



# **White Pine County Public Lands Policy Plan**

*2007*

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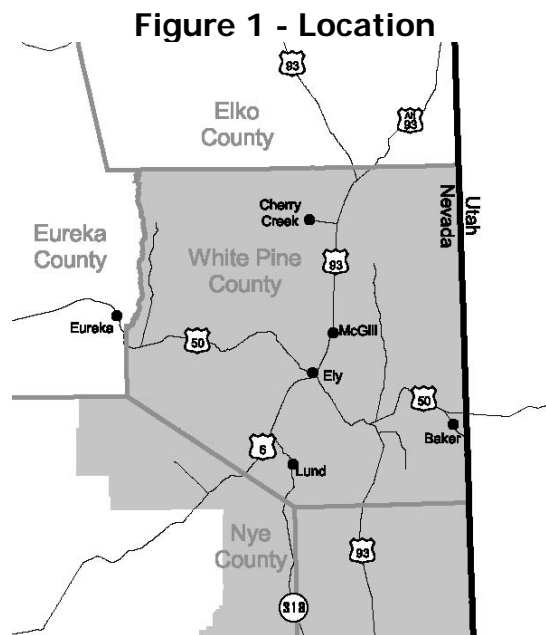
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## I. PLAN BACKGROUND

### Location

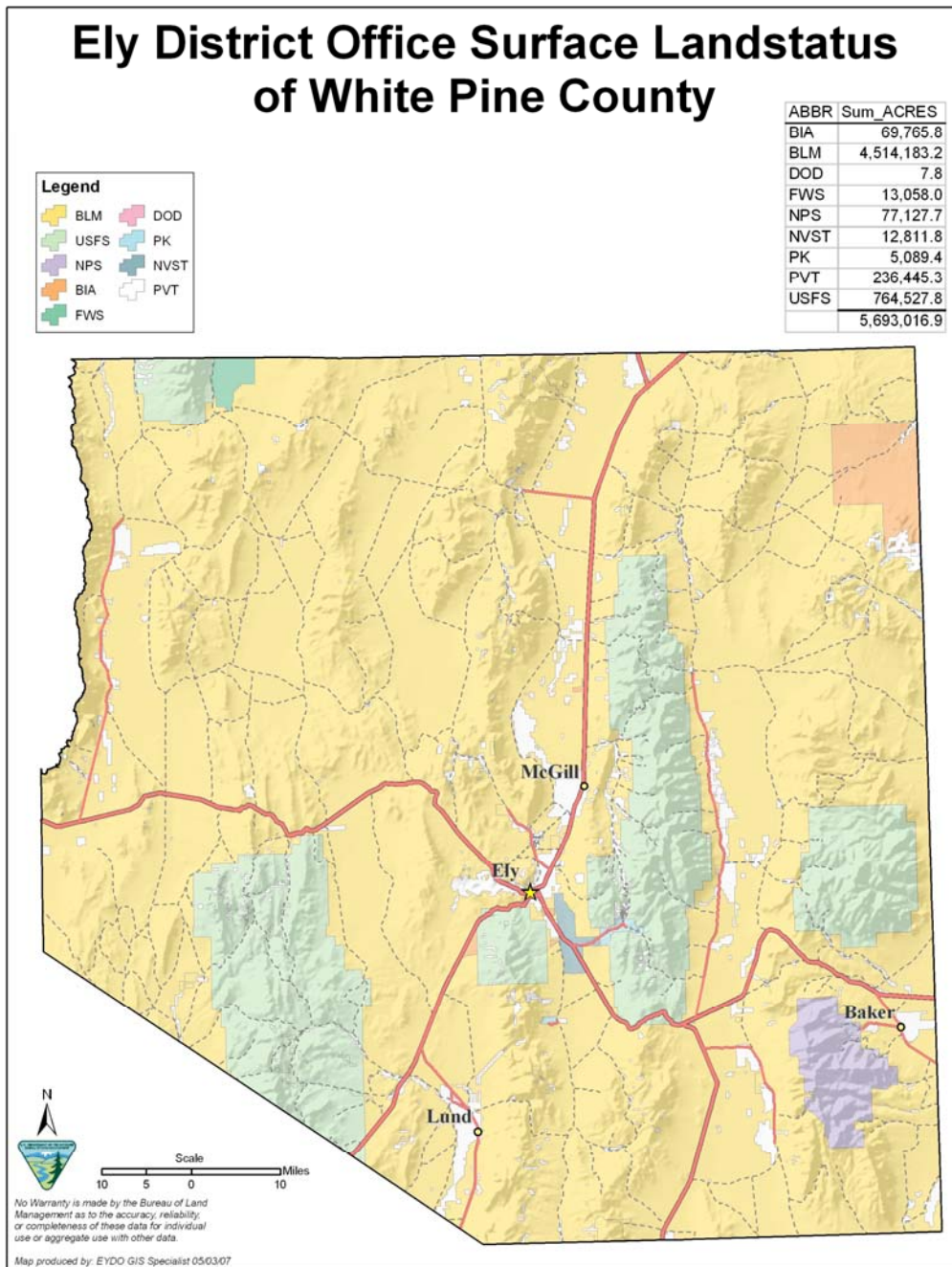
White Pine County is located in east central Nevada and is bordered on the east by Utah, Elko County on the north, Eureka County to the west, and Lincoln and Nye Counties on the South. Ely, the County seat, is located to the west and south of the County's center at the cross roads of US Highways 50 and 93. Reno is 320 miles to the west, Las Vegas is 250 miles to the south, and Salt Lake City is 250 miles to the northeast. Ely is the largest population center in a 150 mile radius serving the White Pine County communities of McGill, Ruth, Lund, and Baker; Eureka, 80 miles west; Pioche (Lincoln County), 129 miles south; and Ibadah, Garrison, and Goshute on the Nevada/Utah border approximately 100 miles east. Recent growth in southern Utah makes St. George (population 64,201) 217 miles from Ely and Cedar City (population 23,983) 200 miles from Ely the closest population centers for retail shopping and medical services. They join Elko, (population 18,642) 180 miles north and west; Fallon (population 8,386) 250 miles west; and Twin Falls, Idaho (population 70,000) 255 miles north as the closest communities providing larger business and service centers. The County is roughly square in shape, measuring approximately 104 miles north to south and 96 miles east to west. It covers 8,941 square miles making it larger than the state of Massachusetts. The County ranks fifth in size in Nevada, covering 8.1 percent of the state's total land area.



Nevada is a state that is comprised predominately of federally-managed lands. Approximately 86.5% of all lands in the state are under the jurisdiction of federal agencies with the majority percentage under Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

jurisdiction. The US Forest Service is secondary, followed by the Department of Defense, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Reclamation. Additional lands are managed by the State of Nevada. This land ownership pattern leaves very few areas under private control for economic development and community expansion. White Pine County is no exception to this land use pattern. Since most of the county is under federal management, little private land exists for community expansion.

Figure 2 – Land Status



**Figure 3 – Land Status – Acres**

Land Area	Acres	Land Area in Percent
Lands Administered by Federal Agencies	5,439,707	95.6
BLM	4,513,533	79.2
Forest Service	761,568	13.4
National Park Service	77,128	1.35
Fish and Wildlife Service	13,058	0.23
Department of Defense	8	minimal
Tribal	69,766	1.22
State	18,344	0.27
Local Government/Private	239,612	4.21
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>5,693,016</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source BLM 2007. Note: Acreage Statistics total based on GIS database.

Note: These figures include the expansion of Cave Lake State Park (+2,960 acres), Ward Charcoal Ovens State Park (+650 acres) and Steptoe Valley Wildlife Management Area (+6,281 acres)

## II. PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of the Plan is to:

- **Detail White Pine County's vision and strong policy voice concerning public lands.**
- **Define White Pine County's public land-related issues and needs.**
- **Provide locally developed land management policies that enable the federal land management agencies to better understand and respond in a positive fashion to the concerns and needs of White Pine County in a collaborative process.**
- **Increase the role White Pine County has in determining the management of the federal lands.**
- **Provide an opportunity to positively address federal land use management issues directly and thereby offer a proactive alternative rather than an after-the-fact response.**
- **Encourage public comment and involvement.**

The initial White Pine County Public Lands Policy Plan (Plan) was developed between 1983 and 1984 as part of a state-wide effort resulting from the passage of Senate Bill 40. Under SB40, the State Land Use Planning Agency section of the Nevada Division of State Lands (SLUPA) was directed by the 1983 State Legislature to:

- **“Prepare, in cooperation with appropriate state agencies and local governments throughout the state, plans or policy statements concerning the use of lands in Nevada which are under federal management.”**

The 2007 Plan represents a review of existing and emerging public lands issues that are of importance to White Pine County as it works with federal agencies under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other public processes.

