway 10/28 was extended in the year 2003 to a length of 6,000 feet long by 100-foot-wide paved runway to accommodate large airplanes for the Hawthorne Army Depot. The second runway 15/33 is 3,250-foot-long by 130-foot-wide dirt runway. The elevation is 4,230.4 feet from sea level. The airport is used for both emergency use, private usage, military usage, and commercial usage. The 10/28 runway is lighted with end lights and edge lighting for night landing.

**GOAL T4: Identify locations in Mineral County that are appropriate for passenger and freight airport services.**

**Policy T4.1** Future airport expansion and growth to Mineral County would bring in the possibility of having a freight line air service from the Hawthorne airport to other areas. Growth to Mineral County would also allow the master plan to extend the airport to include passenger flights to cities for connecting flights.

**Policy T4.2** Future growth on the Industrial Business Park (Babbitt) area and the Hawthorne Airport Industrial Park by connecting with other counties and business parks throughout the state or country and promote our improved airport and the location as the western intermodal hub.

**Policy T4.3** Future growth of the land around the Existing Mina Airport dirt land strip to become a Multi Modal Transportation Hub by buying the property from BLM and/or using the Resource Management Plan (RMP) to trade BLM land and the existing Mina Airport for other land that is under the BLM ownership. The existing Mina Airport could be built up to be used as a future Multi-Modal Transportation hub for future railroad and air transportation for the local mines and/or other industrial/commercial businesses.

**GOAL T5: Develop a strategic plan that clearly identifies the actions, stakeholders and funding opportunities needed to secure and develop an airport facility.**

**Policy T5.1** The Mineral County Transportation will work with other city and county entities to develop needed opportunities when Mineral County growth requires the ability to have stakeholders and private funding for the airport to help maintain the facility.

**GOAL T6: Develop a strategic plan that clearly identifies the actions and funding opportunities needed to secure and develop Highways, Bi-ways, and Local Avenues:**

**Policy T6.1** Level of Service & System Deficiencies Analysis.

The Mineral County Transportation plan in this Master Plan will be assessed to determine the current operating characteristics (level of service) and was examined for system deficiencies. The system will be examined for the perspective of roadway capacity, intersection capacity, ability to manage both general vehicle and truck traffic and general circulation.

A capacity analysis should be performed for this portion of the master plan to help provide a road network and counted street volumes. Based on the volume-to-capacity ratio analysis study that will be done per this master plan, there could be a few roadway segments that have capacity deficiencies under observed traffic volumes. The following road networks should be studied for future traffic conditions in this master plan when Mineral County has a growth of 5% or more of traffic influence.

- Highway 95 from the Hawthorne Army Depot Main Gate to 10th Street.
- Highway 95 from the corner of E Street & 5th Street to the corner of 10th Street & Freedom Road (truck route 95).
- Armory Road from Highway 95 to 1st Street.
- A Street from 10th Street to 1st Street.
- C Street from Highway 95 to 1st Street.
- F Street from Freedom Road (truck route 95) to 5th Street.
- K Street from Freedom Road to 5th Street.
- Cottonwood Drive both East and West side at Walker Lake.
- Walker Lake Drive.
- Golden Willow Drive from West Cotton Drive to Highway 95.
- North Betty Jane Drive from West Cotton Drive to Deyna Drive.
- Schurz ~ because Schurz is a Sovereign Nation and located in Mineral County, if the tribal council would like help from Mineral County with any portion of the transportation infrastructure. The tribal council shall submit to the County Commissioners a request in writing describing the request.

- Luning ~ Because of the severity of the latest recorded plat that Mineral County has recorded and can be found in the Mineral County courthouse was done and recorded in April 1926, it is the recommendation to update this Master Plan with the best transportation infrastructure information for the township of Luning. It is in the best interest that there is an updated survey done to the township of Luning and a new plat recorded before this Master plan can continue with its transportation portion of the document. It is unknown what lots have been combined, roads that have been abandoned, and easements that are not in place or have been moved.
- Mina ~ Because of the severity of the latest recorded plat that Mineral County has recorded and can be found in the Mineral County courthouse was done and recorded in March 1949, it is the recommendation to update this Master Plan with the best transportation infrastructure information for the township of Mina. It is in the best interest that there is an updated survey done to the township of Mina and a new plat recorded before this Master plan can continue with its transportation portion of the document. It is unknown what lots have been combined, roads that have been abandoned, and easements that are not in place or have been moved.
- Corey Canyon ~ Has its own special conditions that need to be addressed, the first is the flooding of the major roads which happens when there is a 100-year reign event. The canyon usually ends up flooding the main roads and then the residents of Corey Canyon cannot get in or out of their property. The only solution that can be addressed in the Master Plan is to develop a master drainage plan with the help of FEMA (see FEMA section below). The Master Plan Transportation should look at the major ingress/egress roads to Corey Canyon within the next ten year and provide an option to pave the roads to help reduce the flooding and control the dust hazards.

**Policy T6.2** System Deficiencies and Potential Solution Alternatives.

The transportation system deficiencies will be summarized below, based on analysis, modeling, and interview with Mineral County maintenance staff and commissioners as well as from the public.

- Highway 95 from the Hawthorne Army Depot Main Gate to 10th Street.
- Highway 95 from the corner of E Street & 5th Street to the corner of 10th Street & Freedom Road (truck route 95).
- The turn intersection on Highway 95 and Freedom Road (truck route 95).

- Armory Road from Highway 95 to 1st Street.
- A Street from 10th Street to 1st Street.
- C Street from Highway 95 to 1st Street.
- F Street from Freedom Road (truck route 95) to 5th Street.
- K Street from Freedom Road to 5th Street.
- Lakeview Tract and Mt Grant Tract needs to be evaluated. Both these areas have 50-foot Right-of-ways and that includes curb, gutter, and sidewalk. Because of on-street parking, it is suggested that the roads become one-way. The change of this driving condition from two-way driving to one-way driving is for the ability of emergency vehicles to be able to access the streets without any issues. Starting with English St. will be one-way going West. Fourth St will go one-way East, Hermansen St will go one-way West, Harrison St. will go one-way East, and Third St. will go one-way West. Baker St. will have to have no street parking to be able to maintain two-way traffic route to control the one-way routes for the other streets. Connelly St. coming from English St. will be one-way heading South towards Bailey Drive.
- Bailey Drive in Mt. Grant Tract shall be a one-way heading South to 1 St Street, Aurora St. will be one-way going North, Bodie St. will be one-way going South, and Candelaria St. will be one-way going South towards Mt Grant Ave. which will be a two-way road with no street parking allowed to meet the traffic conditions for road widths.
- Cottonwood Drive both East and West side at Walker Lake.
- Walker Lake Drive.
- Golden Willow Drive from West Cotton Drive to Highway 95.
- North Betty Jane Drive from West Cotton Drive to Deyna Drive.

