



Elko County
Public Lands Policy Plan
2008

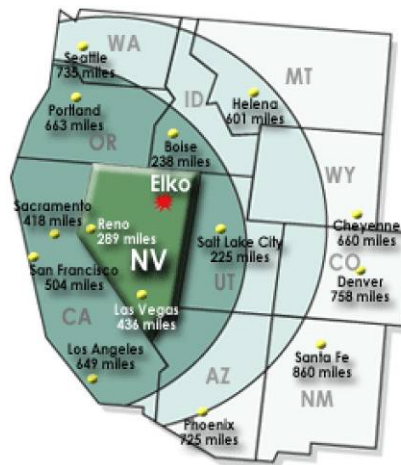


I. PLAN BACKGROUND

Location

Elko County is at a crossroads geographically between Reno, Boise and Salt Lake City. Nearly 45,000 people live in its 17,181 square miles. Elko is the fourth largest county in the lower forty-eight states, as big as five of the New England states plus the District of Columbia. The county enjoys a diversified economy built on mining, ranching and tourism. One of Nevada’s most scenic areas, it offers outdoor enthusiasts opportunities to camp, hike, fish and hunt surrounded by beautiful high desert and mountain vistas. In addition, it has much to offer businesses seeking a central location among the Western states with ample natural resources.

Figure 1 – Location Maps





Pilot Peak

Nevada is a state that is comprised predominately of federally-managed lands. Approximately 86.5% of all lands in the state are under the jurisdiction of federal agencies with the majority percentage under Bureau of Land Management (BLM) jurisdiction. The US Forest Service is secondary, followed by the Department of Defense, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Reclamation. Additional lands are managed by the State of Nevada. This land ownership pattern leaves very few areas under private control for economic development and community expansion. Elko County is no exception to this land use pattern. Since most of the county is under federal management, little private land exists for community expansion.

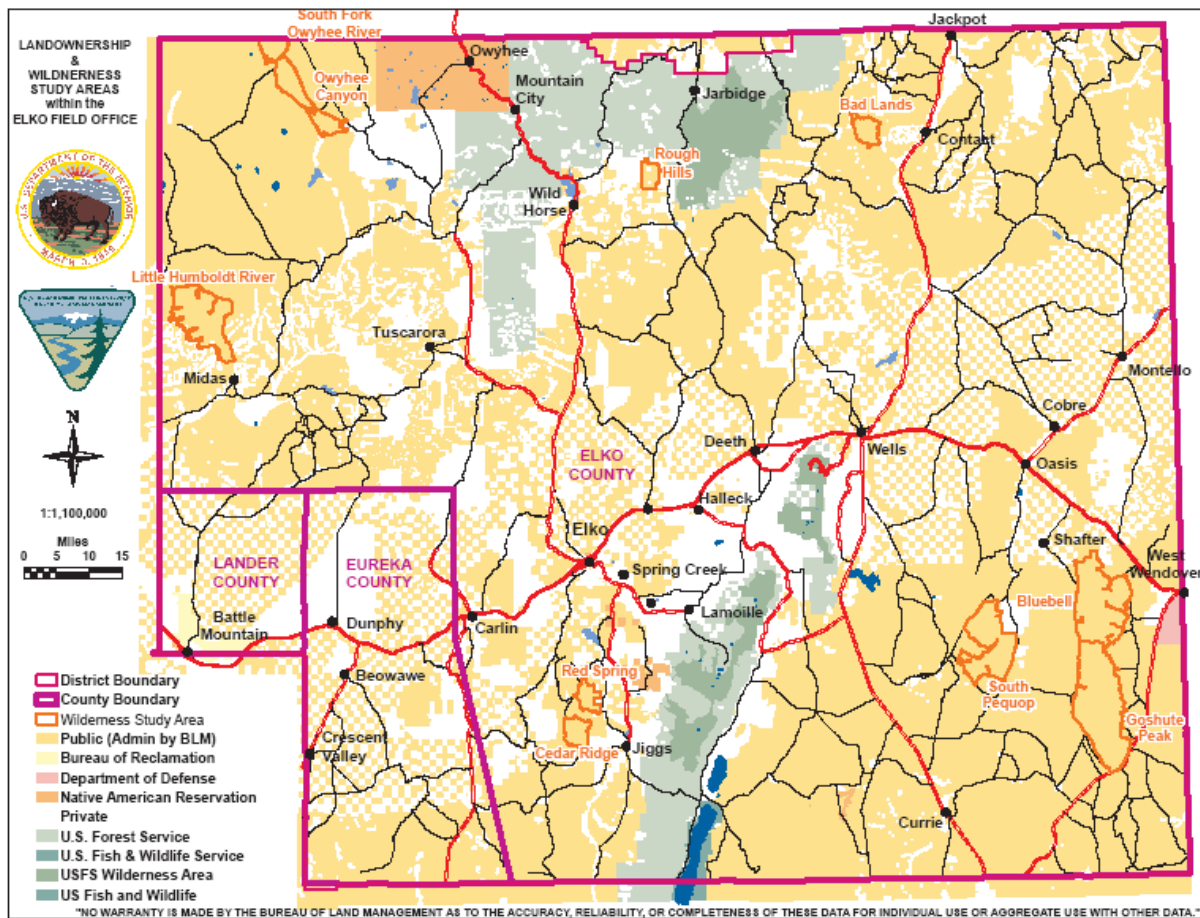
Land Ownership

Of Elko County's 10,995,840 acres, 72.7+/- percent is administered by the federal government. Another 1.5 percent is sovereign tribal lands. The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is administered by the U.S. Forest Service. Most of the remaining lands are administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM Elko District Office along with the Tuscarora and Wells Field Offices administers a majority of public lands in the County while the Twin Falls District, Jarbidge Field Office administers a small portion near Jarbidge. US Forest Service lands in the county include the Ruby, Mountain City and Jarbidge Ranger Districts. The Ruby Valley National Wildlife Refuge is administered by the



US Fish and Wildlife Service. The BLM and the County have identified many federal land parcels needed to meet county or community needs. Additional lands have been identified that would enhance economic development, if made available for purchase by the private sector. Appendix A describes the specific BLM parcels identified by the county for acquisition.

Figure 2 - Elko County Land Status



**Figure 3 - Elko County Land Status Acreage**

Land Area	Acres	Land Area in Percent
Lands Administered by Federal Agencies (1)	7,997,339	72.7
BLM (2)	6,882,161	62.6
Forest Service	1,073,143	9.8
Fish and Wildlife Service	26,872	0.2
Department of Defense	15,163	0.1
Tribal	160,823	1.5
State	15,241	0.1
Local Government/Private	2,822,437	25.7
Total Acres	10,995,840	100.0

Source: BLM 2007, (1) Of this total number Wilderness comprises 206,266 acres and Wilderness Study Areas comprise 268,346 acres. (2) This figure includes lands administered by BLM Twin Falls Idaho District (45,850 acres)

Climate

Elko County's annual precipitation is influenced by elevation and averages 10 inches. March to May is the wettest period with one and one-half inches of precipitation per month. August and September are the driest months, averaging 0.47 inches per month. Temperature, on the average, ranges between 13 and 37 in January to a range from 50 to 91 degrees in July.

Population

Elko County's 2007 total population estimate was 50,434 persons while individual community populations are as follows:

<u>County Population</u>		<u>Population within the Cities of Elko County</u>	
Year	Population		
2007	50,434	Carlin	2,295
2006	44,462	City of Elko	18,427
2005	43,415	Jackpot	1,217
		Montello	165
		Mountain City	129
		Wells	1,508
		West Wendover	4,958

Source: State of Nevada Demographer, 2007 numbers



II. PLAN PURPOSE

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

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

SLUPA, in concert with local governments, developed a public lands policy plan for each of Nevada’s 17 counties as well as a statewide element. The 2008 Plan represents a review of existing and emerging public lands issues that are of importance to Elko County as it works with federal agencies under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and other public processes.

BLM completed two land use plans that cover the Elko District, the 1985 Wells Resource Management plan (RMP) and the 1987 Elko RMP. Since these plans were originally approved, they have been amended for fire, elk and wild horse management. BLM has tentatively scheduled consolidation and revision of the RMPs beginning in 2010. Revision of the Jarbidge RMP for small portions of northern Elko County administered by the Idaho BLM, Twin Falls District is currently underway. The US Forest Service also has Forest Plans in effect for lands they administer.

The purpose of the Plan is to:

- **Detail Elko County’s vision and strong policy voice concerning public lands.**
- **Define Elko County’s public land-related issues and needs.**
- **Provide locally developed land management policies that enable the federal land management agencies to better understand and respond in a positive fashion to the concerns and needs of Elko County in a collaborative process.**



- **Increase the role Elko County has in determining the management of the federal lands.**
- **Provide an opportunity to positively address federal land use management issues directly and thereby offer a proactive alternative rather than an after-the-fact response.**
- **Encourage public comment and involvement.**

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

- The Plan enables the federal land management agencies to better understand and respond to the concerns and needs of Elko County.
- Planning by Nevada's local, state and federal governments, 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 Resource Management Plan (RMP) and proposed federal action for consistency with the Elko County Public Lands Policy Plan and will attempt to make the RMPs and proposed actions compatible with the Plan to the extent that the Secretary of the Interior finds consistent with federal law and the purpose of FLPMA.



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

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

III. PROCESS

The following is a summary of the process followed to adopt the 2008 Plan:

- The PLUAC reviewed existing policies and issues with the assistance of the State Land Use Planning Agency in 2006 and early 2007 during publicly noticed meetings in Elko.
- The Draft Plan was presented at the January 23, 2008 PLUAC meeting in Elko. The PLUAC held an official public review meeting and recommended approval of the Plan.
- The Planning Commission held two public hearings on July 17, 2008 and August 21, 2008 and recommended approval of the Plan to the Elko County Board of Commissioners.
- The Elko County Board of Commissioners held two public hearings on November 5, 2008 and December 10, 2008 and adopted the 2008 Plan.

