

**Bureau of Land Management
Ely District**

District Manager's Update

November 2024



Last revised October 24, 2024

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District Manager

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ENERGY

Electrical Transmission Development

TransCanyon Cross-Tie Project

The BLM and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest on September 20 released the Final Environmental Impact Statement, U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Draft Record of Decision, and pre-decisional objection review for the Cross-Tie 500-kilovolt Transmission Project, beginning a 45-day public comment period. Also on September 20, a Cultural Programmatic Agreement was sent to cooperating agencies for a final 30-day review. Comments on the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Plan of Action were due on October 25.

The project proposes to connect PacifiCorp's existing 500-kilovolt Clover Substation in Juab County, Utah, with NV Energy's 500-kilovolt Robinson Summit Substation in White Pine County, Nev. Planning documents, including maps, are available for review at the BLM National NEPA Register.

SWIP North Project

The BLM Elko District is the designated lead for an authorized 1,500 MW 500 kV transmission line connecting the Midpoint substation north of Twin Falls, Idaho, to the Robinson substation northwest of Ely, where the line would connect with SWIP South. The LS Power line would extend 257 miles on BLM-administered lands in the Twin Falls, Elko, and Ely districts. The project is awaiting a notice to proceed pending cultural inventories, sage grouse mitigation, and ethnographic studies. The review of Terracon's Geotech Cultural Report is complete. The BLM completed review of the main cultural report. The final report addressing comments was sent to the State Historic Preservation Office at the end of October. The BLM has responded to the Bio Characterization report.

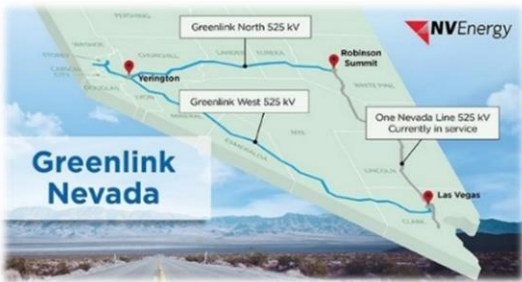
Robinson Substation Expansion

Third-party contractor POWER Engineers is preparing a preliminary environmental assessment analyzing proposals to construct a 1.3-mile transmission line connecting SWIP North to the Robinson substation west of Ely, Nev., and expand the substation by 55 acres to accommodate future electrical transmission. A preliminary EA is expected this Fall.

LS Power applied for the 1.3-mile transmission line in January 2023. In June 2023, LS Power subsidiary Great Basin Transmission, LLC applied to expand the substation. The BLM in September 2023 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Great Basin Transmission for the Robinson Summit Expansion / Interconnect Project. Cooperating agency invitation letters were sent in March 2024. POWER Engineers has completed a cultural resource inventory that is now under BLM review. Raptor Nest Inventory Results and Habitat Characterization Report have been submitted to the BLM. Acoustic monitoring was completed in July, and dark and pale kangaroo mouse surveys are on-going.

Burnt Springs Distribution Service Line

The BLM has received an application and revised proposed Plan of Development from Great Basin Transmission for a 500 kV Fixed Series Capacitor and a half-mile long 7.2kV distribution service line on approximately 15 acres of federally managed land, about 18 miles west of Panaca, Nev. The project has been pre-scoped internally and small mammal surveys and raptor nest inventory results received. The Project has been pre-scoped internally and an IDT established.



Green Link North

The BLM on September 10 published the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Resource Management Plan Amendment for the Greenlink North Transmission Project opening a 90-day public review and comment period that concludes December 11, 2024. More information is available at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2017033/510>.

Renewable Energy Development

Jakes Valley Solar (BRP Sandstone)

BRP Sandstone in September 2024 submitted an application proposing a 1000MW solar facility with a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) on 9,515 acres in Jakes Valley.