- Schurz ~ because Schurz is a Sovereign Nation and located in Mineral County, if the tribal council would like help from Mineral County with any portion of the transportation infrastructure. The tribal council shall submit to the County Commissioners a request in writing describing the request.
- Luning see policy T8.1 for the following solution to the conditions.
- Mina see policy T8.1 for the following solution to the conditions.
- Corey Canyon Master Plan long term plan is to evaluate the flooding conditions and mitigate with a storm drain system that will take a 100-year storm event and move it below the subdivision. FEMA will provide grant money to help with the improvements of storm drain improvements. Work on grants to pave the ingress/egress to Corey Canyon Subdivision.

**Policy T6.3** Improvement Alternatives Development and Analysis.

Based on the existing and expected system deficiencies, various improvement alternatives could be developed to help alleviate future traffic conditions. A study plan should be developed for Mineral County to re-evaluate all the side street intersections and make recommendations to the County on new regulations if needed.

Mineral County shall work with NDOT to re-evaluate any state highway modifications needed that will improve highway safety within Mineral County, (this includes looking at the road striping, adding passing lanes, highway closure when high winds occur, etc.).

Mineral County shall work with NDOT to re-evaluate the corner of Highway 95 and Alt 95 (truck route) to better the flow with a round-about to maintain trucks to the truck route and bring more tourism into the downtown area of Hawthorne.

**Policy T6.4** Selection/Prioritization of Long-Range Street & Highway Improvements.

The future adoption and implementation of the I-11 corridor to match the inter-modal transportation hub. The future of the I-11 corridor could help Mineral County Industrial Park grow, by connecting warehouses faster to stores. Making Hawthorne a central hub for the western cities and utilizing a central location for a distribution location.

The future adoption and implementation of the I-11 corridor to come to Hawthorne shall have a minimum two exits entering the town. One shall be proposed at the North end of town just North of the main gate of the Hawthorne Army Depot. The other exit shall be just South of Highway 95 and freedom Road (Alt 95, Truck Route) just before it turns and goes South.

The future Hawthorne Technology and Industrial Center Diversified Nevada Certified Sites Program that the Hawthorne Army Depot developed will also benefit Mineral County by becoming a central distribution warehouse location. This center will also be able to be developed for renewable energy locations (i.e., solar, geothermal, power plants to connect renewable energy, etc.).

The implementation of new on street parking to help with the required site line for intersections.

The review and Implementation of making A Street one way on each side of the island with no street parking around the island.

The possible review and implementation of curb and gutter and storm sewer to control all storm water and/or flood control to all street within Hawthorne. Streets beginning with A St. and continuing to P St. or beyond if the town grows that way, and from 1 St Street to 10 Th Street. All new subdivisions shall have rural curb, gutter, and sidewalks with storm water control to maintain flood water control from flooding Hawthorne.

**Policy T6.5** Standards and Specifications for Road Construction.

Review and adoption of the State of Nevada Orange Book for all construction standards as Mineral County grows and does not become a mismanage community.

Mineral County to review and modify as needed to fit the County specific requirements to the Orange Book.

**Policy T6.6** Adherence to adopted standards and specifications.

Mineral County shall review and adopt the Orange Book. All work in Mineral County rights of way shall be constructed to Mineral County specifications in accordance with "Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction (Orange Book if adopted)."

Legal and Physical access shall be established prior to approval of development plans. Easements shall be provided as outlined in Mineral County Code and Uniform Fire Code.

Traffic studies should be conducted every five years to assess the impact of a proposed development on the existing and/or planned highway system.

Mineral County shall collaborate co-operatively with Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), Mineral County, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

**GOAL T7: To establish an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging action plan within Mineral County main public streets and public buildings:**

**Policy T7.1** For Mineral County to work with NDOT and the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) to install more charging systems on the downtown corridor of highway 95 and 359 town limits for Hawthorne, Luning, Mina, and Walker Lake.

**Policy T7.2** For Mineral County to work with the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) to install more charging systems to all county buildings for Hawthorne, Luning, Mina, and Walker Lake.

**Policy T7.3** Mineral County to work with the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) and any local business owner that would like to install EV charging stations to their business or surrounding area that is within County property within Hawthorne, Luning, Mina, or Walker Lake.

**SECTION X: FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)**

**FEMA Our Mission:**

The Office of Response and Recovery provides guidance leadership and oversight to build, sustain and improve the coordination and delivery of support to citizens and state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to save lives, reduce suffering, protect property, and recover from all hazards.

- Through our Logistics Management Directorate, we deliver critical commodities and manufactured housing units following disasters. There are eight distribution centers in the United States and OCONUS strategically located to provide rapid support.
- Through our Recovery Directorate, we aid communities overwhelmed by acts of terrorism, natural disasters, or other emergencies.
- Through our Response Directorate, we provide the core, coordinated federal operational response capability needed to save and sustain lives, minimize suffering and protect property in a timely and effective manner in communities that become overwhelmed by natural disasters, acts of terrorism or other emergencies.
- Through our Field Operations Directorate, we ensure the operational readiness of FEMA's incident workforce and coordinate the federal interagency for recovery to achieve timely, effective, and integrated field operations that support the whole community across all mission areas.

## **Flood Control**

### **Goal F1: Flooding from Corey Canyon:**

**Policy F1.1** Mineral County to review the current FEMA maps and regulations in place for the county and see how to work with FEMA to update to current year and conditions for the changing terrain.

**Policy F1.2** Evaluate all existing data on flooding from Corey Canyon and develop a plan to mitigate the flooding of the Corey Canyon housing district by building storm controls as required.

**Policy F1.3** Work with NDOT to convey the flood waters away from any structures, roads, livestock, etc. and move it to the known flood channels located on the Hawthorne Army Depot.