IV. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It is believed that Native Americans inhabited what is now the Elko County area for 10,000 - 13,000 years prior to the first visits by European trappers and explorers. They lived by hunting, fishing and gathering native plants, including seeds, berries, rose hips and pine nuts. The early Indians trapped fish with willow traps woven out of pliant willow branches, narrow at the neck and widening at the bottom. The first contact with the white man in Nevada was in 1826 when Jedediah Smith made contact with the Shoshone Indians in central Nevada and relayed this information to Meriwether Clark of Lewis and Clark fame.



The first recorded white men in the Elko area were fur trappers led by Peter Skene Ogden in 1827. In 1841, the first of an almost continuous stream of pioneers passed through the county, following the Humboldt River westward along the California Trail. These travelers included the ill-fated Donner Party and later the '49ers. Through the 1850s the wagons creaked painfully along the twisted course of the Humboldt River, their metal rimmed wheels cutting tracks so deep in the rock that in some places they can still be seen today.



The earliest form of scheduled, routine transportation for passengers, freight and mail were the stage lines. As early as 1851, stagecoaches crossed the Humboldt Valley from Salt Lake, Utah to Sacramento, California carrying the mail.

On October 31, 1864, Nevada became the 36th state in the union and that same year the first settlers took up ranching in the Lamoille Valley, which a mere five years later would become part of the newly established Elko County. In 1867, Tuscarora was founded and the first permanent settlers established ranches in Starr Valley and South Fork Valley.



Scottish herders brought bands of sheep into Nevada from California and Oregon in the 1860s. When cattlemen were struggling under the impact of the disastrous Winter of the White Death, the sheepmen invaded! They grazed on the public lands that the cattlemen had come to think of as their own. The cattlemen responded with armed force, but the sheepmen were as tough as the cattlemen, and they stayed! At this

time, to say shepherd was to say Basque. The men from the Pyrenees Mountains in Spain and France had proven their reliability and herding skills. They had become the preferred employees on sheep ranches throughout the west. By late 1869, the city of Elko's population had climbed to 2,000.



No accurate account of the naming of Elko County has come down through the years and the origin of the name remains a matter of speculation. It is rumored that Charles Crocker, of the Central Pacific Railroad, named it Elko because of his passion of wild animals - merely adding an "o" to "elk". Another story has it that a party of Indians watched the surveyors laying out the townsite and when told what they were doing the Indians exclaimed "Elko!", a word of extreme disgust. Whatever the tale, Elko County was created March 5, 1869, with Elko as the county seat.

The Central Pacific Railroad gave birth to the town of Elko, Carlin and Wells in 1868 as it pushed its tracks eastward. That same year the Idaho Central Wagon Road connected Carlin to the mines in Silver City, Idaho. Mountain City was also founded. On new Year's Day in 1869, there were just a few tents among the sagebrush, but two weeks later, hastily laid out plots were selling for \$300 to \$500 each. From that beginning, the town grew rapidly as a freight terminus to supply the mines in the region. On March 5, 1869, the State Legislature created Elko County from part of Lander County and made Elko the county seat.

In May 1869, when the Golden Spike was driven at Promontory Point, Utah, the Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads were finally linked. The Chinese laborers from the Central Pacific's track crew were abandoned. On foot, hundreds headed west and many stayed in Elko. One of their chief occupations during the summer months was the raising of vegetables for the town. Their gardens were mostly on the northern banks of the Humboldt River and were watered by hand. Eventually the Chinese built the first water system in Elko. They built a reservoir and dug a ditch to carry the water from Osino to the reservoir, a distance of 8-10 miles (right through what is now City Park).

A special election was held on June 21, 1869 where Len Wines, J. Pierson and J.H. Lettingwell were elected as the first Commissioners of Elko County. One of their first acts was to commission the building of a courthouse and jail. On January 10, 1870, the Commissioners accepted the completed Elko Courthouse building at a cost of \$22,942.48.

When the state legislature passed a law to create a university, they left the location open to competition between the cities and counties. Elko went the extra mile and donated land to the state, as well as providing \$20,000 to back up their offer. The University of Nevada opened on October 12, 1874, and was open for 11 years. In 1885, Elko continued its commitment to educate by opening the first high school in the state. The University of Nevada was moved to Reno in 1886.



The Jarbidge Gold Boom began in 1908 and lasted until 1935. Jarbidge was officially founded in 1910. December 5, 1916 became infamous as the date of the world's last stagecoach robbery and murder, which took place in Jarbidge Canyon. William Smith founded Wendover in 1917, and the legislature authorized the incorporation of the City of Elko. In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson established the Elko Indian Colony by executive order. It was later relocated in 1931.

1927 saw the first completely automatic hydroelectric system in Nevada, planned and organized by H.H. Cazier at Wells. It was the first rural electrification system. In 1934 construction began on Wildhorse Dam and Reservoir on the Owyhee River. Elko helped usher in Nevada's golden age of entertainment with the appearance of Band Leader Ted Lewis on April 26, 1941. Jackpot was founded in 1956.

Newmont Mining Company opened its extensive gold mining operation near Carlin in 1965, and it still operates today along with Barrick Goldstrike Mines, Queenstake Resources USA and several other mining companies.

Elko County gained a treasure in 1968 with the establishment of the Northeastern Nevada Museum. The world famous Cowboy Poetry Gathering started in Elko in 1985 and continues to draw cowboys and spectators from all over the world each January.

On September 23, 1992 the Elko County Courthouse was placed on the national Register of Historic Places and in 1993, Elko was named one of the 100 Best Small Towns in America. In June of 1998, Elko County sold their county-owned hospital to Province Healthcare, who in 2001 completed a new \$50 million, state-of-the-art hospital and medical center for the region.

The new century saw Great Basin College, established in 1967, adding several four year degree programs, a new technology center and health sciences building, a new electrical technical center and continually expanding their facilities, degrees and services.

Elko County had led the way in many firsts for the State of Nevada, and has produced five Nevada Governors. Strong beliefs and pride in an independent spirit, traditions and guaranteed freedoms keep this county in the forefront of protecting its citizens and natural resources while still working toward a prosperous environment in which to live, work, raise children and retire. Not to mention having some of the most beautiful landscapes in Nevada, from the Ruby Mountains to our desert lands.



V. RECREATION

Public recreational uses in Elko County are primarily state or federally owned or managed properties. The BLM currently manages approximately 25 sites totaling 8,218 acres. The Forest Service currently manages approximately 22 sites totaling 160 acres. The State of Nevada provides approximately 5,000 acres of recreation area in the form of State Recreation Areas, including the South Fork State and Wild Horse Recreation Area. The BLM and USFS also note that use of the developed recreational sites is indicating a decrease in annual use. One of the factors that may be causing the decrease in use is that the public is increasingly utilizing the public lands that are not developed for camping or other uses. This trend is referred to as "Dispersed Recreation", areas that are primarily untouched, hard to access and remote to any type of use. Dispersed recreation can provide in a remote setting the solitude a recreationist desires versus the high density uses of a developed camping area. This has historically been a use that hunters frequenting this area have utilized in the past. These uses are increasingly being monitored by federal land management. The use is not being discouraged, but in the effort to protect sensitive lands as well as all public lands, the land managers are increasingly educating the public in the proper uses and procedures.

Over the past 20 years, Elko County has become increasingly a point of destination due to the diversity of many annual recreational, historical, cultural and ethnic special events and attractions, as well as the continued uses that the county has been nationally recognized for. Historically, recreation was primarily hunting, fishing, equestrian use and camping in our many pristine nature areas. This use has also increased over the last 20 years to include all terrain vehicles, cross-country motorcycle racing, long range highway auto racing, hiking, nature viewing, photography, snow skiing, cross country skiing, boating and numerous other uses. Recreation and tourism are considered a resource which to date has not reached its maximum potential. The Elko County Convention and Visitors' Association (ECVA) Trails Committee is developing several trails systems throughout the County, with the cooperation of BLM, US Forest Service, NDOW, ranchers, miners and other public land users. ATVs, mountain bikes, hikers, wildlife viewers and horseback riders and all others are considered in these trail development plans. Elko County has been designated as one of the top ten areas in the World for snowmobiling by Super Trax International Magazine.

The "Tread Lightly" theme is incorporated into all promotional material and NDOW is consulted in regards to wildlife habitat impacts. Elko County fully embraces the multiple use concept of public land management and encourages federal land management agencies to maximize public usage of lands while still addressing environmental concerns.



Opportunities for water-based recreation such as boating, fishing, water-skiing, swimming (not pools) etc:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Willow Creek Reservoir | Wildhorse Lake |
| Willow Creek | Rock Creek |
| Humboldt River | Ruby Lake |
| Wilson Reservoir | South Fork Lake |
| Angel Lake | Dorsey Reservoir |
| Blue Lake | Bull Run Reservoir |
| Lamoille Creek | Trout Creek |
| Franklin Lake | Owyhee River |
| Jarbidge River | Bruneau River |
| Mary's River | Tabor Creek |



Wildhorse Reservoir



South Fork Recreation Area



Open space and recreational opportunities are critical to Elko County's economic, historical and cultural identity. Some prominent resources include:

Wildhorse State Recreation Area	South Fork State Recreation Area
Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge	Lamoille Canyon
Ruby Mountains	Spruce Mountain OHV Trails
Jarbidge Wilderness	Merritt Mountain OHV Trails

VI. WILDERNESS

There are three Congressionally designated Wilderness areas in Elko County, Jarbidge, East Humboldt and Ruby Mountains. All are managed by the US Forest Service. BLM manages a number of areas recommended for wilderness as Wilderness Study Areas.

