

# **The Lincoln County Public Lands Policy Plan**



**2010**

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# **I. PLAN BACKGROUND**

## **Location**

Lincoln County, Nevada is a land filled with mountain ranges, windswept valleys, wild horses, cattle ranches and folks that like the country life. Lincoln County has a large land area, mostly uninhabited, which is full of a variety of landscapes and wildlife. The majority of the land in Lincoln County is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The County contains a wide range of land uses, several small communities, multiple use designated lands and wilderness and open space land.

Lincoln County is rich in cultural heritage. Native American tribes lived in many places throughout Lincoln County as recently as the 1800s - leaving behind evidence of their passing in the form of petroglyphs and other artifacts. There is more than one ghost town standing empty in tribute to the gold and silver miners that lived and worked in them, then moved on. Other historic sites show how daily pioneer life was lived in this area from the time it was first settled to more modern times. The railroad played a large part in the history of the County as well, as several historic sites devoted to the history of the railroad demonstrate.

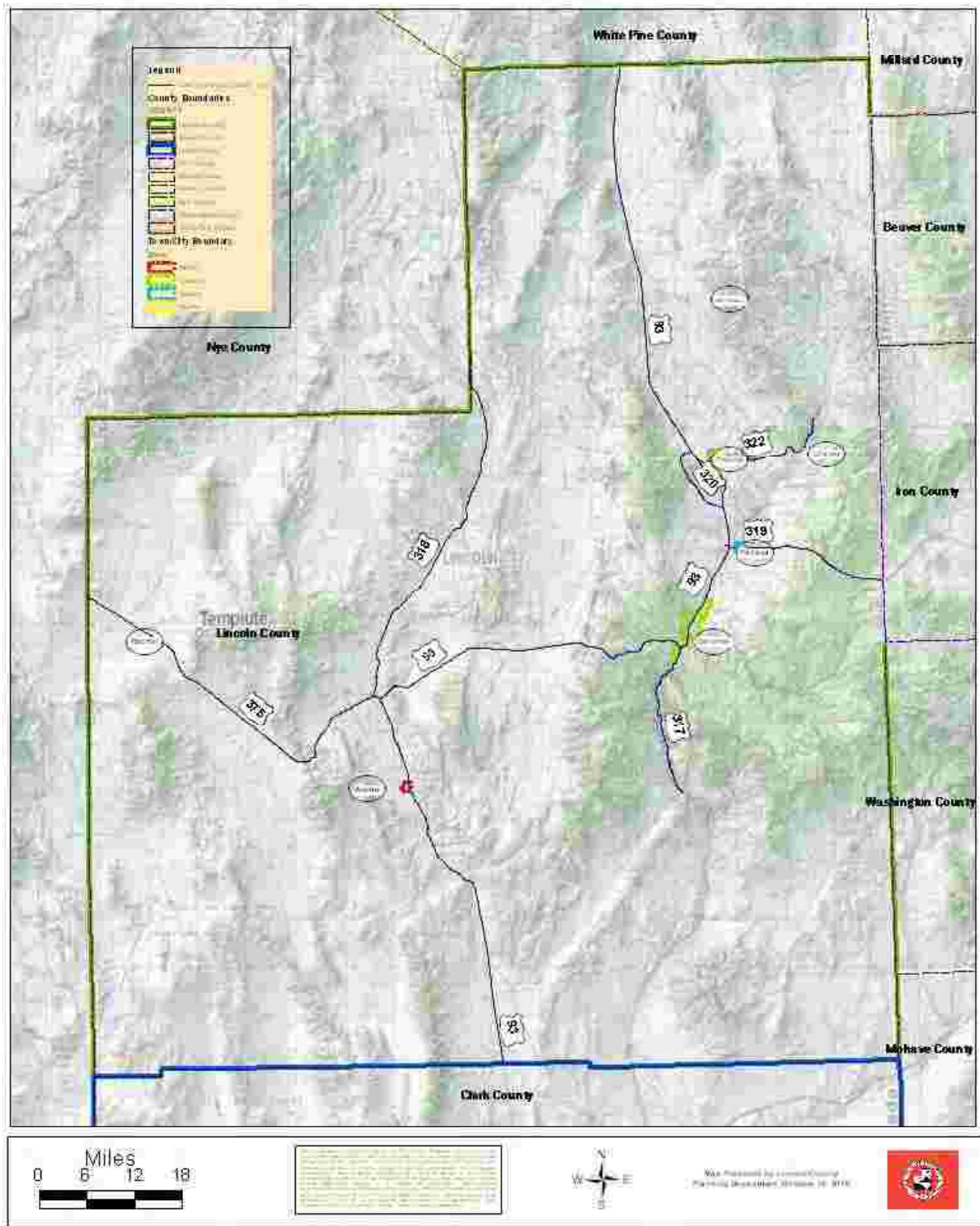
Lincoln County was established in 1866 after Nevada moved its State line eastward and southward at the expense of Utah and Arizona territories. Formerly part of Nye County, Lincoln County is named after Abraham Lincoln, the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. Original legislation called for the creation of a "Stewart County", after Nevada Senator William M. Stewart, but this was later changed. Lincoln County initially included the town of Las Vegas. However, Clark County, Nevada, including Las Vegas, was separated from Lincoln County effective July 1, 1909, by act of the Nevada Legislature.

Lincoln County is home to several small communities. Alamo was settled around 1900 by families and individuals from the Fredonia, Arizona and Kanab, Utah areas. Caselton was founded in the 1920s by Combined Metals Reduction Company on the east slope of Ely Mountain near a rich silver mine. Pioche was known as the roughest town in the west during its gold rush days. It is said that 75 people died there of gunshot wounds before the first resident died of natural causes.

Caliente was a booming railroad town until the main stop was moved to Las Vegas, Nevada. Now it is a small quiet place, the only city in Lincoln County. The other towns in Lincoln County are quiet townships. Panaca has always been a quiet agricultural town, settled by Mormon pioneers in the mid 1800's. Rachel is the newest town, having been founded by D.C. Day in 1978 along Nevada State Road 375 - also known as the famous "Extraterrestrial Highway." More recent rural settlements have sprung up including Mount Wilson, Pony Springs and Dry Valley where 30-60 homes are found with both seasonal and year round residents.

At 10,000 plus square miles, Lincoln County is the third largest county in Nevada, which has been the fastest growing State in the United States. Although most of the recent growth has centered on the Las Vegas area, Lincoln County may become home to two new planned communities located in the southern part of the County, Coyote Springs and Toquop.

# FIGURE 1 - GENERAL LOCATION



Nevada is a State that is comprised predominately of Federally-managed lands. Approximately 84.5% of all lands in the State are under the jurisdiction of Federal agencies with a large percentage managed by Bureau of Land Management (BLM); followed by the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Forest Service. 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. Lincoln County is no exception to this land use pattern. Since most of the County is under Federal management, little private land exists for economic expansion or community needs.

### Figure 2 – Lincoln County Land Status – Acres

Land Area	Acres	Land Area in Percent
Lands Administered by Federal Agencies	6,667,649	
BLM	5,626,679	97.40
Department of Defense/Dept of Energy	773,758	11.26
Fish and Wildlife Service	267,212	3.83
Private	163,168	2.38
Forest Service	29,209	.43
State	7,620	.11
Local Government	3,169	.04
TOTAL ACRES	6,870,815	100.00

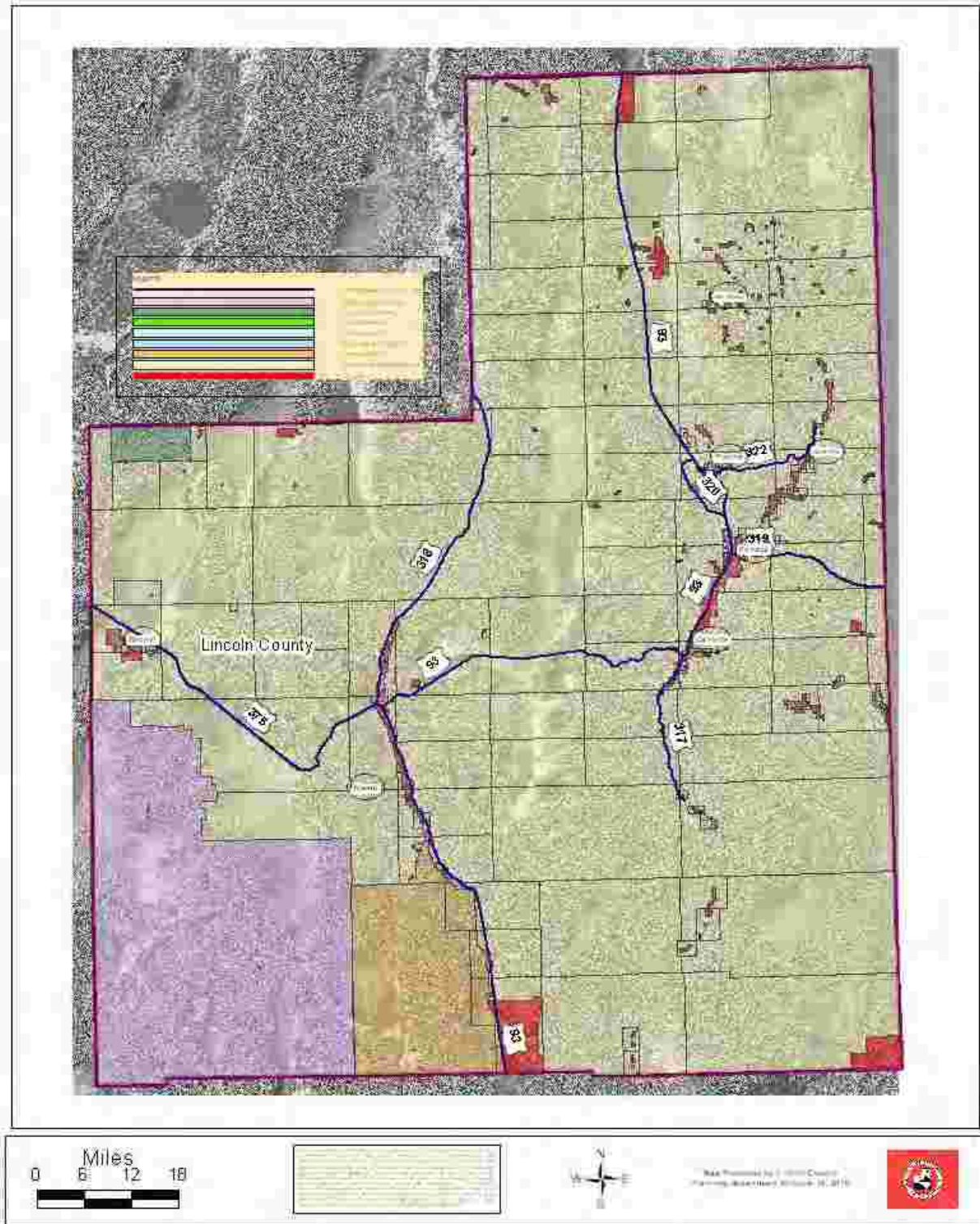
Source Lincoln County Assessor, GIS records, and Nevada BLM Land Ownership records. Note: Acreage Statistics total based on GIS database.

### Figure 3 – Lincoln County Population

Towns	Current # units	Hshld size	Current population
Pioche	495	2.1	1,040
Panaca	367	2.48	910
Meadow Valley	141	2.3	324
Caliente	568	2.34	1,329
Alamo	247	2.48	613
Mt Wilson	63	2.1	132
Hiko/Crystal Springs	69	2.3	159
Rachel	55	2.1	116
	<b>POPULATION</b>		<b>4622.14</b>
<b>**ASSUMES 100% OCCUPANCY</b>			



# FIGURE 4 - LAND STATUS



## II. PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of the Plan is to:

- A.** Detail Lincoln County's vision and strong policy voice concerning public lands including the continued zoning designation of all lands within the County.
- B.** Define Lincoln County's public land-related issues, needs, and to set policy for use in the County land use review process; most specifically, the County's special use permit process which is required by Lincoln County Code on public and private lands for many uses. These types of processes are used to identify and mitigate impacts the County believes are not adequately addressed in the Federal land planning process.
- C.** 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 Lincoln County and the City of Caliente in a collaborative process.
- D.** Increase Lincoln County's role in the management and decision making on Federally managed lands.
- E.** Provide more venues for Lincoln County to collaboratively work with Federal and State agencies on mutual goals and projects.
- F.** Provide an opportunity to positively address Federal land use management issues directly and thereby offer a proactive alternative rather than an "after-the-fact" reactive response.
- G.** Integrate policies with other ongoing County planning efforts.
- H.** To improve Lincoln County's understanding and involvement in the Federal permitting process and public land planning.
- I.** Further develop productive working relationships with Lincoln County, City of Caliente and the Federal and State agencies.
- J.** Encourage increased public interaction and involvement with Federal agencies through the use of multi-media, wiki's, social media, including websites, media notices and flyers beyond the traditionally required notices.

The initial Lincoln County Public Lands Policy Plan (PLPP) 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.”

In 1991 Lincoln County amended its zoning ordinances to require zoning and building approval on all lands within the unincorporated areas of the County. The A-5 “Agricultural Zone” was developed to cover all non-private lands in the County. It set forth a list of permitted and special uses on public lands. A subsequent plan was adopted in 1997 as ordinance # 1998-02 which included information pertinent to the County at that time. That plan set forth the concept of impact reviews by the County to identify and mitigate impacts to Lincoln County not addressed adequately in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), review process. The current plan represents a current review of existing and emerging public lands issues that are of importance to Lincoln County as it works with Federal agencies under 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), Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Energy (DOE), Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS).

The Plan enables the Federal land management agencies to better understand and respond to the operations, concerns and needs of Lincoln 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 proposed action on public lands under its Resource Management Plan (RMP) and for consistency with the Lincoln County Public Lands Policy Plan (PLPP) and other local and State plans. The BLM will attempt to make the proposed actions compatible with the PLPP to the extent that the Secretary of the Interior finds consistent with Federal law and the purpose of FLPMA.

The Ely District RMP and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) were adopted in November of 2007 with a record of decision being issued in August of 2008 for the RMP. This document includes a 20 year horizon for land use planning in the BLM Ely District.

Section 101(a) of NEPA declares that it is the policy of the Federal government, in cooperation with State and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.

Land management planning activities implemented under NEPA require that the Federal agencies determine the consistency of any project proposal with State and/or local laws and plans.

The agency is required to describe any inconsistencies between local and Federal plans and opportunities that may exist to reconcile any differences or duplication. 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 2010 Plan:

The 2008 Lincoln County Master Plan recommended an update of the 1997 Public Lands Policy Plan. The Lincoln County Master Plan also set forth the provision that new development had to bear the costs associated with County review and a new large project review process was established as part of the plan to outline the steps to be taken for large projects.