Within the Plan are descriptions of issues and opportunities relating to public lands and how best to work collaboratively with the federal planning partners, most notably Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Forest Service (USFS), Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

- The Plan enables the federal land management agencies to better understand and respond to the concerns and needs of White Pine County.
- Planning, effective communication and coordination by Nevada's governments, in concert with its citizens, can establish a set of policies for the proper use of these lands and to take advantage of the “consistency” language in Section 202(c)(9) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).
- Section 202(c)(9) governs BLM Planning and directs the BLM to give consideration to appropriate state, local, and tribal lands in the development of land use plans for federal lands.
- The BLM is to provide for meaningful public involvement of state and local government officials in the development of land use plans, regulations and decisions for federal lands.
- The BLM will review each Resource Management Plan (RMP) and proposed federal action for consistency with the White Pine County Public Lands Policy Plan and will attempt to make the RMPs and proposed



actions compatible with the Plan to the extent that the Secretary of the Interior finds consistent with federal law and the purpose of FLPMA.

Forest Service Regulations for Land Management Planning and for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that the Forest Service determine the consistency of any project proposal with state and/or local laws and plans.

- The agency is required to describe any inconsistencies and the extent to which the agency would reconcile its proposal with the state/local laws and plans. This consistency review is also provided for by the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1506.2(d)) developed to implement NEPA.

### **III. PROCESS**

The following is a summary of the process followed to adopt the 2007 Plan:

- The White Pine County Public Land Users Advisory Committee (PLUAC) reviewed existing policies and issues with the assistance of the State Land Use Planning Agency in 2006 and early 2007 during publicly noticed meetings in Ely.
- The final Draft Plan was presented at the April 3, 2007 PLUAC meeting in Ely. The PLUAC held an official public review meeting on May 8, 2007 and recommended approval of the Plan.
- The Regional Planning Commission held a public hearing on June 6, 2007 and recommended approval of the Plan to the White Pine County Board of Commissioners.
- The White Pine County Board of Commissioners held a public hearing on June 13, 2007 and adopted the Plan.

### **IV. ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Climate**

White Pine County has a semi-arid climate and the Basin and Range topography results in a cold desert climate with seasonal shifting of the sub-tropical highs influential less than six months of the year. Interior locations are dry because of their distance from moisture sources or their locations in rain shadow areas on

the lee side of mountain ranges. This combination of interior location and rain shadow positioning produces the cold desert. The dryness, generally clear skies, and sparse vegetation lead to high heat loss and cool evenings (Intertech Services Corporation and Buqo, Thomas S.).

White Pine County's average annual precipitation is 9 inches, the average for the state of Nevada (which is the driest in the nation). The average annual precipitation increases with altitude: between 5,000 and 6,000 feet, it is less than 8 inches per year, between 6,000 and 7,000 feet it is 8 to 12 inches, between 7,000 and 8,000 feet, 12 to 15 inches, between 8,000 and 9,000 feet, 15 to 20 inches, and above 9,000 feet, more than 20 inches (Hose, Richard K. and Blake M.C. Junior). At higher elevations snow accumulates to considerable depths. Much of the snowmelt irrigates nearby valleys. Drought is common and expected. Historically, critical water sources in the County respond to drought conditions and climate changes with approximately four years lag time (Intertech Services Corporation and Buqo, Thomas S.).

In White Pine County's mid-latitude climate the average potential evaporation rate exceeds the average annual precipitation, with actual average evaporation ranging from 45 to 51 inches. On an annual basis, as much as 90 to 95 percent of the total annual precipitation is lost through evaporation and transpiration; only an estimated 5 to 10 percent recharges the ground water regime (Intertech Services Corporation and Buqo, Thomas S.).

In western White Pine County, summers are hot, especially at the lower elevations and winters are cold. The length of the growing season ranges from about 100 to 120 days with the shorter season in the western part of the County. The mean annual temperature in Ely is 44 degrees. The lowest temperature on record for Ely is  $-30$  on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1989, and the highest recorded temperature was recorded in Ely on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1988 at 100 degrees (Intertech Services Corporation and Buqo, Thomas S.).

## **Geology**

White Pine County is made up of the elongate north-trending mountain ranges and generally flat-bottomed valleys that typify the Basin and Range physiographic province. The dominant rock types found within the County include quartzite, limestone, dolomite, sandstone, siltstone, and shale.

The area was affected by two major tectonic events; the younger of the two produced the elongate fault-block mountain ranges and flat-bottomed valleys that characterize the region today. The older event produced a variety of structural features including high-angle faults and low-angle faults, and large amplitude folds (Hose, Richard K. and Blake M.C. Junior).

The geologic units of White Pine County may be grouped into seven categories: 1) the valley-fill deposits, comprising mixtures of gravel, sand, silt and clay that include the alluvial and playa deposits; 2) younger volcanic rocks, comprising ash-flow tuff and basalt; 3) older volcanic rocks, comprising dacite, latite, andesite, and tuffs; 4) Triassic sediments, comprising freshwater limestone, conglomerate, sandstone, siltstone, and tuff; 5) intrusive rocks, comprising granitic plutons; 6) upper Paleozoic carbonate rocks, comprising predominantly limestone and dolomite, but with inter-bedded shale and siltstone aquitards; and 7) lower Paleozoic and older rocks, comprising predominately clastic rocks including shale and quartzite, but with some interbedded carbonate units (Intertech Services Corporation and Buqo, Thomas S.).

### **Geographic Features**

White Pine County is typical of the Basin and Range topography. The landscape is dominated by north-south mountain ranges from 8,000 to 12,000 feet in elevation. White Pine County's mountain ranges are the result of intense folding followed by thrust faulting during the late Permian period. Intrusions of granite rocks cut across the older, complex geological structures. Early deposits of marine conglomerate, sandstone, limestone, and dolomite occur throughout the County. This carbonate rock contains arches, rock shelters, and highly decorated caves.

From west to east, the major ranges are the Diamond Mountains, the White Pine Range, the Butte Mountains, the Egan Range, Cherry Creek Range, Schell Creek Range, and the Snake Range-Kern Mountains. The highest point is Wheeler Peak in the Snake Range at 13,061 feet in elevation. Natural gaps or passes in the mountain ranges are important in allowing cross-country transportation. Between the mountain ranges are long narrow valleys, which range from 5,000 to 7,000 feet in elevation. The valleys are the sites of transportation corridors, agricultural activity, industrial development and urban centers.

The major valleys are:

**Newark Valley:** On the western edge of the county, irrigated by Cole and Newark Creeks and several springs

**Steptoe Valley:** Between the Egan and Schell Creek ranges is one of the longest valleys in the United States at over 100 miles extending from Elko County on the north through the entire

length of White Pine County. The valley's water is supplied by Duck Creek and Steptoe Creek. It houses the County's major urban and industrial development as well as 70,000 acres of tillable land.

**Spring Valley:** Between the Schell Creek and Snake ranges is twelve miles wide and almost one hundred miles long. Its northern portion has a number of small creeks, which provide irrigation water for the valley's cropland

**Snake Valley:** Lies on the eastern border of the county, sloping to the south and east, its climate is the warmest in White Pine County

## Hydrology

The majority of White Pine County is located within the Great Basin, meaning that the water within this physiographic region does not flow to the ocean; instead it is deposited entirely in underground aquifers. Hydrology of the area can be described in the surface water resources and the ground water resources, the latter of which less information is known.