Jarbidge Wilderness	113,176 acres
Ruby Mountains Wilderness	93,090 acres
East Humboldt Wilderness	<u>36,900 acres</u>
Total	243,166 acres



Jarbidge Wilderness



Figure 4 – Wilderness Study Areas (acres)

Bad Lands WSA	9,264
Bluebell WSA	54,413
Cedar Ridge WSA	9,457
Goshute Canyon WSA	340
Goshute Peak WSA	70,138
Little Humboldt River WSA	41,193
N. Fk of the Little Humboldt River WSA	85
Owyhee Canyon WSA	21,380
Red Spring WSA	7,523
Rough Hills WSA	6,484
South Fork Owyhee River WSA	7,847
South Pequop WSA	40,222
Total	268,346

VII. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

In 2003, the U.S. Bureau of Census defined a new classification of counties which are designated as "Micropolitan Statistical Areas." To be classified as a Micropolitan Statistical Area, a group of counties must have a community of at least 10,000 to 49,999 people, be distant from a large city, and have proportionately few residents commuting outside the area. The Northeastern Nevada counties of Elko and Eureka comply with these requirements and have been designated as the Elko Micropolitan Statistical Area (S.A.). The Elko Micropolitan S.A. is the primary area of the state's mining industry. During First Quarter 2007, the Elko Micropolitan S.A. employed 5,202 mining employees, which consists of 44.07% of total state of Nevada mining employment. Also for the Elko Micropolitan S.A., the mineral industry accounted for 20.42 percent of total area employment. As for the Gold and Silver Ore Mining Sector in First Quarter 2007, employment was 5,099 employees in the Elko Micropolitan S.A. Elko Micropolitan S.A. made up 58.93 percent of total State of Nevada Gold and Silver Ore Mining Sector employment. As for the Support Activities for Metal Mining Sector employment, the Elko Micropolitan S.A. had 782 employees in First Quarter 2007. This was 74.90 percent of total State of Nevada employment in the Support Activities for Metal Mining Sector employment. This sector's employment data may be somewhat under reported given Eureka County employment in this sector was not disclosed. Using the IMPLAN input-output model database (Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc., 2006), sectoral location quotient values show which sectors are importers, self-sufficient, and exporters. In 2004, there were 146 economic sectors in the Elko Micropolitan S.A. The twenty top sectors made up approximately \$3.0 billion in output, or 82 percent of total the Elko Micropolitan S.A. output in 2004. The Gold, Silver and Other Metal Ore Mining Sector in the Elko Micropolitan S.A. recorded a value of output of \$1.58 billion which was 43.77 percent of total Elko Micropolitan S.A. value of output. This output level ranks the Gold, Silver and Other Metal Ore Mining Sector as the largest of the Elko Micropolitan S.A.'s 146 economic sectors in sectoral value of production. The value of production for the Support Activities for Other Mining Sector in 2004 was \$92.9 million which was 2.57 percent of total Elko Micropolitan S.A. value



of output. This ranked the Support for Other Mining Sector seventh among the Elko Micropolitan S.A.'s economic sectors in value of output. In total the Gold, Silver and Other Metal Ore Mining Sector and the Support Activities for Other Mining Sector, or what will be denoted as the Hard Rock Mining Sector, make up approximately 46 percent of total Elko Micropolitan S.A. economy output. The top twenty employment sectors made up approximately 74 percent of total Elko Micropolitan S.A. employment in 2004. The Gold, Silver and Other Metal Ore Mining Sector in the Elko Micropolitan S.A. in 2004 had 3,958 employees which were 16.17 percent of total Elko Micropolitan S.A. employment. This employment level ranks the Gold, Silver and Other Metal Ore Mining Sector first among the Elko Micropolitan S.A.'s 146 economic sectors as to level of sectoral employment. The employment level for the Support Activities for Other Mining Sector in 2004 was 335 employees which was 1.37 percent of total Elko Micropolitan S.A. value of output. This ranked the Support for Other Mining Sector sixteenth among the Elko Micropolitan S.A.'s economic sectors in employment. In total the Hard Rock Mining Sector, made up approximately 17.5 percent of total Elko Micropolitan S.A. employment.

Figure 5 - Top Twenty Economic Sectors by Values of Output for the Elko Micropolitan S.A., 2004

Sector	Output	%Total Output
Gold, silver and other metal ore mining	\$1,579,415,000	43.77%
Hotels and motels, including casino hotels	\$261,469,000	7.25%
State & Local Education	\$129,264,000	3.58%
Owner-occupied dwellings	\$125,214,000	3.47%
Wholesale trade	\$105,590,000	2.93%
New residential 1-unit structures-all	\$103,855,000	2.88%
Support activities for other mining	\$92,863,000	2.57%
Cattle ranching and farming	\$76,564,000	2.12%
Power generation and supply	\$74,750,000	2.07%
All other crop farming	\$57,992,000	1.61%
Food services and drinking places	\$50,803,000	1.41%
Commercial and institutional buildings	\$42,534,000	1.18%
Offices of physicians, dentists and other health practitioners	\$41,264,000	1.14%
Monetary authorities and depository credit institutions	\$40,488,000	1.12%
Federal Non-Military	\$40,465,000	1.12%
State & Local Non-Education	\$37,093,000	1.03%
Telecommunications	\$31,279,000	0.87%
Food and beverage stores	\$28,185,000	0.78%
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	\$27,811,000	0.77%
Machinery and equipment rental and leasing	\$27,354,000	0.76%
Subtotal for top 20 sectors	\$2,974,252,000	82.43%

Source: Dr. Tom Harris, University of Nevada, Reno IMPLAN Model / Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc. "IMPLAN Pro Data for Elko County and Eureka County, 2004". Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc.: Stillwater, Minnesota, 2006.



Figure 6 - Top Twenty Economic Sectors by Employment for the Elko Micropolitan S.A., 2004.

Sector	Employment	Percentage Total Employment
Gold, silver and other metal ore mining	3,958	16.17%
Hotels and motels, including casino hotels	3,271	13.36%
State & Local Education	2,941	12.02%
Food services and drinking places	1,239	5.06%
New residential 1-unit structures- all	697	2.85%
Wholesale trade	675	2.76%
Cattle ranching and farming	565	2.31%
State & Local Non-Education	480	1.96%
Food and beverage stores	463	1.89%
Employment services	454	1.85%
Private households	445	1.82%
Couriers and messengers	413	1.69%
Offices of physicians, dentists and other health practitioners	406	1.66%
Commercial and institutional buildings	388	1.59%
General merchandise stores	342	1.40%
Support activities for other mining	335	1.37%
Federal Non-Military	327	1.34%
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	298	1.22%
Nonstore retailers	291	1.19%
Hospitals	263	1.07%
Subtotal for top 20 Sectors	18,251	74.56%

Source: Dr. Tom Harris, University of Nevada, Reno IMPLAN Model / Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc. "IMPLAN Pro Data for Elko County and Eureka County, 2004". Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc.: Stillwater, Minnesota, 2006.

The Cattle Ranching and Farming Sector for Elko County in 2003 had a production level of \$53.8 million, hired 482 employees, and paid labor income of \$3.9 million. Given the multiplier impacts, the Cattle Ranching and Farming Sector in Elko County had total economic impacts of \$96.6 million in 2003. This means that beyond the direct economic benefits of \$53.8 million, the indirect and induced impacts of the Cattle Ranching and Farm Sector on the Elko County economy was \$42.8 million. Indirect impacts are the additional expenditures between economic sectors after the initial direct expenditure is made. Induced impacts are the additional expenditures and economic activity attributable to household sector interactions.



Agriculture and livestock production in Elko County is an important activity that helps meet the needs of Nevada citizens. Agriculture is particularly important when mining activity is slowed. Agriculture helps carry the county through these periods of economic downturns. According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture from the National Agricultural Statistics Services, the following is true for Elko County:

Figure 7 - Agriculture and Livestock

	2002	1997	% Change
Number of Farms:	397	436	-9
Total Farm Acres:	2,472,143	2,832,268	-13
Average Farm Size:	6,227 acres	6,496 acres	-4
Irrigated Acres	183,498	201,376	-9
Production Market Value (Total):	\$45,300,000	\$48,900,000	-7
Crops Revenue:	\$1,680,000	\$4,200,000	-60
Livestock Revenue:	\$43,600,000	\$44,700,000	-2
Farm Average:	\$114,113	\$112,195	+2
Government Payments:	\$1,600,000	N/A	N/A
Gov. Payments Avg/Farm:	\$18,173	\$N/A	N/A

Source: 2002 Census of Agriculture, Farm includes ranches.

Figure 8 -Major Crops and Livestock Production

	2002	1997
Forage Crops	130,361 acres	150,500 acres
Cattle and Calves	135,554 head	163,267 head
Sheep	19,627 head	35,615 head

Source: Nevada Agricultural Statistics Service: Nevada Agricultural Statistics 2004

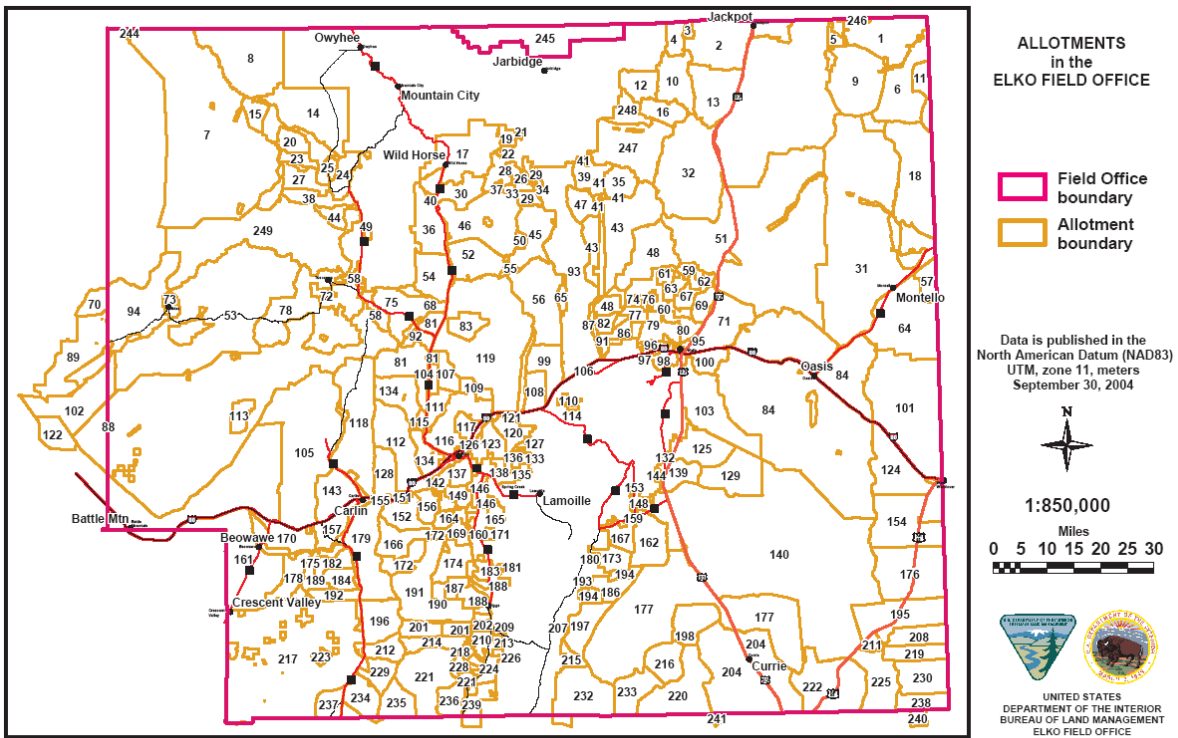
VIII. RANGE AND GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Elko County typifies a true “Cow County” with vast lush grazing lands surrounded by rugged mountains. There are approximately 397 ranches and farms in Elko County. Most are dependent upon federal lands for grazing. There are 135,554 cattle and 19,627