The Lincoln County Public Land Users Advisory Committee (PLUAC) was created in early 2009 and reviewed existing policies and issues with the assistance of the State Land Use Planning Agency throughout 2009 and 2010 during periodic publicly noticed meetings.

The final Draft Plan was presented at the September 29, 2010 PLUAC meeting and the PLUAC recommended approval of the Plan.

The Lincoln County Planning Commission held a public hearing on November 18, 2010 and recommended approval of the Plan to the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners.

The Caliente Planning Commission held a public hearing on November 3, 2010 and recommended approval of the Plan to the Caliente City Council.

The Caliente City Council held a public hearing on November 18, 2010 and adopted the Plan.

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners held a public hearing on December 20, 2010 and adopted the Plan.

## IV. ENVIRONMENT

### Climate

Lincoln County is located predominately in the Great Basin Region, the largest desert in North America which receives very little precipitation. Western Regional Climate Center data for 2006 reported a 4.88-inch average yearly precipitation at Alamo, and a 9.04-inch yearly average at Caliente. Higher elevations of the County receive upwards of 15-25 inches per year.

Average minimum/maximum temperatures were reported as 17.4/46.2°F in January and 56.5/95.4°F in July at Caliente, and 20.1/51.0°F in January and 55.0/100.3°F in July at Alamo. April through June and September are the driest months, while July to September receives high intensity thunderstorms of short duration. Winter rains that fall between October and March supply most of the eastern Mojave Desert area with the largest portion of its precipitation.

### Geologic and Geographic Features

Lincoln County is the third largest county by area in Nevada and the seventh largest county in area in the United States. It is bordered to the north by White Pine County, the west by Nye County, the south by Clark County, and portions of southwestern Utah (Washington and Iron Counties) and northwestern Arizona (Mojave County) make up the eastern boundary.

The Basin and Range region is typified by a distinctive alternating pattern of roughly north-south-trending linear mountain ranges and valleys. The geology of the area is "stratigraphically" and structurally complex, consisting of many types of rocks that have been subjected to a variety of structural disruptions (Welch et al., 2008).

The notable and distinct "transition zone" between the Great Basin Ecological Region and the Mojave Desert Ecological Region provides contrast between the northern and southern portions of the County. The County's 10,000 plus square miles contain lower elevation valley bottoms near the 3,000 foot elevation as well as several mountain peaks that exceed 9,000 feet. A few of the beautiful higher elevation mountain ranges in the County are able to capture much of the precious moisture that flows through the region. Precipitation falls at greater amounts in these areas and it contributes to the natural resource and wildlife diversity in these areas. The Schell Creek Range (Mount Grafton), the Wilson Creek Range (Mount Wilson), and the White Rock Range (White Rock Mountain), are prime examples.

Unique geological resources found throughout Lincoln County include the weathered clay formations at Cathedral Gorge, the rich agricultural areas of Pahranaagat and Meadow Valleys, the rugged volcanic welded tuff formations in the Pahroc Mountain Range, and the Upper and Lower Pahranaagat Lakes. Paleozoic carbonate rocks are exposed in the mountains and underlie many of the valleys, and Cenozoic sedimentary units fill the valleys.



## Hydrology and Groundwater Resources

Unique in Nevada, most watersheds in Lincoln County flow into the Colorado River Hydrographic Basin. According to data from the Nevada State Engineers Office, 33 watersheds are found within the County. Few perennial streams or rivers exist in the County; The Pahranaagat (White) River and the Meadow Valley Wash are the two prominent watersheds with year round stream flows. These streams ultimately drain into the Muddy River, Virgin River, and Colorado River system.

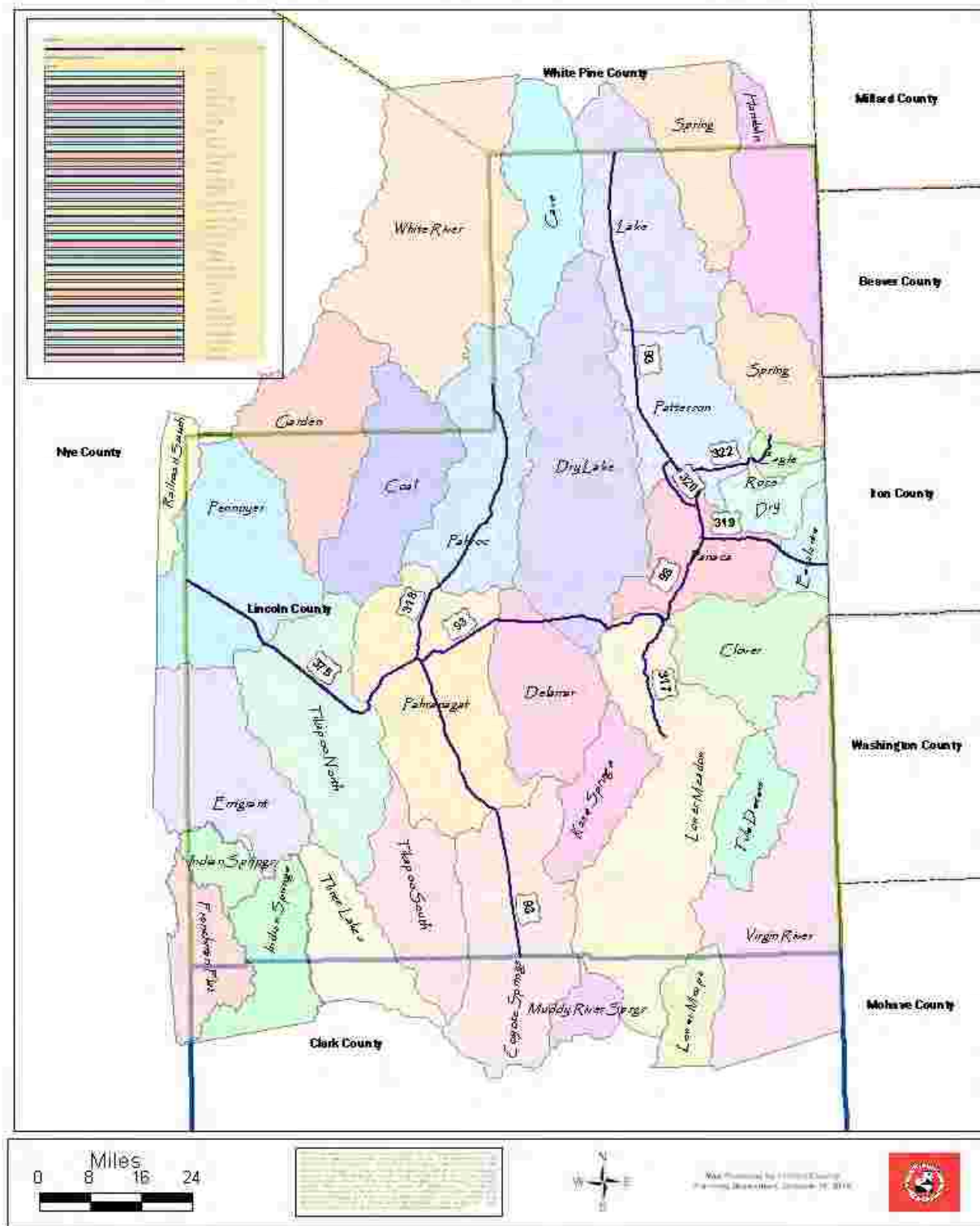
Other sources of perennial waters in Lincoln County are springs. Over 567 springs are known to occur in Lincoln County (USGS 1999). A number of reservoirs also occur in the County primarily for habitat, recreation, flood control, or water storage purposes.

Groundwater occurs in carbonate, alluvial and volcanic rock formations in Lincoln County. Predominantly, groundwater development has occurred in the basin fill aquifer (UNR Cooperation Extension). However, extensive groundwater development is planned for the carbonate aquifer in southeastern Nevada. Section 131 of the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 required a study to investigate groundwater quantity, quality, and flow characteristics in the deep carbonate and alluvial aquifers of White Pine County, Nevada, and any groundwater basins that are located in White Pine County, Nevada, or Lincoln County, Nevada, and adjacent areas in Utah. The BARCUS (Basin and Range Carbonate Rock Aquifer System) study contains 7 detailed reports and can be found at: (USGS 2005). <http://www.barcas.dri.edu/>.



*South Fork Spring, Wood McCullough Basin-Table Mountain*

FIGURE 5 - HYDROGRAPHIC BASINS



## Vegetation

The vegetation classes occurring within the County are described below. Vegetation is highly dependent upon elevation, precipitation and orientation with the Basin and Range system. Several of the higher mountain ranges contain endemic species as the result of the “sky island” effect common in Nevada, where plants and animals have been cut off from other areas by geographic isolation usually due to elevation.

### -Pinyon-juniper

This vegetation class is dominated by a canopy of Singleleaf Pinyon Pine (*Pinus monophylla*) and Utah Juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*). Juniper communities are widely distributed in open canopy stands, and typically occur at lower elevations below the pinyon-juniper zone. In southern Nevada, pinyon-juniper communities occasionally appear with Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), blackbrush (*Coleogyne ramosissima*), sagebrush (*Artemisia spp.*), and bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*).

This ecosystem also includes about 1,508 acres of the mixed conifer vegetation class, which consists of Ponderosa Pine and appears in small cluster communities in the Clover Mountains on north and northwest-facing slopes of other large ranges. The pinyon-juniper vegetation class appears as elevation bands in most ranges of the County. Both pinyons and junipers have provided resources for native and contemporary settlers from pine nuts for food sources to timbers for firewood, building materials and fence posts.

### -Mojave desert scrub

This vegetation class includes Mojave mixed scrub and creosote-bursage (*Larrea tridentata*-*Ambrosia spp.*). Mojave Desert scrub vegetation includes desert thorn (*Lycium spp.*), shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), spiny hopsage (*Grayia spinosa*), blackbrush, (*Coleogyne ramosissima Torr.*), brittlebrush (*Encelia farinosa*) and desert saltbush (*Atriplex polycarpa*) that occur on lower slopes and in washes. Mojave Desert scrub vegetation is the primary vegetation type in desert tortoise habitat used for cover and forage. In addition, Three-corner milk vetch (*Astragalus geyeri var. triquetrus*), and sticky buckwheat, (*Eriogonum viscidulum*), are two State-listed plant species that occur within this vegetation community and are found within the habitat for the Desert Tortoise. Another rare endemic plant, the Las Vegas Buckwheat (*E. corymbosum var. nilesii*), is also known to occur in the vicinity of the Toquop Energy parcel.

### -Blackbrush

Typically a transitional vegetation class between Mojave Desert scrub and Great Basin shrubs, blackbrush usually occurs in elevations of 4,000–5,000 feet. Blackbrush is associated with juniper and shrubs such as spiny hopsage, shadscale, and creosote (*Larrea tridentata*). In Lincoln County, this vegetation class occurs in valleys and upon slopes such as, the Mormon, Delamar and Clover mountains.

### -Sagebrush/perennial grasses

Sagebrush and sagebrush/perennial grasses occur mainly in the northerly portion of Lincoln County in lowland steppes and valleys below 6,000 feet. This vegetation class includes shrubs such as rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus spp.*), bitterbrush (*Purshia spp.*), cliffrose (*Purshia spp.*) spiny hopsage, shadscale, and saltbush (*Atriplex confertifolia*). Principal native and non-native grasses also occur, including: crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron*



*cristatum*) seedlings, bluegrass (*Poa spp.*), needlegrass (*Stipa spp.*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), fescues (*Festuca spp.*), and James' galleta and big galletta- (*Pleuraphis jamesii* and *Pleuraphis rigida*).

#### **-Salt desert scrub**

Salt desert scrub is commonly found on playas, in intermountain basins, and in localized depressions where poor draining silty loam soils develop into a desert pavement. This vegetation class is dominated by one or more shrub types such as shadscale, winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*) desert holly (*Atriplex hymenelytra*), budsage (*Artemisia spinescens*), and fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*). This vegetation class appears in Lincoln County, notably in patchy areas around Caliente and Alamo, in the basins between the South Pahroc Range and the Delamar Mountains, and in clusters in the Mormon Mountains and in the Worthington and Seaman ranges.

#### **-Lowland riparian**

Riparian areas occur along the Meadow Valley Wash and Clover Creek. Both of these drainages are intermittent, meaning that during normal precipitation years they are dry in some sections and flow year-round in other areas. The hydrology of the creeks is primarily controlled by geology and major faults. In the areas where depth to bedrock is shallow, the water flows on the surface. In areas where depth to bed rock is deep, the water is subsurface.

Vegetation consists mainly of cottonwood-willow (*Populus-Salix*) communities consisting of Fremont Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), Goodding's Black Willow (*Salix gooddingii*), honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) and desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*). Non-native Tamarisk or salt-cedar (*Tamarix ramossisima*) has been introduced into this vegetation class.



*Dry Lake Valley and the Bristol Range*

FIGURE 6 - VEGETATION TYPES



## **LAND USES**

Lincoln County is located in southeastern Nevada north of Las Vegas and Clark County and south of Ely and White Pine County. The County is also adjacent to Utah and Arizona on the east and Nye County to the west, Lincoln County is the third largest county in Nevada with a land area of 6,816,000 acres. It is equal to, or larger than 9 other States.

The private land base in the County is approximately 148,000 acres. These lands are used primarily for residential or agriculture uses such as grazing and hay crops. Cultivated lands represent about 60,000 acres. Small communities occupy the valleys at the confluence of watersheds or intersections of State highways. Other settlements like Pioche are located near mining districts. Most residents are employed in agriculture, government, community services and tourism. Approximately 4,500 citizens reside within Lincoln County. Resident populations are found primarily in the towns of Pioche, Panaca, and Alamo and the City of Caliente.

## **TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

Lincoln County's transportation system consists of major highways (e.g. U.S. Highway 93), collector streets, local streets and mountain/rural roads. U.S. Highway 93, also known as the Great Basin Highway, is a north-south arterial that connects Interstate 15 in Clark County with Ely and Idaho to the north. It also serves Alamo, Ash Springs, Crystal Springs, Caliente and Pioche. State Route (SR) 375, also known as the Extraterrestrial Highway, lies approximately 12 miles north of Alamo at Crystal Springs and connects U.S. Highway 93 with U.S. Highway 6 and U.S. Highway 95 at Tonopah. State Route 318 connects U.S. 93 at Crystal Springs to U.S. 6 to the north. State Route 317 allows access down Rainbow Canyon south of Caliente to Kershaw Ryan State Park and the Elgin Schoolhouse State Park. State Route 319, starting in Panaca and running east, is the primary access route for those going into southern Utah. State Routes in the Pioche area include: S.R. 320, 321 and 322 serving Caselton, Pioche scenic loop and Eagle Valley to the east.