The major bodies of water in the County are four reservoirs:

- Cave Lake (320 acres)
- Comins Lake (382 acres, maximum pool)
- Bassett Lake (120 acres)
- Illipah Reservoir (160 acres maximum pool)

The southern portion of Ruby Lakes extends into the northeastern corner of the County. There are numerous small ponds and lakes in the County for a total of 773 water acres. Ninety streams (281 stream miles) have been surveyed in the County. White Pine County has sixteen warm or hot springs. Only one, Monte Neva Hot Springs in Steptoe Valley has been identified by the U.S. Geological Survey as having enough potential for geothermal steam to warrant investment.

- **Surface Water Resources**

Although White Pine County has no major lakes or rivers, there are important surface water resources in many locations. Surface water flows are important sources of irrigation water in the agricultural areas in the major valleys of the

county. Groundwater that discharges to the surface at springs is also an important surface water resource. Many springs in White Pine County have been developed for irrigation, livestock watering, municipal and domestic water supplies, and the mining industry. The surface water resources of White Pine County are also extensively used for recreational purposes including, fishing, hunting, boating and skiing, swimming, camping, picnicking, and relaxation. Wildlife cannot thrive without a dependable source of water and the many springs, streams, and lakes in White Pine County support the habitat for many desirable species (Intertech Services Corporation and Buqo, Thomas S.).

#### ▪ **Ground Water Resources**

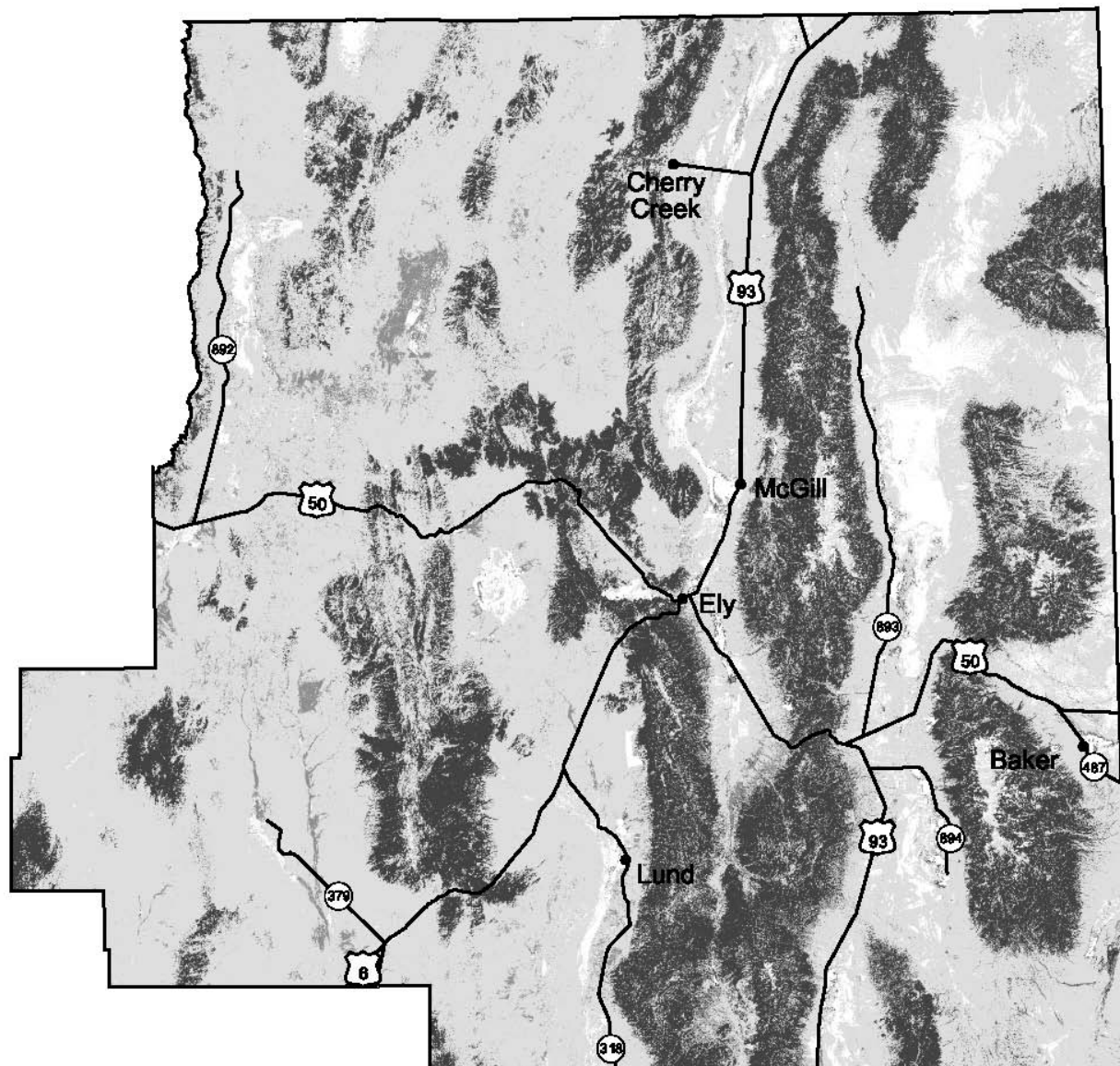
In addition to their surface water resources, White Pine County has groundwater resources. Groundwater occurs at various depths under the entire county and has been developed for municipal, agricultural, and mining supplies as well as for other purposes. In recent years, the demand on the groundwater resources has grown significantly, in part reflecting the growth of the various economic sectors of the County, and in part reflecting the interest in exporting water from White Pine County through large-scale interbasin transfers of water. Additional information may be found in the White Pine County Water Resources Plan.








#### **Vegetation**

Vegetation and wildlife occur throughout the County in patterns that generally reflect the elevations, which give them the optimum moisture and temperature combinations. Vegetation in the valley floors includes shadscale, sagebrush, and winterfat. Heavy bands of pinyon pine and juniper exist in the foothills giving way to mountain mahogany at the 7,500-foot level. Alpine forests cover the highest mountain slopes. Above 8,500 feet there are stands of white fir, Englemann spruce, and limber pine. At the 9,000-foot level, bristlecone pine forests can be found. Some of White Pine County's specimens of bristlecone, the oldest known living species, have been aged at over 4,000 years. The swamp cedar sub-species of juniper is found in three places in the world, all of which are located in White Pine County.

The type of vegetation varies widely with amount of rainfall and temperature and hence with altitude. Shrubs and grasses dominate the valley floors while in the foothills and on slopes at intermediate altitudes, there are many juniper and pinon trees. Between 8,500 feet and timberline, the most abundant tree species are limber pine, bristlecone pine, and white fir (Hose, Richard K. and Blake M.C. Junior).

Figure 4 – General Vegetation Types

**Legend**

-  Planning Area
-  Cities and Towns
-  Federal & State Roads
-  Forests and Woodlands
-  Herbaceous Grassland
-  Shrubland
-  Other

## Wildlife

The expansive amount of public land in White Pine County provides vast amounts of habitat for a variety of wildlife including big game species such as elk, mule deer, bighorn sheep and antelope, a variety of bird species, both migratory and resident, including sage grouse, as well as a variety of reptile, small mammal, and fish species.

It was estimated by Nevada Department of Wildlife that as of spring 2005 there are 3,300 elk, 14,000 mule deer, and 3,000 antelope that populate White Pine County. These numbers reflect some of the largest big game herds in the State of Nevada making White Pine County one of Nevada's premier hunting and wildlife viewing destinations. These animals require large amounts of contiguous unfragmented land, which includes the seasonal habitats required for their survival.

In addition to impressive big game resources White Pine County is also known for being one of the key fishing areas of the state. The lakes and streams of the county provide habitat for four species of trout (rainbow, brook, brown, and cutthroat) and largemouth bass that are highly sought after by recreational anglers. The counties streams and lakes also provide habitat for a number of native fish species as well, such as the Relict Dace, White River Mountain sucker, the White River Speckled Dace, the White River Springfish, Bonneville cutthroat trout, Newark Valley tui chub, and the Duckwater Creek Tui Chub (Intertech Services Corporation and Buqo, Thomas S.).