Lonely Road Solar Project

The BLM in mid-August received an application from Engie Energy for the proposed Lonely Road Solar Project to be constructed on 7,854 acres of the public lands in White River Valley. The Project proposes a fenced 600MW solar facility with BESS, substation, and O&M building and a 17.5-mile 345kV Gen-Tie line. A Cost Reimbursement Agreement was signed on September 25.

White Pine Pumped Storage

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on September 23 accepted rPlus Hydro subsidiary White Pine Waterpower, LLC's final license application and is beginning the NEPA process for a closed-loop pumped storage hydropower facility. The proposed facility, which would be constructed in White Pine County north of Ely, received FAST 41 authority from FERC in March 2023. The White Pine Pumped Storage facility would provide up to 1,000 megawatts (MW) of electrical generating capability with an overall energy storage capacity of 8,000 megawatt-hours (MWh) per day by moving water between an upper and a lower reservoir to store the energy for later use. A new 25-mile, 345-kV single-circuit transmission line would extend from the project to the Robinson Summit substation. The deadline to submit comments is November 22, 2024.

White Pine Pumped Storage Hydrogeologic Evaluation

rPlus Hydro subsidiary White Pine Waterpower, LLC in July 2024 submitted a revised Plan of Development for a hydrogeologic investigation that would inform the larger White Pine Pumped Storage project (see above). The Bristlecone Field office is leading a Technical Working Group

for wildlife that consists of representatives from the BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife, White Pine County, rPlus Energies and Sagebrush Ecological Technical Team, and is preparing a preliminary environmental assessment (EA) for public review. The BLM has reviewed and provided comments on Chapters 1 and 2 of the EA.

Pantheon Solar Development Project

The Ely District on Sept. 24, 2024, received variance concurrence from Director Tracy Stone-Manning. In October 2024 the project proponent applied for and received FAST-41 status.



The BLM in October 2023 segregated for two-years public lands proposed for use by the Pantheon Solar Development Project, preventing the land from being sold or subject to new mining claims while BLM processes the application. The project proposes the use of 2,751.5 acres of Bristlecone Field Office-managed lands south of U.S. Highway 50 in Jakes Valley, about 15 miles west of Ely, Nev. If approved, the project could generate up to 400 megawatts of solar energy.

The BLM worked with the proponent on a Variance Factor Analysis Report (VFAR) as outlined in the October 2012 Approved Resource Management Plan Amendments/ Record of Decision (ROD) for Solar Energy Development in Six Southwestern States.

The Bristlecone Field office is leading a Technical Working Group for wildlife that consists of representatives from the BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Nevada Department of Wildlife. Wildlife survey reports are under review with the BLM. The BLM has issued a fieldwork authorization to conduct a paleontological survey.



Pantheon 2 Solar Development Project

Arevia Power in August 2024 submitted an application proposing a fenced 200-megawatt solar facility across two sites with an O&M building, MET tower, five-mile road, and 230kV or 500kV Gen-tie line to the proposed Pantheon Solar substation. The Project proposed on 1,293 acres in Jakes Valley is adjacent to the Pantheon Solar Development Project (see above). A Cost Reimbursement Agreement was signed on September 9.

Pantheon 3 Solar Development Project

In September 2024, Arevia Power submitted an application proposing a 600MW solar facility with BESS on 5,205 acres in Jakes Valley with an 18-mile long 230 or 500 kV gen-tie line to Robinson substation.

Stagecoach Wind LLC Type 3

Processing of the application is currently on pause per request of Arevia Power. In September 2023, the BLM set aside lands for Arevia Power's proposed Stagecoach Wind Project, a planned 600-megawatt installation that would be located in south Newark Valley, about 40 miles west of Ely or 18 miles east of Eureka, Nev. The announcement set aside nearly 70,000 acres in the project area for two years from appropriation under the public land laws, including location under the Mining Law, but not the Mineral Leasing Act or the Materials Act, to prevent new mining claims from interfering with project review or development. Existing claims are not

affected. The action was taken prior to the BLM beginning the environmental analysis of the proposed project under the National Environmental Policy Act. If completed, the proposed project would be the second and largest wind generation facility in Nevada. More at <https://www.permits.performance.gov/permitting-project/fast-41-covered-projects/stagecoach-wind>