The Lincoln County Road Department maintains another 2600 miles of both paved and gravel roads throughout the County. These roadways are vital in that they serve both public land users and local residents alike. County staff has been inventorying and classifying county roads based on maintenance levels, ownership, special needs like emergency routes and capital assets along the roads such as culverts, cattle guards, bridges and signage.

## **AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Farming and ranching are traditionally major parts of rural Nevada's economic base. Over the past several decades, that role has been augmented by tourism, mining, and government. The most current agriculture data release is from the 2002 agriculture census. The total farm acreage in Lincoln County as of 2002 was estimated at about 46,500 acres, down from 48,497 acres from 1997; a difference of 16 percent. Raising livestock, mainly cattle, is the principal source of cash income for most farming operations in southern Lincoln County (BLM 2005).



All livestock grazing allotments within the BLM Ely District are classified as perennial allotments. Per the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement 2007, the Ely District administers 234 allotments. As of August, 2010, 108 allotments are located in Lincoln County. The Caliente Field Office administers 97 of these allotments, the Schell Field Office administers 8, and the Egan Field Office administers 3.

Although mineral deposits exist in relatively large abundances throughout Lincoln County, operations have remained stagnant and mining activities have fluctuated throughout the past decades.

Recent attention has focused on the development of renewable energy resources such as solar, wind, geothermal, and biomass. Lincoln County has some of the highest solar energy potential anywhere in the world.

## **WILDLIFE**

Lincoln County possesses a variety of wildlife resources that include big and small game as well as many nongame species that are typical of both the Great Basin and Mojave Desert ecological systems. Vegetation types, both woody and herbaceous, that support wildlife within Lincoln County include: various sagebrush communities, pinion-juniper woodlands, salt desert shrub, higher elevation mahogany, conifer and aspen-type forests, Mojave desert shrub communities, mixed grasslands, and riparian and wetland habitats. Riparian type habitat associated with springs, seeps, and perennial streams produces the highest forage value for the benefit of wildlife. In Lincoln County, as with much of Nevada, availability of water is a limiting factor to wildlife production and diversity. A significant amount of water development in the County is privately owned and maintained.

Big Game species in Lincoln County include: Rocky Mountain Elk, Mule Deer, Pronghorn Antelope, Desert Bighorn Sheep, and Mountain Lion. These big game resources make the County a premier destination among many residents as well as non-residents for hunting and wildlife viewing. In addition to the big game resources, Lincoln County also possesses several species of game fish that include varieties of trout and bass as well as other protected species. Small game species in Lincoln County include upland birds such as the Rio Grande Turkey, Greater Sage Grouse, Chukar Partridge, and Mourning Dove. Waterfowl include the American Coot, Mallard, Green-Winged Teal, and Canada Geese. Small game mammals include Black-tailed and Cottontail Rabbits. Furbearers commonly occurring in Lincoln County include the Coyote, Bobcat, Gray Fox, Kit Fox and Beaver.

Many nongame mammals, birds, and reptiles also commonly occur. They include varieties of bats, squirrels, wood rats, mice, badgers, skunks, killdeer, sandpipers, snipes, jays, blackbirds, golden eagles, falcons, hawks, owls, snakes, lizards, and the Desert Tortoise.

Lincoln County's rich variety of wildlife provides opportunity for sportsmen, fisherman, and adventure seekers alike. These wildlife resources also contribute to local economical strength, recreational opportunity, and cultural diversity. Lincoln County also possesses several special status species which afford certain protection and levels of management beyond that of other wildlife. Among the aquatic species are the Big Spring Spinedace, Hiko White River Springfish, and Pahrnagat Roundtail Chub. Birds that fall into this category

include the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and the Greater Sage Grouse. The Desert Tortoise is also among wildlife which receives special status.

Nevada's wildlife resources belong to the people of the State of Nevada. Lincoln County is no exception. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) is the State agency responsible for the restoration and management of fish and wildlife resources, while the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is responsible for the management of rangeland and habitat management. On the local level, the Lincoln County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife, (LCABMW) is responsible for gathering wildlife-related information and issues from its citizens. The LCABMW also reports and recommends relative information to the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners, which establishes broad policy, sets regulations, reviews budgets, and oversees the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

## **V. CULTURE AND HISTORY**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

#### **PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT**

Lincoln County was originally home to Native Americans for thousands of years. First the Basketmakers of Pueblo ancestry and later the Fremont people lived an agricultural life in the stream valleys, growing such items as corn, beans, and squash. Replacing the Fremont culture were the more nomadic Paiutes. By approximately 900 A.D., these hunter-gather people established themselves as the dominant culture, and by 1200 A.D., replaced the Fremont people and their agriculture.

#### **HISTORIC SETTLEMENT**

From the time of the first white settlers in Lincoln County, agriculture, ranching, and mining have determined the fortunes of Lincoln County. The first to arrive were Mormon exploration parties who camped in Meadow Valley in 1858. They planted grain fields and built irrigation ditches, leaving the Native Americans to cultivate when they returned to Utah. In 1863, small ranching colonies were established in Eagle and Spring Valleys. That same year, the Panaca Ledge was discovered in Meadow Valley, and mining began in the County.

Panaca, blessed with fertile soil and natural springs, was the first permanent town in Lincoln County. Establishing the pattern that would dominate most of the first hundred years of the County's existence, the farmers and ranchers of the Meadow Valley area met the needs of nearby mining operations for meat and produce. Today, Panaca's rich fields are supplying some of the new demand for fresh, locally grown foods as the local food movement grows throughout the country.

Pahranagat Valley silver discoveries in 1865 led the organization of the Pahranagat mining district, construction of the first mill, and the establishment of the town of Hiko. Recognizing the mining potential of the Pahranagat region, Governor Blasdel led a party from Carson City in 1866 to organize the County and establish nearby Crystal Springs as

the County seat. The following year, expanding mining operations and a growing farming and ranching population led to the removal of the County seat from Crystal Springs to Hiko in 1867.

At the same time, the tent and dugout community of Logan City sprang out of the dirt to serve the nearby Silver Canyon and Crescent mining camps, boasting a post office the following year. New silver discoveries in Pioche and Tempiute soon eclipsed the area, and the Crescent Mill was dismantled and moved to Tempiute. By 1871, the County's population was concentrated in Pioche, which assumed the County seat from Hiko.

Caliente, originally Culverwell for the Culverwell Ranch, was established in the 1870s as a ranching community, supplying hay to the mining towns of Delamar and Pioche.

By 1881, Spring Valley, Eagle Valley, Rose Valley, and Dry Lake Valley were mainly in grazing and meadow hay. The Muddy River Valley (now in Clark County-formerly Lincoln County), produced fruit, Clover Valley boasted lush meadows, Pahrump Valley (now in Nye County-formerly Lincoln County), was rich in fruit and grain, and Ash Meadow Valley was producing hay. Meadow Valley and Pahrnagat Valley both produced large amounts of fruit, grain and vegetables which were snapped up by the inhabitants of the nearby mining districts, including the Delamar gold camp.

Many of the 19<sup>th</sup> century mining district names remain with us today: Meadow Valley, Freyberg, Groom, Pahrnagat, Tempiute, Wheeler, and St. Thomas. Most of Lincoln County's ghost towns were once thriving mining areas, but once the miners moved on, the towns died: Atlanta, Bristol City, Bullionville, Delamar, Logan City, El Dorado, Fay, Highland, Hiko, Jackrabbit (Royal City), Montezuma, Silverhorn, and Ursine. Spring Valley was a ranching and farming community which prospered only as long as the nearby mining camps created a demand for meat and produce.

The Pahrnagat Valley was initially the site of several promising mineral deposits during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The town of Alamo, founded in 1901 by pioneers from the Fredonia, Arizona and Kanab, Utah areas, has depended primarily on cattle ranching and some farming, along with tourism to the Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge. Only about 100 miles from Las Vegas, there have been recent attempts to make it a tourist destination, as well as a source of fresh, locally grown produce for high-end Las Vegas restaurants.

Today, Panaca's rich fields are supplying some of the new demand for fresh, locally grown foods as the local food movement grows throughout the country.

Caliente, a railroad town and the division point for the trains during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, is the site of the Caliente Youth Center, and some nearby ranching and farming.

Pioche briefly came back as a lead-zinc producer during World War II. As county seat, its economy is based on public services, along with some alfalfa production and cattle ranching

## **CONTEMPORARY SETTLEMENT**

Even the County's most recently founded town of Rachel also owes its existence to mining. The nearby Frieberg district produced scattered lead and silver during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1940, Tempiute was reborn as a tungsten camp. A major tungsten operation in the 1970s



created a need for employee housing, and Tempiute was founded near the mine in Penoyer Valley. The locals celebrated the first and only local birth of a child, a miner's daughter, by changing the name to Rachel. Today, cattle, alfalfa, and Area-51 lore dominate the valley, although there have been recent rumors that the Tempiute Mine may re-open and the prospects have increased for solar energy development.

Other recent developments such as Toquop and Coyote Springs have been proposed. Toquop would result in further urbanization of the Mesquite area north into Lincoln County. These are lands (13,000 acres) sold at auction as a result of LCCRDA. Coyote Springs is envisioned as a master planned community on approximately 27,000 acres of land in southern Lincoln County.

## RECREATION

Recreational sites in Lincoln County are predominately Federally owned or managed, with the State and county having a smaller portion of properties. The BLM and USFWS provide developed and undeveloped recreational sites throughout the county. One of the unofficial trends regarding recreation on Federally managed land is called "Dispersed Recreation". These areas are generally more remote, less developed, and in many cases, more difficult to access. Thus, regular use is limited. This type of use is very popular in Lincoln County. Dispersed recreation can provide in a remote setting the solitude a visitor desires versus the high density uses of a developed camping area.

In the effort to protect sensitive lands and promote conservation the land managers are increasingly educating the public on proper uses and practices on public land. Ethical principles such as "Tread Lightly" and "Leave No Trace," that promote responsible outdoor recreation and emphasize education and stewardship are being promoted throughout Lincoln County.

The Nevada Division of State Parks has a total of six parks located in Lincoln County. These include: Elgin One Room School House, Beaver Dam State Park, Kershaw-Ryan State Park, Cathedral Gorge State Park, Echo Canyon State Park and Spring Valley State Park. Most of these parks are located within easy driving distance in and outside of Lincoln County. Currently, visitation in all of the County's State parks is around 250,000 visitors per year.

In 2008 two parks, Beaver Dam State Park (3400 acres) and Cathedral-Gorge State Park (200 acres) were expanded by LCCRDA. Other land exchanges have occurred at Spring Valley State to improve both public and private land management activities. With significant cultural, historical and scientific resources in the parks and surrounding areas they support more than 75 varieties of trees, shrubs, annuals/perennials and grasses, 60 species of birds, 55 species of reptiles, mammals as well as fish and bat species.

Historically, recreation within the county primarily focused on heritage tourism, hunting, fishing, hiking and camping in many of our backcountry areas. However, over the last few years, Lincoln County has become increasingly a point of destination due to the diversity of many annual special events. This use has increased annually and includes all terrain vehicles, on and off-road racing events, equestrian events and the development of our Lincoln County Trails for multi-use events. Other activities that have become increasingly

popular are OHV “rock crawling”, windsailing, and geocaching. This variety of recreation and tourism provides a positive economic benefit to the County

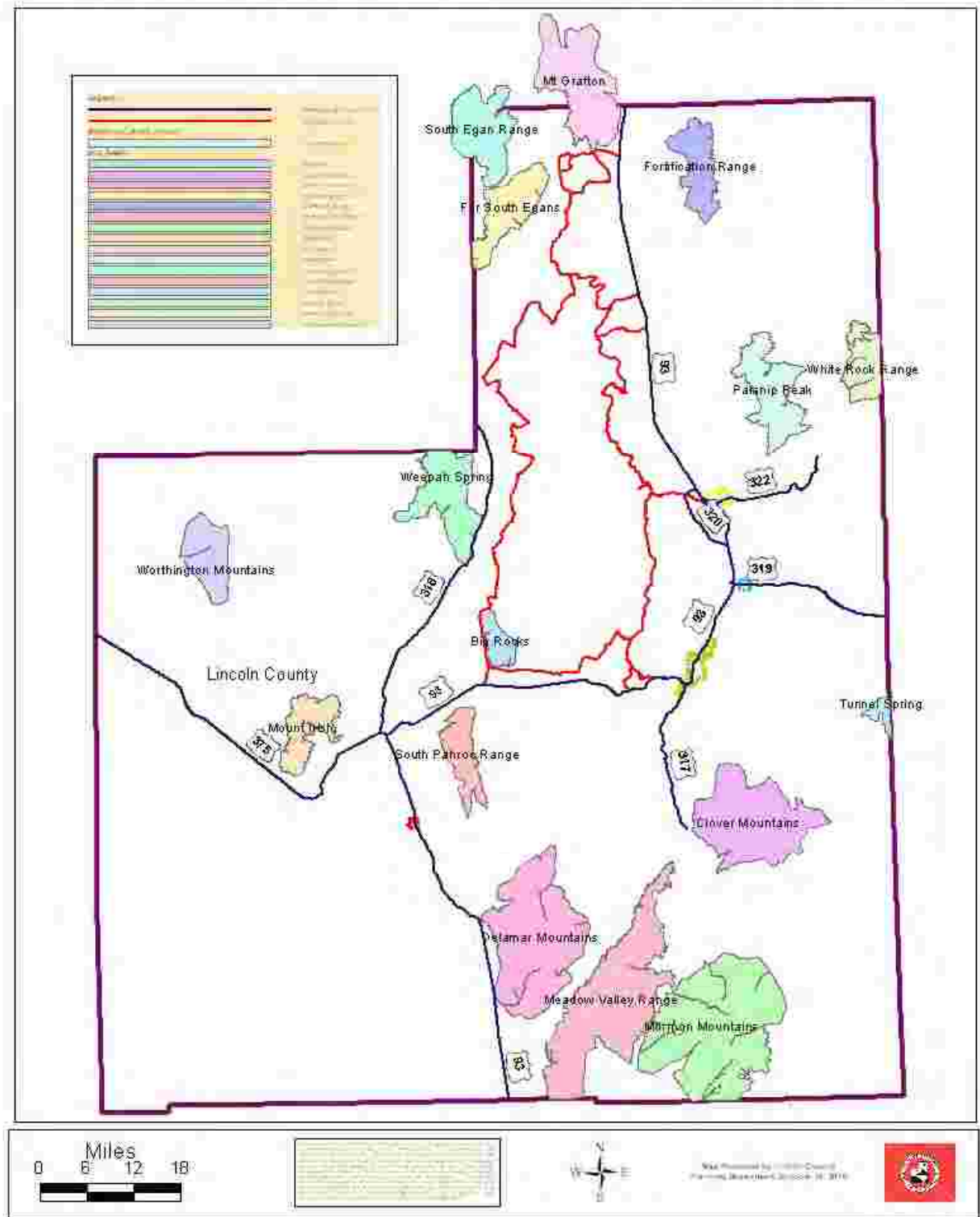
Lincoln County fully embraces the multiple use concept of public land management and encourages all land management agencies to maximize public usage of lands while still addressing environmental concerns. Open space and recreational opportunities are critical to Lincoln County’s economic, historical and cultural identity. Some prominent recreational resource areas include:

- Table Mountain
- White Rock Mountain
- Mount Wilson and the National Mount Wilson Back Country Byway
- Meadow Valley Wash
- The Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge
- Archeological Districts and Sites
- State Parks
- Wilderness Areas
- The Silver State Trail and Chief Mountain OHV Area



*Southeast portion of Table Mountain*

# FIGURE 7 - RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



## **FISCAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

Lincoln County has recently implemented work on a fiscal impact study that examines the county's cost of doing business against the funds derived from available revenues such as property and sales tax. This analysis indicated fiscal deficits in all land use categories when compared with both operating and capital costs for the county. The County faces these challenges based upon its land mass containing such a large percent of Federally managed land and a limited population. This situation leaves the County with a high degree of reliance on State and Federal partners to sustain basic services.