The counties lakes, streams, and wetland areas also provide nesting habitat for a variety of shorebird, wading bird, and waterfowl species including the Black Tern, American avocet, eared grebe, common loon, and Long-billed Curlew and a number of important raptors including the Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Goshawk, Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, American Kestrel, and several species of owls. The water sources of the county are also important stopping off points for a variety of migratory bird species that travel through the area (Intertech Services Corporation and Buqo, Thomas S.).

Sage grouse are also an important bird species that inhabit White Pine County. These birds are managed by the State Sage Grouse plan to which White Pine County is a signatory.

## V. CULTURE AND HISTORY

White Pine County and the surrounding areas have at least 10,000 years of continuous human occupation and can be seen through thousands of recorded cultural resource sites. Some of the earliest cultural sites include several substantial finds of the Paleo-Indian tradition, the earliest prehistoric peoples known in North America. More abundant pre-historic sites are related to the hunter-gatherers of the Desert Archaic tradition and the more recent Shoshone and Southern Paiute groups. Sites from the Fremont culture, a horticulturally based group, can be found in the eastern part of White Pine County. The various remains of these pre-historic cultures are found in a variety of site types including campsites, rock art, artifact scatters, rockshelters, isolated finds, and structural sites.

Historic use of the area began with early exploration efforts during the first half of the nineteenth century by the likes of Jedediah Smith, John C. Fremont, and Kit Carson. These early explorations led to the establishment of the Pony Express route traveling through this area in 1860-1861 and later to the discovery of silver and subsequently expansive mining efforts comprised of boom towns and mining camps (Bureau of Land Management, *Archeology in the Ely BLM District*). All of this mining effort led White Pine County, throughout its history, to produce more mineral wealth than any other county in Nevada through the mid twentieth century (Hose, Richard K. and Blake M.C. Junior). In the early 1900's copper mining and the establishment of the Nevada Northern Railroad also came to the area along with agriculture and livestock grazing. The evidence of this development and history can be found in historic trails, mining buildings and structures (there are 37 mining districts in White Pine County), homesteads, and cemeteries.

### Recreation

The majority of the recreation in the area is based upon Public Lands and the resources that they offer. The major recreational pursuits include hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, horseback riding, along with off highway vehicles and motorcycles. As recreation interest in the region grows other forms of recreation in the area are seeing a slight increase as well such as mountain biking, rock climbing, skiing, and snowmobiling.



## Population

Since the 1800's the County's population reflected the boom bust cycle of the mining industry. As early as 1868, the population was 10,000 in Hamilton alone. Throughout the 19th Century, gold and silver camps flourished and then became ghost towns overnight. From 1900 to 1910 the opening of the copper mines caused a 279 percent increase in population. The County's population reached a peak of 12,377 in 1940. In the 1950's the major copper holdings were consolidated under the ownership of Kennecott Copper Company. The mergers resulted in substantial mine layoffs and the population fell to 9,424. By 1970 it had risen to 10,150. The mine, and smelter layoffs were responsible for a 21 percent decline in population when the population dropped to 8,167. Following the 1980 Census Kennecott closed the smelter and railroad closed and the University of Nevada's Bureau of Business and Economic Research estimated that the population dropped to 7,640 by 1985. The 1990 Census showed that the population had risen to 9,000 again due to increases from the gold mining industry. Between 1970 and 1980 net out-migration was a 28 percent loss and from 1986 to 1996 it was a 22 percent growth rate. At the same time the state experienced a growth of 53 percent between 1970 and 1980 and a 39 percent growth rate between 1980 and 1990. Population continued to fluctuate in the early 1990's and rose from 1994 to 1999 with the employment and business activity from the BHP mine. With the closure of Robinson mine, the population dropped to 9,181 (Census) in 2000 and continued to drop until it reach 8,842 in 2003. The population began to increase in 2004 and 2005. The population estimates reflect an increase of 1.4 percent in 2004 and 3.4 percent in 2005 making White Pine County the fourth fastest growing County in the state and 46<sup>th</sup> fastest growing County in the country.

**Figure 5 – Population**

Year	Population
2006	8,395
2005	8,240

City	Estimated Population 2006
Ely	4,325
Lund	162
McGill	1,145
Ruth	405

Source: State Demographer and Sierra Pacific 2007

**Figure 6 – Income**

Year	Per Capita Income	Median Income			Average Income		
		Household	Family	Disposable	Household	Family	Disposable
2006	\$19,675.00	\$39,718.80	\$48,456.10	\$34,701.30	\$48,163.10	\$56,776.50	\$42,345.80
2005	\$23,406.40	\$38,805.50	\$46,357.30	\$33,912.40	\$54,387.30	\$65,279.30	\$44,702.20

Source: State Demographer and Sierra Pacific 2007

## **Economics**

By mid-2006, the County was experiencing rapidly increasing housing prices, lack of affordable housing, workforce shortages, lack of contractor availability and rapidly increasing costs of construction. The community is also looking ahead at the potential of initial construction of power plants that could be multiple phasing of multiple projects. This could impact services and infrastructure in ways different from other large shorter-term construction projects the County has experienced in the past. All indicators of economic activity have increased including population, housing units, new housing starts and active building permits, total labor force, assessed valuation, room tax revenues, and taxable sales. In the past two years, the County sold thirty-six acres of land in its Industrial Park, issued two Revolving Loan Fund loans, shows an increase in number of firms doing business including three new small manufacturing firms.

## **VI. POLICIES**

This section is organized by major public land issue topic and describes White Pine County's policies and action items related to each issue. The action items are intended to help resolve the State's public land issues and implement the policies in collaboration with the federal planning partners.

### **1. Plan Implementation, Agency Coordination and Local Voice**

Agency coordination of planning is mandated by federal laws.

- The Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 43 U.S. § 1701, declared the National Policy to be that "the national interest will be best realized if the public lands and their resources are periodically and systematically inventoried and their present and future use is projected through a land use planning process coordinated with other federal and state planning efforts." See 43 USC §1701 (a) (2).
- 43 U.S.C. § 1712 (c) sets forth the "criteria for development and revision of land use plans." Section 1712 (c) (9) refers to the coordinate status of a county which is engaging in land use planning, and requires that the "Secretary [of interior] shall" "coordinate the land use inventory, planning, and management activities... with the land use planning and management programs of other federal departments and agencies and of the State and local governments within which the lands are located." This provision gives preference to those counties which are engaging in a land use planning program over the general public, special interest groups of citizens, and even counties not engaging in a land use planning program.

The White Pine County Code Section 2.88 creates the White Pine County Public Land Users Advisory Committee (PLUAC) to review and make recommendations to the County Commission on the following:

- a. Requests for comments on NEPA processes
- b. Requests for public land disposals for private development, public land transfers through Recreation and Public Purposes (R & PP) procedures, rights-of-way, withdrawals, and special designations
- c. General public land use and natural resource issues
- d. In conjunction with the Regional Planning Commission, reviews the goals in the County's Land Use Plan, reports to the County Commission on the County's progress in meeting those goals, and makes recommendations revisions to the Land Use Plan.
- e. At least once every five years, reviews the County's Public Land Use Policy, reports to the County Commission on recommendations for revision.

The PLUAC is a nine-member board appointed by the County Commission with an effort to maintain representation of the wide range of public land use interests.

The PLUAC conducts its meetings under the provisions of the Nevada State Open Meeting Law and provides an open forum for public land users, White Pine County citizens, and representatives of federal, state, and local public agencies to discuss public land use issues.

Federal land management policies and procedures, land transactions, and compatibility with the local Land Use goals are of critical importance to the County's residents. As outlined in County Code Section 2.88.100, White Pine County's Board of County Commissioners supports a policy of multiple uses of public lands that are in the best interests of the residents of the County including recreational activities, production of revenue and other public purposes. The White Pine County Commission is an active participant in reviewing proposed land transactions and public land policies, seeks status as a cooperating agency in NEPA processes, and makes every effort to continually review and update its local planning documents to reflect the need for access to and uses of public lands.

**Policy 1-1:** All proposed actions on State and Federal lands should be brought to the attention of the PLUAC for purposes of review to determine if the federal program is in conformance with this Plan pursuant to NEPA requirements. The PLUAC's role is to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners appropriate action concerning such proposals.