sheep in the county. Elko County ranked first in the State of Nevada for cattle and calves, sheep and lambs and horse production in the 2002 Census of Agriculture. The county also ranked fourth in the nation in number of beef cows tabulated in the 1997 Census of Agriculture. Federal lands are an essential component for most of the county's ranches. Grazing authorized on the federal lands has been reduced over many years for a variety of reasons. Some reasons identified by the federal agencies for the reductions include conflicts with riparian and stream conditions, loss of rangeland productivity, wild horse needs, increases in less desirable species and noxious weeds along with impacts on key wildlife areas such as habitats for threatened and endangered species and other species. Other factors include low market prices, high costs of labor/equipment, and the trend toward purchase of small ranches by large corporations. All of these factors have had some impact on changing the historic ranching trends.

Figure 9 - Allotments



"NO WARRANTY IS MADE BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AS TO THE ACCURACY, RELIABILITY, OR COMPLETENESS OF THESE DATA FOR INDIVIDUAL USE OR AGGREGATE USE WITH OTHER DATA."



1	Big Bend	84	Big Springs	166	Emigrant Springs
2	Jackpot	85	Metropolis Seeding	167	Ruby 5
3	Bear Creek	86	Rabbit Creek	168	LDS
4	Gulley	88	Twenty Five	169	White Flats FFR
5	Barton	89	Jake's Creek	170	Horseshoe
6	Bluff Creek	90	Railroad Field	171	South Fork FFR
7	Owyhee	91	Spratling	172	Dixie Flats
8	YP	92	Fox Springs	173	Ruby 6
9	Little Goose Creek	93	Deeth	174	Crane Springs
10	East Buckhorn	94	Little Humboldt	175	Safford Canyon
11	Grouse Creek	95	City	176	Lead Hills
12	West Buckhorn	96	Hylton	177	Valley Mountain
13	Salmon River	97	Clover Creek FFR	178	Scotts Gulch
14	Indian Creek FFR	98	Smiley	179	Pine Mountain
15	Petan-Owyhee Unit	99	Morgan Hill	180	West Gardner FFR
16	Canyon	100	Moor Summit	181	Wilson FFR
17	Wild Horse Group	101	Pilot	182	Iron Blossom
18	Dairy Valley	102	Eleven Mile Flat	183	Willow
19	Rough Hills	103	Wood Hills	184	Devils Gate FFR
20	VN Pocket Petan	104	Long Field	185	Cottonwood FFR
21	Stone Flat FFR	105	T Lazy S	186	Big Meadows
22	Annie Creek	106	Barger FFR	187	Hansel
23	VN Pocket Allied	107	Dorsey	188	Willow Creek Pockets
24	Line Mountain	108	Halleck FFR	189	Thomas Creek
25	Wilson Mountain	109	Jackstone	190	Sleeman
26	Bruneau River	110	Smiraldo	191	El Jiggs
27	Cornucopia	111	Board Corral FFR	192	Thomas Creek FFR
28	South Four Mile	112	McKinley FFR	193	Bennett Field
29	Rattlesnake Canyon	113	Boulder Field	194	Ruby 7
30	North Four Mile	114	King Seeding	195	White Horse
31	Gamble Individual	115	Adobe	196	Indian Springs
32	Hubbard Vineyard	116	Adobe Hills	197	Ruby 8
33	Stone Flat	117	White Rock	198	North Butte Valley
35	Hot Creek	118	Hadley	199	Merkley-Sunino Sdg.
36	Evans FFR	119	North Fork Group	200	Achurra Sdg.
37	Mason Mountain	120	East Fork	201	Robinson Mountain
38	Andrae	121	East Fork FFR	202	Barnes Seeding
39	Anderson Creek	122	White House	203	Little Porter
40	Steven's	123	Elko Hills	204	Currie
42	Spanish Ranch	124	Leppy Hills	205	Little Porter FFR
43	Stormy	125	Tobar	206	Robinson Mountain FF
44	Mori	126	Burner Basin	207	W & C Ruby #9 FFR
45	Stag Mountain	127	Kennedy Seeding	208	Sugarloaf
46	Beaver Creek	128	Carlin Field	209	Corta FFR
47	Antelope Basin	129	Chase Springs	210	Frost Creek
48	Black Butte	130	Walther	211	West White Horse
49	Bucket Flat	131	Falacio	212	Pony Creek
50	Mexican Field	132	Gordon Creek	213	Corral Canyon
51	HD	133	Sandhill North	214	Robinson Creek
52	Double Mountain	134	Blue Basin	215	Harrison
53	Squaw Valley	135	Bellinger Seeding	216	Odgers
54	Mahala Creek	136	Bottari	217	South Buckhorn
55	Cotant Seeding	137	Four Mile Canyon	218	Twin Creek North
56	Devils Gate	138	Ogilvie-Orbe	219	Ferber Flat
57	JP	139	Snow Water Lake	220	West Cherry Creek
58	Taylor Canyon	140	Spruce	221	Red Rock
59	Dalton	141	Sandhill South	222	Boone Springs
60	Metropolis	142	Bullion Road	223	Potato Patch
61	Antelope	143	Mary's Mountain	224	Lindsay Creek
62	Bishop Flat	144	Warm Creek	225	Antelope Valley
63	Trout Creek	145	Hog Tommy	226	Pearl Creek
64	Pilot Valley	146	Shoshone	227	Twin Creek East
65	Pole Creek	147	Legarza FFR	228	Merkley FFR
66	Six Mile	148	Ruby 3	229	Bruffy
67	Cedar Hill	149	Ten Mile Creek	230	Utah/Nevada South
68	Eagle Rock 1	150	Ruby 1	231	Twin Creek South
69	Town Creek	151	Carlin Canyon FFR	232	Maverick/Ruby #9
70	Tall Corral	152	Tonka	233	Bald Mountain
71	Holborn	153	Ruby 2	234	Mineral Hill
72	Quarter Circle S	154	Utah/Nevada North	235	Union Mountain
73	Midas	155	Old Eighty FFR	236	Browne
74	Mud Springs	156	Grindstone Mountain	237	Pine Creek
75	Eagle Rock	157	Falisade	238	Badlands
76	Antelope Springs FFR	158	Twin Bridges	239	Mitchell Creek
77	Bishop Creek	159	Ruby 4	240	Goshute Mountain
78	Tuscarora	160	South Fork State Park	241	Indian Creek
79	Burnt Creek	161	Geysar	244	Admin by Vale CR
80	Wells	162	Curtis Spring	245	Admin by Boise BLM
81	Lone Mountain	163	Cut Off	246	Cavanaugh (ID)
82	Westside	164	River	247	O'Neil
83	Coal Mine Basin	165	Chimney Creek	248	Cottonwood



IX. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY STATEMENTS

The Plan is a guide developed by the citizens of Elko County regarding the use of federal lands. The Plan addresses federal land use management issues directly by establishing a set of principles or specific guidelines. The Plan is intended to be used as a positive guide for federal land management agencies in their development and implementation of federal plans and management actions. The policies are intended to further agriculture, mining and recreation as principal economic bases of the county. This Plan provides a framework whereby the Elko County Board of County Commissioners can coordinate and influence the implementation of federal policies within the county.

POLICIES

Policy statements have been carried forward from the 1984 SB 40 Plan and the previously updated plans. Additional policy statements have been developed from citizens, industry associations, community groups and Elko County Natural Resource Management Advisory Commission feedback as they relate to changing conditions. Many of the statements are reflective of previous positions taken by the Commissioners in resolutions and cooperative agreements.

1. Agency Coordination and Local Voice

Federal agency coordination of planning with State and local governments is mandated by federal laws.

- FLPMA, Section 102 (a) (2) declares the policy of the United States is that the national interest will be best realized if the public lands and their resources are periodically and systematically inventoried and present and future use is projected through the land use planning process coordinated with other federal and state planning efforts.

Policy 1-1:

All proposed actions on public lands should be brought to the attention of the Elko County Natural Resource Management Advisory Commission, as time allows, or the Elko County Board of County Commissioners (ECBC) for purposes of review to determine if the federal program is in conformance with this Plan pursuant to NEPA requirements. The Elko County Natural Resource Management



Advisory Commission's role is to recommend to the ECBC appropriate action concerning such proposals.

Policy 1-2:

Elko County will participate with federal agencies on actions that affect public lands within the county. The Elko County Natural Resource Management Advisory Commission will serve in an advisory capacity only, and act as liaison to the ECBC. Studies concerning impacts of proposed actions affecting public lands should be conducted by professionals. The Elko County Natural Resource Management Advisory Commission requests the commission and the ECBC be notified by the federal agencies before any studies sponsored by the federal land management agencies are initiated. Copies of resource studies should be provided to the ECBC as soon as available.