Therefore, the desire to pursue certain types of development and other land uses that would economically benefit the County's position is constantly being examined. A sound and sustainable planning process will have to be followed for future development and conservation of identified and selective public lands that should be maintained.

In addition, it is critical that we continue to support and enhance the economic benefits that are derived from the multiple use of our vast public land that is available. These benefits range from heritage tourism to hunting and also other forms of recreation that attract visitors from other areas.

In order to better understand the implications of land disposals authorized under the LCCRDA legislation, staff identified 10 potential land uses that could result from public land sales into the private sector. Selected land use templates were examined including: residential, commercial and industrial activities which assumed a variety of lot sizes and intensities based on likely land use designations currently found in county code. This analysis considered development types in both urban style development locations such as Toquop and Coyote Springs as well as suburban and rural types found in other parts of the County.

While these studies provided critical information to the County for land use planning on private lands, they also highlight the challenges caused from having an imbalance between public and private lands to such extremes.

Another planning project underway has been the Lincoln County Open Space Plan. With regard to open space, similar challenges face the County and City for covering both operating and capital costs. LCCRDA provided a mechanism for the County to request up to 15,000 acres for parks and open space. Planning staff has been analyzing the options for this provision and future open space identification will proceed as staff, county officials, and the public see appropriate.

The next phase of the fiscal impact study will examine future development conditions which will likely require higher levels of service and improved infrastructure. This plan and the County's fiscal and economic health are inextricably linked due to the juxtaposition of scattered and sparsely populated private lands amid a Federal land reserve.



## **VI. Lincoln County Public Lands Policy Plan- POLICIES**

This section is organized by major public land issue topics and describes Lincoln 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.

### **Policy Section 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).

Title 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 Lincoln County Code Section 9-1-1 outlines findings and procedures for cooperative public lands management with all Federal agencies. This section was adopted pursuant to ordinance 1998-2 on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

The Board of County Commissioners, a political subdivision of the State of Nevada, hereby finds as follows:

- A. The government of the United States of America exercises control over a significant portion of the land and resources within the geographic boundaries of Lincoln County.
- B. Decisions governing public lands in Lincoln County have a direct broadly based impact on the interrelated heritage of cultural, environmental and economic well-being and stability of County residents.
- C. The Congress of the United States has expressed intent, codified in 42 USC Section 4331, to act in cooperation with county governments while using all practicable means to create and maintain conditions on public lands allowing for productive harmony

between man and nature while fulfilling the social, economic, environmental and cultural requirements of present and future generations.

- D. The efforts of Congress seeking to coordinate Federal plans with county government, maintaining a balance between population and resources, and encouraging high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities, as contemplated by 42 USC section 4331(b)(5) can be enhanced by both:
  - 1. Increased cooperation between Lincoln County, State of Nevada and those Federal officials involved with the administration of public lands situated within the County; and
  - 2. Full consideration by the Federal government of the needs of citizens of this County will be directly and indirectly impacted by Federal agency decisions regarding the use of public lands.
- E. There exists a significant need to increase the involvement of Lincoln County in the management of public lands and the development of criteria that are meaningful in any decision making process, as contemplated by 43 CFR sections 1610.3-1(a), 1610.3-1(b), 1620.3-2(a); 36 CFR chapter 11 sections 219.7(a), 219.7(c), 219.7(d), (Ord. 1998-02, 4-6-1998)

### **Formation of the Lincoln County Public Land Users Advisory Committee**

Public land management issues have continued to become more complex requiring consistent review and participation by the County. In the interest of the County and its public land involvement, the Board of Lincoln County Commissioners and the Lincoln County Planning Commission created the Lincoln County Public Land Users Advisory Committee (PLUAC). Working as an advisory committee, the PLUAC will make recommendations to the Lincoln County Planning Commission and Board of Lincoln County Commissioners relating to the following:

- a. Requests for comments on NEPA processes and the County land use process and zoning requests.
- 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 land or resources designations.
- c. General public land use and natural resource issues. In conjunction with the Planning Commission, reviews the goals in the City/County's Land Use Plan(s), reports to the Board of Lincoln County Commissioners and the Caliente City Council on the County's progress in meeting those goals, and makes recommendations for revisions to the Land Use Plan.
- d. At least once every two years, reviews the County's Public Land Use Policy, reports to the Lincoln County Planning Commission and the Board of Lincoln County Commissioners on its recommendations.
- e. The PLUAC is a seven-member board appointed by the Board of Lincoln County Commissioners with an effort to maintain representation of the wide range of public land use interests.

- f. The PLUAC conducts its meetings under the provisions of the Nevada State Open Meeting Law and provides an open forum for public land users, Lincoln County citizens, and representatives of Federal, State, and local public agencies to discuss public land use issues.
- g. 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. The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners and Caliente City Council, support 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 Board of Lincoln County Commissioners and Caliente City Council are active participants in reviewing proposed land transactions and public land policies, they seek status as a cooperating agency in the NEPA processes, and make 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 or Federally managed lands should be brought to the attention of the PLUAC for purposes of review to determine if the Federal or State program is in conformance with this Plan or any land use review or zoning requirements pursuant to NEPA requirements. The PLUAC's role is to recommend to the Board of Lincoln County Commissioners appropriate action concerning such proposals.

**Policy 1-2:** Lincoln County desires early participation 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 Board of Lincoln County Commissioners and the Federal and State land management agencies.

The PLUAC requests the Planning Department be notified by the Federal agencies at the scoping phase or time a plan of development is submitted. Copies of resource studies should be provided to the Planning Department and the PLUAC as soon as available.

Cooperating Agency Status may be requested by Lincoln County on projects deemed significant to County resources or its residents. This request can be initiated by any affected local group to the Board of Lincoln County Commissioners.

**Policy 1-3:** The PLUAC emphasizes consistency between this Plan, the County/City master plans and all Federal land use plans which apply to Lincoln County.

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

**Policy 1-5:** Lincoln County strongly supports the Tri County Working Group now in place as a forum to present priorities for land disposals, agricultural range improvements, transportation planning, grant funding, habitat and wildlife concerns and procedural remedies to improve the cooperation between Federal agencies and Lincoln County. It requests that all meeting minutes and agendas are available from website posting to better inform the public of activities on Federal lands.

**POLICY 1-6:** Lincoln County strongly supports the Nevada Partners in Conservation and Development.

## **Policy Section 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 and enhance our natural resources.

- a. Manage public lands and their various resources so that they are used in the combination which will best meet the present and future needs of the residents of the County.
- b. The use of public lands and some or all of their resources or related services shall allow for periodic adjustments in the use of the lands to conform to changing needs and conditions.
- c. Support collaborative scientific monitoring to establish and achieve proper resource values and rangeland health.
- d. Balance the use of some public lands for less than all of their available resources.
- e. Support 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, cultural, scientific and historic areas.
- f. Pursuant to this plan, "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.
- g. Sustainability in relationship to other resources is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Policy 2-2:** Protect and preserve the quality of the environment, 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 Lincoln County now, and for 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 City and County's Comprehensive Master Plan.

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



### Policy Section 3: Federal Land Transactions

The Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation and Development Act of 2004 designates 90,000 acres of Federal land as suitable for disposal to improve the County's tax base and its fiscal health, foster measured community expansion and promote diverse economic development. There has been approximately 57,000 acres of Federal land identified for disposal through the BLM Ely District Resource Management Plan, (RMP) 2008. This disposal acreage would increase the non-Federal land base of Lincoln County.

Specific parcels will be recommended by the County for release when deemed appropriate. This list will be maintained and updated by the County in coordination with the BLM. Each parcel will need to be further reviewed at the time a specific reality action is proposed.



*Disposal areas such as the Alamo Industrial Park promote positive economic growth.*

Figure 8- Potential Land Disposal

## POTENTIAL LAND DISPOSAL – LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS

Source: BLM Ely District RMP 2008

POTENTIAL LAND DISPOSAL AREAS APPROVED RMP				
Township	Range	Section	Legal Description	Acres
LINCOLN COUNTY POTENTIAL LAND DISPOSAL AREAS				
FEDERAL LAND TRANSACTION FACILITATION ACT LANDS				
None because Lincoln County Conservation Recreation and Development Act supersedes Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act				
3 S	55 E	28	All Public Lands south of Highway 375	799
		29	SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , N $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , S $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	
		30	S $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , All Public Lands south of Highway 375 in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	
4 S	56 E	1	LOTS 1-4, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	854
		2	LOT 4, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	
3 S	56 E	31	All Public Lands south of Highway 375	107
4 S	56 E	6	LOTS 1-5, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	316
6 S	57 E	25	NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	40
3 S	60 E	24	SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , All Public Lands east of Highway 318	330
		25	WN All Public Lands east of Highway 318	
		26	EX All Public Lands east of Highway 318	
4 S	60 E	1	SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$	560
		2	All Public Lands east of Highway 318	
		11	All Public Lands east of Highway 318	
		14	N $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	
6 S	61 E	6	Lots 9 and 10	1,859
		7	NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$	
		29	SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$	
		30	LOTS 3 and 4, EXSW $\frac{1}{4}$	
		31	LOTS 1-4, S $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , EXSW $\frac{1}{4}$ , EXNW $\frac{1}{4}$	
		32	NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	
		33	SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$	
7 S	61 E	4	ALL	2,662
		5	NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	
		6	LOTS 1 and 2, N $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , S $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	
		7	EX	
		8	S $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , S $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	
		9	ALL	
		16	NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$	
		17	SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	
3 S	66 E	23	ALL	3,811
		24	ALL	
		25	ALL	
		26	ALL	
		35	ALL	
		36	ALL	
4 S	66 E	1	LOTS 5-12, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	3,589
		2	ALL	
		11	ALL	
		12	NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$	
		13	NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	
		14	ALL	

-continued-

POTENTIAL LAND DISPOSAL AREAS APPROVED RMP				
Township	Range	Section	Legal Description	Acres
2 S	67 E	11	S½	4,160
		12	ALL	
		13	SE¼, NE¼SW¼, N½	
		14	S½NW¼ SW¼ W½SE¼	
		23	SE¼, SW¼, NW¼, W½NE¼, NE¼NE¼	
		24	S½SW¼, NW¼SW¼	
		25	NW¼NW¼	
		26	NW¼SE¼, SW¼, NW¼, NE¼	
		35	W½SW¼, NW¼, NW¼NE¼	
		36	SE, E½SW¼, SW¼SW¼, E½NW¼, S½NE¼, NW¼NE¼	
3 S	67 E	1	ALL	11,995
		4	ALL	
		9	ALL	
		12	ALL	
		13	ALL	
		16	ALL	
		19	ALL	
		20	ALL	
		21	W½NE¼, NW¼, SW¼, N½SW¼SE¼, NW¼SE¼	
		23	ALL	
		24	ALL	
		28	W½NW¼, S½SW¼, SE¼	
		29	NE¼, NW¼, SW¼, N½SE¼	
		30	ALL	
		31	ALL	
		32	E½NE¼, NW¼, N½SW¼, SW¼SW¼, E½SE¼	
		33	ALL	
		34	ALL	
		35	ALL	
		36	ALL	
4 S	67 E	1	ALL	7,253
		2	ALL	
		3	ALL	
		4	ALL	
		5	LOTS 1, 4, SE¼NE¼, SW¼NW¼, SW¼SW¼, NE¼SE¼, S½SE¼	
		6	ALL	
		7	LOTS 1, 2, 5, 6, NE¼NW¼	
		8	S½SE¼	
		9	N½NE¼, N½NW¼, SW¼, W½NE¼SE¼, SW¼SE¼NE¼SE¼, NW¼SE¼, S½SE¼	
		10	N½NE, E½NW¼, NW¼NW¼, SW¼SW¼SW¼NW¼	
		13	ALL	
		14	ALL	
		15	ALL	
		16	ALL	
		17	NE¼	

-continued-

POTENTIAL LAND DISPOSAL AREAS APPROVED RMP				
Township	Range	Section	Legal Description	Acres
2S	68E	4	E½SE¼	1,716
		6	LOTS 6 and 7, E¼SE¼SE¼SW¼, W¼SW¼SE¼SW¼, NE¼SW¼, W¼SE¼	
		7	W¼N¼	
		9	S¼SE¼, NE¼SE¼, SE¼SW¼, E¼SE¼NE¼, E½NW¼NE¼, NE¼NE¼	
		10	All Public Lands south of Highway 25	
		16	E¼SW¼	
		19	SE¼SE¼	
		20	SE¼NE¼	
		21	SE¼, SW¼, S½NW¼, NE¼	
		4 S	68 E	
18	ALL			
11 S	69 E	36	ALL	640
3 S	70 E	25	SE¼, E¼SW¼, NW¼, NE¼	2,440
		26	N½NE¼	
		35	S½	
		36	NW¼SW¼, S¼SW¼, NE¼NW¼, NE¼	
4 S	70 E	1	LOTS 3 and 4, S½NW¼	480
		2	LOTS 1 4, S½ NW¼, S½NE¼	
3 S	71 E	30	S½	880
		31	SE¼SE¼, N¼SE¼, SW¼SW¼, N¼SW¼, NW¼, NE¼	
2 N	66 E	24	ALL	1,280
		25	ALL	
1 N	67 E	4	ALL	6,326
		5	ALL	
		6	ALL	
		8	All Public Lands within	
		9	ALL	
		10	W¼SW¼, NE¼SW¼, N½	
		11	W½	
		12	N½NW¼SE¼, N¼NE¼SE¼, N¼SW¼NE¼SW¼, NW¼NE¼SW¼, NE¼NE¼SW¼, W¼SW¼, W¼NW¼	
		13	S¼, S¼SW¼NW¼, S¼SE¼NW¼, N¼N¼SE¼NE¼, N¼N¼SW¼NE¼, S¼SW¼NE¼	
		15	N½NW¼	
		16	All Public Lands within	
		17	All Public Lands within	
		20	All Public Lands within NE¼	
		21	All Public Lands within	
		22	SE¼NW¼, SW¼NW¼, NW¼NW¼, SW¼NE¼NW¼, E¼NE¼NW¼, All Public Lands within NW¼SW¼	
		23	All Public Lands within	
		26	All Public Lands within N½	
2 N	67 E	19	LOTS 1-4, E¼SW¼, E¼NW¼, NE¼	2,846
		29	SE¼, SE¼SW¼, N¼SW¼, NW¼, NE¼	
		30	LOTS 3, 4, 6, 7, SE¼SE¼SE¼SW¼, W¼SE¼SE¼SW¼, W¼SE¼SW¼, SW¼NE¼SE¼SW¼, W¼SW¼NE¼SW¼	
		31	ALL	
		32	NE¼, NE¼NW¼, S¼NW¼, SW¼, S¼	
		33	ALL	
4 N	67 E	3	LOTS 12-19, S½NW¼, S½NE¼	409
5 N	67 E	34	SW¼SE¼, N¼SW¼, NW¼, W¼NE¼, NE¼NE¼	400
4 N	69 E	3	LOTS 7,8,9,12	26
		10	LOTS 2,4	
Lincoln County Total				57,039



Lincoln County has a total land base of 6.8 million acres. Federally managed public lands amount to 6.6 million acres and this number represents 97.4 % of the County's total land base. Most of the public lands within and adjacent to the communities are administrated by the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Defense, and various State agencies.

