

Executive Summary

This multi-jurisdictional fuels plan facilitates the strategic decisions that must be made by land management, fire, and regulatory agencies to reduce the probability of a catastrophic fire in the Carson Range strategic planning area. It was developed to comply with the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-432 [H.R.6111]). Coordinating the efforts of 16 federal, state, and local agencies, the strategy comprehensively combines all existing plans that have been developed within the planning area, and provides a framework for participating agencies to identify priority areas and a strategy to work collaboratively on accomplishing those priorities. In addition, it builds upon fuel reduction projects that have already occurred on approximately 8,300 acres and the efforts of community-based fire departments and Fire Safe chapters that are actively treating fuels around residences. Fire Safe chapters are the primary means for private landowners to treat hazardous fuels using grant funds such as those available through the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, which will not grant money directly to private landowners.

The plan incorporates approximately 223,000 acres, including portions of Carson City, Washoe, and Douglas counties in western Nevada. This area includes nearly 100,000 homes in the communities of Reno, West Washoe Valley, Galena, Galena Country Estates, Pleasant Valley, Jacks Valley, Carson City, Lakeview, Kings Canyon, Timberline, Clear Creek, Job's Peak, Genoa, and Eagle Ridge. Approximately 60,000 of these homes are outside of core urban areas and are at risk to increased wildland fire conditions in the Carson Range.

Studies in the planning area indicate that current wildland fuels conditions could support high-intensity wildfires that are difficult to suppress. As part of the National Fire Plan, many communities in the planning area were designated in the *Federal Register* (2001) as high risk to damage from wildfire. In addition, values uniquely associated with the Carson Range that are at risk to wildfire include municipal watersheds, community infrastructure, wildlife habitat, forest resources, tourism, and scenic values. Approximately 40 percent of the water supply for Carson City and its outlying communities rely on a municipal watershed that is located in the analysis area. Other major municipalities, such as the City of Reno, also depend upon water sources that are directly affected by the increasing fuel conditions in the planning area. Roads, utilities, and water delivery infrastructure are also at risk. Habitats are at risk because many of the forest resources that make up the Carson Range could potentially burn with high intensities. Finally, residents and tourists are attracted to the scenic beauty of the Carson Range. Large-scale and high-intensity fires have the potential to diminish these values and thus affect the local economies.

This plan recognizes that wildfire protection in the Carson Range planning area requires three components:

1. Buildings and homes should be built of fire-resistant materials and have effective defensible space;
2. Accumulations of hazardous vegetative fuels must be reduced in the areas directly adjacent to communities (community defensible space); and
3. Accumulations of hazardous vegetative fuels surrounding the community defensible space should be reduced.

To accomplish these needs, this plan proposes a continued public involvement strategy to work with homeowners on making their residences fire safe. In addition, the plan proposes approximately 49,000 acres of vegetative fuel treatments and 18,112 acres of maintenance treatments (the same area treated again to maintain its condition) across multiple jurisdictions to create community defensible space and reduce wildland fuels. The treatments are designed to reduce potential fire behavior and facilitate conditions that will ensure safe and effective fire suppression. They are prioritized to protect communities and people in areas that are most at risk. Final implementation of the plan will ultimately result in greater protection of the area's unique values at risk including its people, infrastructure, and natural resources.

Implementing all of the proposed projects and maintenance treatments will increase annual acres treated by fuel reduction activities by 210 percent in the Carson Range. Implementation of this plan is predicted to cost from \$89,000,000 to \$149,000,000 over 10 years with annual predicted expenditures of \$7,600,000 to \$16,500,000. To accomplish this, a variety of funding sources will be required including funds provided through direct appropriations, the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA), and other grants through the State of Nevada, USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry, and the National Resource Conservation Service. These activities will increase the availability of biomass, wood-based products, and jobs associated with vegetation removal.

To ensure the success of this plan, cooperating agencies will focus on several key factors. These include addressing current staffing levels and the availability of qualified mechanical contractors, collaborating with regulatory agencies, and identifying pathways to implement projects with multiple ownerships. While each responsible agency may have its own prescriptions, guidelines, philosophies, and principles, all agree to the overall priorities and strategic guidelines of this plan. It is recognized that unforeseen events, such as wildfires, may affect the priority, scheduling, size, timing, or implementation of any given proposed treatment; consequently, the plan will be reviewed annually by its participants to meet changing conditions within the planning area. The federal, state, and local land managers and Nevada Fire Safe Council will meet annually to review the results of the prior year fuels reduction efforts and identify fuels reduction projects and priorities, within the scope of this strategy, for each upcoming year. Future projects identified by this group will meet the intent of this strategy and meet the intent of all the underlying implementation plans including the Community Wildfire Protection Plans for the planning area.