Samantha Solar (Balanced Rock)

The BLM is reviewing the Final Variance Factor Analysis Report (VFAR). The BLM in July 2024 segregated for two-years public lands proposed for use by the Samantha Solar Development Project, preventing the land from being sold or subject to new mining claims while BLM processes the application. The project proposes the use of 2,893.30 acres of Bristlecone Field Office-managed lands south of U.S. Highway 50 in Jakes Valley, about 15 miles west of Ely, Nev. If approved, the project could generate up to 600 megawatts of solar energy.



The Bristlecone Field office is leading a Technical Working Group for wildlife that consists of representatives from the BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Nevada Department of Wildlife.

Wind and Solar Applications



The Bristlecone Field Office continues receiving applications for solar and wind testing, and development. Development is prohibited within Greater Sage Grouse Priority Habitat under the 2015 Greater Sage Grouse Amendment. Testing is allowed on small, individual sites. Disposition of applications is starting with subsequent NEPA being developed and decision process on testing applications beginning.

LANDS & REALTY

Lincoln County Water District Rights-of-Way

The Caliente Field Office in fiscal year 2024 will begin work on a Lincoln County Water District Plan of Development for a main pipeline and delivery lines to transport groundwater to land disposed of near Mesquite under the Lincoln County Lands Act. The Lincoln County Power District has also proposed access roads and a power line to support the water project. The field office will conduct public scoping for an environmental assessment to amend existing or issue new rights-of-way, in accordance with the Lincoln County Lands Act Groundwater and Utility Development Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (2008).

CalTech DSA-2000 Radio Telescope Array Project

The Bristlecone Field Office is currently in the pre-NEPA planning phase, coordinating timelines and requirements with CalTech. CalTech proposes to erect a Radio Telescope Array Project

(DSA-2000) on approximately 63,250 acres of the public lands in north Spring Valley, about 15 miles north of the proposed Bahsahwahbee National Monument boundary. Wildlife working group members are the Nevada Department of Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team, and California Institute of Technology (CalTech)

CalTech submitted the Right-of-Way application in September 2023. An amendment to the Plan of Development was submitted in January 2024. The BLM conducted formal Tribal Consultation with the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe and the Ely Shoshone Tribe during a site visit in May 2024.

The Bristlecone Field office is leading a Biological Working Group for wildlife that consists of representatives from the BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Nevada Department of Wildlife. Biological study plans and wildlife survey reports are under review with the BLM. A cultural resource inventory is underway.

MINERALS

Mining

Kinross Bald Mountain Mine (KG-BM)

The BLM on July 8, 2024, signed the Record of Decision. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) signed the Record of Decision a day later. The USFWS issued an Eagle Take Permit on Aug. 8 and the BLM signed a Notice to Proceed on Aug. 20, 2024.

The KG Mining Inc. Juniper Project modifies and expands operations on BLM-administered lands within the North Operations Area (NOA) of the existing Bald Mountain Mine, resulting in approximately 4,000 acres of new surface disturbance and extension of the NOA mine life by 11 years.



The BLM's selected and preferred alternative, Alternative A, was developed in close coordination with the Nevada Department of Wildlife and USFWS. It minimizes and avoids impacts to existing mule deer migration corridors within the expansion area and provides mitigation measures for impacts to Greater Sage Grouse. The USFWS intends to issue an Eagle Take Permit. The final EIS is available online at <https://go.usa.gov/xAm2g>.

NevGold USA, Limousine Butte EA

The BLM is routing the final environmental assessment for review and signature. The 30-day public comment period on the preliminary EA concluded in June 2024. The proposed project would be located on public land in White Pine County, about 65 miles north of Ely. NevGold USA is proposing a project area of 16,455 acres with 200 acres proposed for disturbance. The proposal calls for up to eight open exploration holes at any one time. The preliminary environmental assessment is available online at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2027207/510>.