**Policy 1-2:** White Pine County will participate with State and Federal agencies on actions that affect public lands within the county. The PLUAC will serve in an advisory capacity only, and act as liaison between the White Pine County Commission and the federal land management agencies. Studies concerning impacts of proposed actions affecting public lands should be conducted by professionals. The PLUAC requests the commission be notified by the federal agencies before any studies sponsored by the federal land management agencies are initiated. Copies of resource studies should be provided to the PLUAC as soon as available.

**Policy 1-3:** The PLUAC emphasizes consistency between this Plan and all federal land use plans which apply to White Pine County.

**Policy 1-4:** The PLUAC requests inclusion as a recipient of the BLM Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) meeting minutes and agendas. The PLUAC will reciprocate by forwarding agendas and minutes to the RAC.

## **2. Management of Public Lands**

**Policy 2-1:** Support the concept of Multiple Use Management as an overriding philosophy for management of the public lands based on multiple use and sustainable yield concepts, and in a way that will conserve natural resources.

Pursuant to County Code Section 288.100, "multiple use" means and includes:

1. The management of public lands and their various resources so that they are used in the combination which will best meet the needs of the residents of the County.
2. The use of public lands and some or all of their resources or related services in areas large enough to allow for periodic adjustments in the use of the lands to conform to changing needs and conditions.
3. The use of certain public lands for less than all of their available resources.
4. A balanced and diverse use of resources which takes into account the long term needs of the residents of the County for renewable and non-renewable resources including but not limited to recreational areas, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific, and historic areas.

5. The harmonious and coordinated management of public lands and their various resources without the permanent impairment of the productivity of the lands and the quality of the environment with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will produce the greatest yield or economic return for each parcel of land.

Pursuant to County Code Section 288.100, "sustained yield" means the maintenance of the high-level annual or other periodic yield from the various renewable resources of public lands consistent with multiple use.

**Policy 2-2:** Protect and preserve the quality of the environment, and economic, cultural, ecological, scenic, historical and archeological values; protect and preserve wildlife habitat values compatible with economic opportunities needed to provide for long term benefits for the people of White Pine County now, and future generations.

**Policy 2-3:** Support coordination of public land use policies and actions with all appropriate federal, state, and local entities and the components of the County's Comprehensive Master Plan.

**Policy 2-4:** Support the Great Basin Restoration Initiative.

### **3. Federal Land Transactions**

The following are policies developed by White Pine County relating to the federal land program. Appendix A provides a list of parcels initially identified by the County for disposal in the BLM Ely Resource Management Plan. The White Pine County Conservation, Recreation and Development Act of 2006 authorizes as many as 45,000 acres of federal land for disposal to the County and private sectors for local public purposes, community expansion and economic development. This could increase the non-federal land base of White Pine County by 17.3%.

The list and the map provide a general description of the lands identified for acquisition and is expected to be updated annually by the County Commission in coordination with the BLM. Each parcel will need to be further reviewed at the time a specific reality action is proposed.

White Pine County has a total land base of 5,699,200 acres. Federally managed public lands amount to 5,439,707 acres and this number represents 95.4% of the county's total land base. Most of the public lands within and adjacent to the

communities are administrated by the BLM and US Forest Service. Lands identified for disposal are shown in the Ely Resource Management Plan. Appendix A of this plan cross references the Ely RMP.

White Pine County recognizes that many of the policies described below are currently part of the BLM procedures for land transactions. However, the County believes the basic policies on land tenure need to be clearly expressed in this Plan to communicate county policies not only to the federal agencies, but to the citizens of White Pine County as well.

White Pine County has identified many parcels for public purposes and for economic development. The specific land transaction program is to be guided by the following policies:

**Policy 3-1:** White Pine County recognizes and will weigh carefully the value of public lands for recreation, sight-seeing, hunting, fishing, grazing, hiking, mining, and a wealth of other multiple use activities when supporting or recommending specific land transactions or designations. Short and long term costs and benefits of all public lands disposals must be carefully weighed.

**Policy 3-2:** Evaluate federal land disposals for private development utilizing the following criteria and priorities and policies:

**Criteria:**

1. Compliance with the zoning designations, land use recommendations in the County's Comprehensive Master Plan, priorities for economic and community development identified in the annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and other community planning efforts; cost of County services including water, sewer, roads, utilities, fire and police protection, weed control, and other infrastructure; and impact to existing commercial, residential, and industrial activities.
2. Adequate assurance of public access to and through disposed lands and to adjacent public lands for recreation and other multiple uses (through the recordation of an easement and deed restriction). If alternative routes of access are required they should be acquired and guaranteed prior to the disposal and loss of any existing access should be of equal value and public benefit.
3. Impacts to existing uses including important wildlife habitat, key seasonal grazing rights, mineral resources, municipal watersheds, flood prone areas, visual values, access, and recreational use of the lands.
4. Availability of water resources to support the proposed use.
5. Compliance with the policies contained in this Public Lands Policy Plan.

Priorities:

1. Isolated tracts of public lands.
2. Any public lands in-holdings within existing private land should receive a high priority for sale or exchange.
3. Land sales and exchanges that make private lands more manageable.
4. Public lands should be transferred to the private sector when suitable for intensive agricultural operations.
5. At the request of local governmental entities, public lands within the municipal service areas of Ely, McGill, Baker, Lund, Ruth, Preston and Cherry Creek should be made available for urban expansion.

Policies:

1. Disposals for private residential and commercial development should be structured so that local residents have a reasonable opportunity to acquire parcels on a competitive basis.
2. As appropriate, and at the request of adjacent land owners and users, encourage preference for direct sale or preferential bid.
3. Encourage disposals including direct sale and preferential bid for land disposals based on a Record of Decision following completion of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Assessment (EA) processes where the public has had substantial opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project.
4. When land disposals result in loss of AUM's or range improvements, encourage full compensation and alternatives allowed under the law.

**Policy 3-3:** Rights-of-Way: Support designation of corridors for the future transmission of energy, communications, and transportation when they are planned for in harmony with other multiple uses on federally administered lands in accordance with the NEPA processes.

**Policy 3-4:** Land Transfers to Local Government and State Government: As requested by local governments and state agencies, lands identified for public purposes should be made available through the R&PP process.

- A. Lands within municipal service areas should be made available for public purposes only when local governments determine that it is an opportune time and the transfer will not burden the local government.
- B. Requests for R&PP transfers should receive preference to disposal for private development.

- C. Preference should be given for land sales and exchanges that consolidate high value public purposes

**Policy 3-5:** Specially Designated Lands (i.e., National Recreation Areas, National Conservation Areas, Wildlife Refuges, Wilderness Areas, State Parks, State Wildlife Management Areas, etc.)

- A. Support designation of new specially designated lands within White Pine County which are suitable and beneficial to White Pine County citizens, consolidate high value public purposes lands, and are valuable assets to the State and its residents.
- B. Support a balanced review and inventory of all multiple interests prior to designation of any new wilderness areas.

**Policy 3-6:** The federal government should continue to evaluate the mineral resources on lands before they are sold or exchanged. The federal agencies are encouraged to continue to manage the presently open, federally-owned mineral estate in White Pine County as open to mineral location, sales and leases.

- A. Support withdrawals from mineral entry only after careful evaluation of mineral resources which is documented by a mineral report that adequately describes the mineral potential of those lands.
- B. Support minimal separation of surface and mineral estates in all realty actions.
- C. Encourage federal management policies on existing split mineral estates based on state and local participation
- D. Support limited use of the mineral withdrawal process to protect fragile special lands.

**Policy 3-7:** White Pine County opposes any further military withdrawals of land and restrictions of airspace.



**Policy 3-8:** Acquisition of Private Land for Public Purposes: Recognize that the acquisition of some private lands for certain special public purposes is a benefit to its residents.

