

**The Nevada Mining Association's**  
***White Pine County Wilderness Study***  
***Area Position Paper***

**A Review of Wilderness Study**  
**Areas in White Pine County Nevada.**

**Part: 1 Nevada Land Use Patterns**

**Part: 2 Individual WSA's**

EXHIBIT D Wilderness

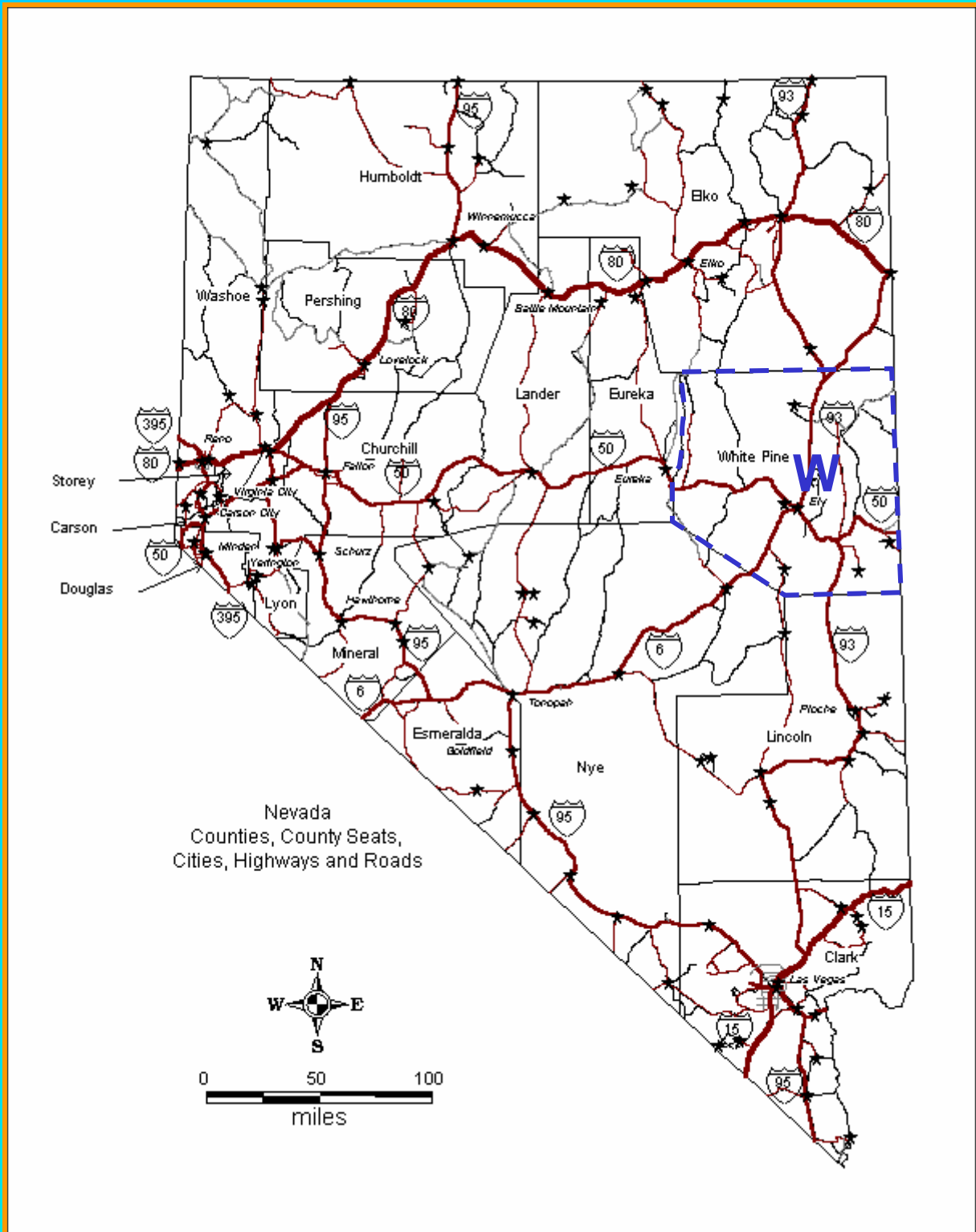
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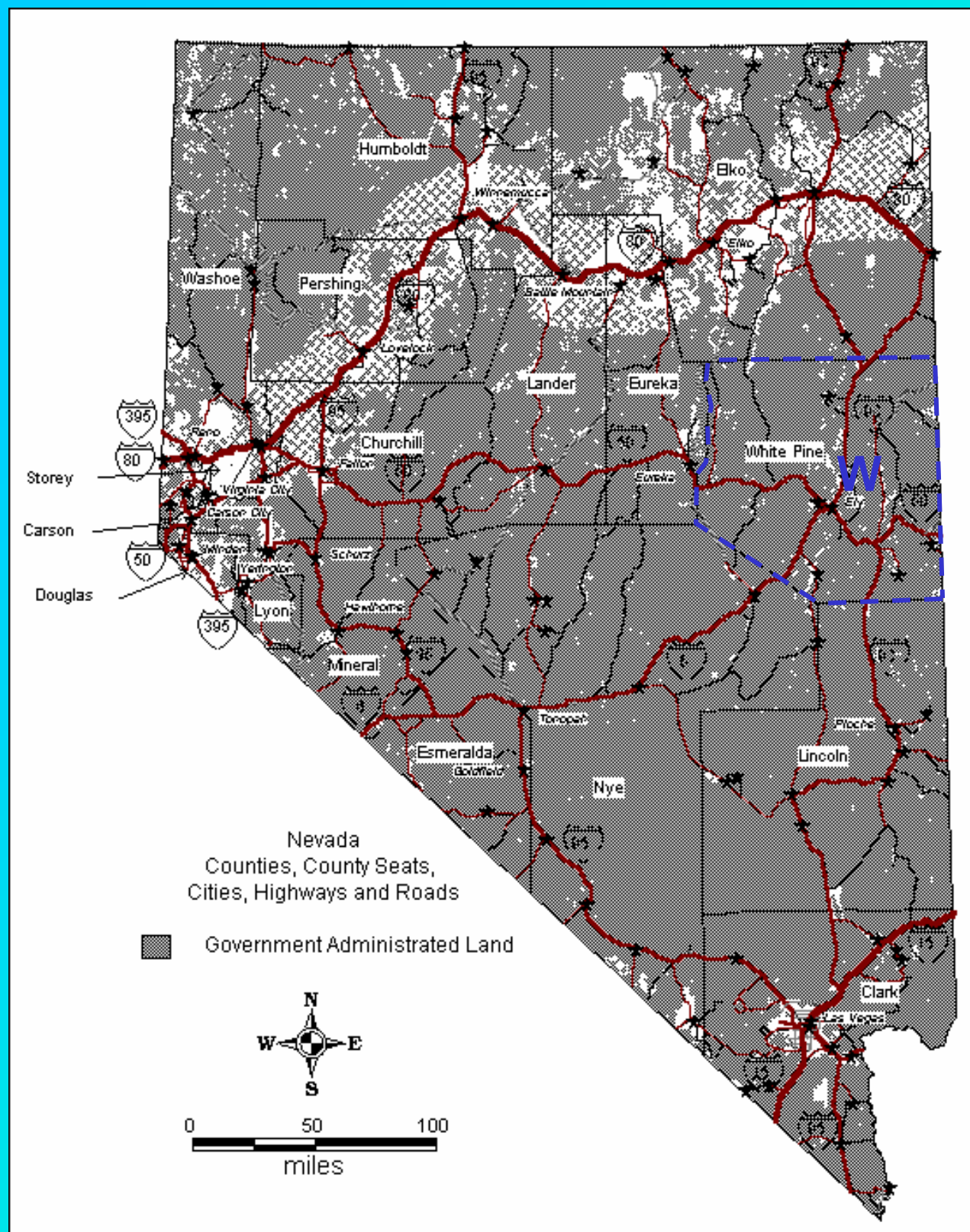
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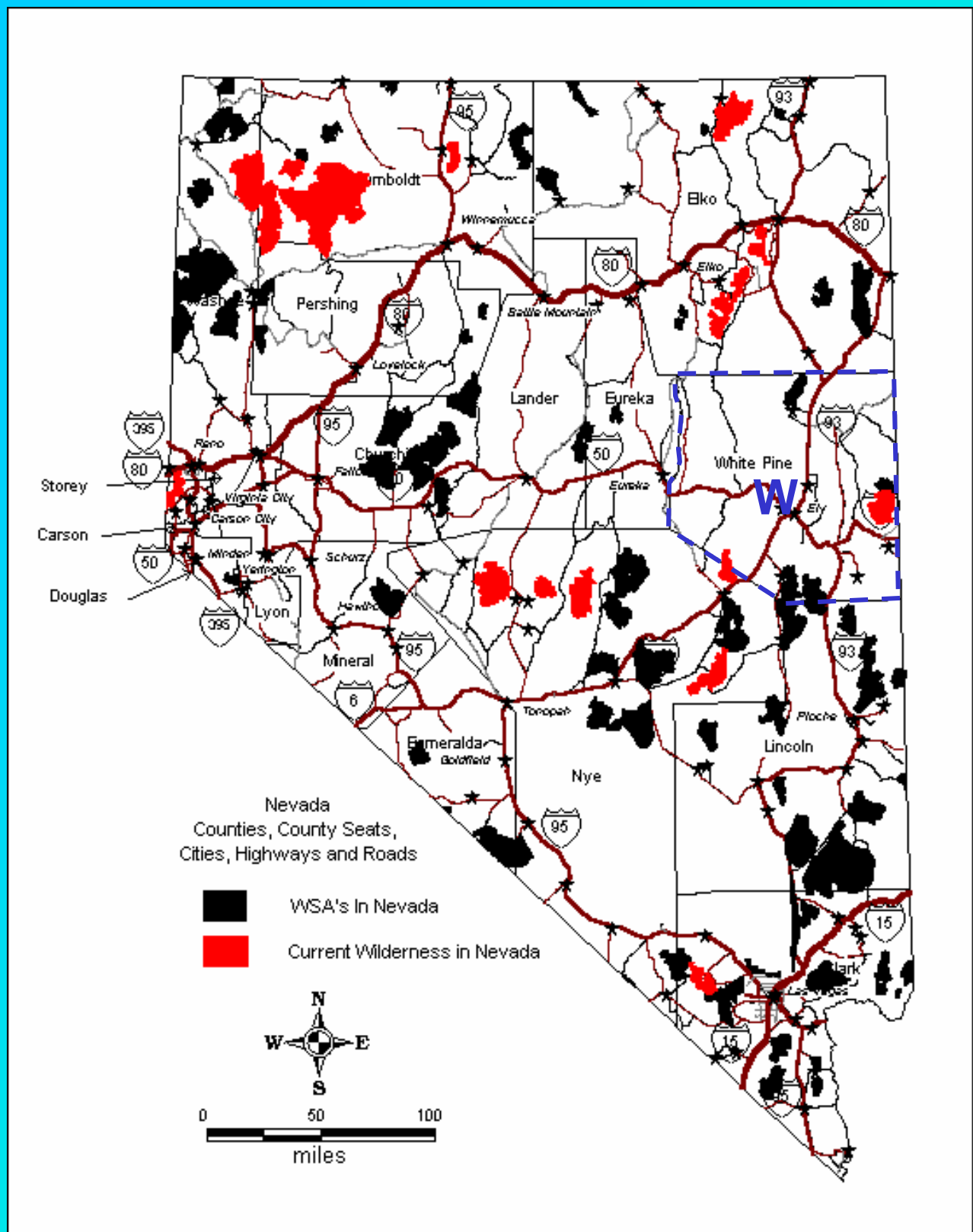
☐ Due to size limitations, pages \_\_\_\_\_ provided. A copy of the complete document is available through the Research Library (775/684-6827) or e-mail [library@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:library@lcb.state.nv.us).