Oil and Gas

Applications for Permit to Drill

Western Oil Exploration Company has not finished drilling the Scott Federal #35-1 exploratory well. The BLM issued a decision on Dec. 16, 2022, informing Western Oil that their lease has expired and they are no longer authorized under diligent drilling. Western Oil and the lease holder have filed an Appeal and Petition for Stay.

SPECIAL LEGISLATION

Lincoln-White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act Land Sales

- The Ely District on September 12 conducted a competitive online sale offering seven parcels of public land totaling 571.5 acres in Lincoln and White Pine counties. Five parcels totaling 481.5 acres sold generating \$477,500. The sales complied with the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 and White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006. Additional information is available at <https://www.blm.gov/announcement/blm-land-sale-generates-477500-projects>
- The Caliente Field Office is preparing an environmental assessment for a proposed multi-phase sale of 67 parcels of public land, totaling 5,445 acres in Lincoln County, Nev. The Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 directs the Ely District to dispose of up to 90,000 acres of public land within the county. Parcels identified by Lincoln County and BLM for rounds 5 through 11 may be offered for public sale annually through competitive auctions.
- The Bristlecone Field Office is preparing an environmental assessment for a proposed sale of three parcels of public land, totaling 1,535 acres in White Pine County, Nev. The White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006 directs the Ely District to dispose of up to 45,000 acres of public land within the county.

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Rangeland Monitoring/Term Permit Renewals

The Bristlecone Field Office has completed the proposed decision for the Indian George and is reviewing the protests received.

The Bristlecone Field Office and Basin and Range National Monument are preparing a term permit renewal for John Uhalde and Company's outcome-based grazing allotments. Invitation letters to cooperating agencies have been mailed. A preliminary environmental assessment is anticipated to be available for public comment in fall 2024.



The Caliente Field Office is completing NEPA for several range improvements, mostly improvements to water availability and spring protection. Several of the improvements are funded in part by the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).



The BLM is conducting a Land Health Assessment for the Barclay, Clover Creek, Duckwater, Enterprise, Simpson and Wildhorse allotments. The assessments are being organized by Use Area and are to be used for the allotment's Term Permit Renewals. Coordination with the livestock grazing permit holders is ongoing.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Fuels Reduction and Habitat Restoration

Multi-year, landscape-scale fuels reduction projects restore watershed health and improve wildlife habitat while reducing catastrophic wildfire risk. Treatment methods include, but are not limited to, hand-thinning, chaining, mastication, and prescribed fire use followed by aerial and/or ground seeding. The District often partners with federal and state agencies, Native American tribes, and private landowners. Some projects receive Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act funding. Current projects are:

- **Free Well/Gouge Eye Lop and Scatter:** Lop and scatter on 4,000 acres of the public lands within Lake Valley, about 55 miles south of Ely. The project is in a previously chained area where the regrowth is being treated. The treatment is part of the Cave and Lake Valley Watershed Restoration Project that will ultimately treat up to 165,000 acres of a 583,832-acre project area.
- **South Steptoe Chaining Maintenance:** Lop and scatter on 2,864 acres of the public lands along the west side of the Schell Creek Range, about 25 miles southeast of Ely. The project is in a previously chained area where the regrowth is being treated. The treatment is part of the South Steptoe Watershed Restoration Plan that will ultimately treat up to 54,000 acres of a 201,322-acre project area.
- **South Steptoe Chaining Maintenance:** Lop and scatter on 8,525 acres of the public lands along the west side of the Schell Creek Range and east side of the Egan Mountain Range, about 25 miles southeast of Ely. The project is in a previously chained area where the regrowth is being treated. The treatment is part of the South Steptoe Watershed Restoration Plan(see above).
- **Pony Springs Mastication:** Masticating pinyon-juniper from 987 acres of the public lands south of Pony Springs along Highway 93, about 25 miles north of Pioche. Seeding with a grass and forb mixture will follow. The treatment is part of the Cave and Lake



Valley Watershed Restoration Project that will ultimately treat up to 165,000 acres of a 583,832-acre project area.