Lincoln 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 prospective land bidders and the citizens of Lincoln County as well.

Lincoln County has identified, and will continue to identify, many parcels for public purposes, economic development, open space, and other applicable designation. The specific land transaction program is to be guided by the following policies:

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

**Policy 3-2:** Public utility and facility sites shall be identified and coordinated for dedication, conveyance or retention prior to land disposals.

**Policy 3-3:** Lincoln County will provide a disclosure of appropriate land uses for disposal prior to sale and provide all bidders/buyers with a Statement identifying allowed land uses, prohibitions on land use changes, access, infrastructure and other master planning requirements for site development.

**Policy 3-4:** Evaluate Federal land disposals for private development utilizing the following criteria:

- A.** Compliance with the zoning designations, land use recommendations in the City/County's Comprehensive Master Plan, priorities for economic and community development identified in the annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy findings of the Lincoln County Fiscal Impact Studies and cost of land use studies 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.
- B.** Adequate assurance of public access to and through disposed lands 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 and it should be of equal value and public benefit.
- C.** Impacts to existing uses including important wildlife habitat, key seasonal grazing rights, mineral resources, municipal watersheds, flood prone areas, identified public visual values, access, and recreational use of the lands.

- D.** Availability, development and feasibility of conveyance systems of water resources to support the proposed use.
- E.** Compliance with any existing community transportation plans or development of plans that are required of proponents of development projects which will alter existing land uses, increase density in an area or require improvements to or modify existing transportation systems.
- F.** Compliance with the policies contained in this Public Lands Policy Plan and the Lincoln County Open Space and Community Lands Plan.

#### **Disposal Phasing, Release and Development Criteria:**

- a. Isolated tracts of public lands or parcels which create management challenges to existing private land users or other agencies.
- b. At the request of local communities, BLM lands within existing municipal service areas of Pioche, Panaca, Caliente, Alamo, Rachel, should be made available for urban expansion and public purposes prior to those lands outside boundaries.
- c. Any public land in-holdings within existing private land should receive a high priority for sale or exchange.
- d. Land exchanges shall be encouraged to make private and public lands more manageable while maximizing or improving existing infrastructure.
- e. Public lands should be transferred directly to the private sector when suitable for and critical to existing agricultural operations.
- f. Land Use and Zoning designations will be frozen for a period of 5 years after disposal recordation date. Any subsequent zone change requests will require master plan and zoning amendments for compliance and public utility and facility infrastructure studies, fiscal implications with the master plan and other County policies.
- g. To ensure for real estate market stability and managed growth, land disposal acreages should not exceed 10% of the existing private land base for that planning area per year. Lincoln County may request socio-economic studies to be completed by the proponent for any exceptions to this policy.
- h. An R&PP priority location list shall be developed soon after this plan's adoption. This will help ensure the proper identification, location, and benefit of potential public sites. These locations will occur both in, and adjacent to, disposal sites.
- i. Disposal tract acreages for private residential and commercial development should be structured so that local residents have a reasonable opportunity to acquire parcels on a competitive basis.
- j. Parcels released should generally range in size from 10 to 160 acres in size. At least 30% of all lands disposed of annually should range in size from 10 to 80 acres in size.

- k. As appropriate, and at the request of adjacent land owners and users, Lincoln County encourages BLM to use preferential bid or direct sale for agricultural producers in regard to lands that present management challenges.
- l. Encourage disposals including direct sale and preferential bid for land disposals based on a Record of Decision following completion of the NEPA processes where the public has had substantial opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project.
- m. When land disposals result in loss of AUMs or range improvements, full compensation or mitigation measures should be required as allowed under the law. Required mitigations should include vegetative manipulations and reseeding of beneficial native and non-native species that will result in no net loss of AUMs through these trades or land transfers.
- n. New disposal developers may be required to fence the perimeter of developments, adhere to appropriate setbacks from non-farm uses and sign and record right to farm disclosure easements; acknowledging traditional farm uses in the area or from non-farm projects that are adjacent to active grazing allotments to avoid urban/citizen/livestock/wild horse negative interactions.
- o. Level of municipal service districts areas should be created by the County and towns to ensure a consistent level of improvements based on geographical areas and proximity or suitability for future development. These districts would range from urban to rural and include improvements such as roadway widths and surfacing types, curb and gutter, streetlights, sidewalks or paths and other public infrastructure needs.
- p. Disposal lands currently served by existing community infrastructure (roads, power, water, sewer and communications) will receive the highest rating for release. Leapfrog development will be discouraged.
- q. A development index will be developed to rank these criteria for release and to determine phases for all disposals.
- r. Land use designations will be developed by the County that support land disposals and R&PP sites.
- s. Public benefit is defined as an activity or action that:
  - i. Improves public health or safety of a community
  - ii. Increases public access for multiple use activities
  - iii. Retains access or locations with an identified benefit
  - iv. Provides a fiscal, social or economic good to a greater population beyond the proximity of the site.
  - v. Is sustainable into the future for several generations.
  - vi. Has the ability to diversify the local economy.
  - vii. Provides education to the public on a current issue or land use.
  - viii. Does not degrade another use or activity with a public benefit.

**Policy 3-5: Rights-of-Way:** Support designation of corridors for the future transmission of energy, communications, and transportation when they are planned for and in harmony and will not preclude other multiple uses on Federally administered lands in accordance with the NEPA processes.

**Policy 3-6: 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 and receive priority for processing.

- 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 governments' ability to provide mandated public services.
- B.** Requests for R&PP application processing should receive preference to disposal for private development.
- C.** Preference should be given for land sales and exchanges that consolidate high value public purposes.
- D.** Lands located within areas identified as "suitable for disposal" should receive priority for Federal review and be able to utilize Federal funds through LCRRDA or other Federal revenues to cover certain costs associated with Federal permitting and studies.
- E.** Lincoln County should support R&PP requests by other local and State agencies to provide for other public services not served by the County but vital to the local economy and quality of life.

**Policy 3-7: Special Designated Lands** (e.g. national recreation areas, national conservation areas, cooperative management and protection areas, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, State parks, State wildlife management areas, etc.)

- A.** Support potential specially designated lands within Lincoln County which have local socio-economic benefits to citizens and consolidate high value public purpose lands.
- B.** Multiple interest representation shall apply in proposed designations. Grazing interests, property owners, sportsmen, conservation interests, local government, State agency, State wildlife, and Federal agencies (among others) shall have the opportunity to contribute to the designation, identification, development and implementation of the applicable designated lands.
- C.** Management planning and implementation of designated areas shall include all multiple interests listed above.

**Policy 3-8** 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 Lincoln 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 review and input prior to any such mineral eState actions by Federal agency.
- D.** Support limited use of the mineral withdrawal process to protect fragile special lands.

**Policy 3-9:** Acquisition or exchanges of Private Land for Public Purposes: Recognize that the acquisition of some private lands for certain special public purposes is a benefit to residents. Recommendations for acquisition or exchange of private land for public purposes shall ensure:

- A.** All transactions must involve a "willing seller".
- B.** Private land should not be acquired or exchanged unless it includes broad fiscal, social and economic benefits to the citizens of Lincoln County. Such acquisition should be very limited and be able to clearly demonstrate public benefit or need.
- C.** Environmental, recreation, and cultural values are protected.
- D.** Private property interests are protected.
- E.** Socio-economic impacts are duly considered and the local economy and fiscal health is not negatively impacted.
- F.** Due process is guaranteed to all private parties involved in land use controversies by means that do not demand or create a financial hardship.
- G.** Acquisition may be considered to include conservation easements by a willing party.
- H.** Community values and identified sites such as those in the Open Space and Community Lands Plan are considered.

## **Policy Section 4: Agriculture and Livestock Production**

Agricultural production is necessary to help maintain the historical, cultural and economic viability of Lincoln County. There is a strong relationship between the continued availability of public lands for agricultural and the vitality of the communities and traditions of the County. Agricultural lands require few public services but offer many direct and indirect fiscal and economic benefits to Lincoln County.

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

**Policy 4-2:** The pursuit and production of renewable agricultural resources are consistent with the long term heritage of Lincoln County. This private industry benefits Lincoln 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 consistent with the BLM Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council's Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. Lincoln County supports the periodic updating of the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook to help establish proper levels of grazing. Lincoln County supports accountability between BLM and Lincoln County Commission to assure these management practices are carried out in a timely and professional manner.

**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 all science-based relevant studies, as described in the current Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook. Changes to these standards should involve pre-planning collaborative consultation with the permittee and Lincoln County Commission.

**Policy 4-6:** Encourage agencies managing public lands to coordinate directly with the N-4 Grazing Board and the Lincoln County Conservation District on all matters affecting livestock grazing on public lands and interface lands between public and private lands within Lincoln 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.

**Policy 4-8:** Preference should be given to direct sale in regard to inadvertent agricultural trespasses on public lands.

## **Policy Section 5: Forestry**

Forest and forestry production in Lincoln County is a benefit to the livelihood and well being of its citizens. Many residents rely on pinyon and juniper to heat their homes, pine nuts are harvested both for sale and personal use, fence posts are cut from forests and others use forest products for a variety of arts and crafts. Therefore, it is the policy of Lincoln County to utilize forest resources and promote their development into a sustainable forestry products industry by providing economic opportunity, relying on self-determination and open market conditions.

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

**Policy 5-2:** Support prompt timber salvage and re-vegetation with beneficial native and non-native species of forage after forest loss due to fire, insect infestation or other events.

**Policy 5-3:** Lincoln County should pursue the implementation and siting of a biomass energy production center in Lincoln County. The County should utilize university range scientists and Agricultural Research Service to monitor the renewable and sustainable health of our forests. These efforts would improve the forest health, establish beneficial plants, rejuvenate springs, improve habitat for sage grouse, help control erosion, and establish a systematic treatment of the PJ overstory. Lesser densities of trees reduce competition for available water and other resources. The treated pinyon and juniper tree product could be used to make electric energy, pellets, particle board, and certain beneficial chemicals used in manufacturing.

**Policy 5-4:** 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 with little to no shrub or herbaceous understory. Promote sustainable management and protection of aspen, ponderosa pine, white fir and limber pine forests. Recognize that although these upper elevation forest communities are only a small portion of Lincoln County's extensive forest lands, they are a very important forest type.

**Policy 5-5:** Urge Federal agencies to promote and facilitate treatment of wildland/urban interface and the treatment of the monocultures such as pinion and juniper forests, and the removal of tamarisk on public lands. Emphasis in regard to these areas should be the reclamation of beneficial plant communities which also enhances the watershed, wildlife, fire, and grazing. This should be done in such a manner that local entities have an opportunity to derive economic benefits from the forest. Local officials and entities should be consulted for their input prior to any such treatments in cooperation with Federal agencies.

**Policy 5-6:** Recognize the importance of maintaining healthy aspen communities and encourage demonstrated restoration activities that will retain and improve the vigor of these plant communities.

**Policy 5-7:** Lincoln County should promote the economic development of alternative forestry products such as Christmas trees, seed collection, nursery crops and other native plants to utilize area forest resources.

**Policy 5-8:** Lincoln County will work cooperatively with Federal agencies in investigating and prosecuting thefts of forest products.

**Policy 5-9:** Support burned area emergency stabilization, rehabilitation and restoration projects.

## **Policy Section 6: Wild Horses**

Sightings of wild horses are thrilling and memorable moments for many travelers crossing public lands. An overabundance of horses, however, is detrimental to horse health, ecological resiliency, plant diversity, density, and richness. Because plant communities in Lincoln County did not evolve under horse grazing they are not capable of withstanding constant grazing pressure from horses. This leads to a reduction of palatable species for wildlife and livestock with an increase in non-native invasive species.

**Policy 6-1:** Publicize, provide signage and encourage visitation in the two BLM Herd Management Areas (HMAs) in Lincoln County. (The Silver King HMA and Eagle HMA) This would include interpretive signs and literature explaining the history of horses in North America, how/when they went extinct, how/when they were re-introduced and the changes the ecosystem underwent throughout that time as well as the differences between the naturally evolved prehistoric horses and the domesticated and genetically engineered horses that we see today which will emphasize the need for management.

**Policy 6-2:** Manage wild horses within the HMAs and maintain low Appropriate Management Level (AML) so there can be continued and sustainable multiple uses on the public lands. Adopt innovative strategies to maintain appropriate levels of horses.

**Policy 6-3:** Discourage additional Horse Management Area designations.

**Policy 6-4:** Support wild horse gathers to achieve AML and assist with a sustainable balance of the multiple uses on public lands.

**Policy 6-5:** Support the use of helicopters as an effective, humane, and efficient means to gather wild horses.

**Policy 6-6:** The BLM, US Forest Service, State of Nevada Wild Horse Commission, State of Nevada Department of Agriculture, Department of Wildlife, Lincoln County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife, N-4 State Grazing Board, Public Land Users Advisory Commission and Board of Lincoln County Commissioners should all work cooperatively on wild horse management issues.