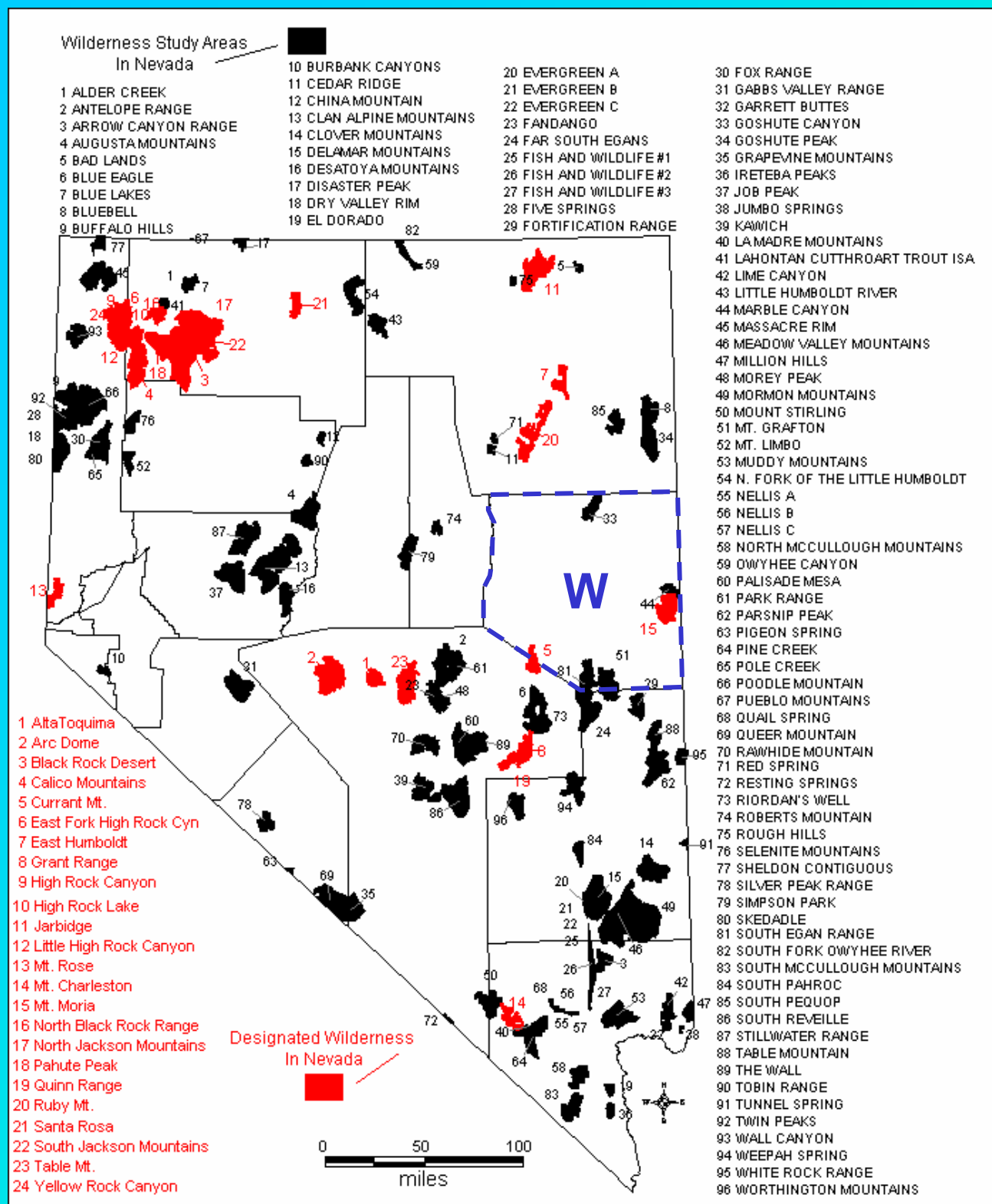
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## White Pine County









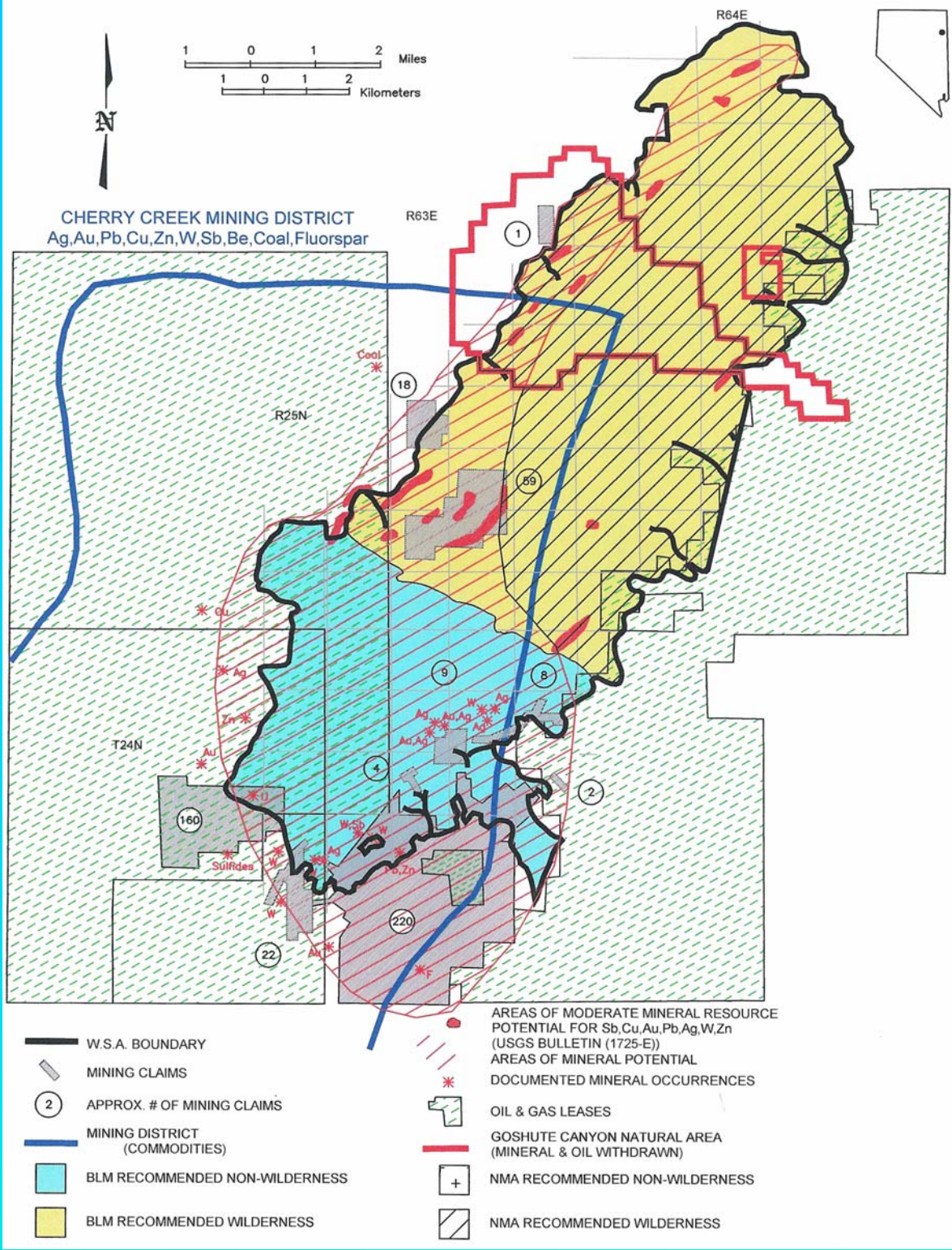
# Wilderness Study Areas

## WHITE PINE COUNTY

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# GOSHUTE CANYON NV-040-015



## **GOSHUTE CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA**

### **1. THE STUDY AREA - 35,594 acres**

The Goshute Canyon WSA (NV-040-015) is located in the Cherry Creek Mountains in east-central Nevada within White Pine and Elko Counties. The entire WSA is comprised of 35,594 acres of public land with one 15-acre patented mining claim inholding near the southern boundary. The Goshute Canyon Natural Area/Instant Study Area is partially (5,009 acres) located within the WSA. The remaining 2,641 acres of the Natural Area are contiguous with the WSA to the east and west, separated by roads or jeep trails. The southern boundary of the WSA is defined by a series of patented mining claims and connecting jeep trails. The western edge of the WSA is formed by roads along the eastern side of Butte Valley and the Paris Canyon Road. Two parcels of private land and connecting jeep trails form the northern boundary of the WSA and a series of roads, jeeps trails and fence lines define the eastern boundary. The 13-mile long Goshute Canyon WSA is a rugged, uplifted range, with massive white limestone cliffs jutting from its slopes. The lower elevations are thickly forested by pinyon pine and juniper, while bristlecone and limber pine blanket the higher elevations. Aspens and cottonwoods in the moist drainages provide for a verdant, cool retreat. Large high elevation basins rimmed by naked peaks contain pockets of aspen and white fir and are filled with wild flowers in spring and summer. Snowmelt and numerous springs provide riparian settings and water sources for a great number of wildlife species that include Bonneville cutthroat trout in Goshute Creek, mule deer, mountain lions, bobcats, owls, falcons, eagles, hawks, kestrels and marmots. The WSA is a natural, harmonious composition of contrasts. Brilliant yellow fall color and light-colored rock are juxtaposed with the dark green foliage of the evergreen canopy. Distance becomes distorted, difficult to judge because of the immense scale of topographic features, while the detail of weathered rock, of small grassland riparian areas, and of stark white aspen trees complete a nearly perfect tableau. No one who visits the area leaves without a strong impression of the area's beauty.



**2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE - 22,225 acres recommended for wilderness 13,369 acres recommended for nonwilderness**

The recommendation for the Goshute Canyon WSA is to designate 22,225 acres as wilderness and release 13,369 acres for uses other than wilderness. Exceptionally high wilderness values, strong public interest, and a limited amount of competing resource uses were the reasons for recommending a portion of the WSA as wilderness. The rugged, mountainous core of the Cherry Creek Range comprises the recommended portion of the Goshute Canyon WSA. With elevations rising above 10,000 feet, expansive meadows rimmed by craggy peaks create a vision of untouched natural beauty. Numerous aspen stands, large jutting limestone outcrops, conifer forests and open areas intermix to form visually pleasing mosaics throughout the unit. Bristlecone pine, one of the area's special features, can be found in their classic, gnarled configuration along the windswept ridgelines. On more protected slopes large, vigorous stands of bristlecone pine grow tall and straight. Further enhancing the high wilderness values are Goshute and Carry Basins. These huge, scenic basins provide crucial watershed for several perennial streams and riparian areas which are an integral part of the unit. Goshute Creek hosts a viable population of Bonneville cutthroat trout, a State sensitive species. Goshute Cave, another of the area's special features provides superb caving opportunities. This gentle, yet highly decorated cave provides visitors with an unusual glimpse into the subterranean wilderness. The nature of the limestone within the WSA almost ensures the presence of an undiscovered cave resource for the persistent explorer. The potential for undiscovered caverns is one of the compelling reasons cavers highly regard the area. The southern portion of the WSA, while most of it is highly scenic, was not included in the area recommended for wilderness because of past mineral interest in the area. Further contributing to the nonwilderness recommendation for the southern portion of the WSA are the unnatural features associated with the old mining operations. There is some potential for disseminated gold deposits associated with jasperoid outcrops. Development of lode deposits is anticipated to occur in the portion of the WSA recommended for uses other than wilderness.