Policy 1-3:

The Elko County Natural Resource Management Advisory Commission and ECBC will encourage consistency between this Plan and all federal land use plans which apply to Elko County.

2. Management of Public Lands

Policy 2-1:

Elko County supports the concept of Multiple Use Management as an overriding philosophy for management of the public lands based on multiple use and sustainable yield concepts, and in a way that will conserve natural resources.

Policy 2-2:

Whenever possible, protect and preserve the quality of the environment, and economic, cultural, ecological, scenic, historical and archeological values; protect and preserve wildlife habitat values compatible with economic development needed to provide for long term benefits for the people of Elko County and future generations.

3. Federal Land Transactions

The following are policies developed by Elko County relating to the federal land program. Included in the Appendix is a list of parcels generally identified by the County for local



public purposes, for community expansion and economic development. The list and the map provide a general description of the lands identified for acquisition and are intended to be used as a guide for more detailed studies. Each parcel will need to be further reviewed at the time a specific realty action is proposed.

The lands identified in Appendix A represent the latest efforts by the BLM and County in developing an overall plan for transferring some public lands to the county or private sector. This is an on-going process and changes in the list should be expected as new information or needs develop in the future.

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

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

Policy 3-1: Specially designated lands (i.e. National Recreation Areas, National Conservation Areas, Wildlife Refuges, Wilderness, State parks, etc.) are valuable assets to the State and its residents. Within Elko County, any new specially designated areas should be reviewed carefully in a public forum to determine if they are suitable and beneficial to our residents.

Policy 3-2: Government agencies should not acquire additional private lands without first ensuring:

1. That private land is not disposed of unless it clearly benefits the citizens of Elko County;
2. That environmental and cultural values are protected;
3. That private property interests are protected or enhanced;
4. That socioeconomic impacts are duly considered;
5. That takings in any form are fully compensated and substantiated to meet the highest public need;
6. That the local tax base is not negatively impacted;



7. That due process is guaranteed to all private parties involved in land use controversies, by means that do not demand or create a financial hardship; and
8. That the State and local government within those jurisdictions that the land is located be consulted in regard to the acquisition.

Policy 3-3:

Isolated tracts of public lands, checkerboard areas, and public lands in rural townships where the majority of land is private should be identified for disposal. All public land easements and/or access should be retained for continued public use. The use of alternative access to accommodate land management through property may be employed if feasible and appropriate.

Policy 3-4:

Increase opportunities for local economic development by selectively increasing the amount of privately owned land within the county. Elko County's goal for land exchanges is to maintain a "no net loss" in private, county or state acreage. Although the County supports exchanges that will increase economic development, the County is also concerned about any proposal that will reduce private, county or state ownership unless it is a clear benefit to the County.

1. Public lands within the municipal service areas of Elko, Spring Creek, Carlin, Wells, Jackpot and Wendover should continue to be made available for urban expansion through the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) process. Sale and Exchange Provisions of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) and the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA – BACA Bill) should also be used to transfer lands in an expedited manner. These lands should be transferred only when local governments agree that the transfer is opportune and would not be a burden on local governments.
2. Public lands should be made available as needed for state and local government purposes. Lands identified for public purposes should receive preference to disposal for private purposes.
3. Before public lands are disposed of, adverse impacts on existing uses should be considered. Adverse impacts could include important wildlife habitat, key seasonal grazing rights, municipal watersheds,



flood prone areas, access, mineral potential, oil / natural gas potential, alternative energy potential and recreational use of the lands.

4. Land exchanges and lands sales that consolidate high value public purpose lands and/or make private lands more manageable should be given high priority in federal land transaction processes.
5. Elko County encourages the BLM to review the agency's land sales/exchange procedures to determine ways, including changes in policy and regulations when appropriate, to expedite the sales and exchange process. The existing process can be "cost prohibitive" and time consuming when applied to small isolated land exchanges and sales. All appropriate authorities for land disposal under the BACA Bill should be used for maximum flexibility and for the payment of fees associated with appraisals and other administrative costs to expedite the process.
6. Public access to and through disposed lands should be retained through the recordation of an easement and deed restriction. Whenever public lands are disposed of, existing public access to adjoining or nearby public lands should be retained for recreational and other multiple use needs. The development of alternative routes of access may be necessary, but should be acquired and guaranteed prior to the disposal and loss of any existing access and should be of equal value and public benefit.
7. The public as well as local and state governments should be involved in decisions related to public lands activities. Adequate public notice should be given before the initiation of any federal land transactions.

Policy 3-5:

Public lands should be transferred to the private sector when suitable for intensive agricultural operations through either the Desert Land Act or the sale authority provided by FLPMA and the BACA Bill.

1. Preference should be given to existing land users or adjacent land owners through a direct sale or preferential bid, where possible.



2. The lands made available for irrigated farm land must have adequate water, as determined by the State Engineer.
3. Any public lands fenced in within existing private land, should receive a high priority for sale or exchange.

Policy 3-6: Promote the increased use of, and adherence to, comprehensive planning among all government entities in Nevada.

1. Corridors for the future transmission of energy, communications and transportation need to be planned for in harmony with other multiple uses on federally administrated lands.
2. The County will review all public land withdrawals that include the potential for the transportation, storage, and disposal of all hazardous and toxic refuse or waste materials.

4. Custom and Culture

Elko County recognizes the rich history of cultures and customs that comprises our past and also the newer culture and customs and public land uses that combine to create the present and future. The County is fortunate to have so many expressions of various cultures coming together to form the whole, and is richer for it, and celebrates that richness.

Policy 4-1: Continue to support and aid expressions of culture such as the heritages of ranching and agriculture at the County Fairgrounds, Sherman Station, the Elko County Museum, the California Interpretive Trail Center, the National Basque Festival, the Mining Expo, Western Shoshone Pow-Wows, the Cowboy Poetry Festival and others.

Policy 4-2: Recognize the cultural and economic advantages of modern land uses. Being the wet corner of Nevada allows for excellent game and fish habitat and vast hunting, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, ORVing, Native American seed gatherings and activities, and other dispersed opportunities accessible to the public. Many visitors from around the State and nation come to Elko County to be part of



these activities. Another modern use is the annual hot air balloon festival, which requires only time and continuity to become custom.

5. Community Stability

Three essential factors are related to measuring community stability and well-being:

- societal and cultural values;
- economic viability; and
- environmental integrity

By incorporating these factors at the onset of planning processes, discussions and decisions move toward furthering community stability, and avoid disruptions. The varied nature of these essential considerations underlies community stability and well-being, corresponds to the breadth and diversity of citizen interests, and their values and needs. Incorporating these factors within the public land planning process will establish a basis for coordinating the multiple use interests and needs of Elko County.

Community stability can be affected by national needs and interests, which are frequently outside the control of the local planning processes. Recognition of potential outside needs and interests within the county planning process, can prepare the community to respond with positive data and constructive options.

Elko County is experiencing consistent growth, and increasing demands on public lands for historic production interests and expanding recreational uses. Additionally, Elko County public land base is increasingly valued for open space amenities, such as, wildlife and view shed. Effective coordination of Elko County public land interests requires expert counsel from within the county government, and expanded citizen involvement within the county planning process.

To promote community stability related to public land issues, and to encourage the practical and successful implementation of the Elko County Public Lands Policy Plan, the following is recommended:

Policy 5-1: Incorporate the concepts of community stability measurement factors within the Elko County Public Lands planning process;



Policy 5-2: Initiate the position of Elko County Federal Lands Program Coordinator to provide specific guidance to Elko County's developing public land plan, which will provide the county and its citizens meaningful involvement in the federal land planning process;

Policy 5-3: Generate resource issue topics through a collaborative forum suitable for inclusion in the Bureau of Land Management, Elko District Office, Resource Management Plan (RMP) process which is scheduled for 2010, and the U.S. Forest Service scheduled planning updates;

Policy 5-4: Initiate a comprehensive county planning process to benefit and maximize the issue topics and desired positive outcomes detailed in the Elko County Public Lands Policy Plan.

6. Public Safety

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

Policy 6-1: Any unfenced right-of-ways along State highways should be fenced to protect the traveling public and to reduce the loss of livestock. This fencing should be constructed under a cooperative effort between the BLM, US Forest Service, Nevada Department of Transportation, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Nevada Division of Forestry, private property owners, and the permittees.

Policy 6-2: Elko County appreciates the presence and cooperation of federal law enforcement officers on public lands but is opposed to any increase in BLM law enforcement authority. The County prefers the existing protocol between BLM and other federal law enforcement officers and the Elko County Sheriff. The County recognizes the Elko County Sheriff as the primary law enforcement agency.

Policy 6-3: Support cooperative training in areas of public safety such as search and rescue and hazardous materials. The US Forest Service and BLM should work with the County to ensure adequate personnel, training and equipment are available to meet the increased demand for back country rescues. In the event of future nuclear shipments through Elko County, cooperative training,



funding and preparatory response resources should also be provided by DOE, or other federal agencies, to facilitate readiness and prompt response capabilities to Elko County.

Policy 6-4: Military Withdrawals of Land and Air Space: Support full evaluation of criteria listed in the Public Land Use Policy Plan in regard to any public land and air space withdrawals for military use including those with potential for transportation, storage, and disposal of all hazardous, toxic, or nuclear materials. Careful considerations should be given to approval of any additional Air Space designations due to substantial MOA inventories and impacts associated with the MOA's.

Policy 6-5: Roads on public lands should be maintained for safe passage. Areas of high travel should be made a priority. Where road conditions are dangerous, signs and other public notification should be utilized until the condition can be mitigated. Maintenance of roads should be coordinated between the BLM, US Forest Service, County and the public.

7. Agriculture and Livestock Production

Agricultural production is necessary to help maintain the historical, cultural and economic viability of Elko County. Elko County encourages the federal agency use of the 2006 Elko County Grazing Economic Impact study, or updated studies, in all environmental analysis on livestock grazing related decisions.