AML should be set at reasonable limits based on sound science and adaptive management as determined through public involvement through coordinating agencies such as the BLM Mojave Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council, the Lincoln Coordinated Resource Advisory Council, the Nevada Wild Horse Commission, N-4 State Grazing Board, and Board of Lincoln County Commissioners.

**Policy 6-7:** High priority should be placed on education. Educating Congress and the general public on wild horses and their management is the first step in attaining a sustainable balance on our multiple use public lands. Monitor, encourage and participate in the development of legislation to allow greater flexibility for their management and adoption. Increase the role of the Farm Bureau in modifying Federal policy for Wild Horses.

## **Policy Section 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 Lincoln County. At one time, Lincoln County was the State's leading producer of lead and zinc, and has produced vast quantities of gold, silver, perlite, clay, gypsum, tungsten, manganese, fluorspar, and other metals. Sand, gravel, decorative rock, and other industrial minerals are produced daily.



**Policy 7-1:** Encourage the development and production of Lincoln County's mineral resources while recognizing the need to conserve other environmental resources and multiple uses of the public land.

**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.

Support the continuation of the 1872 Mining Law. If changes are made to the Mining Law there should be direct local benefit to assist the County and locally based State and Federal agencies in furthering the development of this resource.

**Policy 7-3:** Mineral operations should be consistent with State and Federal regulations and the multiple use of public lands. Lincoln County Code requires a conditional use permit for all new and expanded mining activities throughout the County. The County requests the assistance of Federal agencies in notifying the County to coordinate and share expertise for these situations. Plans of Construction and Operation will require review by the Lincoln County Planning Commission and/or PLUAC and Lincoln County Commission if applicable. 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 State and Federal regulations. Specific reclamation standards should be developed for each property rather than using broad based universal standards. Private properties (e.g. 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 Lincoln 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, Brownfield redevelopment 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:** Support the securing of abandoned mine areas throughout Lincoln County. Coordination should be maintained between the PLUAC, State Division of Minerals, and The BLM.

**Policy 7-9:** 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.

## Policy Section 8: Wilderness

The benefits of designating wilderness areas include protecting the scenic, recreational and ecological values of the land. Lincoln County recognizes the importance of providing some areas where non-motorized users can experience and enjoy lands containing wilderness characteristics.

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

- Direct income from recreational use and tourism.
- Passive value by passing its legacy on to future generations.
- "Ecosystem benefits" such as providing clean air we breathe and the water we drink.
- Locations for research and evaluation of ecosystems and climate.
- Grazing and other multiple use resource benefits.

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 Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation and Development Act of 2004 (PL 108-424) created additional wilderness in the County and released other "study" area to multiple use. The following table illustrates the wilderness acreage of the 16 wilderness areas, either completely or partially, located in Lincoln County.



*Bull elk in the White Rock Wildernes*

**Figure 9 – Wilderness Lands****WILDERNESS AREAS IN LINCOLN COUNTY**

<b><u>Wilderness Area</u></b>	<b><u>Acres</u></b>
Big Rocks	12,997
Clover Mountains	85,784
Delamar Mountains	111,328
Far South Egans	36,384*
Fortification Range	30,656
Meadow Valley Range	123,488*
Mormon Mountains	157,938*
Mount Grafton	78,743*
Mount Irish	28,334
Parsnip Peak	43,693
South Egan Range	67,214*
South Pahroc Range	25,800
Tunnel Spring	5,371
Weepah Spring	51,480
White Rock Range	24,413
<u>Worthington Mountains</u>	<u>30,664</u>
Total Acreage	914,287

\*Denotes wilderness areas with boundary shared by other counties  
See Figure 7-Recreational Opportunities Map for locations

**Policy 8-1:** Wilderness in appropriate areas is supported for its many benefits by Lincoln County.

**Policy 8-2:** Lincoln County supports existing designation and proper management of existing wilderness areas in the County and their visitation to the maximum extent possible.

**Policy 8-3:** Existing wilderness should be managed to protect Lincoln County's important natural resources, its clean water and air, its scenic and recreational values, its customs and culture, 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, in early consultation with the Board of Lincoln County Commissioners. Unnecessary roads would be those which duplicate and parallel existing routes, roads not maintained by either the County or the public agency and roads which contribute to public safety problems.

**Policy 8-5:** In many cases, the designation of wilderness limits use and effective management of public land resources. Lincoln County recognizes that current and sustainable multiple interests exist on potential wilderness areas and shall require a balanced review and inventory of all such interests prior to any designation of new wilderness areas.

**Policy 8-6:** Lincoln County requires final County approval on all aspects of wilderness designations with full congressional consultation during the designation process.

**Policy 8-6:** Management plans for wilderness areas should be actively monitored by Lincoln County for any proposed modifications. The County should consider additional staff and/or funding dedicated to natural resources planning and management, economic development in conjunction with public lands and available natural resources. Existing wilderness areas that allow grazing should continue those activities under proper management.

## **Policy Section 9: Wildlife**

Lincoln County residents support conservation of valuable wildlife resources as well as proactive State and Federal management that focuses on wildlife health and diversity, population, distribution, along with habitat and range protection.

**Policy 9-1:** Wildlife in Lincoln County should be managed and maintained for the long-term benefits of the wildlife resource itself, recreational opportunity, cultural diversity, and local economics. A balanced and scientific approach to wildlife resource management is encouraged on the local, State, and Federal levels. Conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat is supported.

**Policy 9-2:** The Nevada Wildlife Commission and BLM should consider and give high priority to Lincoln County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife (LCABMW) recommendations in their planning land use action activities. Recommendations made by the LCABMW should be seriously considered and actions taken where appropriate.

**Policy 9-3:** Lincoln County endorses the State's programs to provide sustained levels of game animals. The Lincoln County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife (LCABMW), regional Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) specialists, and the Lincoln County Public Land Users Advisory Committee (PLUAC) should maintain an active and constructive dialogue.

**Policy 9-4:** A yearly update by Federal and State agencies should be provided to Lincoln County and the PLUAC to maintain an active and constructive dialogue concerning all wildlife management projects in Lincoln County including but not limited to special status species and potential listings of same.

**Policy 9-5:** Land disposal areas and Federal land permitted for development and/or rights of way, both residential and commercial in nature, which encroach upon habitat of any special status species, should meet Lincoln County Planning Commission approval.

**Policy 9-6:** Because the availability of water is a limiting factor in both wildlife and the free roaming wild horse populations, production, diversity, and distribution, areas of riparian and wetland habitat should be maintained. Wildlife water developments, (guzzlers) should be supported and encouraged in locations that promote habitat balance and wildlife populations while not infringing upon current range improvements.

**Policy 9-7:** Areas in Lincoln County identified by NDOW, the LCABMW, and the PLUAC to be in prime or critical wildlife habitat should be maintained and in certain circumstances, preserved and improved to provide sustainable forage for all animals. Where new uses are proposed for introduction that may impact wildlife of their habitat studies and surveys should be undertaken by State and Federal agencies to ensure these species or their habitats will not be degraded.

**Policy 9-8:** Habitat reclamation and "revegetation" projects to improve wildlife habitat should be supported and encouraged when compatible with other uses. Coordination should be made with BLM resource specialists, N-4 State Grazing Board, Lincoln County Commission, and NDOW planners regarding habitat reclamation, improvement, and management. Such improvement projects should be done in advance of any transplant of game animals. Scientific monitoring of the vegetation improvement projects should be established and resource values established prior to any such transplants to assure the success of the transplant operations. Lincoln County encourages the "revegetation" work to be accomplished in a timely and efficient fashion.

**Policy 9-9:** Support prescribed burns in appropriate areas. Fire rehabilitation and appropriate re-vegetation of beneficial species both native and non-native, in relation to natural fire cycles; contribute to habitat improvement and rejuvenation.

**Policy 9-10:** BLM Wild horse management practices should be modified to address herd management levels in regard to wildlife and livestock habitat degradation within Lincoln County. Areas in which the livestock and wildlife habitat is substantially degraded due to overpopulation of wild horses should be identified and measures taken to address the issue. Recommendations by the LCABMW, the N-4 State Grazing Board and NDOW regarding wild horses should be prepared jointly with appropriate BLM personnel.

**Policy 9-11:** Noxious and invasive weed management should be supported to assist in maintaining healthy wildlife habitat. Coordination with BLM weed specialists and the Tri-County Weed District regarding noxious and invasive weed issues should be maintained.

**Policy 9-12:** Support big game species management through the LCABMW and utilize the County and State management plans for elk, mule deer, antelope, bighorn sheep and mountain lion.

**Policy 9-13:** Support and encourage hunting and fishing as proven conservation practices which enhance Lincoln County's wildlife resources, improve wildlife habitat, provide recreational opportunity, local economic benefit, and cultural diversity.

**Policy 9-14:** Support and encourage local volunteer conservation groups such as the Pioche Rod and Gun Club, Mule Deer Foundation, and the Lincoln County Resource Conservation Group to assist with and contribute to wildlife-related issues.

## Policy Section 10: Public Safety

Lincoln County appreciates the general safety and security of its residents and visitors on public lands.

**Policy 10-1:** Any unfenced rights-of-way along State highways should be fenced to protect the traveling public and to reduce the loss of livestock. This fencing should be constructed and maintained 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:** Lincoln County appreciates the contribution by BLM of equipment and personnel within the County sheriff department to patrol public lands. The County encourages continued cooperation for all law enforcement, search and rescue and fire suppression activities.

**Policy 10-3:** Support cooperative training in areas of public safety such as search and rescue, fire and emergency responses, and hazardous materials. Federal agencies and State agencies should work with the County to ensure adequate personnel, training and equipment to meet the increased demand for back country rescues.

**Policy 10-4:** Lincoln County requests assistance from its Federal partners to improve fire suppression activity and coordination on urban interface areas in conjunction with the Lincoln County Fire District.

Funding, cooperation and technical assistance are required to implement the County's fire district which primarily serves unincorporated rural portions of the County on both public and private lands. The purchase of equipment, assistance with training and logistical support to identifying existing and developing new water sources for fire suppression and development of County fire substations are major challenges to Lincoln County.

**Policy 10-5:** Military Withdrawals of land and air space: Support full evaluation of criteria listed in this Public Lands 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. The County may request mitigation measures to assure public access, multiple use of public lands, and no net loss of grazing AUMs resulting from any such land withdrawal by any Federal or State agency.

**Policy 10-6:** Abandoned mines should be identified and properly fenced and/or secured 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 10-7:** 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 County roads on lands managed by the BLM and US Forest Service should be coordinated between the BLM, US Forest Service, County and the public.

**Policy 10-8:** Lincoln County should be compensated by Federal agencies for any public safety or public health costs to equip for, or respond to, the handling of hazardous waste incidents.

**Policy 10-9:** Proposed large scale commercial and recreational operations on public lands have the potential to increase Lincoln County's law enforcement costs in both short term and long term operations.

Emergency Management, fire suppression, emergency medical services, search and rescue and law enforcement all are services required of Lincoln County on both private and public lands. Specials events, utility corridors, energy production, military operations, grazing operations, professional research, mining and recreation are all activities that could require county services in the event that an individual or party become injured, incapacitated or lost. The County requests reimbursement for certain costs incurred to county resources in the public land review process and with financial resources for County resources expended at local taxpayer expense.

**Policy 10-10:** Lincoln County fully supports the coordinated efforts of the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department, Nevada Highway Patrol, Federal agency law enforcement, and other pertinent entities in the enforcement of illegal drug production and trafficking on public lands.

## **Policy Section 11: Air Quality**

Air quality in Lincoln 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. Good air quality is essential in attracting new residents and businesses. Therefore, it is the policy of Lincoln 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 right applications associated with proposed new projects should require comprehensive monitoring programs to include air quality measurements. Such monitoring should involve Lincoln County officials. If PM-10 levels increase, an immediate reclamation project will be necessary to stabilize the surface of any area 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. Lincoln 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, monitored and maintained by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection to establish local ambient air quality. Results of information developed through this monitoring should be periodically shared with Lincoln County Planning Department and local officials.

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

## **Policy Section 12: Cultural Resources and Native Americans**

The preservation of the County's irreplaceable cultural heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations.

Cultural resources are defined as a definite location of human activity, occupation, or use through scientifically documented field inventory, historical documentation, or oral evidence. This term includes archaeological, historic, or architectural sites, structures, or places with important public and scientific uses, and may include definite locations of traditional cultural or religious importance to specified social and or cultural groups. Cultural resources are concrete, material places and things that are located, classified, ranked, and managed through a system of identifying, protecting, and utilizing for public benefit. These resources may or may not be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Lincoln County recognizes that archaeological resources are an accessible and irreplaceable part of the Nation's, and the County's, heritage. Cultural resources located in Lincoln County represent some of the most pristine resources located in eastern Nevada, and the Great Basin. This is partially due to its relatively low population and the remoteness of some of these resources.

Despite its population and remoteness, Lincoln County recognizes that these resources are being increasingly endangered by both natural and human impacts such as; commercial attractiveness, natural process (e.g. fire and erosion), vandalism, unauthorized use, OHV use, land development, land use, and rural/urban sprawl.

Lincoln County's policies for cultural resources have been developed to create an environment that allows for present and future enjoyment of the resources while at the same time providing these resources the protection needed to ensure their availability to future generations. This can best be accomplished by working with Federal and State agencies to find creative ways to balance the County's needs with the need to protect its cultural resources.

Lincoln County cultural resources include, but are not limited to, those related to the following activities:

**Prehistoric**

Settlement Systems  
Subsistence Systems  
Ethnographic  
Art  
Dance Locations

**Historic**

Ranching  
Mining  
Farming  
Recreation-Heritage Tourism  
Transportation Systems  
Communication Systems

Less tangible resources include:

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

**Policy 12-1:** Assist in ensuring the conservation of cultural resources for future generations according to standards established by Federal law.

**Policy 12-2:** Participate in the project planning process to ensure that the use of public lands is balanced with the protection of cultural resources as required by Federal law.

**Policy 12-3:** Promote and support educational programs for citizen stewardship of cultural resources in a manner that will guarantee the thrill of discovery for present and future generations, and the protection of the resource. This can be done by actively promoting and encouraging the Nevada Site Steward Program, the Lincoln County Chapter of the Nevada Archaeological Association, the Nevada Rock Art Foundation, and other groups associated with preservation of cultural resources in Nevada and the United States.

**Policy 12-4:** Lincoln County should pursue funding for the construction of a Federally approved repository for cultural resources. This facility could be supported by local heritage and community groups, utilized by Federal agencies and receive Federal funding for its operation.

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. Support efforts to develop sources of funding to house artifacts under Federal legal standards.

**Policy 12-5:** Participate in the planning of and work collaboratively with, Federal and State agencies in interpreting (websites, brochures, interpretive panels, kiosks, signs, etc.) the County's cultural heritage resources for public enjoyment and education.