### **3. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**A. Naturalness:** The core of the Goshute Canyon WSA is in a pristine condition. When in the center of the WSA, the forces of nature dominate the senses. Only a few imprints of man's work lie within the WSA, and these are unnoticeable within the area as a whole and do not detract from the enjoyment of the area's wilderness character. These include two rock gabions in Goshute Canyon, numerous two-track routes (most only a few hundred feet in length) established on the periphery of the area, a buried pipeline, and several historic structures. The foregoing description of these several unnatural features tends to focus attention on them and thereby exaggerate their significance. Put back in the context of the 35,594 acre area where they occur, these impacts are substantially unnoticeable, being dwarfed and absorbed by the largeness of the landform.

Vegetative and topographic screening conceal most of them whenever the visitor is more than a few feet distant from them. The overwhelming impression of the area is that it retains its primeval character, unaltered by man's activities.

**B. Solitude:** Opportunities for solitude in the Goshute Canyon WSA are outstanding. While the size and configuration of the unit certainly contribute to these; it is the topographic and vegetative screening which are primarily responsible. The rugged and very precipitous 13-mile length of the Cherry Creek Mountains runs along an approximately north-south axis and is highly broken by ancillary east-west ridges and associated canyons. The screening effect of this variegated terrain is complemented by extensive forestation which cloaks most of the area.

**C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:** Primitive recreation opportunities are outstanding in the Goshute Canyon WSA because of their quality and diversity. Presently, hunting is one of the major recreational pursuits. Much of the WSA provides key habitat for mule deer, and every year heavy hunter use occurs all around the area's periphery. Mountain lions, blue grouse, and sage grouse are also unusually prolific and provide abundant hunting opportunities. The area around Goshute Canyon offers especially noteworthy opportunities for recreation. Fishing opportunities of moderate quality occur in Goshute Creek, which hosts a population of Bonneville Cutthroat Trout. Easy walk-in camping can be done along the banks of both Goshute and Carry Creeks beneath cottonwoods and willows. About 1-mile to the north of the mouth of Goshute Canyon is Goshute Cave, an extensive limestone solution cave that offers excellent opportunities for caving and geological study. Less utilized but similarly excellent recreation opportunities in the WSA include day hiking, backpacking, nature study, photography, rock climbing, and cross-country skiing.

**D. Special Features:** Many special features, including Goshute Cave, bristlecone pines and a diversity of numerous wildlife species contribute to the attractiveness of the Goshute Canyon WSA. The WSA, with its well watered basins, abundant resources, and topographic diversity, proved to be an attractive area for primitive man in eastern Nevada. Historic resources within the WSA are mostly located on the lower reaches of the more accessible drainages and provide a unique glimpse into eastern Nevada's early history of settlement.

#### **4. MANAGEABILITY**

The portion of the Goshute Canyon WSA recommended for wilderness would be easily managed as wilderness or the long term. There are no private lands nor mining claims, and it appears highly unlikely that the oil and gas leases on the north end will ever be developed. Control of off-road vehicle use on the approaches to the mountains necessitate some patrol, especially during the high-use months of deer season and trapping season. There is a possibility that stream stabilization work may be necessary in Goshute Creek. Past efforts to improve the fishery have exacerbated erosion problems and further destabilized conditions. Severe flooding in past years has caused deep headcutting on portions of the creek resulting in the lowering of the creek bed by 30 feet in some places.

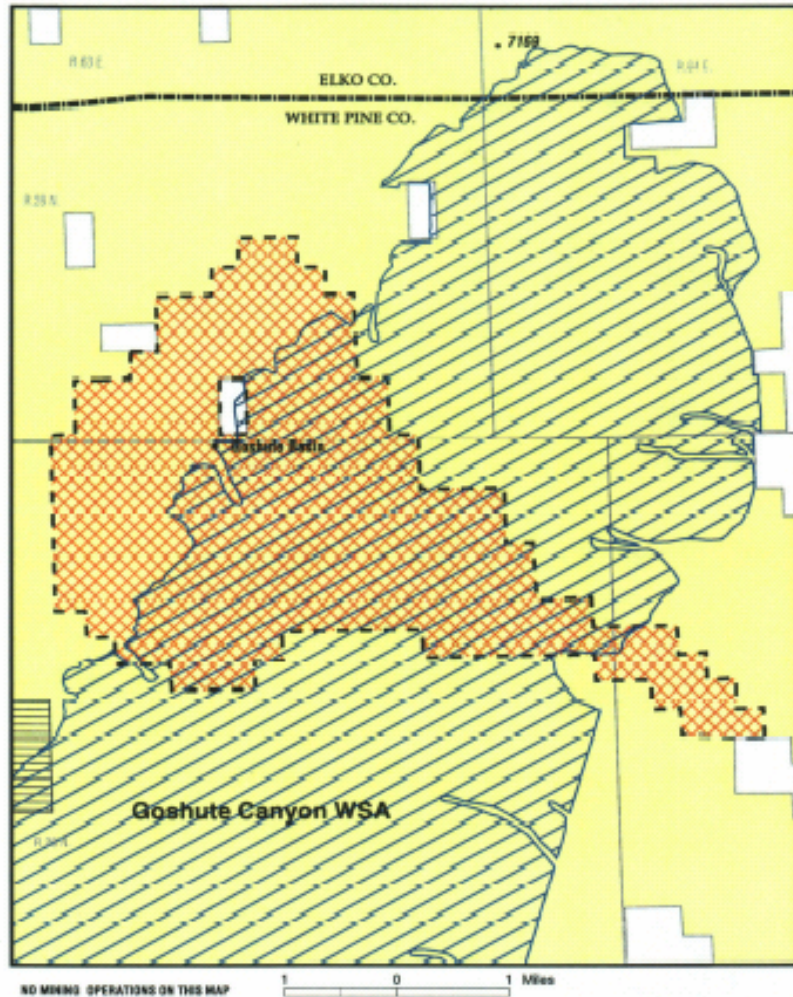
#### **5. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES**

The U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines prepared a mineral assessment for the Goshute Canyon WSA in 1988 (U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1725-E). The USGS/BM study rates the Goshute Canyon WSA as having low potential for oil and gas, and geothermal resources. The report indicates that the majority of the recommended portion has low potential for the occurrence of mineralization which would host gold, silver, antimony, copper, lead, zinc and tungsten. Small jasperoid-silica zones along the fringes of the suitable portion were identified by the report as having a moderate mineral potential for gold, silver, antimony, and tungsten. The Goshute Canyon WSA encompasses the central portion of the Cherry Creek Range. Mineral interest in the Cherry Creek Range dates back to the 1870's with the formation of the Cherry Creek Mining District. A portion of the mining district extends into the southern portion of the WSA. Past production from the district is reported at \$4.8 million since reporting was instituted (1902), and before that \$6 million to \$20 million in production is estimated. Minerals produced include gold, silver, lead, and copper.

#### **6. SUMMARY OF WSA-SPECIFIC PUBLIC COMMENTS**

During public review of the draft EIS and Wilderness Technical Report a total of 59 comments were received specifically addressing the Goshute Canyon WSA. In general, 52 commentors supported wilderness designation for all or part of the WSA and six commentors supported no wilderness for the WSA. Comments supporting wilderness designation cited the high scenic qualities, outstanding recreation opportunities, botanical, archaeological and speleological values and the presence of the Goshute Canyon Natural Area. Comments opposing wilderness mentioned mineral and energy potential and the existing mining along the southern boundary. Two commentors took no position on designation. Throughout the wilderness process, concern was expressed that should the Goshute Canyon WSA be designated as wilderness, the designation could somehow negatively effect the proposed White Pine Power Project. The White Pine Regional Planning Commission, the City of Ely, and the White Pine County Commission opposed wilderness designation for this area for that reason. Since completion of the wilderness study, the White Pine Power Project has been dropped from consideration as a viable energy development due to decreased regional demand for electricity.

# Goshute Canyon Instant Study Area MINING CLAIM DENSITY AND OPERATIONS



## Mining Claim Density - 3/97

- 1-5 Claims
- 6-35 Claims
- 36 or more Claims

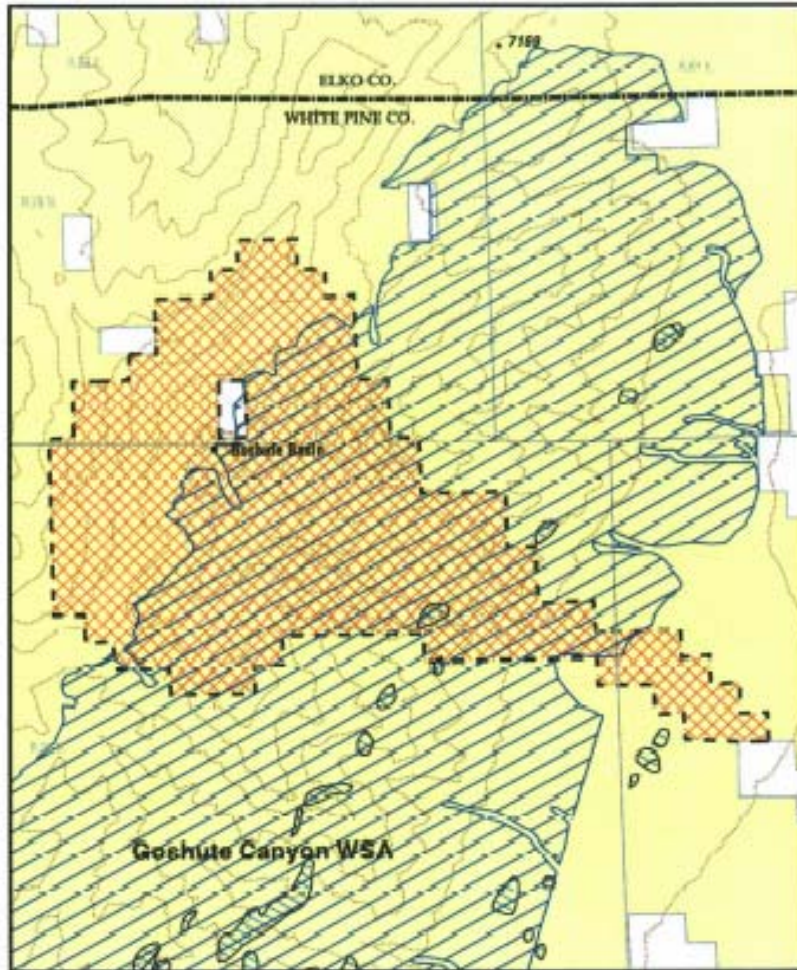
BLM  
Private Land

-- Instant Study Area Boundary  
Recommended Non-Suitable






# **Goshute Canyon Instant Study Area MINERAL POTENTIAL**




1 0 1 Miles

CONTOUR INTERVAL 200 METERS ( 656 FEET )