A. Recommendations for acquisition of private land for public purposes shall ensure:

1. All transactions must involve a “willing seller”.
2. Private land is not acquired unless it clearly benefits the citizens of White Pine County.
3. Environmental, recreation, and cultural values are protected.
4. Private property interests are protected and enhanced.
5. Socio-economic impacts are duly considered and the local economy is not negatively impacted.
6. Due process is guaranteed to all private parties involved in land use controversies by means that do not demand or create a financial hardship.

#### **4. Agriculture and Livestock Production**

Agricultural production is necessary to help maintain the historical, cultural and economic viability of White Pine County.

**Policy 4-1:** Preserve agricultural land and promote the continuation of agricultural pursuits, both traditional and non traditional, in White Pine County.

**Policy 4-2:** The pursuit and production of renewable agricultural resources are consistent with the long term heritage of White Pine County. This private industry benefits White Pine County economically and culturally.

**Policy 4-3:** Opportunities for agricultural development on public lands should continue at levels that are consistent with historical customs, environmental sustainability, culture and compatibility with other multiple uses.

**Policy 4-4:** Grazing should utilize sound adaptive management practices. White Pine County supports the periodic updating of the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook to help establish proper levels of grazing.

**Policy 4-5:** Allotment management strategies should be developed that provide incentives to optimize stewardship by the permittee. Flexibility should be given to the permittee to reach condition standards for the range. Monitoring should utilize the use of long-term trend studies as described above.

**Policy 4-6:** Encourage agencies managing public lands to coordinate with the N-4 Grazing Board on all manners affecting livestock grazing on public lands within White Pine County.

**Policy 4-7:** Range water rights and improvements such as those associated with seeps, springs, streams, lakes and wells used by livestock should be protected in the long term for that use. Encourage cooperation between the federal land management agencies and the grazing operator in protecting the riparian values of these water sources.

## **5. Forestry**

Forest and forestry products production in White Pine County is a benefit to the livelihood and well being of its citizens. Therefore, it is the policy of White Pine County to protect forest resources and promote the continuation of a sustainable forestry products industry by providing economic opportunity, relying on self-determination and open market conditions.

**Policy 5-1:** Promote multiple use of public forest resources to realize sustainable and continuous provisions of timber, forage, firewood, wildlife, fisheries, recreation and water.

**Policy 5-2:** Support the prompt salvage of forest losses due to fire, insect infestation or other events.

**Policy 5-3:** Support the management of woodlands/forest by ecological condition for a diversity of vegetation communities. Grass and shrub ecosystems with no or few invasive species are preferable to pinyon/juniper monocultures.

**Policy 5-4:** Urge BLM and Forest Service to allow and promote thinning of wildland/urban interface. This should be done in such a manner that local entities have an opportunity to derive economic benefit from the forest.

**Policy 5-5:** Recognize the importance of maintaining healthy aspen

communities and encourages activities that will retain and improve the vigor of these communities.

## **6. Wild Horses**

Sightings of wild horses are thrilling and memorable moments for many travelers crossing public lands. An overabundance of horses, however, may be detrimental to the health of these lands. Management must carefully balance needs of wild horses against the needs of other multiple uses.

**Policy 6-1:** Publicize and encourage visitation in areas where wild horses can be seen by the public.

**Policy 6-2:** Manage wild horses to reduce detrimental impacts to other multiple uses. Potential adverse effects on private lands, rangelands, wildlife habitat, and water sources should be avoided or properly mitigated.

**Policy 6-3:** The BLM, US Forest Service and the State should work cooperatively on wild horse management issues. Appropriate management levels (AMLs) should be set at reasonable limits as determined through public involvement through coordinating agencies such as the BLM Northeast Great Basin Resource Advisory Council, the White Pine Coordinated Resource Advisory Council, and the Nevada Wild Horse Commission.

**Policy 6-4:** Educate Congress and the public on the impacts of wild horses. Encourage legislation to allow greater flexibility for their management and adoption.

**Policy 6-5:** Encourage the BLM to increase the potential of the adoption program for wild horses through an aggressive marketing program. Holding and adoption facilities for wild horses should be created in White Pine County.

## **7. Mineral Resources**

The development of Nevada's mineral resources is desirable and necessary to the economy of the nation, the state and particularly to White Pine County. White Pine is the state's leading producer of copper and has produced vast quantities of gold, silver, and other metals. The area is an active frontier for oil and

geothermal development. Sand, gravel, decorative rock, and other industrial minerals are produced daily.

**Policy 7-1:** Encourage the careful development and production of White Pine County's mineral resources while recognizing the need to conserve other environmental resources.

**Policy 7-2:** Support State and federal policy that encourages both large and small scale operations. Regulatory hurdles should not be so complex that they undermine the principles of the various mining and leasing laws, including the Mining Law of 1872.

**Policy 7-3:** Mineral operations should be consistent with best management practices for the protection of the environmental qualities and the multiple use of public lands. Federal and state regulatory agencies should continue to enforce existing reclamation standards to ensure there is no unnecessary or undue degradation of the public lands and adjacent private lands.

**Policy 7-4:** Mine site and exploration reclamation standards should be consistent with the best possible post mine use for each specific area. Specific reclamation standards should be developed for each property rather than using broad based universal standards. Private properties (i.e., patented claims) should be reclaimed to the standard and degree desired by their respective owners, following state law and regulations.

**Policy 7-5:** Reclamation of mine sites should be coordinated with the White Pine County Commission and the PLUAC. Options should be considered for post-mine use of buildings, access roads, water developments, and other infrastructure for further economic development by industry as well as uses pursuant to the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

**Policy 7-6:** Support the policy of the small miner exemption if the miner is offered the opportunity to develop the property. Federal and state regulators should work closely with the small miner to ensure that permitting costs and complexity do not prevent the implementation of this option. An annual assessment requirement for holding mining claims has led to unjustified land disturbances which did not necessarily aid in the furtherance of the property's resource development. These requirements have since been revised and require the claim holder to pay an annual rental fee to the BLM, in

lieu of doing work on the ground. There is an exemption for a small miner who holds ten claims or less. If the small miner chooses the exemption, \$100 of assessment work must be expended annually to hold the claim.

**Policy 7-7:** Federal, State and county governments should cooperate in continuing to provide sources of gravel, topsoil, rock and other mineral materials for local communities. These should be located as near as practical to present and planned urban areas while being in conformance with County development plans. County, State and federal agencies should jointly plan for the efficient development and use of material sites for both the government agencies and the private sector.

## **8. Wilderness**

The benefits of designating wilderness areas include protecting the scenic, recreational and ecological values of the land. Furthermore, special areas in White Pine County should be protected from irresponsible OHV use, speculative oil and gas development, and to provide for clean air and water for future generations. While OHV users continue to enjoy the majority of public lands where roads and trails already exist, it is important to provide for some areas where non-motorized users can experience and enjoy wilderness quality lands.

Dollar values are difficult to place on wilderness areas, but wilderness pays in a number of ways.

- Direct income from recreational use.
- Passive value by passing its legacy on to future generations.
- "Ecosystem benefits" such as cleaning the air we breathe and the water we drink.

Protecting land as wilderness can act as a strong economic lure to draw people to live in nearby areas for business, pleasure and retirement. Residents see this as a benefit to their quality of life that brings economic development. The White Pine County Conservation, Recreation and Development Act of 2006 (HR 6111) created additional wilderness in the county and released other areas to multiple use. The following table illustrates the total wilderness area in White Pine County. Note that some listed wilderness areas extend into other counties. However, only the acreage figures for those areas within the county are shown in Figure 7 on the next page.

**Figure 7 – Wilderness**

<u>WILDERNESS NAME</u>	<u>ACRES</u>
Mount Moriah	65,222
Mount Grafton	54,011
South Egan Range	32,713
Egan Ridgeline	18,669
Highland Ridge	70,098
Government Peak	6,313
Currant Mountain	20,714
Red Mountain	17,496
Bald Mountain	22,352
White Pine Range	42,562
Shellback	36,133
Schell Creek Range	122,123
Becky Peak	18,119
Goshute Canyon	42,657
Bristlecone	14,096
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>583,388</b>

**Policy 8-1:** Wilderness in appropriate areas is supported for its economic benefits to White Pine County.

**Policy 8-2:** As wilderness protects scenic, recreation and ecological values important to the economic future and as well as protecting important natural resources, including clean air and water of White Pine County, we support designation and proper management of existing wilderness areas in the County.