### **Goal F2: Flooding from Cottonwood Canyon:**

**Policy F2.1** Mineral County to review the current FEMA maps and regulations in place for the county and see how to work with FEMA to update to current year and conditions for the changing terrain.

**Policy F2.2** Evaluate all existing data on flooding from Corey Canyon and develop a plan to mitigate the flooding of the Corey Canyon housing district by building storm controls as required.

**Policy F2.3** Work with NDOT to convey the flood waters away from any structures, roads, Highway etc. and move it to the known flood channels that would convey the water to Walker Lake.

### **Goal F3: Control Flooding for Hawthorne:**

**Policy F3.1** Mineral County shall have a yearly review of the flood plan to make sure that all the current flood controls are in place and working properly before each known rainy season begins.

**Policy F3.2** Mineral County shall have a five-comprehensive review of the flood plan with FEMA to make sure the flood controls that are in place are still adequate for the changing terrain. If the plan shows that there should be some modification done to the storm system in place, then it should be done before the next rainy seasons begins.

If FEMA recommends changes, then Mineral County shall take action to make sure that the changes are made before the next rainy season.

**Policy F3.3** Armory Road should be evaluated for repaving along with curb and gutter for storm run-off. This road backs up to the desert and is prone to flooding and should be required to have a storm system installed.

**Policy F3.4** Mineral County and The Hawthorne Army Depot should re-evaluate the boundary line just southwest of Hawthorne above the fire department and Mount Grant hospital for flooding. The current berm is inadequate and needs to be revamped to move the water East across Highway 359 to a major drainage channel on the Hawthorne Army Depot call middle ditch for flood control.

#### **Goal F4: General Flood Control Mineral County:**

**Policy F4.1** Mineral County Emergency Management board shall meet yearly to go over all required regulations that are presented by FEMA to update all emergency rules that need to be put in place to help protect Mineral County from any emergencies.

**Policy F4.2** Mineral County shall work with any new mining company that enters upon work within Mineral County to open a mine and process ore to make sure there is a flood control plan registered with the Mineral County Planning Commissioner's office and the Building Inspectors office and approved before the mine can go into operation. This is to prevent any spoils and/or chemicals from leaving the site.

### **SECTION XI: GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The 2022 Mineral County Master Plan is a living document that will guide Mineral County in efforts to make our County a better place to live and work. In our work to produce a comprehensive plan, during public meetings of the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission and the subsequent public hearings, there were many comments repeated consistently and identified as areas of concern. Many of these are discussed in the text of the document. As a result of our efforts, the Regional Planning Commission hereby offers the goals and recommendations that follow.

The Board of Mineral County Commissioners should take the lead and coordinate the many County government departments and public functions to achieve prosperity in our County. We need to build a collaborative conversation within the community itself – of the attitudes, processing, duties, responsibilities, and relationships that go into forming and maintaining healthy communities. Many organizations and functions of County government, community organizations, and individuals have similar goals. Effective coordination will minimize duplication of effort and maximize limited resources. We have a lot to offer in our County and communities. By working together with the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Authority, and others, we can advertise our assets, communicate our wishes and desires, and use the versatility of the Master Plan to build a credible Capital Improvement Plan for Mineral County. We must communicate to all in our communities the importance of the Master Plan and opportunities it can make possible. One of the most important things is public lands management that intersects with the economic health of our County.

The Board of Mineral County Commissioners should hold joint meetings with other elected or appointed boards in our county's government, such as the school board, the hospital board, the Mineral County Housing Authority, the Regional Planning Commission, and others to solicit input and identify strengths and weaknesses. Elected boards, appointed boards, civic groups, etc. are each responsible for their own realm and may not understand the role of others. We need to meet jointly in workshops and develop an assessment process of our capacities to grow and prosper. We must be honest with ourselves, admit where we are weak and document both strengths and weaknesses. We must open an effective, honest, and clear lines of communication with all stakeholders in Mineral County. We must have a vision and develop a direction and focus with clear, compelling, and comprehensive data on which common understandings can be formed and decisions can be made. All too often, decisions are made based on a few leaders' assumptions and perspectives. This is all too evident in past endeavors in Mineral County. There has been a great deal of time, money, and efforts expended on programs and projects only to fail because of a lack of common goals and visions. We must take the time to get the facts straight and clearly define our problems. In organizations where the capacity to focus on the future is given sufficient weight, vision is a process of imagining a preferred future, and strategic planning is a process of identifying the ways and means of attaining that future. We cannot predict the future, but with the proper organization and planning we can create it.

In a self-assessment of ourselves and the County, we must look at our communities. What are we projecting to prospective business enterprises and families looking to relocate? What are our capacities to improve? What do we offer for housing, schooling, or the general appearance of our communities? Is there a consistency in our actions or are we only operating on the present with no direction to the future? There are many questions that we must honestly answer to ourselves. We must accomplish a transformation of our organization by repositioning and reorienting action into a new way of accomplishing our goals. We must adopt change by radically changing the means of work that has traditionally been done – the meanings, the culture in which programs are imbedded, as well as changing the current system of rules, roles, and relationships. Even the social structure should be considered so that innovations needed will be supported. Strategic action requires that we make choices and act on those choices. We must make decisions that are optimally supportive of long-term missions and goals.

We are at a crossroads in our County. We can no longer rely on a single industry to sustain our communities, we must diversity our economy. Under the direction of the Mineral County Commissioners, the Regional Planning Commission can gather information and complete a detailed, comprehensive, long range Capital Improvement Plan for Mineral County, a plan with clear goals, workable solutions, and identified funding sources all working within the versatile framework of the Master Plan.

## **SECTION XII: MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The Mineral County Regional Planning Commission is the advisory board with a primary responsibility for compliance with the Master Plan administration.

This Mineral County Master Plan is developed by the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission and is authorized and adopted by the Mineral County Board of Commissioners. It is a policy document to be enforced by all levels of government. This Master Plan must continually be compared to land use requests and zoning patterns. Deviations are not considered consistent with the policies of this plan. There are provisions for amendments to this plan, however they require a strict series of noticing, hearings, and publication that are outlined in the Nevada Revised Statutes, Chapter 278.

Other funding sources should not be overlooked, such as gifts, as may be offered, usually for specific facilities, parks, community center or library, usually from individuals, corporations and/or foundations. Also, **state, and federal grants** are frequently available to plan, construct and finance public improvements, and Mineral County qualifies on many because of its unusual volatile economic reliance on Federal revenue sources to maintain community services.