Policy 7-1: Preserve agricultural land and promote the continuation of agricultural pursuits, both traditional and non traditional;

Policy 7-2: The pursuit and production of renewable agricultural resources are consistent with the long term heritage of Elko County. This private industry benefits the County economically and culturally;

Policy 7-3: 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 7-4: Grazing should utilize sound adaptive management practices. Elko County supports the periodic updating of the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring



Handbook to help establish proper levels of grazing;

Policy 7-5: Allotment management strategies should be developed that provide incentives to optimize stewardship by the permittee. Flexibility should be given to the permittee to reach condition standards for the range. Monitoring should utilize the use of long-term trend studies as described above;

Policy 7-6: Encourage agencies managing public lands to coordinate with the N-1 Grazing Board on all manners affecting livestock grazing on public lands within the County;

Policy 7-7: 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 7-8: The Congressional Delegation should be encouraged to develop regionally variable grazing fees that are based on the quality and quantity of forage, accessibility and infrastructure.

Policy 7-9: Elko County requests federal agency notification of all actions regarding permit renewals for potential request by Elko County for status as a cooperating agency in such action.

8. Noxious Weeds and Invasive Species

Due to the broad range of management and ownership of public and private lands, an integrated comprehensive approach to cooperative noxious weed management across all jurisdictional boundaries is essential. Negative impacts due to noxious weeds include low resale value of property, loss of wildlife and fisheries' habitat, accelerated erosion, decreased water quality, degraded recreation opportunities, deadly effects to some animals and humans, reduced forage production for agricultural producers, increased cost of consumer goods and disruption of productive ecosystems. The scope of the noxious weed infestation throughout Elko County is currently sizeable, with 19 identified species, and acreage infested growing at an alarming rate. Many species require multiple years of



treatment and monitoring to eliminate and combination of resources is a necessity for successful weed management.

WANTED

(Dead, Not Alive)

SCOTCH THISTLE

(a.k.a. Onopordium acanthifolium)
Last Seen Growing in This Vicinity

Distinguishing Features

- reaches 8 to 10 feet in height
- stems are erect, branching, sharp spiny leaf wings extend down to the stem
- basal leaves may be over 2 feet long and 1 foot wide
- leaves are coarsely lobed, fine, dense hair on both sides, sharp spines on margin
- flowers are violet to reddish, 1 to 2 inches in diameter, solitary and numerous

Crimes Committed:

- choking & the deliberate takeover of native plants
- stealing land, homes, & food from wildlife
- corrupting & invading open lands, roadsides, & recreation areas
- costing a bundle for taxpayers to control
- wreaking havoc & mayhem on innocent, unsuspecting ecosystems

Join the Invasive-Weed Patrol

- help stop the spread of this weedy, seedy, desperado
- report any sightings to local land managers or rangers
- remove all weed seeds from clothing, shoes, pets, camping gear, & tire treads

Reward

Healthy Ecosystems on Your Public Lands

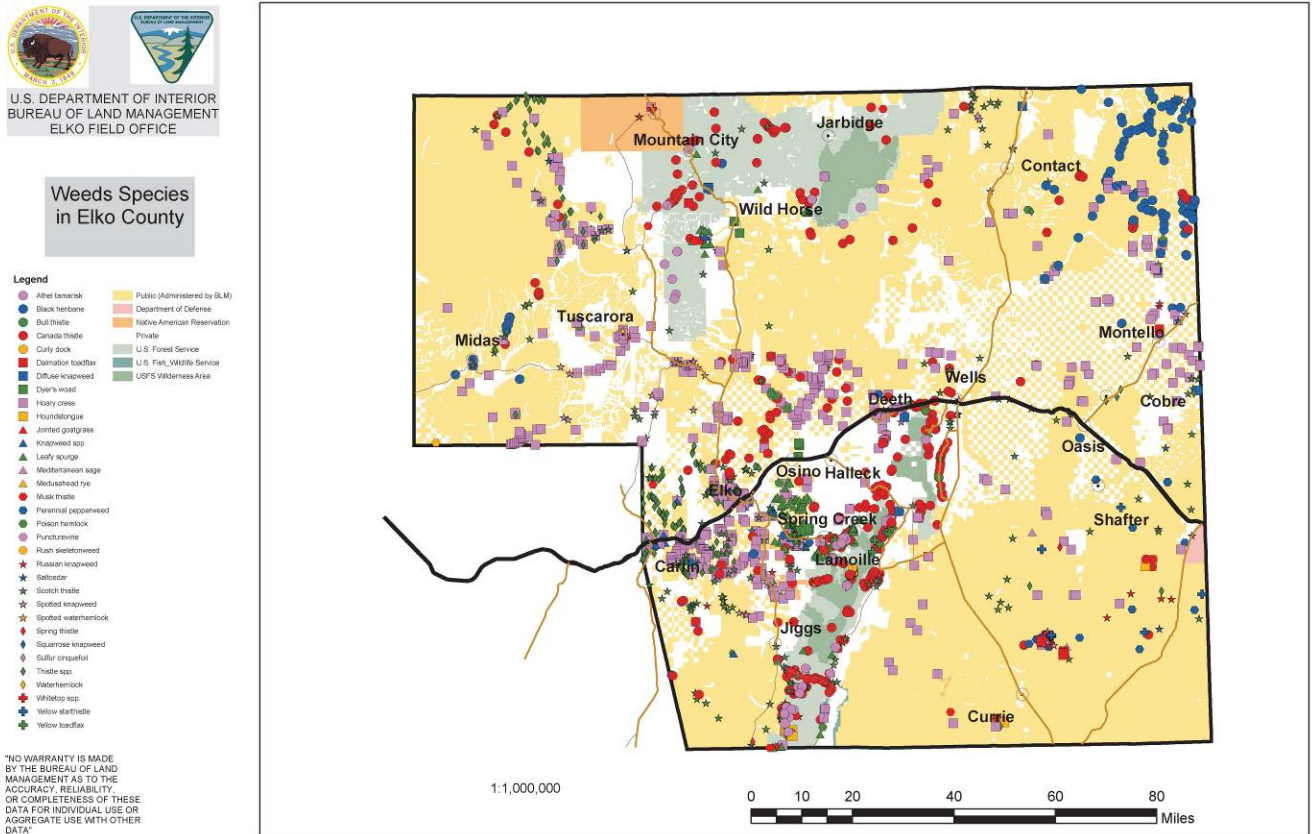
   American Hiking Society

Local contact: _____ Phone: _____

Elko County, in coordination with Federal agencies, State agencies, Tribal governments, private businesses, Elko County Association of Conservation Districts, non-profit organizations and local citizens, assisted in organizing the Elko County Cooperative Weed Management Association Area in December of 2003. The mission of the ECCWMA is to coordinate integrated activities necessary for prevention and control of noxious and invasive weeds in Elko County. The emphasis is focused on education, prevention, control, treatment and monitoring activities, inventory collection, cooperative work projects, funding and grant solicitation and utilization of all available resources. Priority of control and eradication efforts is concentrated on species listed on the Nevada Noxious Weed List and other species of significance as identified by the local working groups.



Figure 10 – Weed Species in Elko County



Strategies for implementation of the following policies include active and financial support of all Countywide noxious weed treatment activities as able, effectively establishing, implementing and enforcing County codes and ordinances relating to prevention measures and actively lobbying for additional Federal and State funding for noxious weed treatment.

Policy 8-1: Implement an outreach inclusive approach to integrated cooperative noxious weed management;

Policy 8-2: Prevent the introduction, reproduction and spread of designated noxious weeds and invasive exotic plants;

Policy 8-3: Reduce the extent and density of established noxious weeds to a point that natural resource damage is within acceptable limits;



Policy 8-4: Implement the most economical and effective control methods for the target weeds;

Policy 8-5: Implement an integrated management system using all appropriate methods;

Policy 8-6: The County will provide guidance and aid, through county extension agents and control of predators and pests that are harmful to the economic well-being of the agricultural industry and residents of its communities. Active pest and predator control may be used if it is clearly demonstrated there are only minimal undesirable side effects on wildlife and wildlife habitats. Programs to control predators may be used when necessary to maintain optimum levels of domestic and game animals as well as for public safety;

Policy 8-7: The federal agencies should give a priority to working cooperatively with the County and its eight Conservation Districts to control noxious weeds. The continued spread of noxious weeds is a serious threat to agriculture and native grasslands 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. A memorandum of understanding exists between the County, federal agencies and businesses for the purpose of executing the ECCWMA's goals and objectives.

9. Air Quality

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

Policy 9-1: 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 9-2: All energy proposals should attain the lowest feasible emissions, the highest feasible efficiencies, and the highest possible standards using Best Available Control Technology;



Policy 9-3: All water rights applications associated with proposed pipeline projects should require comprehensive monitoring programs to include air quality measurements. If PM-10 levels increase an immediate revegetation project will be necessary to stabilize the surface of any areas where any vegetation is changing as a result of the project;

Policy 9-4: Air quality standards should be established based on best available control techniques by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection. Elko County's excellent air quality should be maintained as an important aspect of the quality of life of the citizens and visitors;

Policy 9-5: Particulate monitoring stations should be established by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection to establish local ambient air quality. Naturally occurring fugitive dust should be considered in establishing local ambient air quality baseline measurements;

Policy 9-6: Greenhouse gases should be considered as an air quality issue.

10. Cultural Resources

Elko County cultural resources and customs include all the prehistoric and historic archaeological resources and traditional cultural practices of the people of the County. For example, the California Emigrant Trail Route traverses Elko County and is a valuable asset that showcases the county's resources.

Cultural resources include, but are not limited to:

- historic roads
- trails
- two-track roads
- Pony Express Trail
- Hastings Cutoff
- railways
- highways and associated buildings
- sidings



- stations
- rock art sites
- historic townships
- mining camps and districts
- racetracks
- cemeteries and isolated gravesites
- paleoindian sites
- prehistoric villages and campsites
- rock shelters
- caves
- toolstone sources
- quarries

Less tangible resources include:

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





California Trail Interpretive Center under construction
Mike Brown, Elko BLM Field Office

Policy 10-1:Elko County supports preservation of cultural resources (i.e., research, interpretative opportunities for the public etc.) compatible with local customs and culture. Elko County supports a balanced land management approach in consideration of cultural resources.