## **Mineral Potential**

 **Medium - All Metals**

 **BLM**  
 **Private Land**

-- **Instant Study Area Boundary**  
 **Recommended Non-Suitable**



Goshute Canyon RSA

## **GOSHUTE CANYON INSTANT STUDY AREA**

### **1. THE STUDY AREA - 7,650 acres**

The Goshute Canyon Natural Area is located approximately 60 road miles north of Ely, Nevada in White Pine County and contains 7,650 acres of public lands. Except for the eastern and western portions of the natural area (2,641 acres), the bulk of the acreage (5,009 acres) is included with the Goshute Canyon Wilderness Study Area (35,594 acres). The Goshute Canyon Natural Area was designated in 1970 for the protection of Utah Cutthroat Trout, an uncommon fish species confined to a few locations of the intermountain west. The fish is on the State of Nevada's endangered species list.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE - 0 acres recommended for wilderness 7,650 acres recommended for nonwilderness**

The natural area was inventoried and evaluated separately from the comprehensive roadless inventory during a special project inventory in 1978 in conjunction with the Intermountain Power Project. That inventory found that the Goshute Canyon Natural Area did not possess sufficient wilderness character to warrant a recommendation for wilderness designation. The area appears to be natural but it does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Some supplemental values are present within the natural area such as scenic, archaeological, and scientific values.

Accordingly, the Instant Study Area was recommended for release from further wilderness consideration in the Goshute Canyon Natural Area Nevada BLM Wilderness Report dated February, 1980. The area did not qualify, by itself, as a WSA. However, as the report stated on page 16, the area "may qualify when considered with the contiguous roadless lands." The Section 603 inventory I authorized by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, included the middle portion of the Goshute Canyon Natural Area within the Goshute Canyon Wilderness Study Area.

The long and short term effects of releasing the Goshute Canyon Instant Study Area from interim management protection would be that all uses which were previously compatible within the Natural Area outside of the boundaries of the Goshute Canyon Wilderness Study Area would continue to be permitted.

### **3. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**A. Naturalness:** The landscape character in general remains substantially natural. A four wheel drive road bounds the eastern side of the western portion of the Instant Study Area. The eastern area is bounded by a road to the south and traversed by a county road to the east. Other unnatural features of this area include riparian fence enclosures for the protection of fish habitat and several water diversion ditches.

**B. Solitude:** The open terrain and low vegetation of both portions the Instant Study Area limit the ability of the visitor to avoid others or the sights and sounds of traffic and ranching activities. Opportunities for solitude are not considered to be outstanding in this area.

**C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:** Hiking, camping, fishing, nature study and photography are some of the activities which may occur in this area, but neither the diversity nor quality of these activities are considered outstanding.

**D. Special Features:** The eastern portion may support populations of the Utah Cutthroat Trout.

#### **4. MANAGEABILITY:**

The area is not manageable as wilderness due to its small size, the lack of natural boundaries and limited wilderness character.

#### **5. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES**

A minerals report from the U.S. Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey was prepared for the Goshute Canyon Wilderness Study Area which includes the Natural Area. The potential for the occurrence of oil and gas resources within the study area is considered to be low. The findings of more recent oil and gas exploration in this area are not known. The potential for other mineral resources is considered to be low.

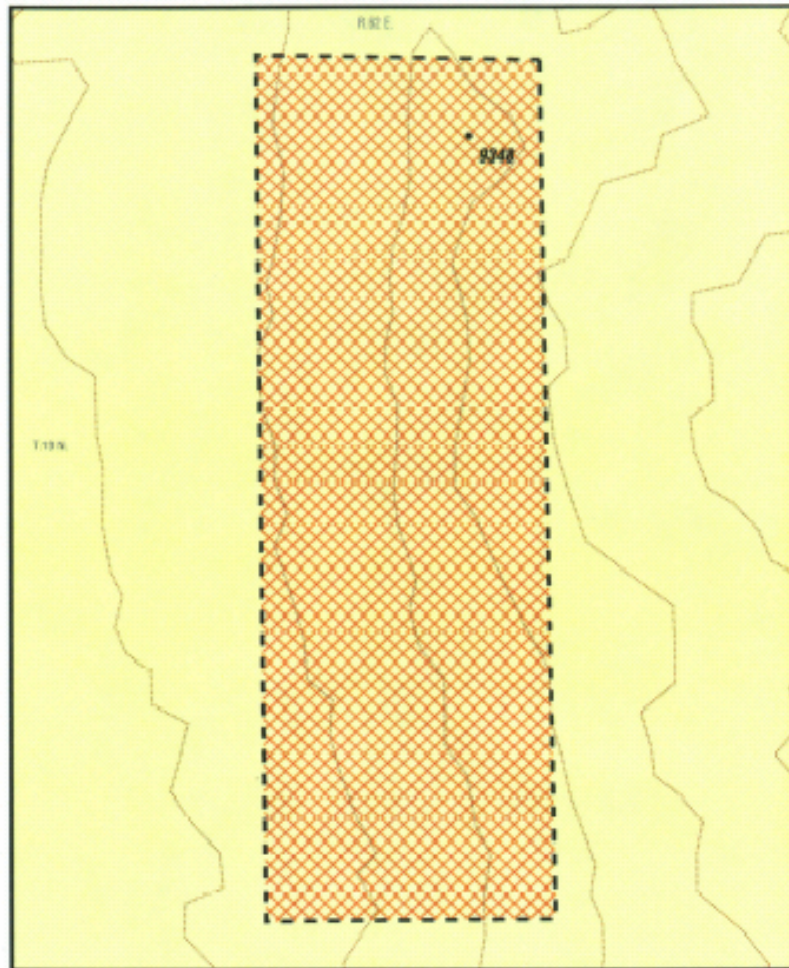
#### **6. SUMMARY OF WSA -SPECIFIC COMMENTS**

The Goshute Canyon Natural Area was inventoried separately from the comprehensive roadless review area during an early special inventory conducted in conjunction with the Intermountain Power Project. A public meeting was held in Ely, Nevada on January 14, 1980 to describe the findings of the special inventory and to invite public comment. A 30-day public comment review period was held from January 1, 1980 to January 30, 1980.

Two comments were received during the public review period. One comment noted intrusions and a lack of solitude opportunities while the other supported wilderness. A summary of other comments received during formal public review of the draft EIS and Wilderness Technical Report for the Goshute Canyon Wilderness Study Area are found in the Nevada BLM Statewide Wilderness ReDort, Oct. 1991, Vol. 4.

3/13/00

# Heusser Mountain Instant Study Area MINERAL POTENTIAL



NO HIGH OR MEDIUM MINERAL POTENTIAL IS IDENTIFIED ON THIS MAP.

 BLM

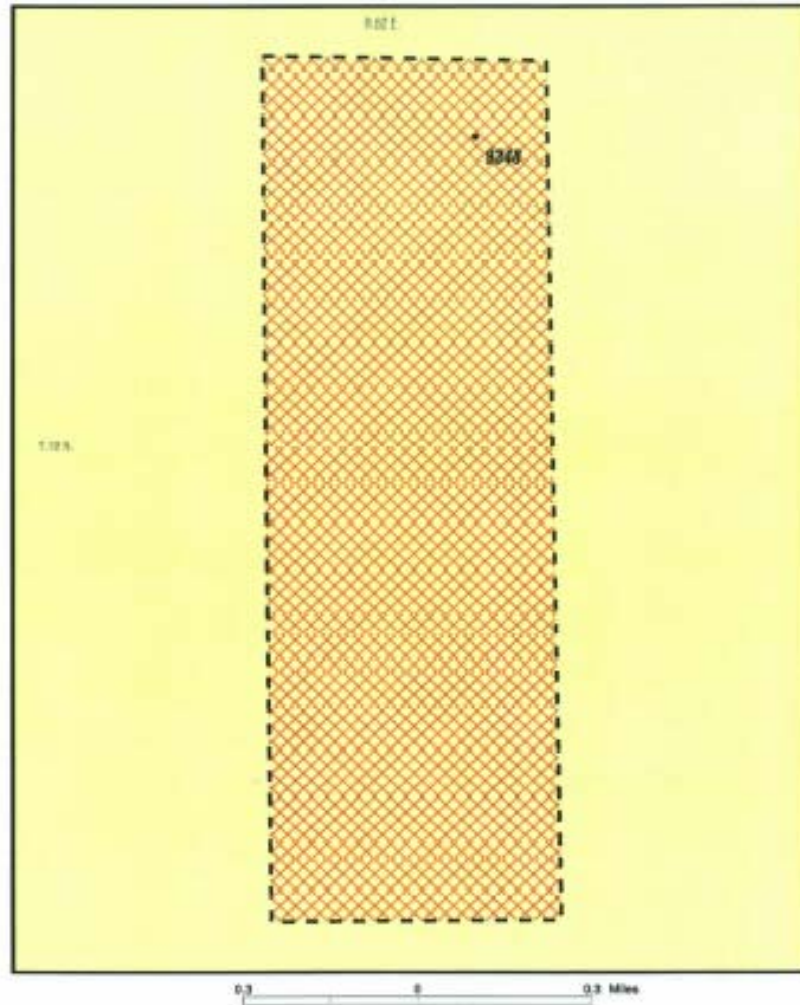
-- Instant Study Area Boundary  
 Recommended Non-Suitable






3/13/00

# Heusser Mountain Instant Study Area MINING CLAIM DENSITY AND OPERATIONS



NO MINING CLAIMS OR OPERATIONS ON THIS MAP

 **BLM**

-- Instant Study Area Boundary  
 Recommended Non-Suitable



## **HEUSSER MOUNTAIN BRISTLECONE PINE INSTANT STUDY AREA**

### **1. THE STUDY AREA - 480 acres**

The Heusser Mountain Bristlecone Pine Instant Study Area is located in the Egan Range just east of Smith Valley, and approximately 5 miles northwest of the town of Ely, Nevada in White Pine County. It consists of approximately 480 acres of public land. The Heusser Mountain Research Natural Area was designated in 1965 to protect the "unique botanical... characteristics of irreplaceable scientific and recreational values." The Natural Area was intensively inventoried and evaluated in conjunction with the surrounding 32,940 acre roadless review area NV-040-048A. The entire review unit was found to lack wilderness character following intensive inventory completed in December, 1979.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE - 0 acres recommended for wilderness 480 acres recommended for nonwilderness**

The Heusser Mountain Bristlecone Pine Natural Area and its contiguous roadless acreage were determined to lack the wilderness characteristic of outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The study area was recommended for release from further wilderness consideration, and the roadless review area was not designated as a wilderness study area. The long and short term effects of not designating Heusser Mountain Bristlecone Pine Natural Area as wilderness would be that all uses which previously were compatible with natural area management would continue to be permitted. The area is expected to remain in a natural condition due to the precipitous terrain that would prevent most surface disturbing activities.