### **A. Master Plan Implementation**

Conducting the Mineral County Master Plan must be a countywide effort based upon a partnership between local government, landowners, and citizens at large. The Master Plan can be modified and updated through a process the same of which created this plan. The greatest challenge for Master Plan implementation is to achieve systematic and effective use of the plan throughout the development process. The Master Plan must be correlated continuously through close liaison and coordination between all County offices, the Mineral County Board of Commissioners, and the Regional Planning Commission. It is the official development policy guide in decision making, capital budgeting, and administration. Related legal controls such as the Zoning (Land Use) Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Building Control are all part of the program toward successful implementation. Continuous reference to the adopted Master Plan should be followed by:

- Public officials and citizens collaboration with goals and Master Plan recommendations.

- Actions to strengthen the structure and functions of the Mineral County Regional Planning Commission to assure implementation of the Master Plan as an integrated process.
- Working knowledge of and cooperation with programs conducted or contemplated by state and federal agencies.
- Development of an information system and add to our data bank to provide a consistent view of development trends and essential information for effective operations and actions of government and the private sector.
- Procedures for referral and response to significant public and private development proposals within the County.

**APPENDIX A: EXHIBITS AND MAPS**



(Photo by Mineral County Museum)  
Ghost Towns of Mineral County

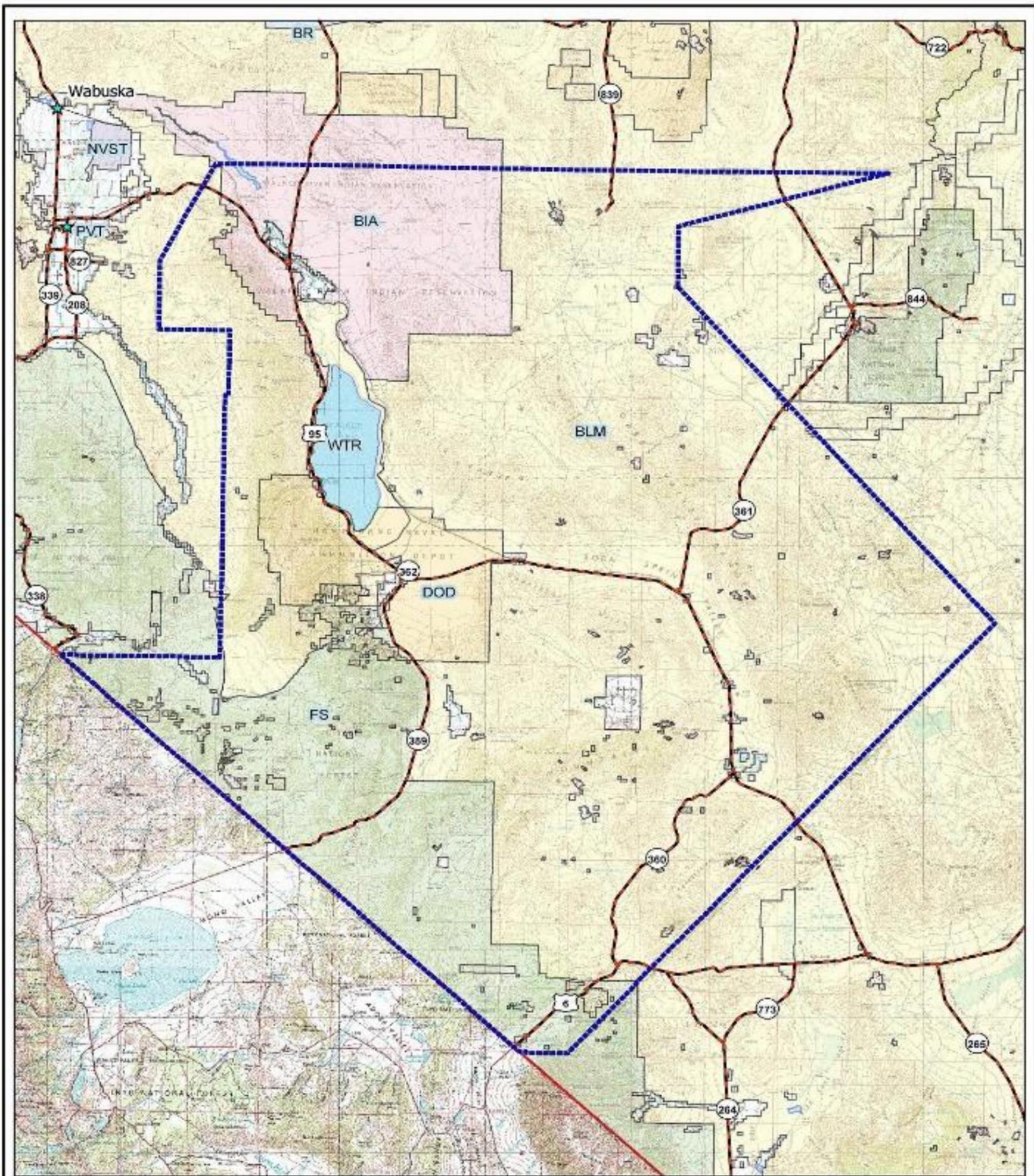
**Reference page 11 Section A History and Features**



(Photo by USGS)  
Topo of Mineral County

**Reference Page 17 Section A Topography**





**Legend**

**Land Ownership**

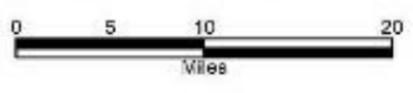
- Other
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Department of Defense
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Forest Service
- Private
- Water

★ Mineral Communities

▭ Mineral County

— Highways

Figure 3-1. General Location of Communities and Land Ownership Mineral County, Nevada



Resource Concepts, Inc.  
340 N. Minnesota St.  
Carson City, NV 89703  
(775) 883-1600