Policy 10-2:The County supports the preservation and inventorying of historical sites coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office. The County supports the concept of a systematic and early planning process for management of cultural resources to avoid crisis management where possible and to ensure compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

Policy 10-3:Prehistoric site studies should be coordinated with local Native American communities. Cultural resource studies and activities should be documented to the extent that they are characterized for posterity. Elko County recognizes and supports protection and management of the significant cultural values in sites. Elko County encourages federal and state land managers to consider economic development in concert with cultural resources and mitigate conflicts.

Policy 10-4:Cultural resources must be managed in a way that allows for community advancements supported by the will of Elko County residents, consistent with federal and state law.

11. Forestry and Forest Products

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

Policy 11-1:Promote multiple use of public forest resources to realize sustainable and continuous provisions of timber, forage, firewood, wildlife, fisheries, recreation and water.

Policy 11-2:Support the prompt salvage of forest losses due to fire, insect infestation or



other events.

Policy 11-3:Support the management of woodlands/forest by ecological condition for a diversity of vegetation communities. Grass and shrub ecosystems with no or few invasive species are preferable to pinion/juniper monocultures.

Policy 11-4:Urge BLM and Forest Service to allow and promote thinning of wildland/urban interface. This should be done in such a manner that local entities have an opportunity to derive economic benefit from the forest.

Policy 11-5:Recognize the importance of maintaining healthy aspen communities and encourage activities that will retain and improve the vigor of these communities.

12. Water Resources

Elko County's water resources are the basis for all the resource, economic, and cultural viability enjoyed by the county residents and visitors to the County.

Policy 12-1:All activities on the County's public lands should consider the policies as adopted in the Elko County Water Resources Plan.

13. 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 Elko County Water Resources Plan.

Policy 13-1:Wetlands, riparian habitat and waters of the US should be protected from undue degradation. Undue degradation may result from over pumping of groundwater, destruction of vegetation for over-development or misplacement of recreational facilities, poorly planned land dispositions, unintentional misuse of riparian resources by public and private users, and other actions.



Policy 13-2:Wetlands, riparian habitat and waters should be managed in a responsible and balanced manner with other resources and uses.

Policy 13-3:Support a coordinated effort to protect wellhead protection areas and municipal watersheds from undue degradation through proactive zoning and development controls, pursuant to the County's Wellhead Protection ordinance.

14. Mineral Resources

The development of Nevada's mineral resources is desirable and necessary to the economy of the nation, the state and particularly to Elko County.



Courtesy Newmont Gold

Policy 14-1:Retain existing mining areas and promote the expansion of mining operations and areas not specifically withdrawn.

Policy 14-2:Elko County supports the Mining Law of 1872 and opposes any policy or regulatory revisions that may result in overregulation. Elko County encourages federal agency use of the 2007 Elko County Mining Economic Impact Study, or updated studies, in all environmental analysis on mining related decisions. Elko County requests federal agency notification of all actions regarding mining related



environmental analysis for potential request by Elko County for status as a cooperating agency in such action.

Policy 14-3:The federal government should continue to evaluate the mineral resources on lands before they are sold, exchanged, designated wilderness or special use. The federal agencies are encouraged to continue to manage the presently open, federally-owned mineral estate in Elko County as open to mineral location, sales and leases. The agencies should carefully evaluate all withdrawals and land disposal and minimize the separation of surface and mineral estates in all realty actions.

1. Federal management policies on existing split mineral estates should be developed with state and local participation and in consideration of local zoning ordinances.
2. The mineral withdrawal process may be an acceptable means of protecting fragile or "special" lands, but its use should be limited.

Policy 14-4:Federal land management agencies should continue to enforce existing reclamation standards to ensure there is no undue degradation of the public lands.

Policy 14-5:To improve the economic well-being of the County, federal land management agencies should allow the use of buildings and infrastructure on reclaimed sites for other uses. Buildings should be retained for other economic development including industry as well as uses pursuant to the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

Policy 14-6:Mine site and exploration reclamation standards should be consistent with the best possible post mine use for each specific area. Specific reclamation standards should be developed for each property rather than using broad based universal standards. Private properties (i.e., patented claims) should be reclaimed to the standard and degree desired by their respective owners, following state law and regulations.



Policy 14-7: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 provide for the claim holder to pay a \$100 fee annually 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. Elko County supports the policy of the small miner exemption if the miner is offered the opportunity to develop the property. Encourage federal agencies to use the mining claim maintenance fees collected within the state or county that they were generated, especially in the use of reclamation of abandoned mine sites.

Policy 14-8:The Secretary of Interior prohibition on issuing patents should be withdrawn. The Secretary should use all means to encourage the exploration and development of the mineral resource, including the issuance of patents, as appropriate.

Policy 14-9:Elko County suggests that all mining companies work with the county and others to facilitate smooth transition either in a mine closure, or dramatic reduction in productivity.

15. Public Access

Access to public lands is a critical component of the economic and recreational vitality of the County and multiple use access is strongly encouraged.



Public access on BLM lands.

According to NRS 405.191 and 403.410 a “public road” is defined as follows:

1. A United States highway, a State highway or a main, general or minor county road and any other way laid out or maintained by any governmental agency.
2. Any way which exists upon a right of way granted by Congress over public lands of the United States not reserved for public uses in chapter 262, section 8, 14 Statutes 253 (former 43 U.S.C. § 932, commonly referred to as R.S. 2477), and accepted by general public use and enjoyment before, on or after July 1, 1979. Each board of county commissioners may locate and determine the width of such rights of way and locate, open for public use and establish thereon county roads or highways, but public use alone has been and is sufficient to evidence an acceptance of the grant of a public user right of way pursuant to former 43 U.S.C. § 932.
3. Any way which is shown upon any plat, subdivision, addition, parcel map or record of survey of any county, city, town or portion thereof duly recorded or filed in the office of the county recorder, and which is not specifically therein designated as a private road or a nonpublic road, and any way which is described in a duly recorded



conveyance as a public road or is reserved thereby for public road purposes or which is described by words of similar import."

Policy 15-1: Federal land management agencies should recognize and honor the valid and important rights Congress gave local governments to own and manage public roads and related right-of-ways.

Policy 15-2: The State definition of a "public road" (NRS 405.191, 403.410 and 244.155) should be used consistently throughout Nevada by all federal, State and local agencies. Road mapping should be coordinated between the US Forest Service and BLM.

Policy 15-3: Utilize R.S. 2477 right-of-ways to protect historical public access to public lands across private property. Promote private access across private properties.

Policy 15-4: Supports access to mining claims by adhering to the rights claimed under R.S. 2477.

Policy 15-5: Optimize accessibility within the County and reduce the cost of movement between all communities across public lands. Public access to public lands is vital to Elko County's economic stability.

Policy 15-6: The County supports transportation of minerals and mining products over federal, state, and county roads and highways, given that appropriate safety precautions guarantee public safety.

Policy 15-7: Recognize that the Gardner Maps identify existing roads prior to 1976. Some of these roads may be RS2477 and some may be private lands.

Policy 15-8: Federal agencies should allow access across federally managed lands by right-of-ways prior to the need for access across private lands.



16. Recreation and Open Space

Elko County enjoys many natural amenities that attract local residents and visitors. These resources should be protected and developed for the public's multiple use benefit. This section represents Elko County's Open Space Element of the Master Plan and corresponds to recreation and open space policies and maps contained therein. This Open Space Element represents the qualifying plan for participation in the State of Nevada's Question 1 Program.



Thomas Creek

Policy 16-1: Conserve and protect scenic, historical, recreational and open space resources for the benefit of the present and future generations with additional consultation with local, State and federal governments and users by implementing the Elko County Open Space Plan. Elko County recognizes that recreation in all forms is consistent with multiple use of public lands. All resources utilized by the public should be conserved and Elko County reserves the right for application under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) for all such resources.



Policy 16-2 Encourage recreational use in Elko County by increasing marketing efforts that describe the recreational opportunities available in the County.

Policy 16-3:Promote “Eco-tour” and responsible off highway vehicle businesses in the County. The themes of the tours could vary from wildlife viewing, to visiting hot springs, historical sites, or to learn to ride motorcycles and drive four wheel vehicles. Ensure that all governmental agencies work in a cooperative effort to encourage such uses while protecting the resources from damage.

Policy 16-4:Develop a regional marketing strategy that includes the promotion of activities such as heli-ski operations, downhill skiing, cross country skiing, endurance horse events and all off-highway events on vehicles or animals.

Policy 16-5:Encourage recreation opportunities, both dispersed, and close to population centers, as a substantial economic asset to local economies and direct agencies to maintain all historic and heritage trails and ways and access on the public lands, in balance with other multiple uses.

Policy 16-6:Public lands with value for concentrated recreational use (camp grounds, historic sites, wagon trails, etc.) should be identified, protected and developed for recreational purposes. The BLM should consider withdrawing these key areas from mineral entry on a limited basis. Any proposals for mineral withdrawals should be coordinated with the Elko County Natural Resource Management Advisory Commission and or Elko County Board of Commissioners.

Policy 16-7:Recognizing that most Nevadans reside in towns, investments in open space, park and recreation facilities should be concentrated as close to residential populations as feasible. Other sites in more remote areas are encouraged where feasible.

Policy 16-8:Protect water quality and water rights for recreational fishing in the county's creeks and rivers. Recreational uses and facilities are encouraged and should be developed where appropriate.



Policy 16-9: Support hunting and fishing as recreational resources and as a multiple use of public lands. Elko County endorses the State's programs to provide sustained levels of game animals.

Policy 16-10: The establishment of new specially designated lands (i.e. National Recreation Areas, National Conservation Areas, Wildlife Refuges, wilderness, State parks, etc.) should be carefully weighed to determine overall county benefit.