- Waking Spring Lop and Scatter: Lop and scatter on 2,334 acres of the public lands near Sacramento Pass, about 30 miles north of Ely. Portions of the project are in a previously chained area where the regrowth is being treated. The treatment is part of the Waking Spring Fuel Reduction Project that will ultimately treat up to 4,485 acres near Sacramento Pass.
- Water Canyon Mastication: Rangelands Restoration Services, LLC, a local contractor, is masticating pinyon-juniper from 1,413 acres of the public lands on the west slope of the Egan Range in the Ward Mountain area, about 20 miles south of Ely. Seeding with a grass and forb mixture will follow. The first phase of the treatment was completed in 2023 treating 710 acres leaving 703 acres to be treated in 2024. The treatment is part of the Ward Mountain Restoration Project that will ultimately treat up to 42,670 acres within a 100,000-acre project area.

The following treatments are part of the Duck Creek Basin Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project that will ultimately treat up to 12,900 acres of a 30,000-acre project area.

- Axhandle Mastication: Masticating pinyon-juniper on 997 acres of the public lands along the east side of the Duck Creek Range in Duck Creek Basin, about 15 miles north of Ely. Seeding with a grass and forb mixture will follow. The first phase of the treatment was completed in 2023 treating 552 acres leaving 445 acres to be treated in 2024. The project is being completed by local contractor Rangelands Restoration Services, LLC.

The following treatments are part of the Egan and Johnson Basins Restoration Project that will ultimately treat up to 24,346 acres of the 84,675-project area.

- Egan and Johnson Lop and Scatter: Lop and scatter on 2,846 acres of the public lands in Egan and Johnson Basins, about 45 miles north of Ely.
- Egan and Johnson Basin Thinning: Lop and scatter on 2,426 acres of the public lands in Egan Basin, about 40 miles north of Ely.
- Egan and Johnson Mastication: Mastication on 1,217 acres of the public lands in Egan Basin, about 40 miles north of Ely.

The following treatment is part of the South Spring and Hamlin Watersheds Restoration Project that will ultimately treat up to 123,969 acres of a 637,140-acre project area.

- Hub Basin Lop and Scatter: Lop and scatter on 3,623 acres of the public lands near Shingle Creek, about 30 miles southeast of Ely.

RECREATION & TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Garnet Hill Recreation Area Management Plan

Contracts have been awarded for the Design of the Recreation Areas, as well as Design & Construction of motorized and non-motorized trail systems. Construction is scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2025. The Bristlecone Field Office released a Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Garnet Hill Recreation Area Management Plan and final Environmental Assessment in November 2023. The 30-day appeal period concluded in December 2023.



The field office is improving both the Garnet Hill Recreation Area and Egan Crest trail systems west of Ely. The Plan addresses how the BLM will manage and maintain the new recreation area, and anticipated increase in public visitation. Improvements include upgrading roadways, enlarging existing trailheads, adding overnight campgrounds, and constructing signed motorized and non-motorized trails systems. All facilities and some trails will be ADA accessible. Funding for the capital improvement project is provided through Round 18 of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

The Decision Record, Finding of No Significant Impact, and Garnet Hill Recreation Area Management Plan and final Environmental Assessment are available online at <https://bit.ly/3VdC38R>.

Highland Range Non-Motorized Trail

An International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) design team has finished almost 10 miles of single-track hiking and mountain biking trails connecting Pioche with Cathedral Gorge State Park. Trail construction is scheduled to be completed by midyear 2025. Project funding is provided by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act through the Caliente Field Office.