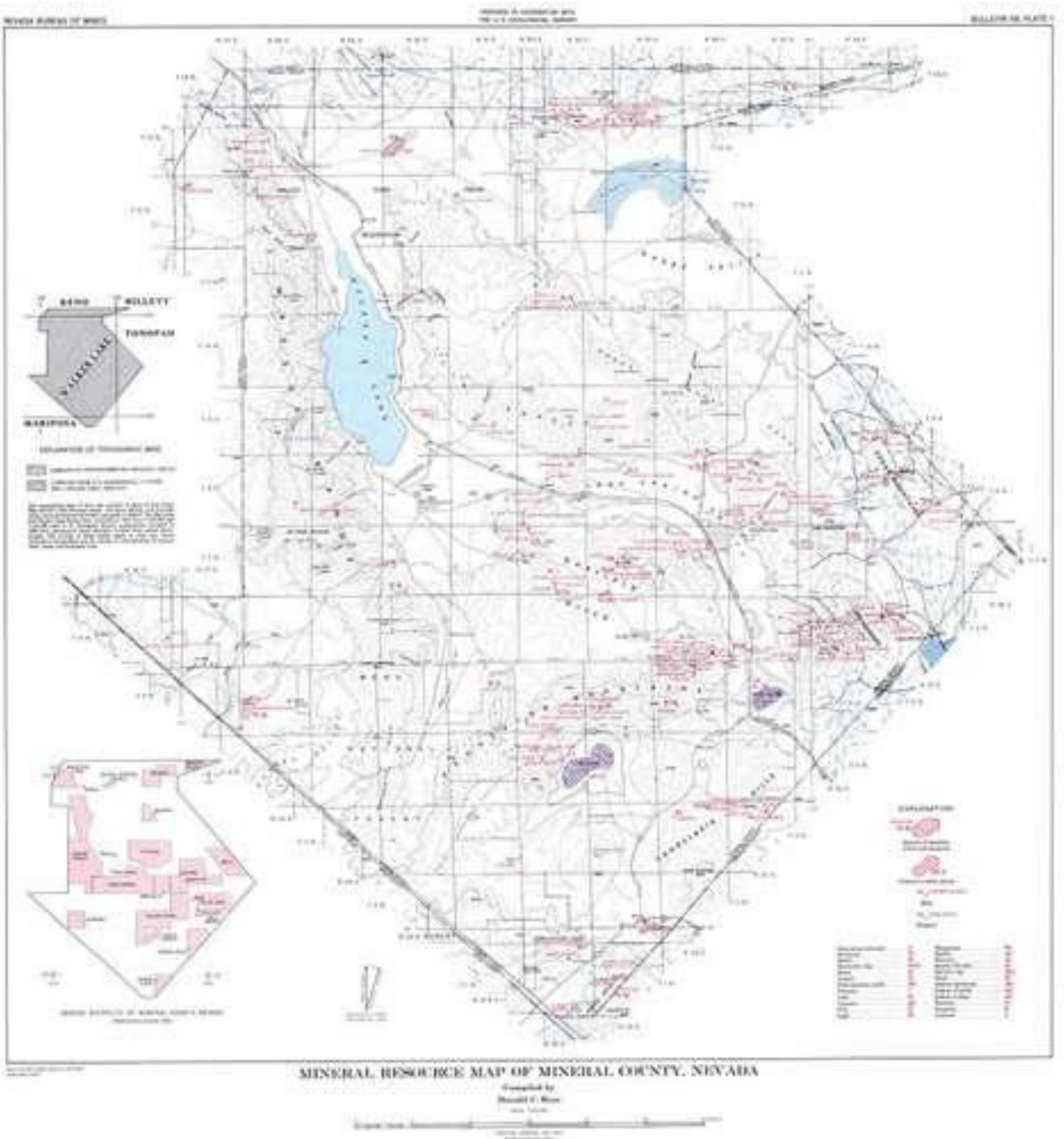
**Nevada Community Wildfire Risk / Hazard Assessment Project**

Resources Concepts, Inc. has made every effort to accurately compile the information depicted on this map, but can not warrant the reliability or completeness of the source data.

(Photo by USGS)