Policy 16-11: Elko County fully embraces the multiple use concept of public land management and encourages federal land management agencies to maximize public usage of lands while still addressing environmental concerns.

17. Wilderness

A large number of acres within the County are designated as Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas (de facto wilderness). Addressing evolving issues such as noxious weeds and fire on these specially designated lands is a challenge. Many years have passed since the Secretary's recommendation with no Congressional action and many of these areas were taken out of multiple use.



Ruby Mountains

Policy 17-1: Nevada's Congressional delegation should sponsor and actively pursue passage of legislation that would release lands from WSA status back



to multiple use determined by the U.S. Department of Interior and Bureau of Land Management to be unsuitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Policy 17-2:As part of any potential land act process in Elko County, the Congressional delegation should conduct public hearings that specifically address the BLM's wilderness recommendations.

Policy 17-3:Wildlife, fire control, weed management, mineral resources, visitor impacts, grazing, public access, recreation and management needs should be considered when designating areas for wilderness and in the development of wilderness area management plans. Documented mineral resources are adequate reasons for not considering the area as wilderness.

Policy 17-4:Any wilderness area management plans should be developed involving the public and governmental consultation, preferably using a coordinated resource management and planning type process. Motorized access utilizing cherry stem roads should be considered when appropriate.

Policy 17-5:Wilderness in appropriate areas is supported for its economic benefits to Elko County.

Policy 17-6:As wilderness protects scenic, recreation and ecological values important to the economic future and as well as protecting important natural resources, including clean air and water of Elko County, proper management of existing wilderness areas is supported.

Policy 17-7:Recognizing that multiple interests exist on potential wilderness areas, the County supports a balanced review and inventory of all such interests prior to any designation of new wilderness areas. Elko County does not support additional wilderness areas beyond the reconciliation of WSA's in suspension.

18. Wild Horses



Wild horses are part of the landscape. However, an overabundance of horses can be detrimental to the health of public lands. Management must carefully balance needs of wild horses against the needs of other multiple uses.

Policy 18-1: Manage wild horses to reduce detrimental impacts on other multiple uses and pursue resource enhancement where needed to correct wild horse caused damage.

Policy 18-2: Wild horse herds should be managed at reasonable levels to be determined with public involvement and managed with consideration of the needs of other wildlife species and livestock grazing. The BLM and the State should work cooperatively on wild horse management issues and ensure the management and maintenance of all federal improvements by the federal agencies. BLM should give a priority to establishing Appropriate Management Levels (AML) for the remaining horse management areas. The AML should be established at levels that do not jeopardize or interfere with the economic viability of any private enterprise within Elko County, and be coordinated with the BLM Resource Advisory Council.

Policy 18-3: Educate Congress and the public on the impacts of wild horses. Encourage legislation to allow greater flexibility for the disposal and adoption of wild horses.

Policy 18-4: Wild horse impacts on private lands and water sources should be mitigated.

Policy 18-5: Encourage the BLM to increase the potential of the adoption program for wild horses through an aggressive marketing program and strategic partnerships.

Policy 18-6: The BLM should take advantage of good forage years by emphasizing maintenance level captures on horse management areas that have established AMLs. Maintenance of established AMLs is economical if herd numbers are kept in check periodically. Once herds greatly exceed the AMLs, capture and management is very expensive.

Policy 18-7: Publicize and encourage areas where the public can view wild horses.



Policy 18-8:Elko County supports a strict policy of wild horse population control to ensure the species does not interfere with the productivity of the ranching community, wildlife and other multiple use needs.

19. Wildlife

Policy 19-1:Identify, protect and preserve wildlife species and habitats. Wildlife and fisheries' populations are recognized as a renewable resource and therefore should be managed accordingly. Coordination of federal and state wildlife and fisheries' management and enforcement is encouraged.

Policy 19-2 Hunting and fishing is an important recreational resource of multiple use of public lands. The county supports the State's programs to provide sustainable levels of game animals.

Policy 19-3:Identify habitat needs of wildlife species, such as adequate forage, water, cover, etc. and provide for those needs in time, to attain reasonable population levels compatible with other multiple uses.

1. Known critical wildlife habitats such as streams, riparian zones, wetlands etc. should receive protection where needed.
2. Wildlife habitat improvement projects such as guzzlers should be continued as appropriate. The projects should take into consideration impacts on other uses.
3. The county supports general improvements to the waterways and fisheries to enhance access for recreational activities.

Policy 19-4:Rangeland management should include adequate consideration of wildlife needs.

Policy 19-5:Adequate and sufficient habitats to support the reintroduction of big horn sheep in Elko County should be provided on public lands. The reintroduction of the bighorn sheep should be in coordination with local government officials and agencies.



Policy 19-6: The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) should give a high priority to the opinion of the County wildlife boards when setting harvest levels for wildlife.

Policy 19-7: Elko County should establish a threatened and endangered species (T&E) committee for overseeing protection and recovery of all federal and state listed threatened, endangered and sensitive species, coordinated with the local BLM Resource Advisory Council.

20. Fire Management

Elko County has and will experience devastating wild land fires that have catastrophic economic and environmental impacts.



Courtesy: Living With Fire/Nevada Fire Safe Council

Policy 20-1: Maintain and improve local coordination and collaborative efforts between BLM, US Forest Service, Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) and local volunteer fire departments to improve fire suppression management. The federal and state agencies need to take advantage of the skills and local knowledge of local residents. This is particularly important when using out-of-state fire crews for fire fighting. Elko County will aid in any way possible in suppression of wildfires that endanger the livelihoods and personal well-being of its citizens.



Policy 20-2: Encourage the federal agencies to continue the policy of contracting with Elko County residents for privately owned equipment suitable for fire fighting. Encourage the practice of early season inspections and sign-ups well before the fire season.

Policy 20-3: Encourage the federal agencies to consider using livestock to reduce the fire hazard. There may be situations where livestock grazing can be effective in reducing the fire danger and will not result in environmental damage. This is particularly true in the wildland urban interface areas.

Policy 20-4: Implement the recommendations of the Community Wildfire Protection Plans as outlined in the Elko County Wildfire Risk/Hazard Assessment Project of 2005. The County should make every effort to work with the local volunteer fire departments, NDF, the federal land management agencies and organizations such as the Nevada Fire Safe Council to encourage these communities to take preventative actions to prevent and combat wild fires.

Policy 20-5: Fire equipment brought in from out-of-state should be cleaned to assure it is "weed-free" before being dispatched to a wildfire.

21. Military Operations

Policy 21-1: Elko County supports a collaborative dialogue with the Department of Defense on all future testing and training. Elko County supports military training on public lands and existing military-withdrawn lands because of the increased military preparedness.

Policy 21-2: Elko County opposes any further military land and airspace withdrawals.

22. Energy Production



Energy production, both renewable and non-renewable is a vital component of Elko County's economic future.

Policy 22-1: Energy production is encouraged as a vital economic component of the Elko County economy. Renewable resources should be a priority and utilized in a manner that compliments other environmental resources. All efforts should be undertaken to ensure a balance between energy development and protection of resources that make the County attractive to residents and visitors.

Policy 22-2: The development and coordinated siting of new energy generation and transmission facilities 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.

23. Habitat Conservation Planning

Habitat conservation planning is important if the County and State wish to preserve wildlife species as well as way of life. Without proper planning and protection, species could be listed under the Endangered Species Act. If this occurs, drastic measures will be required to address the listing. It is much more beneficial to proactively develop appropriate habitat conservation planning measures.

Policy 23-1: Promote proactive habitat conservation planning in conformance with the Elko County Ecosystem Conservation Strategy to improve the habitat of species at risk of being listed under the Endangered Species Act, and to help avoid the adverse impacts associated with such listings.

Policy 23-2: Habitat conservation planning should consider the economic and social consequences of the conservation efforts being considered.

Policy 23-3: Habitat conservation planning should include the use of positive incentives for private landowners to increase the likelihood the plan will succeed.

24. Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs)

The use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) has increased significantly over the past decade.



Important to many Nevadans' lifestyles for work and play, they provide many economic benefits and many environmental impacts.

Policy 24-1: Direct OHV use to designated trails and actively discourage the pioneering of new trails and use in sensitive areas through collaborative public education efforts with the local communities and federal planning partners.

Policy 24-2: Support community efforts to expand the availability of OHV trails and resources such as the Spruce Mountain trail system, Merritt Mountain trail system, the new Silver State OHV Trail in Lincoln County, a planned state wide trail system.

Policy 24-3: Maintain support for the "Gardner Map" roads and recognize the use and access provided by these roads.

Policy 24-4: Encourage and support the development of a County OHV Management Plan by encouraging a broad based local planning group to provide input in determining and prioritizing needs for current and future OHV use and management in Elko County.

Policy 24-5: Encourage and support the development of a County OHV Management Plan and any other policy and regulation that:

1. Incorporates guidelines for any future consideration, development and management of any additional OHV trails, routes or limited off-road use areas in Elko County.
2. Promotes sensible and responsible use of OHVs through registration, licensing, education, training, advertising and other means.
3. Requires OHV users to stay on designated roads and trails or in limited off-road use areas and actively discourage the pioneering of new trails.
4. Encourages sufficient resources to be made available to local district offices to publish maps of areas and routes suitable for OHV use.
5. Effectively monitor and manage off-highway vehicles in areas where they are allowed.
6. Seasonal closures should be considered where necessary.



7. Elko County supports off-road use for federally designated permitted uses.

Policy 24-6: Encourage and support the development of policy and regulation that will:

1. Register off-highway vehicles and make them identifiable in the field.
2. Provide for the safety of OHV users and non-users.
3. Prevent the environmental degradation of public lands, air, water, wildlife and vegetation.
4. Provide for restoration of damaged lands.
5. Provide for the enforcement of such rules and regulations.
6. Provide for the recreational enjoyment of both OHV users and non-users.

Policy 24-7: Encourage and support administration of money generated through off-highway vehicle registration that will:

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

2008 Elko County Public Lands Policy Plan

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