### **3. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**A. Naturalness:** During the intensive inventory, approximately 24,600 acres, including the Natural Area and surrounding roadless area, was found to be completely natural with "no known imprints of man's work." These lands are characterized by steep mountainous terrain dominated by bristlecone pine and surrounded by pinyon pine and juniper.

**B. Solitude:** Even when considered with the surrounding area determined to be natural, the inventory unit was considered not to have outstanding opportunities for solitude due to its long, narrow configuration. When the surrounding roadless, natural lands were dropped from further consideration as wilderness, the remaining 480 were determined to lack sufficient size to provide opportunity for solitude.

**C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:** The intensive inventory unit was determined to have "good, but not outstanding, diversity of recreation opportunities..." The quality of recreation opportunities was said to be further diminished by the presence of heavy smog from a nearby smelter, which has since been destroyed.

**D. Special Features:** The area contains a moderate cover of bristlecone pine which are considered one of the longest living life forms on earth, but are not particularly unusual or rare.

#### **4. MANAGEABILITY**

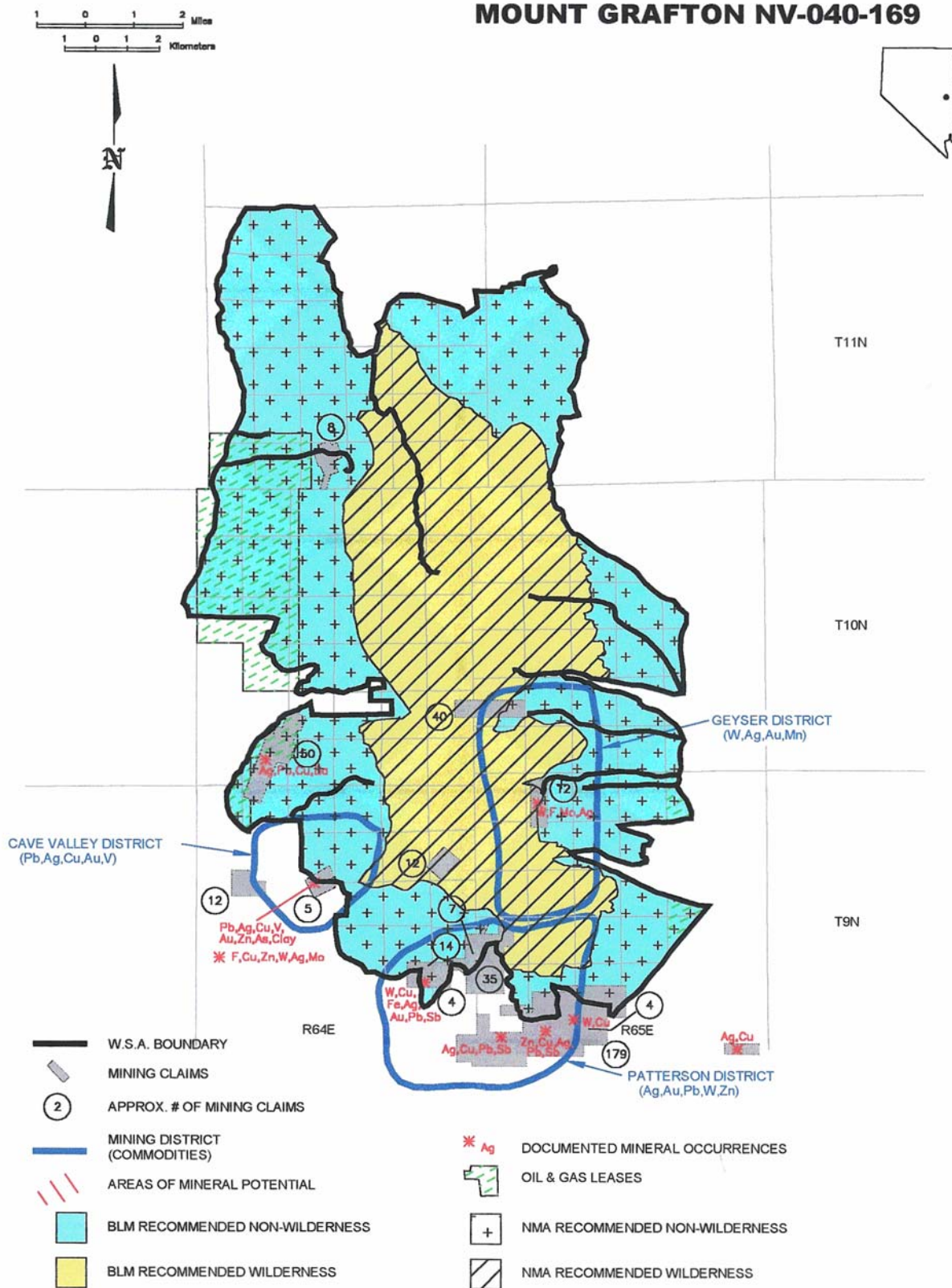
The area is not manageable as wilderness due to its small size and lack of natural boundaries..

#### **5. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES**

A minerals report from the U.S. Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey was not prepared for this study area.

#### **6. SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The Heusser Mountain Bristlecone Pine Natural Area was inventoried along with the roadless review area in which it is located (NV-040-048A) during an intensive inventory conducted in 1979. Most specific comments on this unit mentioned natural conditions and outstanding opportunities. Some cited intrusions and lack of solitude. One stated the unit lacks wilderness criteria, and several noted supplemental values and two listed other resource values. 2,326 general comments stated that the unit meets the wilderness criteria.





## **MOUNT GRAFTON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA**

### **1. THE STUDY AREA - 73,216 acres**

The Mount Grafton WSA (NV-040-169) is located in east-central Nevada, in White Pine and Lincoln Counties, approximately 30 miles south of Ely, Nevada. The WSA includes 73,216 acres of public land and five privately owned inholdings totaling 280 acres .

The boundaries of the WSA are a complex combination of lines drawn along roads, private land, contour lines and natural features. The northern boundary of the unit follows a legal line, a fence line, the 7,400-foot contour line, several natural features and the Cattle Camp Wash Road. The eastern boundary is formed by the Lake Valley Summit Road and a series of inter-connected fence lines and jeep trails which traverse the eastern bench. The southern boundary is formed by old mining roads and scars north of Patterson Pass. The southwestern boundary traverses the alluvial bench to the north and for the most part is defined by private land and jeep trails. The Cave Valley Road forms the west boundary of the unit.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE - 30,115 acres recommended for wilderness 43,101 acres recommended for nonwilderness**

Mount Grafton itself, at 10,990 feet, is the tallest peak on BLM-administered land in Nevada. These highly scenic mountains of the Schell Creek Range are rugged with numerous rock outcrops, crags and peaks scattered throughout the high country. Public support was strong during the study process and during the formal review of the draft wilderness EIS. It has also long been one of the more popular areas in the region among outdoor recreationists. The diversity and the quality of these recreation opportunities are outstanding and led to the recommendation to designate a portion of the WSA as wilderness. Every feature of the WSA is on a large scale, its three major peaks being the last to hold snow in the late spring, the first to carry snow in autumn. From the peaks, the view of surrounding valleys and mountains is expansive and contributes to the exhilaration that is a definite part of the experience of ridgeline hiking. Wildlife is abundant: Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, mule deer, elk, raptors, and mountain lions are among the many species in the area. Extensive forested areas include pinyon, juniper, aspen, limber and bristlecone pine, and white fir. Also supporting the recommendation is the striking absence of manmade intrusions and the very naturalness of the area. The richness of the natural environment along with its size makes for outstanding opportunities for solitude. Excellent screening is provided by the massive landform and by the dense woodland over much of the mountain range. Designation of this portion of the WSA as wilderness would serve to protect most of the high wilderness values, while minimizing the conflicts with other resources. Some conflicts associated with mineral potential do remain. Although potential exists, it is not anticipated that any mineral production would occur in the foreseeable future.

Portion A was not recommended due to lower wilderness values, the presence of a crested wheat grass seeding, several stock reservoirs and cherry stemmed routes. Portion B was not recommended for wilderness due to numerous cherry stemmed roads and ways totaling about 10 miles, a bladed fence line, two diversion ditches and the ruins of an abandoned tramway. This portion also includes the area near the Deer Trail Mine where numerous mining prospects are scattered along the hillsides.

Portion C was not recommended for wilderness due to mineral information provided by the 1983 GEM study. The mineral potential of this area is sufficient to emphasize management of this area to maintain access for mineral exploration. Portion D was not recommended for wilderness because of manageability concerns with the five parcels of private lands scattered throughout the area as well as mineral potential. Several of the private parcels have no current access and any attempt to create a road to them would be highly visible.

Maintaining access to this area for mineral exploration is emphasized. Portion E on the north end of the WSA was excluded because of the presence of many unnatural features including crested wheat grass seedlings, stock reservoirs, as well as many miles of fences and jeep trails. In addition, approximately 5 miles of the northern boundary is not based on easily seen features on the ground and this lack of identification is considered a manageability concern.

### **3. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**A. Naturalness:** The Mount Grafton WSA is in a natural condition. The WSA's large size and dissected topography has served to confine intrusions to the lower elevations. The high degree of naturalness within the WSA has been recognized with the designation of two scenic areas within the unit - the Mount Grafton and North Creek Scenic Areas. The suitable core of the area is nearly pristine. Here, creeks rush down through aspen groves, elk wander in high meadows and bristlecone pine cling to rocky faces. Only portions of five primitive cherry stemmed routes can be found within this area and they are very unobtrusive.

**B. Solitude:** Opportunities for solitude in the Mount Grafton WSA are outstanding. The sheer size of the area alone makes for good opportunities. Combined with this are the excellent topographic screening with many side canyons and large rock outcrops; and excellent vegetative screening from dense pinyon-juniper stands and large stands of aspen and fir. The benchlands in areas A, B, and D have lower quality opportunities for solitude than the remainder of the WSA. Overall, both the topographic and the vegetative screening on the benches is somewhat less than in the mountains and fewer secluded areas can be found.

**C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:** Outstanding opportunities for recreation exist in the Mount Grafton WSA due to a combination of good diversity and a high quality of opportunities. Hiking, camping, and backpacking opportunities are excellent on the ridgeline where the scenic vistas both outside and within the WSA are awe-inspiring. The North Creek area on the east side of the WSA is a large riparian zone with abundant fauna and flora. The creek is one of only a few perennial streams with a fishery entirely on BLM-administered land in the Ely District. Other types of recreation possible in the WSA include trapping, hunting, rock climbing, photography, and fishing at North Creek and Geyser Creek. The quality of these opportunities generally diminishes as the elevation decreases. Recreation opportunities are lowest on the benchlands where the vegetation, wildlife, and scenery is least varied.

**D. Special Features:** The high scenic value of the WSA is considered to be a special feature. Many factors contribute to the scenic values including the massiveness of the landform; the alternating open and forested areas with their different and contrasting colors and textures provided by talus fields, grass meadows, rock outcrops, and bright fall colors of large aspen stands. The North Creek and Mount Grafton scenic areas are formally designated areas which partially lie within the WSA.