Communities and Land Ownership of Mineral County

**Reference Page 19 Section IV: Land Use, Federal and State**



(Photo by USGS)  
Mineral Resources of Mineral County

**Reference Page 37 Section on Natural Resource and Land Use Planning**

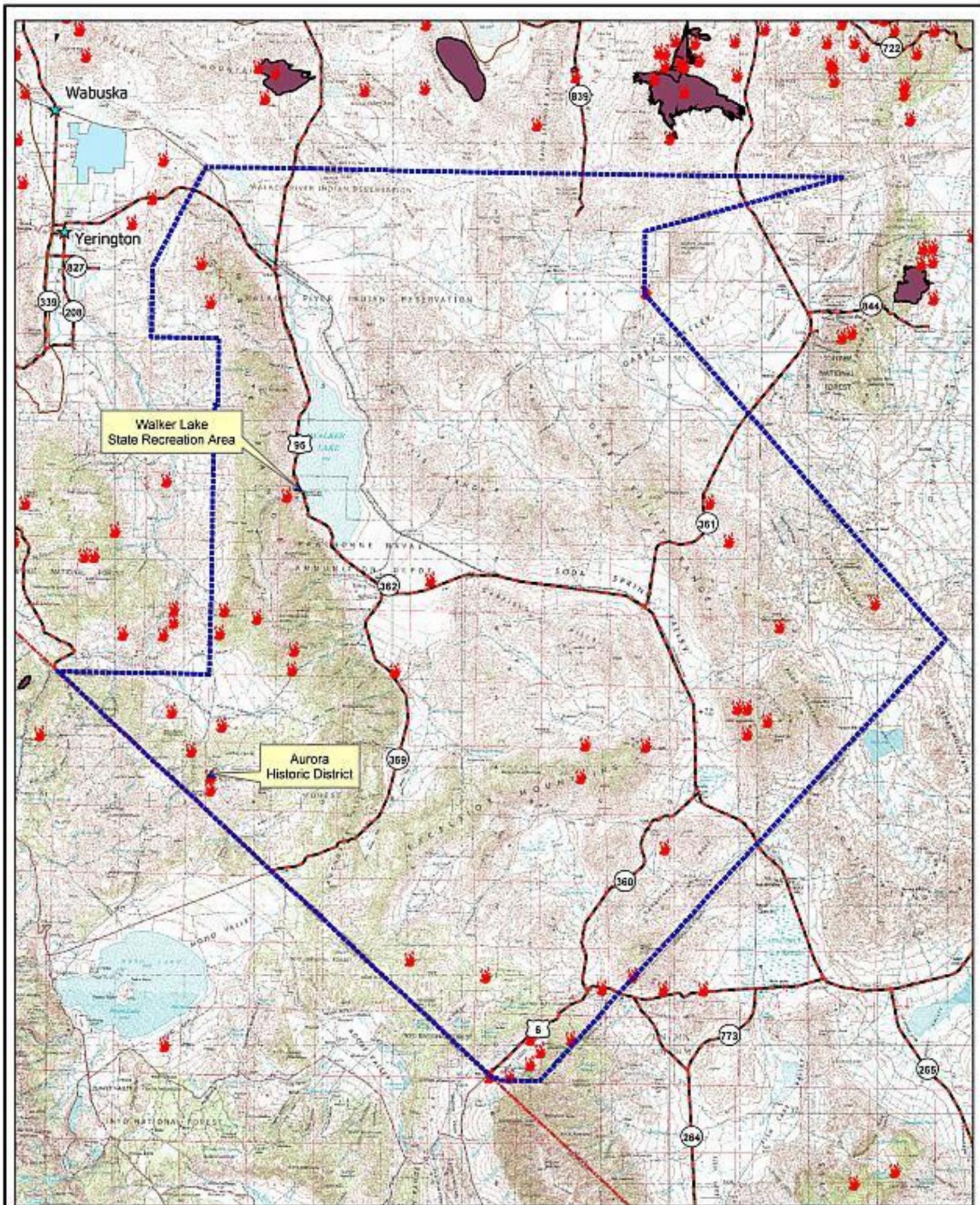


Figure 3-2. Fire History, Ignition Risks and Potentially At-Risk Resources Mineral County, Nevada



- Legend**
- ★ Mineral Communities
  - 🔥 Fire Ignitions
  - Past Fires (1961-2003)
  - ▲ Mineral Historic Sites
  - State Recreation Areas
  - Highways
  - ▭ Mineral County

0 5 10 20  
Miles



Resource Concepts, Inc.  
340 N. Minnesota St.  
Carson City, NV 89703  
(775)-883-1600

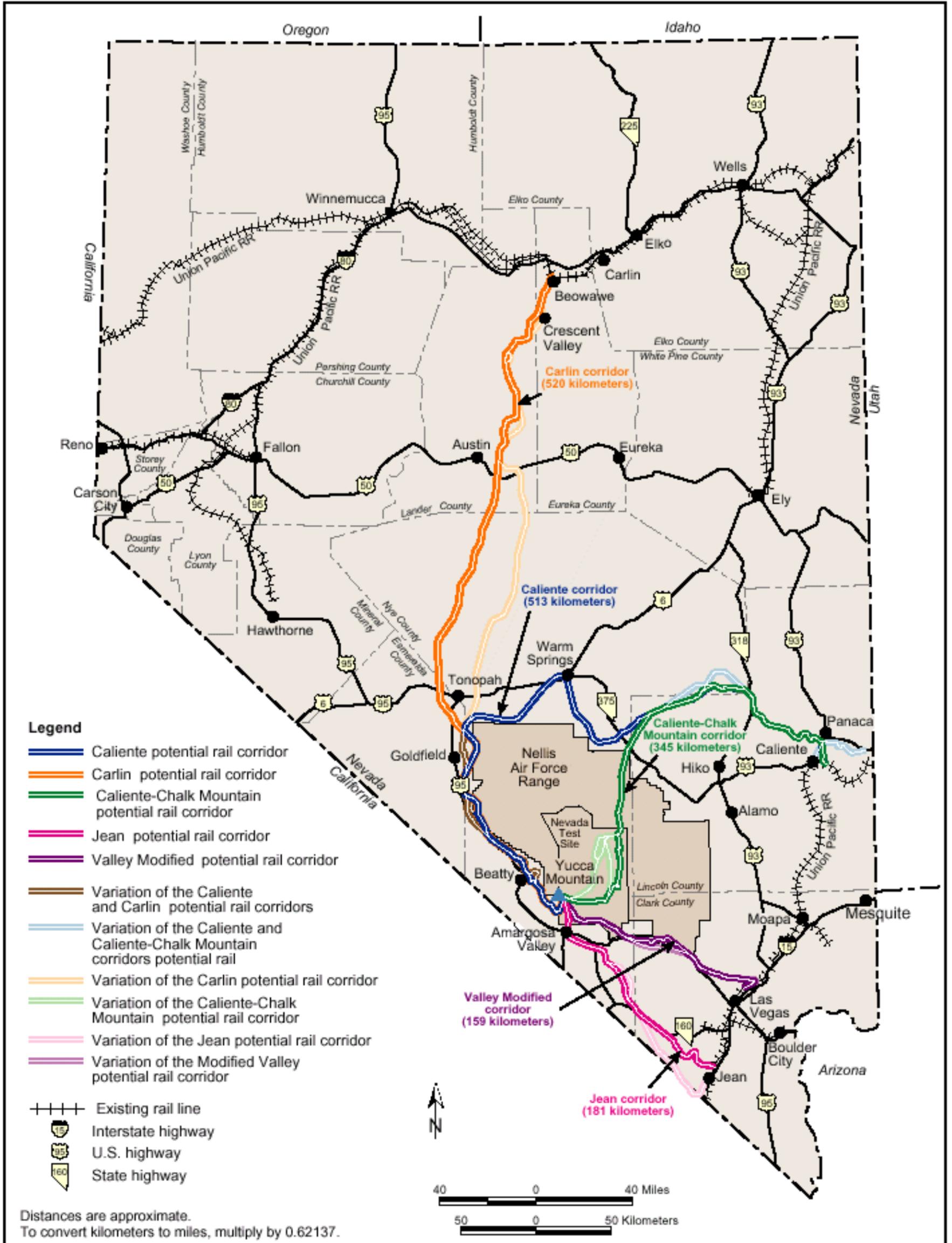
*Nevada Community Wildfire Risk / Hazard Assessment Project*

Resources Concepts, Inc. has made every effort to accurately compile the information depicted on this map, but can not warrant the reliability or completeness of the source data.