Mount Irish Cultural Resource Protection and Visitor Enhancements Project

The BLM is developing interpretive materials for camping areas and walking trails. Construction establishing four primitive camp areas, a vault toilet, walking trails connecting to rock art sites, and interpretive kiosks began in July 2023. The initial trail signage was installed the following September by National Public Lands Day volunteers. Mount Irish's diverse collection of cultural resources have attracted visitors for decades. Increased visitation and lack of amenities have resulted in trash, rock campfire rings, and human refuse in close proximity to the rock art. The project will enhance the visitor experience and protect rock art areas.

Multipurpose Sagebrush Discovery Trail Travel and Transportation Management Plan

The BLM is reviewing quotes and proposals for project design and construction. Design, engineering and construction are likely to occur early in fiscal year 2025. The Bristlecone Field Office issued a Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact in September 2023. Due

to public comment received the field office selected an adjusted Alternative C that incorporated changes to the trail's layout. The non-motorized trail would be located on public lands adjacent to Baker, Nev., and consist of up to two miles of existing two-track roads, closed to motorized vehicles and improved to make them available for hiking, biking, skiing, and walking; construction of approximately 400 feet of new trail and two trailheads, and installation of informational kiosks and interpretive signs, and benches and shade structures. The travel plan and phase one of the project is funded by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

Christmas tree-cutting permits

The Ely District is making Christmas tree-cutting permits available to the public through noon on Friday, Dec. 20. Permits cost \$5 each with a limit of 10 per purchaser. Purchase permits online, in-person at the Ely District and Caliente Field offices, or by telephone.

WILD HORSE MANAGEMENT

Triple B Complex Wild Horse Gather

The Elko District, Wells Field Office and Ely District, Bristlecone Field Office will begin a wild horse gather on or about Nov. 1 within and outside of the Triple B Complex in Elko and White Pine counties, about 60 miles north of Ely, Nevada, using the helicopter-assisted method.