**Policy 8-3:** Existing wilderness should be managed to protect White Pine County's important natural resources, its clean water and air, its scenic and recreational values, and its economic future.

**Policy 8-4:** Support the reclamation of unnecessary roads and trails and the proper management of wilderness lands by the administering agency.

**Policy 8-5:** White Pine County recognizes that multiple interests exist on potential wilderness areas and supports a balanced review and inventory of all such interests prior to any designation of new wilderness areas.

## 9. Wildlife

White Pine County residents support a diversity of wildlife species. Coordination of federal and state wildlife and fisheries' management and enforcement is encouraged.

**Policy 9-1:** Recommendations made by the White Pine County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife should be followed and actions taken where appropriate.

**Policy 9-2:** The Nevada Wildlife Commission should consider and give high priority to White Pine County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife recommendations.

**Policy 9-3:** The White Pine County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife and the White Pine County PLUAC should maintain an active and constructive dialogue.

**Policy 9-4:** A yearly update by Federal and State agencies should be provided to the PLUAC to maintain an active and constructive dialogue regarding threatened and endangered species and potential listings of same.

**Policy 9-5:** Identify habitat needs for wildlife species, such as adequate forage, water, cover, etc., and provide for those needs so as to, in time, attain appropriate population levels compatible with other multiple uses as determined by public involvement.

**Policy 9-6:** Support the Wildlife Services Environmental Analysis for the Humboldt National Forest and the Animal Damage Control Plan for the Ely District BLM.

**Policy 9-7:** Support habitat restoration to improve wildlife habitat when compatible with other uses.

**Policy 9-8:** Support big game species management through the White Pine County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife and the County and State Management Plans for elk, mule deer, antelope, bighorn sheep and mountain goat.

**Policy 9-9:** Support hunting and fishing as recreational resources and as a multiple use of public lands. White Pine County endorses the State's programs to provide sustained levels of game animals.

**Policy 9-10:** The Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge should continue to be managed for wildlife and appropriate recreational uses.

## **10. Public Safety**

White Pine County appreciates the safe passage of its residents and visitors on public lands.

**Policy 10-1:** Any unfenced right-of-ways along State highways should be fenced to protect the traveling public and to reduce the loss of livestock. This fencing should be constructed under a cooperative effort between the BLM, US Forest Service, Nevada Department of Transportation, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Nevada Division of Forestry, private property owners, and the permittees.

**Policy 10-2:** White Pine County appreciates the presence and cooperation of federal law enforcement officers on public lands but is opposed to any increase in BLM law enforcement authority. The County prefers the existing protocol between BLM and other federal law enforcement officers and the White Pine County Sheriff.

**Policy 10-3:** Support cooperative training in areas of public safety such as search and rescue and hazardous materials. The US Forest Service and BLM should work with the County to ensure adequate personnel, training and equipment to meet the increased demand for back country rescues.

**Policy 10-4:** Military Withdrawals of Land and Air Space: Support full evaluation of criteria listed in the Public Land Use Policy Plan in regard to any public land and air space withdrawals for military use including those with potential for transportation, storage, and disposal of all hazardous, toxic, or nuclear materials.

**Policy 10-5:** Abandoned mines should be properly sealed through a cooperative agreement between the County, BLM, the Nevada Division of Minerals, mining companies and private land owners. Emphasis should be placed on those mines in close proximity to communities and high-use recreational areas.



**Policy 10-6:** Roads on public lands should be maintained for safe passage. Areas of high travel should be made a priority. Where road conditions are dangerous, signs and other public notification should be utilized until the condition can be mitigated. Maintenance of roads should be coordinated between the BLM, US Forest Service, County and the public.

## **11. Air Quality**

Air quality in White Pine County is currently some of the best in the nation and it is an important factor influencing the quality of life and well being of its citizens. Therefore, it is the policy of White Pine County to protect air quality.

**Policy 11-1:** Air quality must be protected with a balanced approach that provides economic growth without a detriment to the social, aesthetic, cultural and ecological values of the County.

**Policy 11-2:** All energy proposals should attain the lowest feasible emissions, the highest feasible efficiencies, and the highest possible standards using Best Available Control Technology.

**Policy 11-3:** All water rights applications associated with proposed pipeline projects should require comprehensive monitoring programs to include air quality measurements. If PM-10 levels increase and immediate revegetation project will be necessary to stabilize the surface of any areas where any vegetation is changing as a result of the project.

**Policy 11-4:** Air quality standards should be established based on best available control techniques by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection. White Pine County's excellent air quality should be maintained as an important aspect of the quality of life of the citizens and visitors.

**Policy 11-5:** Particulate monitoring stations should be established by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection to establish local ambient air quality.

**Policy 11-6:** Greenhouse Gases: Greenhouse gases should be considered as an air quality issue.

## 12. Cultural Resources

White Pine County cultural resources and customs include all the prehistoric and historic archaeological resources and traditional cultural practices of the people of White Pine County. The Great Basin Heritage Route traverses White Pine County and is a valuable asset that showcases the county's resources.

Cultural resources include, but are not limited to:

- historic roads
- trails
- railways
- highways and associated buildings
- sidings
- stations
- rock art sites
- historic townships
- mining camps and districts
- racetracks
- cemeteries and isolated gravesites
- paleoindian sites
- prehistoric villages and campsites
- rock shelters
- caves
- toolstone sources
- quarries
- White Pine Public Museum

Less tangible resources include:

- dance forms
- customary beliefs
- material traits of a group
- integrated patterns of human behavior passed to succeeding generations by stories and traditions

**Policy 12-1:** Support conservation of its historic properties, landscapes and practices which use these landscapes in a manner that does not degrade them for future generations.

**Policy 12-2:** Participate in the planning of appropriate uses and the protection of cultural resources. Threats to cultural resources include fire, vandalism, unauthorized use and rural/urban sprawl.

**Policy 12-3:** Promote educational programs for citizen stewardship of cultural resources in a manner that will guarantee the thrill of discovery for future generations. This includes the County's ghost town and mining heritage and the Great Basin Heritage Route.

**Policy 12-4:** Tangible artifact remains and records of folk life and cultural heritage should be preserved locally, rather than removed to out-of-county or out-of-state sites. Citizen access to the remains and the actual sites is encouraged if the resources are protected.

**Policy 12-5:** The customs and culture associated with American Indian activities in White Pine County is necessary to the livelihood and well being of American Indians. White Pine County supports American Indian activities on public lands.

### **13. Recreation and Open Space**

White Pine County enjoys many natural amenities that attract local residents and visitors. These resources should be protected and developed for the public's multiple use benefit. This section is cross-referenced to, and is consistent with, the County Open Space Plan and County Wildland Urban Interface Emergency Services Plan, coordinated with White Pine County, BLM, US Forest Service, NDF and the UNR Cooperative Extension. Open space is critical to White Pine County's economic, historical and cultural identity.

**Policy 13-1:** Conserve and protect scenic, historical, recreational and open space resources for the benefit of the present and future generations with additional consultation with local, State and federal governments and users. White Pine County recognizes that recreation in all forms is consistent with multiple uses of public lands. All resources utilized by the public should be conserved and White Pine County reserves the right for application under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) for all such resources.

**Policy 13-2:** Encourage sustainable recreational use in White Pine County by increasing marketing efforts that describe the opportunities available. Marketing programs that promote such features as the Great Basin Heritage Route, The Loneliest Highway in America, the Pony Express Trail, Great Basin National Park, the mining history of Hamilton and

other areas, the Ghost Train, and state parks should be increased.