(Photo by USGS)

Fire History Resources for Mineral County Nevada

**Reference Page 56 Section on Primary Planning Guidance Addressed**

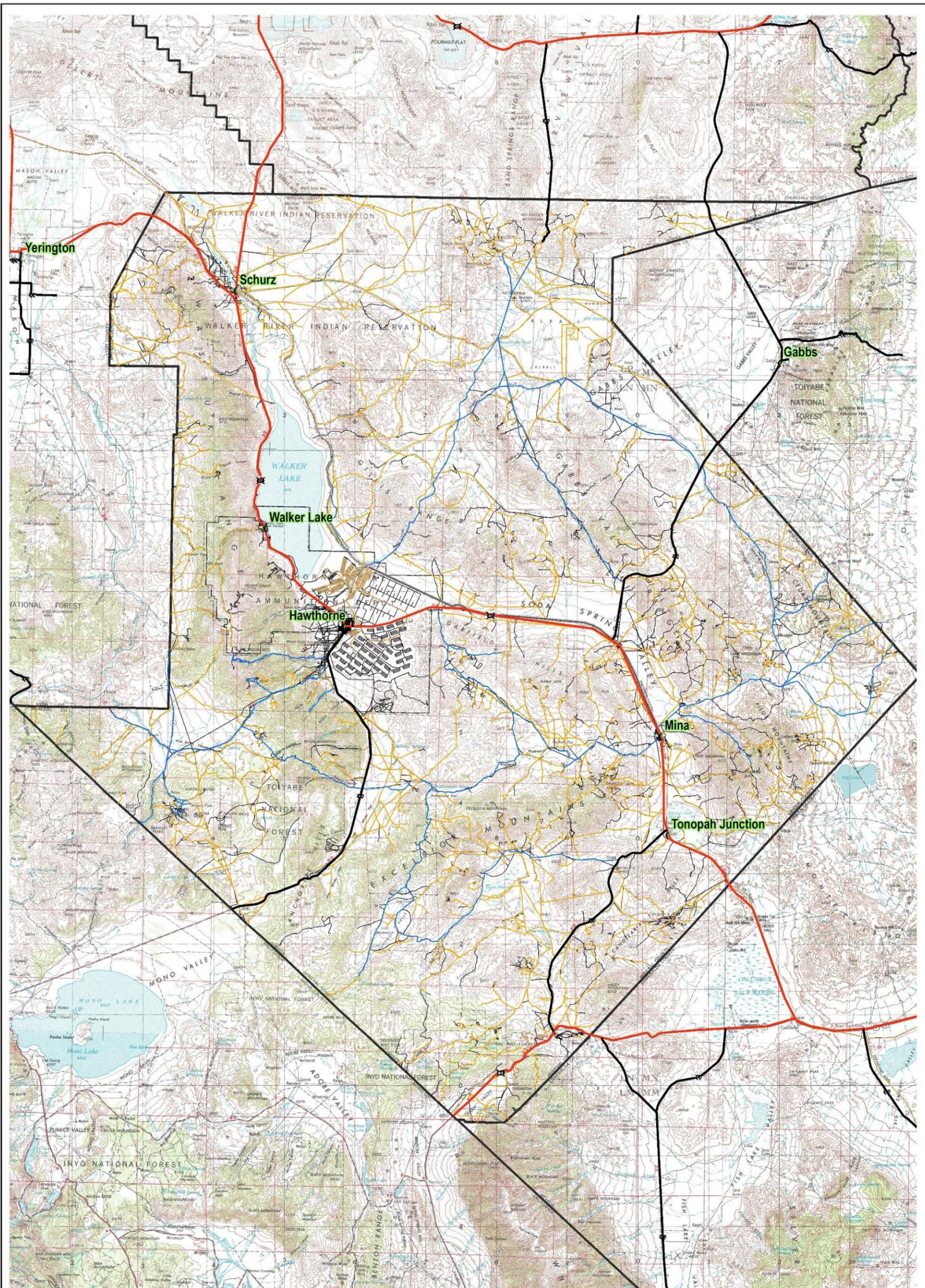


**Figure S-13. Potential Nevada rail routes to Yucca Mountain.**

(Photo provided by Internet)  
Railroad of Mineral County

**Reference Page 79 Section on Future Railroad Development**

**APPENDIX B: MASTER PLAN MAP**



**Legend**

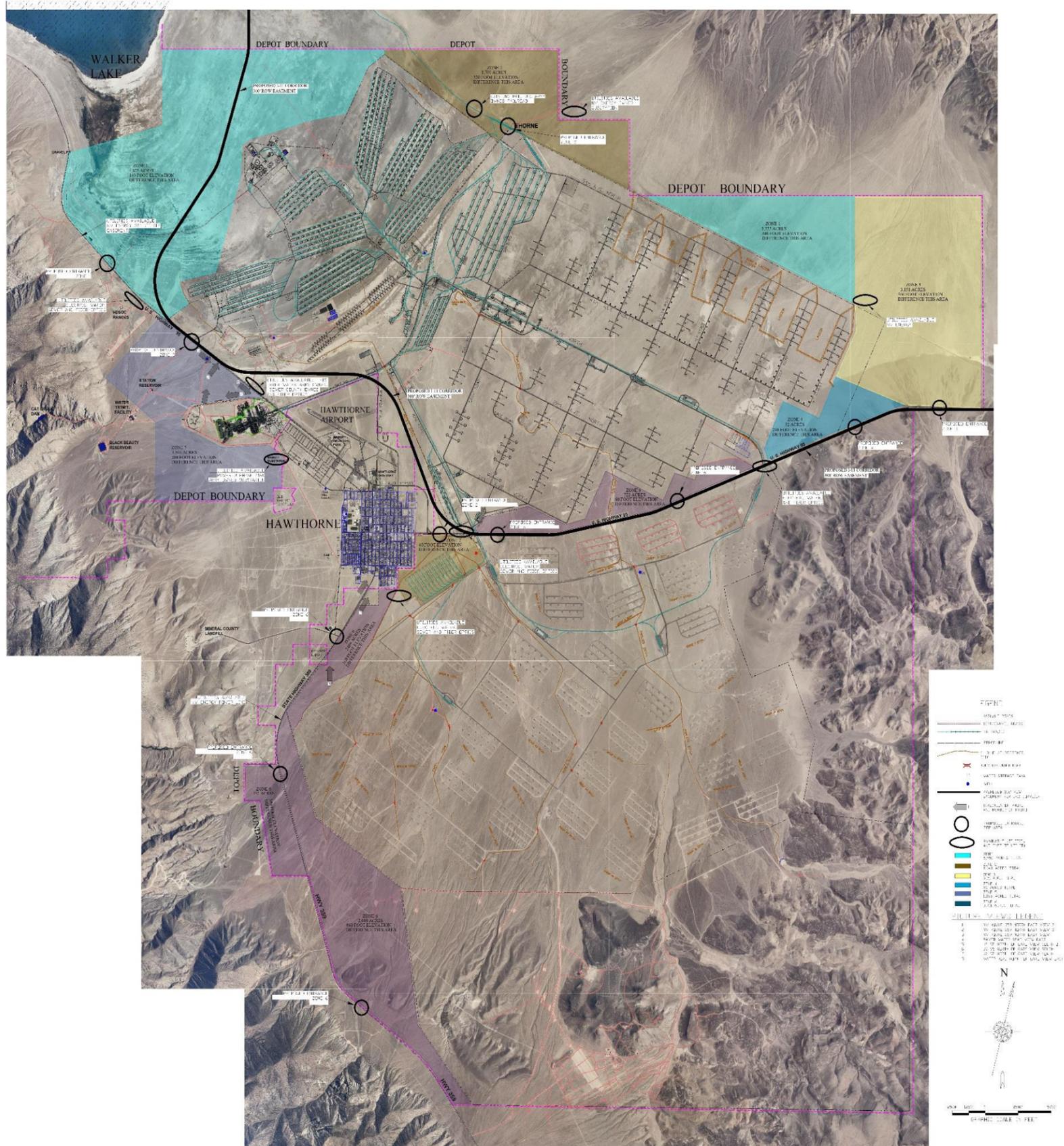
- State Route
- US Highway
- Local, Rural, and City Roads
- Railroad
- Old Railroad
- Maintained Roads
- Minor County Roads