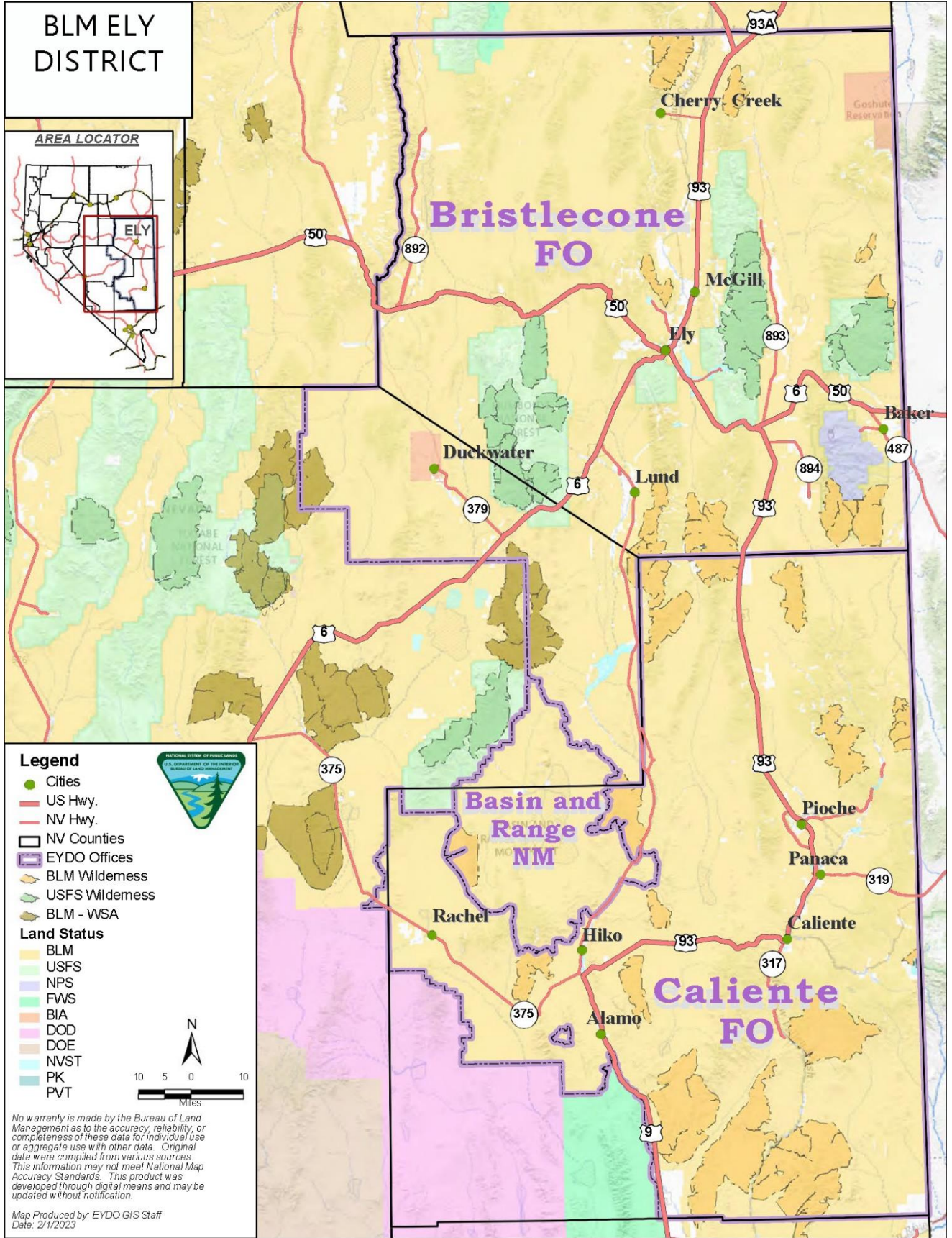
The Triple B Complex consists of the Antelope Valley (west of US Highway 93), Maverick-Medicine and Triple B Herd Management Areas (HMAs). The combined Appropriate Management Level (AML) is 472-889 wild horses. In March 2023, the BLM conducted a simultaneous double-observer helicopter survey. The estimated population is 3,335 wild horses within and directly outside of the Complex. The current estimated population is over 4 times above the high end of established AML.

The BLM plans to gather up to 2,255 horses and remove up to 2,155 excess wild horses. Up to 50 mares will be treated with the population suppression vaccine GonaCon and released with 50 stallions back to the range. The purpose of the gather is to prevent undue or unnecessary degradation of the public lands associated with excess wild horses, to restore a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship on public lands, consistent with the provisions of Section 1333(b) of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Removing excess animals would also enable significant progress toward achieving the Standards for Rangeland Health identified by the Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council.

All animals identified for removal will be transported to the Palomino Valley Center Wild Horse and Burro Corrals, in Sparks, Nev., and Indian Lakes Off-Range Wild Horse and Burro Corral, in Fallon, Nev. Upon arrival to the facilities, all animals will be checked by a veterinarian and readied for the BLM's wild horse and burro adoption and sale program.

The BLM is conducting the gather under the DOI-BLM-NV-E030-2017-0010-EA Antelope and Triple B Complexes Gather Plan Environmental Assessment decision signed on December 21, 2017. Access the Decision Record and determination of National Environmental Policy Act adequacy at <https://go.usa.gov/xSYnE>.

Contact Chris Hanefeld at (775) 289-1842 or chanefel@blm.gov for more information on these and other projects/programs in the district.

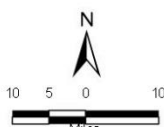


BLM ELY DISTRICT

AREA LOCATOR



- Legend**
- Cities
 - US Hwy.
 - NV Hwy.
 - ▭ NV Counties
 - ▭ EYDO Offices
 - ▭ BLM Wilderness
 - ▭ USFS Wilderness
 - ▭ BLM - WSA
- Land Status**
- BLM
 - USFS
 - NPS
 - FWS
 - BIA
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Map Produced by: EYDO GIS Staff
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