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Expansion of Steptoe Valley Wildlife Management Area boosts recreation and marks a new milestone in State Land ownership

In early spring 2018, the [Nevada Division of State Lands](#) completed the conveyance of 6,281 acres of federal land to nearly double the size of the Steptoe Valley Wildlife Management Area near Ely, Nevada. The land transfer from the Bureau of Land Management to State Lands was made possible by the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation and Development Act of 2006, legislation that State Lands partnered with federal lawmakers on to ensure this important conservation area was included in the bill.

The newly-acquired property expands the Wildlife Management Area's borders on its west and east sides, and increases a shared boundary with the adjacent Cave Lake State Park. Not only does the acquisition represent a boon to Nevada's outdoor enthusiasts, who can now enjoy over 16,800 acres of contiguous State Land for public recreation use, it is also marks an important milestone for Nevada: The State's ownership of land and land interests in Nevada now exceeds more than 300,000 acres.

"The Nevada Division of State Lands is excited to offer expanded access to Nevada's natural wonders in the beautiful Steptoe Valley," said Charlie Donohue, Administrator of the Nevada Division of State Lands. "Situated in a picturesque setting, the Steptoe Valley will provide a unique and memorable outdoor experience for residents, families, and visitors to enjoy for generations to come."

The process to secure the federal land patent gained momentum in 2014. At that time, the BLM sent its survey team to map and legally define the area's new boundaries. State Lands developed environmental documents required under the National Environmental Policy Act and worked with the [Nevada State Historic Preservation Office](#) on an agreement for the protection of the area's cultural resources. Ranchers with grazing leases and other entities with interest in the property were engaged in this transfer process. In March 2018, State Lands received and recorded the land patent, completing the conveyance.

The expanded Steptoe Valley Wildlife Management Area is assigned to and will be managed by the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW). The area is known for its wildlife diversity, bird watching, fishing, and boating opportunities. For those who enjoy birding, up to 30 species of shorebirds, 15 species of hawks, and more than 140 species of songbirds have been recorded in the area. Sage grouse hens and broods are frequently seen in Steptoe Valley's meadows during

the summer. For anglers, Steptoe Creek contains rainbow and brown trout, and boating is popular on Comins Lake.

Getting there

From Ely, take US 93/50 approximately seven miles south to the main entrance. Comins Lake is located just south of the main entrance on the west side of US 93/50. From Las Vegas, take I-15 to US 93 approximately 280 miles north to the main entrance.

For more information on the role Nevada Division of State Lands plays in acquiring, authorizing the use, and disposing of state land, go to: <http://lands.nv.gov/authorizations-and-permitting/state-land-office>