**Policy 12-6:** Recognizing that the County's cultural heritage belongs to all the citizens of the United States, Lincoln County will support Federal and State law enforcement personnel in preventing vandalism and destruction to the County's cultural resources, and prosecuting those who engage in these activities.

**Policy 12-7:** The customs and culture associated with Native American activities in Lincoln County is necessary to the livelihood and well being of American Indians, Lincoln County citizens and the general public. Lincoln County supports Native American activities on public lands. Lincoln County supports direct consultation with native groups where activities or development may have a detrimental effect on cultural resources. County notification of these activities should be improved for future land use actions or planning efforts.

## **Policy Section 13: Recreation, Parks, Trails, and Open Space**

Lincoln County enjoys many natural amenities that attract local residents and visitors. These resources should be protected and developed for the public's multiple use and health benefits. This section is cross-referenced to, and is consistent with, the County Open Space and Community Lands Plan and County Wildland-Urban Interface Emergency Services Plan, as well as the BLM Ely District Resource Management Plan; coordinated with Lincoln County, BLM, US Forest Service, NDF and the UNR Cooperative Extension. Open space is critical to Lincoln County's economic, historical and cultural identity and to the well being of all local residents.

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

Notable recreational activities in Lincoln County on public land include:

- Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) activities, both organized and non-organized
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Trapping
- Camping
- Hiking
- Bird watching and other wildlife viewing
- Heritage Tourism
- Pine nut picking
- Shed Antler Gathering
- “Geocaching”
- “Rock hounding”

**Policy 13-2:** Encourage sustainable recreational use in Lincoln County by increasing marketing efforts that describe the opportunities available. Marketing programs would focus on features such as local State Parks, the Extraterrestrial Highway, Rainbow Canyon, Great Basin Scenic Byway, Mount Wilson Backcountry Byway and the mining history of the County.

**Policy 13-3:** Promote "Landscape based-tourism" and responsible off-highway vehicle (OHV) businesses in the County. The themes of the tours could vary from wildlife viewing, to visiting hot springs, historical sites, or to learn to safely enjoy riding motorcycles and driving four wheel vehicles. OHV users are encouraged to visit and patronize County communities and enjoy the Silver State Trails system in Lincoln County.

**Policy 13-4:** Ensure that all governmental agencies work in a cooperative manner to protect natural, recreational and cultural resources from damage and that all commercial operators obtain proper permits required for activities on public lands from the applicable Federal, State or local government entity.

**Policy 13-5:** Encourage year-round recreational opportunities on public lands as a substantial economic asset to local economies. Adhere to local inventories of public land resources and or public access to these sites, where either disposals may occur or where large developments for utilities, energy or other developments may have a detrimental effect on community resources such as those identified in the County's adopted Open Space and Community Lands Plan.

**Policy 13-6:** Public lands with value for concentrated recreational use (campgrounds, historic sites, wagon trails, etc) should be identified, protected, interpreted and developed in coordination with the Board of Lincoln County Commissioners, as appropriate, for recreational purposes. The BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service should consider withdrawing these key areas from mineral entry on a limited basis. Any proposals for mineral withdrawals or other potentially incompatible proposals should be coordinated with the PLUAC and Lincoln County.

**Policy 13-7:** Recognizing that most Nevadans reside in towns, investments in open space, parks, and recreation facilities should be concentrated as close to resident populations as feasible and appropriate. Locations identified in the County Open Space and Community Lands Plan highlighted 40 minutes as the maximum time most people will travel to a recreational site from their community.

**Policy 13-8:** Protect and promote the Union Pacific Railway corridor as a cultural resource with tourism value in a way that protects private property rights, public land access, the safety, function and purposes of the Union Pacific Railroad.

**Policy 13-9:** Protect water quality and opportunity for recreational fishing at Spring Valley State Park, Echo Canyon State Park, Upper and Lower Pahrangat Lakes, and other important water resources. Recreational uses and facilities are encouraged and should be developed where appropriate. Encourage coordination and collaborative cooperation between the Board of Lincoln County Commissioners, local irrigation districts, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Nevada Division of State Parks, and private water right holders in and near State and Federal facilities in Lincoln County.



**Policy 13-10:** Support hunting and fishing as recreational resources and as a part of multiple use of public lands. Lincoln County endorses the State's programs to provide sustained levels of game animals and Lincoln County's need to be a part of the planning processes that enhance this activity.

**Policy 13-11:** The establishment of new specially designated lands (e.g. national recreation areas, national conservation areas, cooperative management and protection areas, wildlife refuges, State parks, etc.) may be a valuable asset to Lincoln 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 historic events that draw tourists, participants, and visitors to Lincoln County.

**Policy 13-13:** The County understands that unstructured play time outdoors in nature is important for the healthy development of children. The County will work collaboratively with Federal and State agencies to ensure that open, green, undeveloped spaces and trails are located near communities and accessible for children and families to freely recreate.

**Policy 13-14:** A recreational opportunities inventory developed for the County Open Space and Community Lands Plan will be utilized to identify sites on public lands deserving conservation measures or mitigation by development proponents. Attention will be focused upon conflicting public land uses and consideration for appropriate land uses approved by the Board of County Commissioners and Caliente City Council.

**Policy 13-15:** Special events and large gatherings held on public lands that are properly permitted, managed and organized have the potential for economic benefit to Lincoln County. These activities also have the potential to create impacts on the resources of Lincoln County finances and staffing. Title 4 of the Lincoln County Code outlines a permitting process for special events. The County may require mitigation measures to address the following issues related to such events:

- A.** Public safety and law enforcement
- B.** Public health and sanitation
- C.** Fire and ambulance services
- D.** Wildland fire protection
- E.** County road maintenance and repair
- F.** Liability to Lincoln County
- G.** Impacts to existing community services
- H.** Traffic flow and safety
- I.** Communications
- J.** Other public land uses such as grazing and access to public or private lands
- K.** Other impacts to city/county services
- L.** Conflicts from multiple events
- M.** Contractual performance and decommissioning bonding by proponents
- N.** The permitting process should be updated as needed to identify changes in trends and event patterns as they occur.

## Policy Section 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 Lincoln County Water Plan.

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

**Policy 14-2:** Special consideration should be given to wetlands, riparian habitat, and waters due to their limited existence. These resources and surrounding lands should be managed and protected in a responsible and balanced manner with other resources when considering land disposals, development or other activities on public lands.

**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 and by developing a Wellhead Protection ordinance in consultation with community water providers. Lands identified for disposal within wellhead areas should be conserved through the R&PP process or direct disposal to the County to protect community water resources.

## Policy Section 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 catastrophic wild fires that affect the economic and environmental well-being of the County.

**Policy 15-1:** The recommendations contained in the current Lincoln County Urban-Wildland Interface Regulation Review and the current Lincoln County Wildland-Urban Interface Handbook should be implemented as soon as possible. Hazardous fuels treatment should be promoted strongly and be the responsibility of Federal, State and local agencies, as well as the private property owner.

**Policy 15-2:** Maintain local coordination between BLM, U.S. Forest Service, Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF), Emergency Management and local volunteer fire departments to increase the effectiveness of fire suppression. Encourage the development of mutual aid agreements between the local fire departments, Emergency Management, NDF and the Federal agencies.

**Policy 15-3:** Federal agencies should continue the policy of contracting with Lincoln County residents for privately owned equipment suitable for fire suppression and fuels reduction. Encourage the practice of early season inspections and sign-ups well before the fire season.

**Policy 15-4:** There may be situations where livestock grazing may be effective in helping to reduce hazardous fuels (fire danger), in the form of invasive plant species (e.g. *Bromus tectorum*), without resulting in environmental damage. Therefore, encourage Federal agencies to use livestock to reduce such hazardous fuels during opportune times. Under such circumstances, active AUMs should not be negatively affected.

Support the use of livestock, where deemed appropriate and with agency and grazing operator approval, to control established areas of noxious weeds, promote eradication, and help prevent spread. Cattle, sheep and goats should be used, wherever practical and appropriate, to achieve such goals.

The aforementioned use of livestock as a management tool should be prioritized and facilitated by the appropriate Federal agencies with all interested parties working collaboratively in making policy changes, in a timely manner, to achieve intended goals.

**Policy 15-5:** The use of green stripping is encouraged only if the treated areas are seeded with fire-resistant native and non-native species and maintained.

**Policy 15-6:** Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) should utilize the appropriate combination of mechanical and chemical abatements on highway rights-of-way at a frequency that will not increase weed infestations resulting in increased potential for the spread of fires onto adjacent public and private lands.

**Policy 15-7:** All fire equipment should be cleaned to assure it is “weed-free” to be consistent with the ELY RMP and/or consistent with the County’s weed management plan.

**Policy 15-8:** Encourage the Federal agencies to develop and implement fire management plans to incorporate forest treatment, fire use areas, prescribed burns and reseeding to restore natural functioning and reduce the impact of invasive species.

**Policy 15-9:** Lincoln County should develop fire safety development standards in conjunction with local fire safe councils and fire departments to improve urban interface fire risks. These standards will include both educational and regulatory measures to ensure new development in fire prone areas effectively mitigate future fire risk. These standards shall be based on adopted county codes such as National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) or other applicable codes.

**Policy 15-10:** The County and Federal agencies should contribute expertise, funding and commitment to the creation, operation and funding of local Fire Safe Councils to protect private property and prevent the spread of fire events from private to public lands.

## Policy Section 16: Noxious Weeds and Invasive Species

Invasive weeds in Lincoln County are currently displacing diverse native plant communities and greatly impacting Nevada's natural and economic resources. That threat to the biological diversity which makes the surrounding ecosystem function will expand rapidly unless kept in check by constant vigilance and work to control them whenever they are found. Negative impacts due to noxious weeds include loss of wildlife and fisheries' habitat, accelerated erosion, decreased water quality and quantity, degraded recreation opportunities, deadly effects to some animals and humans, reduced forage production for agricultural producers, and disruption of productive ecosystems.

The scope of the invasive weed infestation throughout Lincoln County is currently sizeable, with 13 identified noxious species plus numerous other invasive weeds. In addition to the species already within the County, there are several aggressive weed species, such as Dyer's woad and Malta star thistle, which are located in adjacent counties, mainly Clark, Washington, and Iron Counties. Many species require multiple years of treatment and monitoring to eliminate and a combination of resources is a necessity for successful weed management. Due to the range of management and ownership of public and private lands, an integrated comprehensive approach to cooperative invasive weed management across all jurisdictional boundaries is essential.

**Policy 16-1:** Prevent the introduction and spread of noxious and invasive weeds. Control or eradicate existing populations using the most economical and effective control methods.

**Policy 16-2:** Implement an integrated management system that addresses all applicable methods including but not limited to prevention, education, biological, cultural, mechanical and chemical methods.

**Policy 16-3:** The Federal agencies should give a priority to working cooperatively with the Tri-County Weed Program to control noxious and invasive weeds. The continued spread of invasive weeds is a serious threat to agriculture and wildlife within the County. This threat requires immediate action by Federal, State and local agencies along with private land owners while there is still time to control the spread of these weeds.

**Policy 16-4:** Implement an outreach inclusive approach to integrated cooperative weed management. Provide information and support to private landowners and other public land managers who request help with invasive weed identification and treatment methods. Support the education of off-road vehicle operators about the hazard of transporting weeds from currently infested areas.

**Policy 16-5:** Any large rights-of-way applications or other ground disturbing projects shall include a comprehensive weed treatment program including re-vegetation and monitoring. Efforts shall be made to minimize the footprint of development, access roads and other ground disturbing activities. Best management practices which are described in the BLM Ely District RMP should be strictly adhered to.

**Policy 16-6:** Federal agencies should support the development of local "weed free" hay markets.

**Policy 16-7:** Support the development of cooperative weed management areas.

**Policy 16-8:** Surface disturbing activities in the County should be quickly revegetated with a certified weed-free native and non-native seed mix that is an adapted beneficial species to prevent the establishment of invasive species.

**Policy 16-9:** If weeds increase due to plant community changes as a result of any project, immediate revegetation projects will be necessary to stabilize the surface and revegetate the area with native or adapted beneficial species.

**Policy 16-10:** Support the Nevada Weed Free Forage Certification program. Lincoln County encourages such weed free certification to be more readily available to Lincoln County producers.

**Policy 16-11:** Support the continuation of the Tri County Weed District. Participate as an active partner in the group and serve as a resource to private landowners on weed identification and treatment methods.

**Policy 16-12:** 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 to 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.)

**Policy 16-13:** All new development projects should include a comprehensive revegetation monitoring program that includes the ability to make adjustments to the plans when identified through monitoring.

**Policy 16-14:** Support the use of appropriate media to educate the public as to the positive benefits of noxious and invasive species awareness, such as cleaning methods on vehicles upon exiting recreation or designated areas.

## **Policy Section 17: Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)**

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

The recent BLM Ely District RMP has created three Motorcycle Special Recreation Permit Areas in Lincoln County. All competitive motorcycle races are to be confined to these areas. The RMP also created three Special Recreation Management Areas in Lincoln County. The District is also starting Transportation Planning in the area of Desert Tortoise habitat and eventually will cover the rest of the County. Much of this planning focuses on issues relating to the dramatic increase of OHV use throughout the Ely district.

**Policy 17-1:** Lincoln County will work cooperatively with Federal and State agencies and their educational programs to support OHV user ethical principles such as "Tread Lightly" and "Leave No Trace."



**Policy 17-2:** Proceeds from the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation and Development Act should be made available for recreational and OHV planning on public lands adjacent to lands likely to be impacted by land disposals and private development.

**Policy 17-3:** Encourage the use of OHVs as economic and recreational assets that further enhance Lincoln County's diverse cultural heritage.

**Policy 17-4:** Support organized OHV events that contribute to local economics.

**Policy 17-5:** Support the Lincoln County Special Event permitting process and the BLM Special Recreation permitting process. The Lincoln County Special Event permit requires organized event promoters to secure Lincoln County Commission approval for events. These permitting processes help address issues regarding resource damage, public safety, reimbursement for county services, and liability coverage.

**Policy 17-6:** Encourage and support the development of a Lincoln County OHV Management Plan by using the CRM (Coordinated Resource Management) process encouraging a broad-based local planning group to provide input in determining and prioritizing needs for current and future OHV use and management in Lincoln County.

The OHV Management Plan should be based upon the following:

- A. Incorporates the guidelines set forth by Congress in Title III Lincoln 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 Lincoln County.
- B. Promotes sensible, safe and responsible use of OHVs through registration, education, training, advertising and other means.
- C. 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.
- D. Encourages sufficient resources to be made available to local district offices to publish maps of areas and routes recommended for OHV use.
- E. Provides monitoring and adaptive management of off-highway vehicles in areas where they are allowed.