**4. MANAGEABILITY** (the area must be capable of being managed to preserve its wilderness character) The portion of the Mount Grafton WSA recommended for wilderness is manageable with little cost or effort due to the exclusion of benchland areas which contain most of the roads, ways, range developments and private lands. Portions A through C would be manageable as wilderness. The crested wheat grass seedlings and other range developments in these portions would require periodic mechanical maintenance. While temporarily impacting wilderness values in the vicinity during the needed maintenance, wilderness values would not be greatly lessened by these efforts. While not rendering the entire Portion D unmanageable, the two private parcels with no current access do create a management concern. Portion E would not be manageable with the current boundary. Approximately 5 miles of this northern boundary is poorly defined on the ground. The crested wheat grass seedlings and other range developments in this portion would require periodic mechanical maintenance. While temporarily impacting wilderness values in the vicinity during the needed maintenance, wilderness values would not be greatly lessened by these efforts.

#### **5. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES**

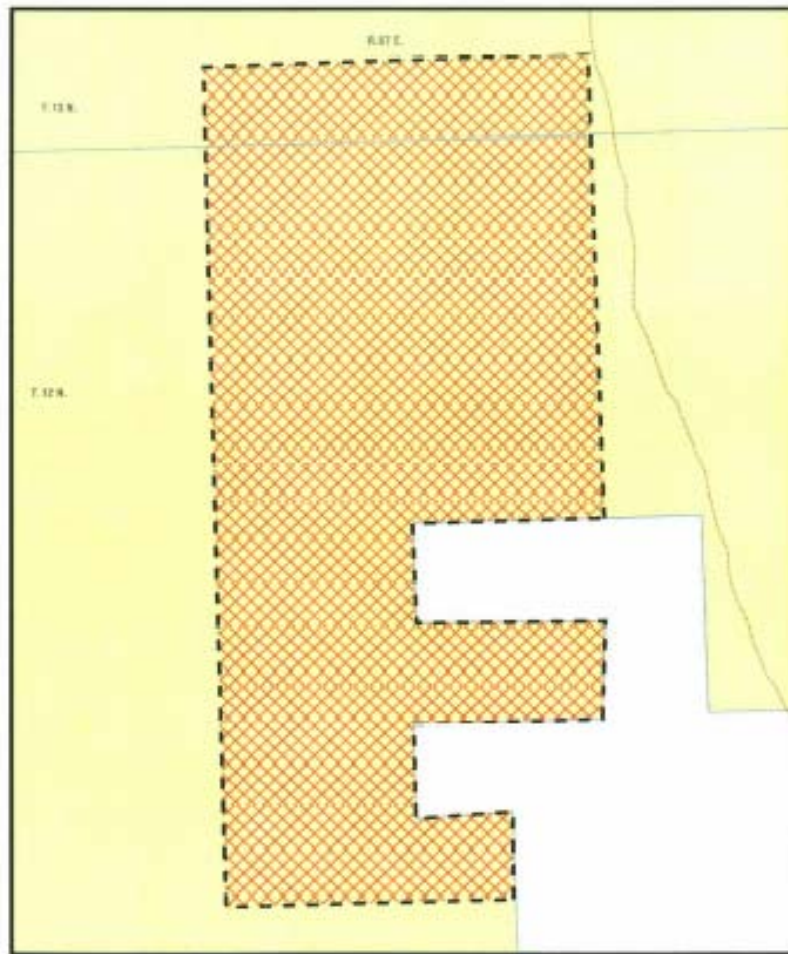
The report identifies the majority of the area recommended for wilderness as having low potential for mineral resources. Three areas on the periphery of the unit were identified as having moderate potential. On the northwest periphery of the study area, moderate potential for gold and silver occurring in vein deposits was identified. The eastern portion of the unit was identified as having moderate potential for silver and tungsten. The southern portion of the unit which borders the Patterson Mining District was identified as having moderate potential for tungsten, lead, zinc, silver, gold and fluorite in hydrothermal veins or replacement deposits. A small zone within the moderate potential area was identified as having high potential for tungsten, zinc and copper metals. Development of mineral resources is not anticipated. The energy resource (oil and gas) potential was rated as low for the Mount Grafton WSA. Geothermal resource potential for the WSA was also rated as low.

#### **6. SUMMARY OF WSA-SPECIFIC COMMENTS**

During formal public review of the draft EIS and Wilderness Technical Report held between April 8 to July 8, 1983 a total of 41 comments were received specifically addressing the Mount Grafton WSA. Of those, 32 were written comments and 9 were oral testimonies. In general, 35 commentors supported wilderness designation for all or part of the WSA, 5 commentors supported no wilderness for the WSA while one commenter mentioned the Mount Grafton WSA but took no formal position on wilderness designation. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Mines, Bureau of Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, and the Department of the Air Force all commented on the draft EIS. None of these agencies had a jurisdictional conflict with any of the alternatives. The Governor of Nevada as well as the State Divisions of State Lands, Parks, Forestry, and Historic Preservation and Archeology, Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Lincoln County Conservation District supported a no wilderness recommendation because of old tungsten mining sites, the presence of roads and ways, and a concern that access for wildlife management could be curtailed. One letter was received on the final EIS from the Environmental Protection Agency which supported the BLM's wilderness recommendation.

10/23/2000

# Shoshone Ponds Instant Study Area MINERAL POTENTIAL



NO HIGH OR MEDIUM MINERAL POTENTIAL IS IDENTIFIED ON THIS MAP.

BLM  
Private Land

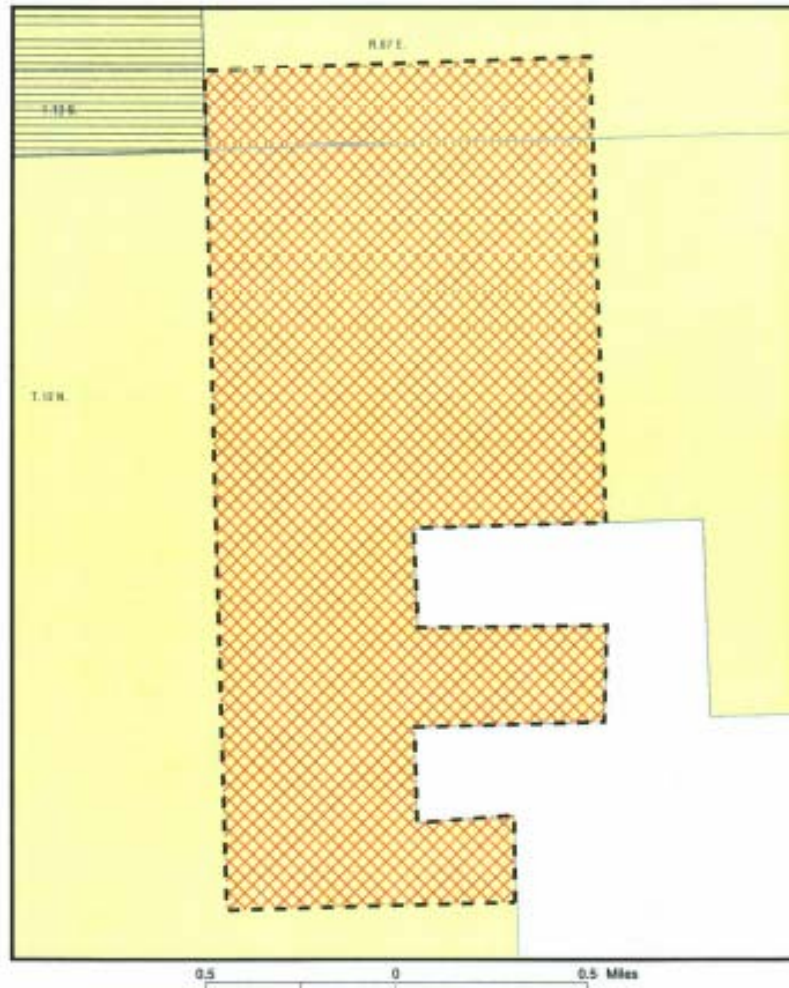
-- Instant Study Area Boundary  
Recommended Non-Suitable



Shoshone Ponds ISA



**Shoshone Ponds Instant Study Area**  
**MINING CLAIM DENSITY AND OPERATIONS**



**Mining Claim Density - 3/97**

- 1-5 Claims
- 6-35 Claims
- 36 or more Claims

**NO MINING OPERATIONS ON THIS MAP**

BLM  
Private Land

-- Instant Study Area Boundary  
Recommended Non-Suitable



## **SHOSHONE PONDS INSTANT STUDY AREA**

### **1. THE STUDY AREA - 1,240 acres**

The Shoshone Ponds Natural Area is located approximately 40 road miles southeast of Ely, Nevada in White Pine County and contains 1,240 acres of public land. The study area is bordered on the southeast by private lands. Public lands comprise the remainder of the study area boundary. The Shoshone Ponds area was designated a Natural Area in 1970 for the protection of several species of fish listed as threatened or endangered. These fish were acquired from various locations in southeastern Nevada and transplanted into artificial ponds built specifically to provide habitat for these fish populations. The Shoshone Ponds Natural Area was inventoried along with the 1,400 acre roadless review area NV-040-180 during an early special inventory conducted in conjunction with the Intermountain Power Project. That inventory found that the review area met the wilderness act criteria for naturalness, but lacked outstanding opportunities for either solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE - 0 acres recommended for wilderness 1,240 acres recommended for nonwilderness**

The Shoshone Ponds Natural Area and its contiguous roadless acreage were determined to lack the wilderness characteristics of outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The wilderness instant study area was recommended for release from further wilderness consideration and the roadless area was not designated as a wilderness study area. The long and short term effects of releasing Shoshone Ponds Natural Area from interim management protection would be that all uses which were previously compatible with the natural area would continue to be permitted. The area is expected to remain in a natural condition because of the continuing need to protect the fish populations and their habitat.

### **3. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**A. Naturalness:** The landscape character in general remains natural. The intrusions noted are located primarily in the northeastern portion of the study area and are associated primarily with the water developments. These include a water well, small artificial ponds and a livestock enclosure fence. Other intrusions include a highway, access roads and ways, a stock pond, and historical ruins.

**B. Solitude:** Opportunities for solitude are limited due to the flat terrain, low vegetation and small size of the Natural Area. These factors combine to limit the ability of the visitor to avoid others or the sights and sounds of traffic and ranching activities. Opportunities for solitude are not considered to be outstanding in this area.

**C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:** Hiking, camping, nature study and photography are some of the activities which occur in this area, but neither the diversity nor quality of these activities are considered outstanding.

**D. Special Features:** Small ponds and artesian wells were developed in this area to provide habitat for threatened and endangered fish. One species of endangered fish continues to exist within the ponds. The study area also contains remnants of a Civilian Conservation Corps Camp built during the 1930's. Physical remnants of the camp include an earthen structure once used as a swimming and bathing pool and a stone bordered pathway which delineates the living quarters and parade grounds of the camp.

Rocky mountain juniper thrives in the wet meadows of the study area. This is a tree species uncommon to Nevada and found primarily in wet, upland drainages of mountain slopes. The marshy area created by the developed water source attracts wildlife and enhances vegetation diversity.

#### **4. MANAGEABILITY:**

The area is not manageable as wilderness due to its small size, the lack of natural boundaries and the limited wilderness character.