**Mineral County Master Plan  
Minor County Public Roads**



RESOURCE CONCEPTS, INC.

**Reference Pages 19 & 20 Section on Primary Planning Guidance Addressed**



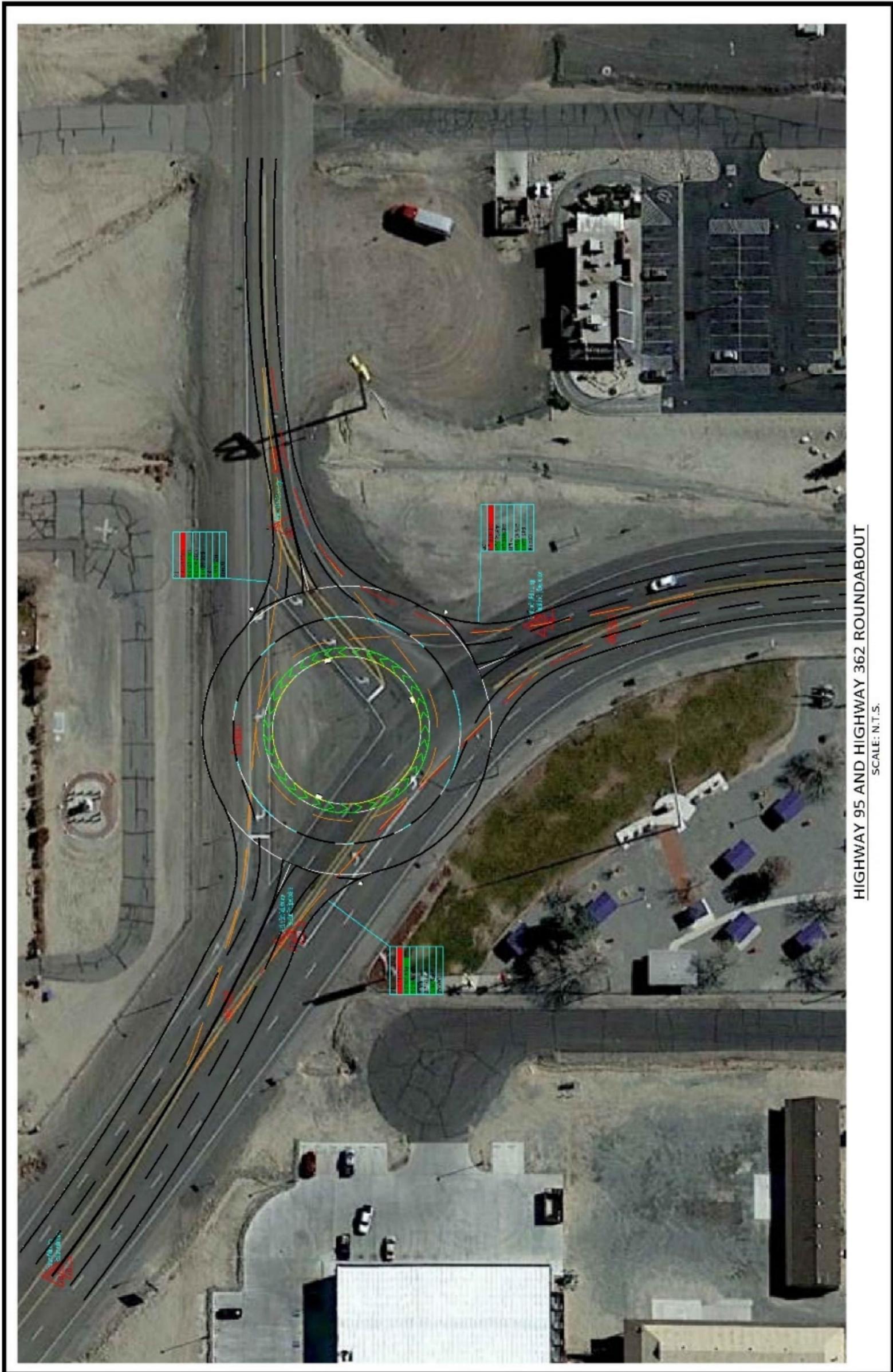
**HAWTHORNE TECHNOLOGY and INDUSTRIAL CENTER  
 DIVERSIFY NEVADA CERTIFIED SITES PROGRAM  
 HAWTHORNE ARMY DEPOT, NEVADA**

**Reference Page 77 Section on Hawthorne Technology and Industrial Center**



ONE WAY ROUTE FOR LAKEVIEW AND MT GRANT TRACTS  
SCALE: N.T.S.

**Reference Page 87 thru 89 Section Pertaining to Goal T6**



HIGHWAY 95 AND HIGHWAY 362 ROUNDABOUT  
SCALE: N.T.S.

Reference Page 84 Section on Public Transportation