**Policy 17-7:** Encourage and support the development of policy and regulation that will:

- A. Register off-highway vehicles and make them identifiable in the field.
- B. Provide for the safety of OHV users and non-users.
- C. Prevent the environmental degradation of public lands, air, water, wildlife and vegetation.
- D. Provide for restoration of damaged lands.
- E. Provide for the enforcement of such rules and regulations.
- F. Provide for the recreational enjoyment of both OHV users and non-users.

**Policy 17-8:** Encourage and support administration of money generated through off-highway vehicle registration that will:

- A. Be administered by a balanced and broad-based board with multiple interest representation.
- B. Provide public safety and enforcement.
- C. Provide for rehabilitation of damaged lands and trails.

- D. Provide maintenance for existing trails.
- E. Pay for new trail construction.

## Policy Section 18: Military Operations

Lincoln County provides the United States military with the unique combination of topography and isolation that gives our pilots some of the best possible training experience available. In turn, the military is one of Lincoln County's major employers. Therefore, it is the policy of Lincoln County to promote communication and cooperation among the various governmental entities affected and involved.

**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.

**Policy 18-2:** Lincoln County requests increased planning coordination for military exercises in Lincoln County.

**Policy 18-3:** The Department of Defense shall provide the Board of Lincoln County Commissioners with advance notification whenever they plan military or air operations over public and private land in Lincoln County.

**Policy 18-4:** Lincoln County requests the Department of Defense consult with the County regarding the County's Open Space Program whenever joint benefits will occur or activities may be affected within operational areas.

**Policy 18-5:** Lincoln County requests involvement in the Joint Military Affairs Committee meetings as a forum to resolve or stay current on land use issues of Lincoln County, Department of Energy, or the Department of Defense.

**Policy 18-6:** Lincoln County opposes any further military withdrawals of land and/or restrictions of airspace.

## Policy Section 19: Water Resources

Water is fundamental to Lincoln County's present and future. This plan focuses on activities on public lands that may have an impact or benefit to Lincoln County. Because water resources are a critical element in public land planning, necessary for public or private projects on Federal lands or the disposal of public lands, it will be included in this plan.

**Policy 19-1:** Support the Lincoln County Water District with the responsible and sustainable management of Lincoln County's valuable water resources.

**Policy 19-2:** Promote the intent and policies of the Lincoln County Water Resources Plan, policies, or other ordinances.

**Policy 19-3:** Development projects on public lands will be required to demonstrate to Lincoln County that any sources of water supplied to support projects will not jeopardize community developments, traditional land based activities, and the expansion and diversification of the economy.

**Policy 19-4:** The Lincoln County Water District should demonstrate through its plans that the provisioning of water resources for existing land uses on public lands vital to local interests will be maintained sustainably into the future.

**Policy 19-5:** The Lincoln County Water District should develop clear policies for providing water resources for public land disposals in Lincoln County. These plans should outline their specific role in coordinating with current community water providers and addressing infrastructure needs in basins adjacent to planned disposal areas. District plans should be consistent with master plan policies for new growth and Federal land projects.

**Policy 19-6:** New development on land disposals should connect to existing community water and sewer systems when feasible rather than using individual wells and septic systems. This will enable local entities to increase their user base, ensure long term viability and improve their current systems for both existing and future residents.

**Policy 19-7:** A baseline analysis and inventory of existing water resources should be performed by the Lincoln County Water District that identifies existing water right holders, the types of water permits in place, both agricultural and municipal uses in place or planned within the County and the District's plans for phasing development of water resources in its basins.

## **Policy Section 20: Energy Development**

The development of Lincoln County energy resources and transmission corridors is desirable and necessary to the economy of the State and the County. Lincoln County contains feasible areas for the development of both traditional and renewable energy. Energy production, transmission, and distribution are a component of Lincoln County's economic future and are necessary to support land disposals.

Technological advancements with all forms of energy production are expanding and Lincoln County supports efforts in traditional energy development such as oil, natural gas, coal, nuclear, and others. Likewise, renewable energy development is also supported. Paramount to these types of development is the cumulative impacts both positive and negative to the County.

Lincoln County is also strategically located for the transmission of energy resources from the southwest to the Rocky Mountain States. The County supports such corridors if County Master Plan policies are met and applicants receive appropriate impact review approvals. Major concerns include, but are not limited to, impacts to County maintained roads, viability of or need for community facilities, infrastructure to support such projects, impact to County inventoried community resources, impacts to natural and cultural resources, and costs and coordination identified by Lincoln County Law Enforcement officials.

**Policy 20-1:** The development and coordinated “siting” of renewable, alternative, and traditional energy generation and transmission is encouraged. Coordinated planning is needed to integrate related Federal, State, and local planning documents and processes and expedite the permitting and evaluations needed for project approvals. This planning and coordination should occur at the project scoping phase or other preliminary process.

**Policy 20-2:** Renewable and alternative energy should be a priority and utilized in a manner that compliments other environmental resources and considers cumulative effects in a given area. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure a balance between renewable energy development and the protection of other resources that make the County attractive to residents and visitors.

**Policy 20-3:** Areas that have been identified which contain valuable high concentrations of natural and/or cultural resources within the County by the PLUAC, Lincoln County Planning Department, and Board of Lincoln County Commissioners, should be restricted from commercial energy development. Overlay zones will be created by the County highlighting both recommended energy development areas and those areas containing sensitive community resources.

Areas that have been previously identified include:

- Mount Wilson and the Mount Wilson Back Country Byway area
- Table Mountain
- White Rock Mountain
- The Atlanta Summit Area

**Policy 20-4:** The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners should adopt specific resolutions and in some cases, ordinances which relate to commercial energy development. County approved documents should describe areas desirable and feasible for development as well as those areas which should have certain land use restrictions imposed. These documents should require development standards for improvements that are consistent for both public and private lands but consider proximity to communities and other location factors. Specific standard conditions will be dependent upon scope of project, location, and other related factors.

**Policy 20-5:** The development of corridors for energy transmission and distribution is encouraged. Coordinated planning at the scoping level is needed to integrate related Federal, State, and local planning documents and processes and expedite the obtaining of permits and/or rights-of-way for the corridors.

**Policy 20-6:** Energy projects shall consider impacts to County maintained roadways, public safety, emergency management, and other services. Financial sureties, traffic plans, community impact studies, and other agreements may be required prior to any County approval to mitigate impacts to both County roadways and other fiscal resources.

**Policy 20-7:** Per Lincoln County Code, Title 13, all energy development projects shall be a conditional use in Lincoln County. Special Use Permits and appropriate building permits shall be required for any structures for use and/or occupancy greater than 180 days. This includes all commercial energy development projects.

**Policy 20-8:** Special use permits for energy development projects may require the submission of the following impact review analyses for review by the County; fire safety plans, public facility needs assessments, fiscal impact review, visual impact study, transportation and drainage studies, remediation and restoration plans. Other plans and studies may be required at the discretion of the planning commission in order to mitigate impacts to the County or its communities. For major projects as identified by the planning department, a development agreement between any involved parties may be required.

**Policy 20-9:** Reclamation, Performance, and Decommissioning Bonding will be required for approval of all energy projects to assure adherence to applicable resource protection and mitigation and ensure structure removal after the useful life of the project has ceased.

**Policy 20-10:** Energy generation projects less than 50 KVV may be exempted from County use permits serving domestic uses or commercial/agricultural on site uses.

**Policy 20-11:** Energy development projects shall be sited to minimize impacts to outright permitted and active uses of the primary zone.

**Policy 20-12:** Energy project development shall avoid or mitigate potential detrimental impacts to County- identified natural, visual, cultural, heritage, historic or recreational resource inventories.

**Policy 20-13:** Energy structures should be designed to allow for the co-location of communication equipment for either public or private use.

**Policy 20-14:** The County may require collection of preliminary data of energy resources be submitted for County review as justification for the feasibility of proposed energy generation and any proposed locations.

**Policy 20-15:** Public access to lands within and or in the proximity of energy development projects shall be given a high priority when evaluating proposed energy projects. Traditional recreational, cultural, and other multiple use areas and their access shall not be unduly limited.

**Policy 20-16:** Support local, State and Federal policies that encourage large and small scale operations. Regulatory steps should be simplified so that the economic development of renewable and alternative energy resources is rapid and that permitting processes at all levels are easily understood and predictable.

**Policy 20-17:** The installation of renewable energy generation facilities for public buildings, (e.g. schools, community centers, government offices) is encouraged. The use of public funds, (e.g., USDA, renewable energy grants or bonds) is encouraged to fund the implementation.

**Policy 20-18:** Improvements for both public and private use shall adhere to any adopted County design and development standards.

**Policy 20-19:** Renewable and alternative resources should be a priority and utilized in a manner that compliments other environmental resources. Efforts should be undertaken to



ensure a balance between renewable energy development and the protection of other resources that make the County attractive to residents and visitors.

**Policy 20-20:** Any changes to leasing or revenue sharing agreements on public lands should require a split of 50% of proceeds with local government entities. Lincoln County should have the option of disposal of its 90,000 acres of land from LCCRDA for the purposes of energy development leasing or transmission facilities.

## **Policy Section 21: Transportation and Access**

Lincoln County maintains over 2600 miles of roadways in its current and recognized system. Many of these County maintained roads cross public lands and have been used historically for a variety of uses. County staff has been inventorying roadways which receive Federal gas tax revenues in an effort to better track and prioritize roadway system maintenance and improvements.

The Nevada Department of Transportation, (NDOT) has recently conducted an audit of all County maintained roads classified as "Class C" or better. This audit will provide a snapshot in time of roadway lengths, conditions, and intersections which will be provided to the County in the GIS database for County use. Simultaneously the County has been developing a database to track roadway names, starting and ending points, surface type, jurisdiction, right of way or easement width, emergency routes, width of road and data useful for the County.

Recent interaction between the County and the BLM regarding roadway maintenance practices have led to renewed efforts at prioritizing roads for "rights-of-way" applications, road maintenance agreements or RS 2477 roadways based on applicable environmental concerns, wildlife habitat, cultural issues, classification of roadways, or special hazards, seasonal maintenance or designated evacuation routes. Currently, the County holds approximately 15 rights-of-way on roads crossing BLM managed public lands.

**Policy 21-1:** Lincoln County will develop a formal transportation system inventory and map. This process will coincide with the travel management planning process as required under the 2008 Ely District Resources Management Plan which covers Lincoln County. This inventory will include trails, access ways, unimproved and improved maintained roads, and an appropriate classification system to be developed in conjunction with NDOT and BLM.

**Policy 21-2:** Lincoln County will require developers of community disposal lands to bear the costs of planning and constructing roadways, trails and easements to the specifications of Lincoln County prior to land development. This includes all costs borne by the County for professional reviews by outside consultants selected by the County to advise on public benefits and capital costs and long term operational costs. Notification letters to bidders of public lands provided by the county will outline these costs.

**Policy 21-3:** Transportation corridors shall be designed to improve traffic flow internally within new developments and minimize access encroachments onto State and county roadways. Land uses shall be arranged to reduce trips that access to and from major roadways.

**Policy 21-4:** Land uses shall be designated and arranged to allow for mixed uses and live-work communities to minimize travel.

**Policy 21-5:** Lincoln County shall work in conjunction with agricultural operations to designate routes for ingress/egress from public roadways to minimize traffic conflicts that occur on public or private lands.

**Policy 21-6:** Lincoln County should pursue the Recreational Trail Assistance Program offered by the National Park Service for technical assistance on trail development, pedestrian improvements and heritage planning in all communities.

**Policy 21-7:** Lincoln County should increase signage on rural roads in cooperation with BLM and NDOT to increase public safety on public lands, better inform the public as to passable roadways and to improve tourism and recreational opportunities throughout the County. Lincoln County should secure funding for transportation planning from NDOT to properly plan for an integrated transportation and land use plan for communities.

**Policy 21-8:** Access for grazing operations and protection of any auxiliary systems for stock water storage or conveyance shall be protected and monitored during land use reviews on public and private lands. The burden for mitigation such as fencing, pipeline burial or replacement or other recommended measures will be placed on the project applicant.

**Policy 21-9:** Energy development applicants will design their projects and roadways to minimize impacts on existing public land users with minimal intrusions into established public land uses, resources and access. Mitigation measures will be required when necessary to reduce operational costs for grazing or other permitted uses. The County will require reclamation, performance, and decommissioning bonding for roadways utilized as part of energy development.

**Policy 21-10:** Lincoln County will encourage the development of pedestrian and hiking trails near existing communities or planned land disposals to increase public health, stimulate heritage tourism and promote community awareness. The County requests financial and technical assistance from Federal partners in this endeavor.

**Policy 21-11:** The dedication of rights-of-way and easements to County standards will be required for public travel and utility placement for all land disposals. Construction of actual roadways within designated corridors will consider County levels of service for the subject area and will be based on expected land divisions, traffic levels, topography and build out of areas. Any upsizing of infrastructure will be the burden of Lincoln County or future developers utilizing said infrastructure.

**Policy 21-12:** Lincoln County should pursue funding and technical assistance opportunities from NDOT to develop area transportation plans to address roadway inventory, development standards, current public safety concerns, current transportation systems, future land disposals, classification and management of County roads and to set standards for both rural and community transportation plans required by developers.

**Policy 21-13:** Lincoln County asserts existing RS 2477 rights-of-way across wilderness designated lands at levels of access suitable for wilderness management. These corridors will be mapped by the County to ensure future public access for traditional uses.

Special thanks to members of the Public Land Users Advisory Committee.

Background Photos

<u>Page</u>	<u>Lincoln County Location-Description</u>
Cover	Rosencrans Basin-Table Mountain
2-Table of Contents	Mount Wilson-along the Mount Wilson Back Country Byway
3-Table of Contents	Cobb Creek-White Rock Range
10	Burnt Canyon area-Little Spring Valley
11	Caliente Summit area
14	Delamar Valley
17	Cave Valley
18	Table Mountain, Mule Deer
19	Silver King area, Griswold Cabins
21	Caliente Summit-Silver State OHV Trail, Chief Mtn. South Trailhead
25	Six-Mile Flat and the South Pahroc Range
34	Cave Valley
37	Tikaboo Valley
40	Panaca Summit area, Wild Horses
41	Stampede Gap area
43	Parsnip Peak Wilderness-Mount Wilson Back Country Byway
45	Table Mountain, Sage Grouse
46	Lincoln County Sheriff's Department
48	Rainbow Canyon, petroglyphs
50	Pony Springs
53	The Upper Pahrnagat Lake area
55	The Pines area-Little Spring Valley
57	Caliente Summit-Silver State OHV Trail, Chief Mtn. South Trailhead
58	The Upper Pahrnagat Lake area
60	Delamar Valley
62	Little Spring Valley



# **The Lincoln County Public Lands Policy Plan 2010**