#### **5. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES**

A minerals report from the U.S. Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey was not prepared for this study area. The potential for the occurrence of oil and gas resources within the study area is considered to be high. The potential for other resources is considered to be low or no potential for occurrence.

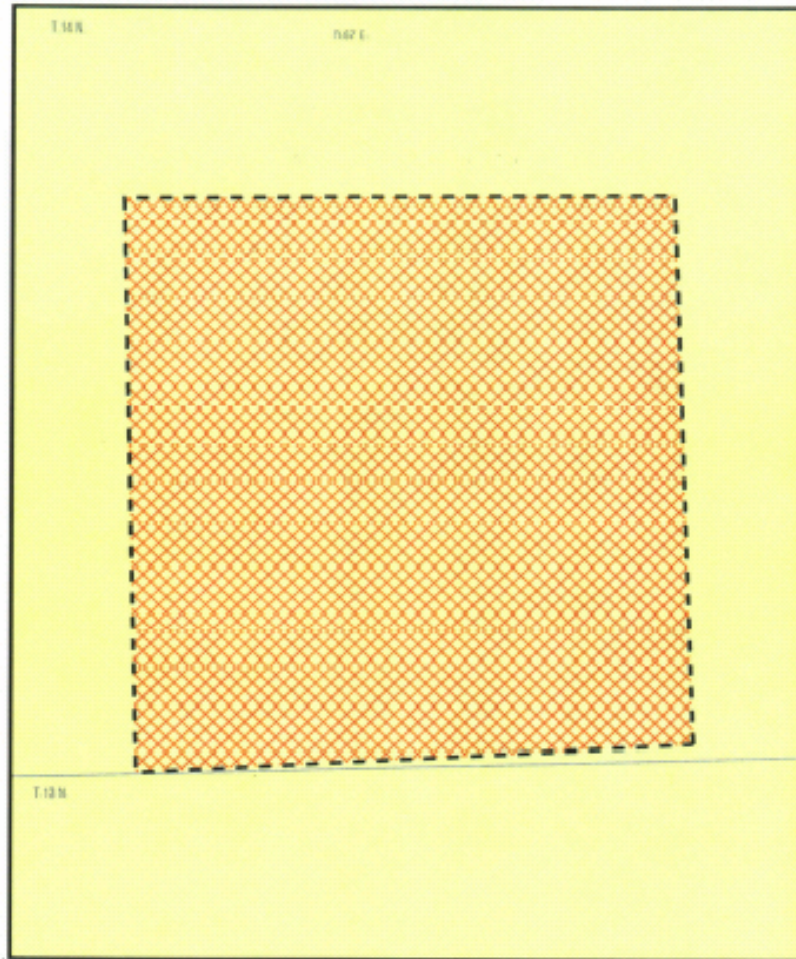
#### **6. SUMMARY OF WSA-SPECIFIC COMMENTS**

The Shoshone Ponds Natural Area was inventoried along with the 1,400 acre roadless review area during an early special inventory conducted in conjunction with the Intermountain Power Project. A public meeting was held in Ely, Nevada on November 14, 1978 to describe the findings of the special inventory and to invite public comment. A 90-day public comment review period was held from November 19, 1978 to February 16,

1979. Meetings were also held in Reno and Las Vegas, Nevada during the public comment period. No public comment was received during the public review period regarding the Shoshone Ponds Natural Area or the roadless area NV-040-180.

10/23/2000

# Shoshone Pygmy Sage Instant Study Area MINERAL POTENTIAL



0.1 0 0.1 Miles  
CONTOUR INTERVAL 200 METERS ( 656 FEET )

NO HIGH OR MEDIUM MINERAL POTENTIAL IS IDENTIFIED ON THIS MAP.

 BLM

-- Wilderness Study Area Boundary  
 Recommended Non-Suitable

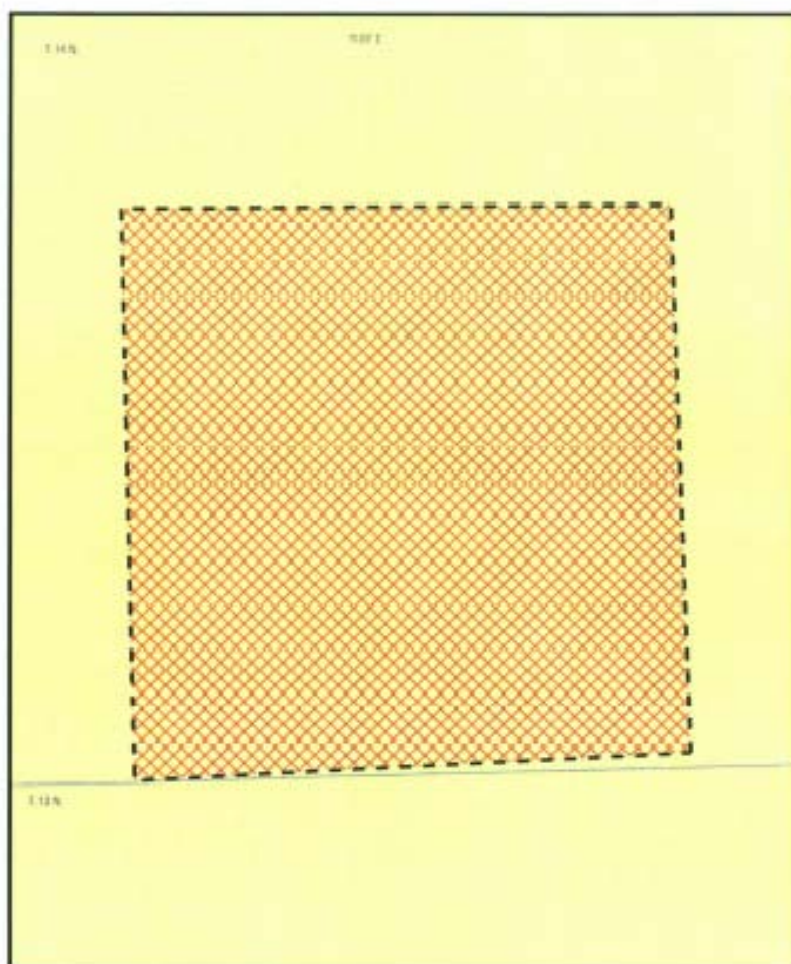


Shoshone Pygmy Sage ISA





10/23/2000

# **Shoshone Pygmy Sage Instant Study Area** **MINING CLAIM DENSITY AND OPERATIONS**



NO MINING CLAIMS OR OPERATIONS ON THIS MAP

 **BLM**

-- **Wilderness Study Area Boundary**  
 **Recommended Non-Suitable**



Shoshone Pygmy Sage ISA

## **SHOSHONE PYGMY SAGE INSTANT STUDY AREA**

### **1. THE STUDY AREA - 160 acres**

The Shoshone Pygmy Sage Instant Study Area is located northwest of Mount Wheeler within Spring Valley in White Pine County, NV. It consists of approximately 160 acres of public land. The Shoshone Pygmy Sage Research Natural Area was designated in 1965 to assist in the preservation of an example of the pygmy sage ecosystem for comparison with those ecosystems influenced by man, to provide an educational and research area, and provide a gene pool and preserve for an unusual (but not threatened or endangered) species. The Natural Area was intensively inventoried and evaluated in conjunction with the surrounding 3,840 acre roadless review area in conjunction with the Intermountain Power Project accelerated wilderness inventory. The entire review unit was found to lack wilderness character following intensive inventory completed in March, 1979.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE - 0 acres recommended for wilderness 160 acres recommended for nonwilderness**

The Shoshone Pygmy Sage Instant Study Area and its contiguous roadless acreage were determined to lack the size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreation considered to define wilderness character. The study area was recommended for release from further wilderness consideration, and the roadless review area was not designated as a wilderness study area. The long and short term effects of not designating Shoshone Pygmy Sage Instant Study Area as wilderness would be that all uses which previously were compatible with natural area management would continue to be permitted.

### **3. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**A. Naturalness:** During the intensive inventory, the area was determined to be generally unnatural, containing fence lines, a well and a power line.

**B. Solitude:** The small size of the area combined with its lack of substantial vegetation and topographic diversity combine to minimize opportunities for solitude.

**C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:** Hiking, dry camping, photography, and nature study are all physically possible in the area, but neither the quantity nor quality of these opportunities can be considered outstanding.

**D. Special Features:** Pygmy sage (*Artemesia pygma*) is an unusual species which grows in the area, however, it is not listed as threatened or endangered.

### **4. MANAGEABILITY**

The area is not manageable as wilderness due to its small size. Even including the surrounding roadless review area, it would contain only 4,000 acres. The lack of any substantial vegetation combined with the flat topography of the area would make management for wilderness nearly impossible.

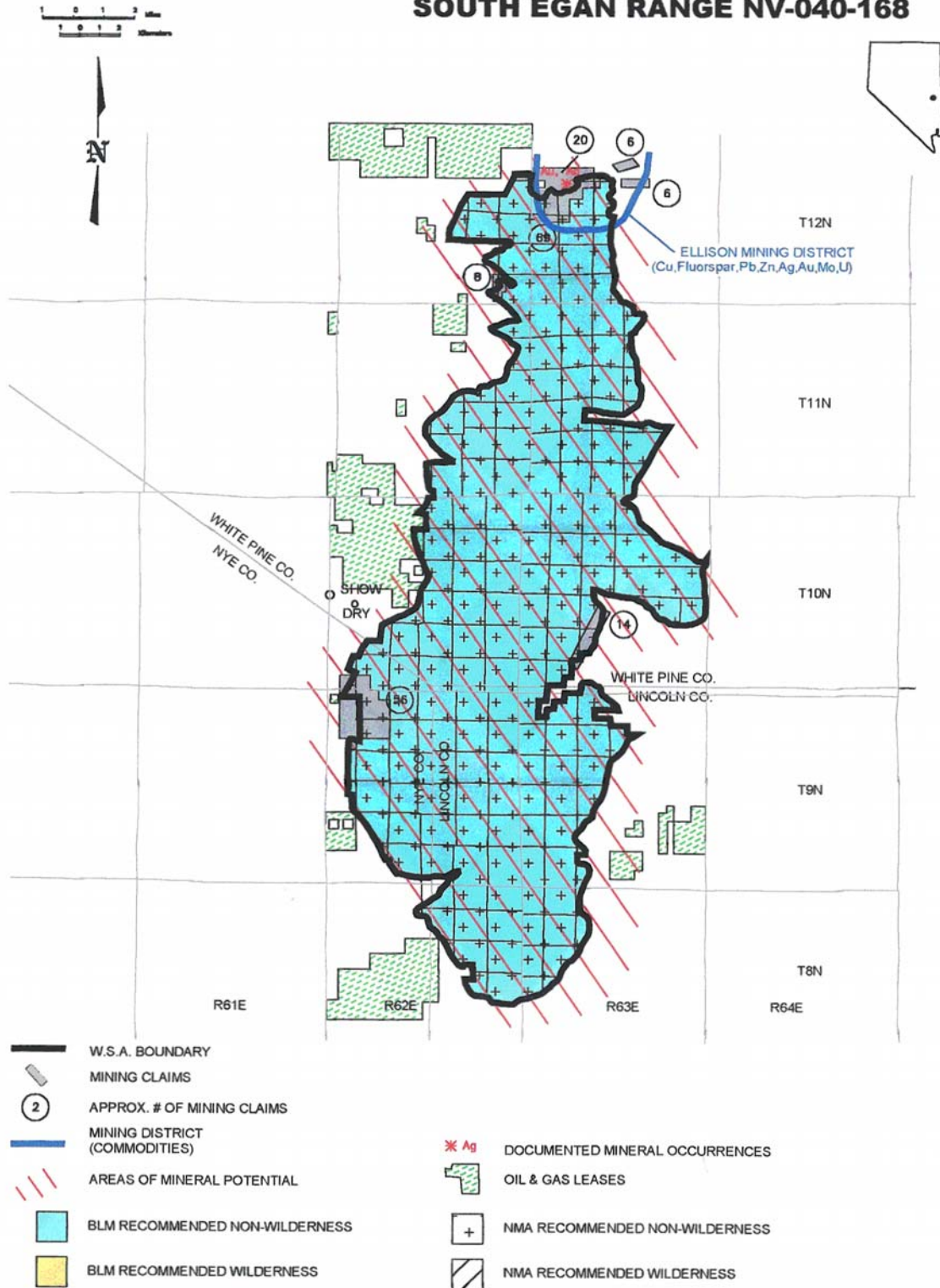
### **5. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES**

A minerals report from the U.S. Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey was not prepared for this study area.