Projects will be prioritized for funding submission consistent with this strategy and current direction and intent. Where projects cross jurisdictional boundaries, the group will collaborate on implementing the project with the goal of facilitating environmental compliance, permitting, reducing contracting costs, identifying appropriate measures for protection of forest ecosystems, reducing the risk of wildfire, and protecting homes, lives, and firefighters. Projects may be prioritized through a variety of funding mechanisms recognizing that, at this time, the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act will not provide enough resources to fully fund the plan.

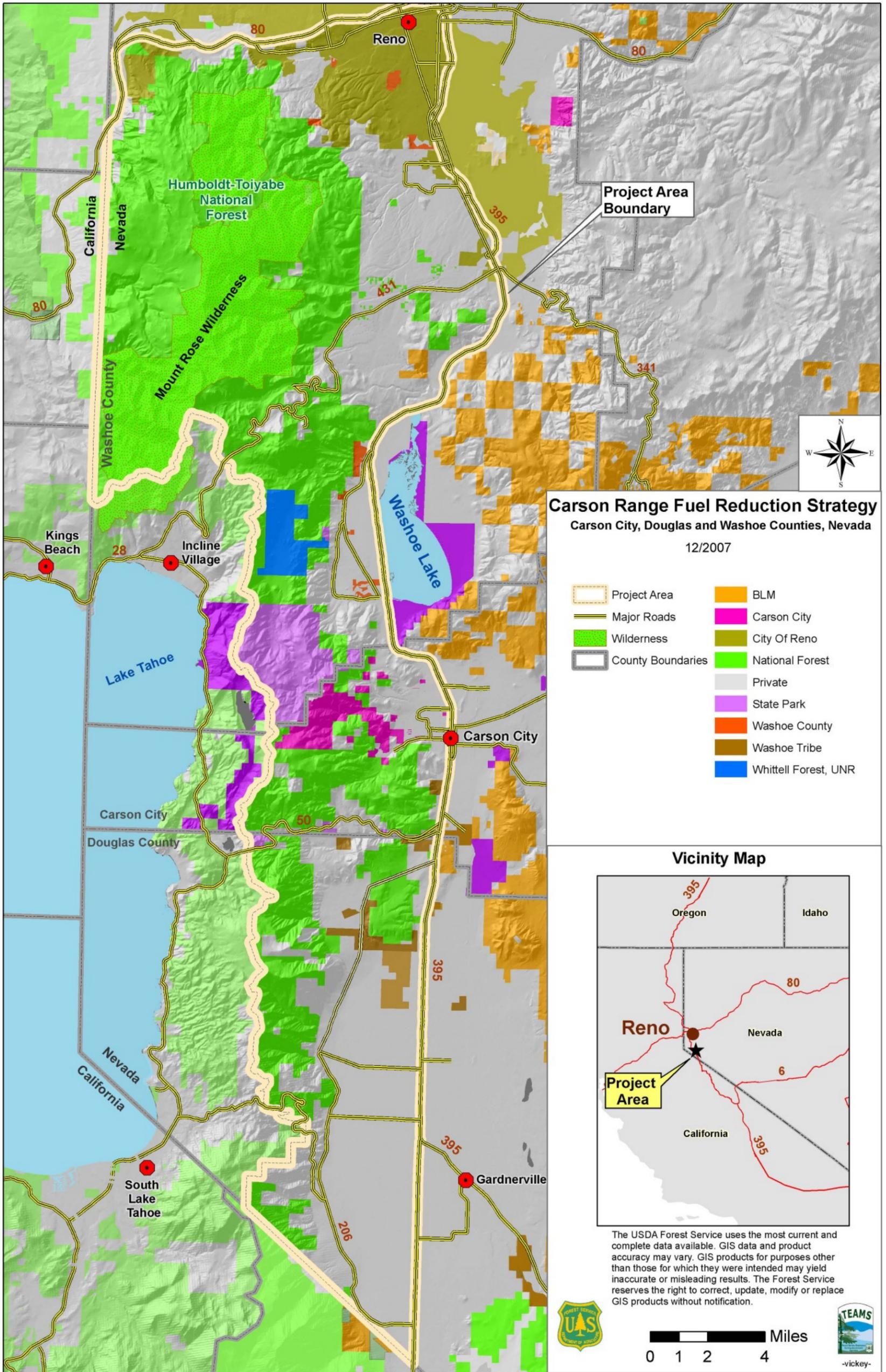


Figure 1. Carson Range strategic planning area