- Policy 13-3:** Promote “Eco-tour” and responsible off highway vehicle businesses in the County. The themes of the tours could vary from wildlife viewing, to visiting hot springs, historical sites, or to learn to ride motorcycles and drive four wheel vehicles. Ensure that all governmental agencies work in a cooperative effort to encourage such uses while protecting the resources from damage. OHV users are encouraged to visit and patronize county communities.
- Policy 13-4:** Encourage the development of a community ski hill to provide close and low cost winter recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.
- Policy 13-5:** Encourage dispersed recreation opportunities on public lands as a substantial economic asset to local economies.
- Policy 13-6:** Public lands with value for concentrated recreational use (camp grounds, historic sites, wagon trails, etc.) should be identified, protected and developed for recreational purposes. The BLM and US Forest Service should consider withdrawing these key areas from mineral entry on a limited basis. Any proposals for mineral withdrawals should be coordinated with the PLUAC.
- Policy 13-7:** Recognizing that most Nevadans reside in towns, investments in open space, park and recreation facilities should be concentrated as close to resident populations as feasible.
- Policy 13-8:** Protect and promote the Pony Express Trail and Lincoln Highway corridors as a cultural and recreational resources in a way that protects private property rights and promotes tourism.
- Policy 13-9:** Protect water quality and water rights for recreational fishing at Cave Lake, Comins Lake, Illipah reservoir and other important water resources. Recreational uses and facilities are encouraged and should be developed where appropriate.
- Policy 13-10:** Support hunting and fishing as recreational resources and as a multiple use of public lands. White Pine County endorses

the State's programs to provide sustained levels of game animals.

**Policy 13-11:** The establishment of new specially designated lands (i.e. National Recreation Areas, National Conservation Areas, Wildlife refuges, wilderness, State parks, etc.) may be a valuable asset to White Pine County and its residents. Determination of value can only be achieved through close coordination with the PLUAC and close adherence to a public and transparent citizen input process.

**Policy 13-12:** Promote increased marketing of the Silver State Classic automobile road race between Lund and Hiko.

#### **14. Wetlands, Riparian Habitat and Waters of the United States**

Wetlands, riparian habitat and waters of the United States support the diverse populations of waterfowl, fisheries, wildlife, and plant communities prized by all public land users within the County. These policies correspond to the policies and statements contained in the White Pine County Water Plan.

**Policy 14-1:** Wetlands, riparian habitat and waters of the US should be protected from undue degradation. Undue degradation may result from over pumping of groundwater, destruction of vegetation for over-development or misplacement of recreational facilities, poorly planned land dispositions, unintentional misuse of riparian resources by public and private users, and other actions.

**Policy 14-2:** Wetlands, riparian habitat and waters should be managed in a responsible and balanced manner with other resources.

**Policy 14-3:** Support a coordinated effort to protect wellhead protection areas and municipal watersheds from undue degradation through proactive zoning and development controls, pursuant to the County's Wellhead Protection ordinance.

#### **15. Fire Management**

Fire is an integral component of the well-being of public lands. However, introduced factors have led to the dangerous potential for out of control wild fires that affect the economic and environmental well-being of the County.

- Policy 15-1:** The recommendations contained in the current White Pine County Urban-Wildland Interface Regulation Review and the current White Pine County Wildland-Urban Interface Handbook should be implemented as soon as possible. Defensible space should be a responsibility of federal, state and local agencies, as well as the private property owner.
- Policy 15-2:** Maintain local coordination between BLM, US Forest Service, Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) and local volunteer fire departments to increase the effectiveness of fire suppression. The federal agencies need to take advantage of the skills and local knowledge of local residents. This is particularly important when using out-of-area fire crews for fire fighting. White Pine County will aid in any way possible in suppression of wildfires that endanger the livelihoods and personal well-being of its citizens.
- Policy 15-3:** Encourage the development of mutual aid agreements between the local fire departments, NDF and the federal agencies. White Pine County supports the use of mutual aid agreements and encourages the federal agencies to utilize local fire fighting resources as much as possible.
- Policy 15-4:** Encourage the federal agencies to continue the policy of contracting with White Pine County residents for privately owned equipment suitable for fire fighting. Encourage the practice of early season inspections and sign-ups well before the fire season.
- Policy 15-5:** Encourage the federal agencies to consider using livestock to reduce the fire hazard. There may be situations where livestock grazing can be effective in reducing the fire danger and will not result in environmental damage. Sheep and goats should be used wherever practical to reduce fuel loads.
- Policy 15-6:** The use of green stripping is encouraged if the treated areas are seeded with fire-resistant grasses and maintained.
- Policy 15-7:** Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) should mow and/or spread herbicide on all highway rights-of-ways as frequently as possible to reduce the potential for the spread of fires onto adjacent public and private lands.

**Policy 15-8:** All fire equipment should be cleaned to assure it is “weed-free” before being dispatched to a wildfire.

**Policy 15-9:** Encourage the federal agencies to develop and implement fire management plans to incorporate thinning, fire use areas, prescribed burns and reseeding to restore natural functioning and reduce the impact of invasive species.

## **16. Noxious Weeds and Invasive Species**

Invasive weeds in White Pine County are currently displacing diverse native plant communities and greatly impacting Nevada’s natural and economic resources. That threat to the biological diversity that makes the surrounding ecosystem function will expand rapidly unless kept in check by constant vigilance and work to control them whenever they are found.

**Policy 16-1:** Support the Tri-County Weed Program’s cooperative weed management areas to control invasive species and institute a revegetation program in areas where weeds are treated.

**Policy 16-2:** Support the education of off-road vehicle operators about the hazard of transporting weeds from currently infested areas.

**Policy 16-3:** Surface disturbing activities in the county should be quickly revegetated to prevent the establishment of invasive species.

**Policy 16-4:** Water rights applications associated with pipeline projects should include a comprehensive revegetation monitoring program.

**Policy 16-5:** If weeds increase due to plant community changes as a result of any water project, immediate revegetation projects will be necessary to stabilize the surface and revegetate the area with adapted species.

**Policy 16-6:** Support the Nevada Weed Free Forage Certification program. Any hay being transported for feed on public land needs to be from a certified weed free field.

**Policy 16-7:** Federal, State and county agencies should investigate and treat invasive species as soon as they are detected in the County, and before those species develop an infestation.

Proactive treatment at first detection will cost much less than treatment of established populations. (Example – The recent emergence of Sahara Mustard in Clark County.)

## **17. Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV's)**

The use of off-highway vehicles (OHV's) has increased significantly over the past decade. Important to many Nevadan's lifestyles for work and play, they provide many economic benefits and many environmental impacts.

**Policy 17-1:** Encourage and support the development of a White Pine County OHV Management Plan by using the CRMC process encouraging a broadbased local planning group to provide input in determining and prioritizing needs for current and future OHV use and management in White Pine County.

**Policy 17-2:** Encourage and support the development of a White Pine County OHV Management Plan and any other policy and regulation that:

1. Incorporates the guidelines set forth by Congress in Title III White Pine County Conservation, Recreation and Development, Section 355 Silver State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail for any future consideration, development and management of any additional OHV trails, routes or limited off-road use areas in White Pine County.
2. Promotes sensible and responsible use of OHV's through registration, education, training, advertising and other means.
3. Requires OHV users to stay on designated roads and trails or in limited off-road use areas and actively discourage the pioneering of new trails.
4. Encourages sufficient resources to be made available to local district offices to publish maps of areas and routes suitable for OHV use.
5. Effectively monitors and manages off-highway vehicles in areas where they are allowed.

**Policy 17-3:** Encourage and support the development of policy and regulation that will:

1. Register off-highway vehicles and make them identifiable in the field.
2. Provide for the safety of OHV users and non-users.
3. Prevent the environmental degradation of public lands, air,



- water, wildlife and vegetation.
4. Provide for restoration of damaged lands.
  5. Provide for the enforcement of such rules and regulations.
  6. Provide for the recreational enjoyment of both OHV users and non-users.

**Policy 17-4:** Encourage and support administration of money generated through off-highway vehicle registration that will:

1. Be administered by a balanced broad based board with an emphasis on rural representation.
2. Provide public safety and enforcement.
3. Provide restoration and rehabilitation of damaged lands and trails.
4. Provide maintenance for existing trails.
5. Pay for new trail construction.

## **18. Military Operations**

**Policy 18-1:** Support a collaborative dialogue with the Department of Defense on the use of all public lands and air space for military operations.

## **19. Water Resources**

Water is fundamental to White Pine County's present and future.

**Policy 19-1:** Promote the intent and policies of the White Pine County Water Resources Plan.