### **6. SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The Shoshone Pygmy Sage Instant Study Area was inventoried along with the roadless review area in which it is located during an accelerated inventory conducted in 1979. There was no public comment made on the Pygmy Sage Natural Area during the formal public comment period. One letter was received after the close of the comment period which supported wilderness classification for the area.

# **SOUTH EGAN RANGE NV-040-168**



## **SOUTH EGAN RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA**

### **1. THE STUDY AREA - 96,916 ACRES**

The South Egan Range WSA (NV-040-168) is located in White Pine, Lincoln and Nye Counties in east-central Nevada. The nearest incorporated town is Lund, Nevada located two miles to the west. The WSA is comprised primarily of public land although it contains several private inholdings. The boundaries for the WSA are a complicated system of roads, private land, fence lines, and other unnatural features that, together, encircle nearly 100,000 acres of very mountainous terrain. The northern boundary of the unit is formed by the Sawmill Canyon Road and the Rock Canyon seeding fence.

The eastern boundary follows the Lone Pine Swale Road for nine miles to the Tony fence line. Two miles to the south the fence line connects with the Milk Ranch Canyon Road. The next ten miles of boundary are formed by the Milk Ranch Canyon Road, the Cave Valley Road, the Blue Rock Canyon Road and an unnamed jeep trail which traverses the Egan Range south to Long Canyon. Private land forms the boundary in Long Canyon and Haggerty Wash. The Shingle Pass Road completes the eastern and southern boundaries of the unit. The western boundary parallels State Highway 318 by following a series of interconnected north-south jeep trails and fence lines which traverse the length of the alluvial fan slope at the base of the range. The southern most part of the western boundary is formed by a series of indefinite point-to-point locations which tie into the Shingle Pass Road.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE - 0 acres recommended for wilderness 96,916 acres recommended for nonwilderness**

The recommendation for the South Egan Range WSA is to release the entire area for uses other than wilderness. The South Egan Range was not recommended for wilderness because of the quantity of unnatural features, the mineral potential in the northern portion, concern expressed by local citizens, potential for developed recreation, and close proximity to several other WSAs recommended for wilderness. Several manageability concerns exist that support the recommendation include an awkward configuration caused by a series of unnatural features (roads, fence lines, reservoirs). The area could almost be considered as two separate units; a northern unit and a southern unit. Dividing the area or reducing its size to deal with manageability concerns would dilute the quality of opportunities available. In addition, the WSA boundary is based on many ambiguous features. Much of the eastern boundary is based on private parcels which are largely unsurveyed and unmarked on the ground. Portions of fence lines, jeep trails, point-to-point features, etc. make identifying the remaining boundary very difficult. Although most of the unnatural features have been cherry stemmed from the area, they still exist as reminders of man's influence. Their extent goes beyond the valley and bench areas into the high country. Bladed fence lines occur as high as the top of the range and numerous cherry stemmed roads and ways cut through the heart of the WSA.



### **3. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**A. Naturalness:** Much of the WSA is untouched, almost pristine. Naturalness values are highest in two fairly distinct zones, a northern and a southern one. These are the remote higher elevation areas of the WSA where the ruggedness prevents extensive grazing by cattle and access and project developments are less feasible. Yet, a large number of manmade intrusions penetrate the area. This part of the Egan Range has been heavily developed for livestock grazing, and most of the unnatural features are associated with this activity. Several miles of bladed fence line, many roads, and numerous developed springs exist throughout the area. Many of the man-made intrusions are especially concentrated in the Sheep Pass Canyon area in the center of the unit.

**B. Solitude:** Opportunities for solitude are outstanding in the WSA. The very large size of the area combines with extensive topographic and vegetative screening to create these. Although the mountains of the unit lie in an elongated configuration, they do have breadth and are highly dissected. Many side canyons and ancillary ridges, outcrops and interconnected peaks serve to provide innumerable secluded places to which a person can retreat from evidences of civilization. Solitude is greatest in the most natural parts of the WSA.

**C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:** Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation in the WSA are outstanding because of the variety and quality of different types of recreation possible. The area provides a diversity of terrain, ecosystems, and scenic vistas which enhance nearly all opportunities, including those for backpacking, hunting, nature study, horseback riding, and hiking. In many places at the highest elevations, the mountains form a broad, nearly flat table with small scattered stands of timber. Opportunities for camping and hiking are especially good in such areas because of their openness, the level terrain they offer and the coppices of trees that provide shelter and fuel wood. Recreation opportunities in the WSA are generally enhanced by a relative abundance of springs and riparian areas. Hunters find ample opportunities for enjoyment of their sport because of the concentrations of mule deer, sage grouse, blue grouse and mountain lions. The WSA currently sustains comparatively heavy hunting use, with an estimated 455 hunter visits per year. The potential for technical rock climbing is known to be good. Challenging ascents exist for a wide range of skill levels, from the easiest to the very difficult.

**D. Special Features:** Bristlecone pines, members of the longest-lived species on earth occur in fairly high numbers at the highest elevations. Angel Cave is considered a special feature even though it is not especially large. It is a limestone solution cave that is atypical because of the high elevation at which it occurs. Most such caves occur at lower elevations where groundwater accumulates. The cave is ripe for scientific study that may lead to understanding of the mechanisms and dynamics of its formation.

Another special feature is the area's archaeological richness. Known prehistoric archaeological values are fairly extensive and include several large camp site complexes, quarry sites, and rock art. Potential for discovery of additional cultural resources is very high within the WSA. The scenic values of the WSA are especially great because of the dramatic rock cliffs on the western side of the range. They are very striking from highway 318, which parallels the range; and are most impressive when beheld at close range, towering high overhead. The wildlife values of the area constitute a special feature due to their great numbers and diversity.

The cliffs provide nesting areas for cliff dwelling raptors, in particular prairie falcons, whose nesting density here is the highest in the Ely BLM District. Red-tail hawks, golden eagles, kestrels, turkey vultures, great horned and long eared owls also dwell in the area. Their presence provides good opportunities for scientific and educational study.

#### **4. MANAGEABILITY**

Overall, the South Egan Range WSA would be manageable as wilderness. Nearly 25 miles of the boundary are based on unsurveyed and/or unmarked private land. The 400 acres of private land scattered through the WSA could cause some manageability problems should development take place on these parcels in the future and access be needed. In addition, the 80 acres of privately owned mineral rights (split estate) could also present manageability problems should any exploration or development occur.

The mineral potential on the north end of the WSA could pose some manageability dilemmas. Even with wilderness designation, some mineral and energy exploration is likely. In addition, two oil and gas exploration wells are predicted to be drilled along the western bench within the WSA and wilderness values would be lost in their immediate vicinity for a long period of time. Finally, manageability would be affected by activities which are currently occurring without authorization, principally greenwood cutting. Patrol costs and regulation of these activities would be costly in terms of both time and funds. Other activities such as off-road travel, would be difficult to control because of an established history of use by local residents.

#### **5. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES**

The South Egan Range WSA was evaluated for energy and mineral potential in the 1983 GEM study. This study led to additional geochemical sampling over the entire WSA to further refine the resource potential evaluations (USGS Preliminary Open-File Report "Reconnaissance Geochemistry of the South Egan Range"; 1983). The 1983 GEM report rates the northern portion of the WSA within the Ellison Mining District as moderate to high favorability for metallic and non-metallic mineral resources with a high confidence level. This evaluation is supported by the fact that mining claims are still held in the area and mineral exploration is continuing on a sporadic basis. Limited amounts of gold, silver, lead, copper, zinc, and fluorite were produced from the area in the 1930's and 1940's (Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology; Bulletin 85, 1976). The GEM study indicates that there are no known occurrences of oil and gas resources within the WSA and the area is rated as having low favorability for these resources. A 328 acre near Emigrant Springs has moderate geothermal potential. The thermal water here is measured at 70 degrees Fahrenheit. The remainder of the WSA has low potential for geothermal resources.

## **6. SUMMARY OF WSA-SPECIFIC PUBLIC COMMENTS**

During the inventory phase there were no comments received which mentioned other resource values or conflicts. Issues raised during the study phase cited the unit's archaeological, geological, and scenic values as well as diverse wildlife and vegetation. During public review of the draft wilderness recommendation, a total of 62 comments were received that specifically addressed this area; 52 commentors supported wilderness designation for all or part of the WSA, 9 commentors supported no wilderness for the WSA, and one commenter took no position on designation. Those supporting designation discussed the wildlife, scenic limestone cliffs and forests and bristlecone pine as reasons why the unit should be wilderness. The Division of State Parks in supporting the unit as wilderness, stated "the Egan Range is probably the best example in the Great Basin that shows a complete Paleozoic sequence of geology." Comments opposing wilderness designation mentioned the mineral and energy potential and existing mining to the north, high potential for range development, existing roads and dependence on the area for fuel wood and Christmas tree cutting by local residents.

The Governor of Nevada, in his consensus and consistency letters supported the referred Alternative of no wilderness. The White Pine County Commission, White Pine Regional Planning Commission, City of Ely and the Lund Town Council supported the proposed action which was no wilderness. The major concern of these groups was that wilderness designation could adversely affect the local economy. There were two comment letters received on the final wilderness recommendation. The first, from the Environmental Protection Agency did not specifically mention the South Egan Range WSA, nor did the second letter from the Duck water Shoshone Tribe.

*THE END*

Compiled from AutoCad, MapInfo and WordPerfect files supplied by the Nevada Mining Association.

By: G.I.S. Land Services 775-746-8803 5-22-03



# Nevada Mining Association

- Wants to be involved in the process
- Does not oppose wilderness designation of truly special BLM lands in Lincoln County that:
  - Meet the definition found in the Wilderness Act of 1964
  - Have been recommended by BLM for designation
  - Have low mineral potential

# Nevada Mining Association

- Supports legislation that addresses the status of existing Wilderness Study Areas.
- Reserves its position on new non-BLM Wilderness candidate areas in Nevada until the status of existing WSA's is resolved.