

1999. JAN

~~2/1/99~~
1/1999



**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

WINNEMUCCA FIELD OFFICE



**Paradise-Denio
and
Sonoma-Gerlach
Management Framework Plan**

**Approved
Lands Amendment
and
Decision Record**

January 1999



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Nevada State Office
1340 Financial Boulevard, P.O. Box 12000
Reno, Nevada 89520-0006

In Reply Refer To:
1610
(NV-020)

January 29, 1999

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your information and use is a copy of the Approved Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach Management Framework Plans Lands Amendment and Decision Record. This Amendment and Decision Record completes the land use planning and environmental documentation of the proposed changes to various decisions as they pertain to the retention, acquisition, and disposal of public lands managed by the Winnemucca Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management.

This document contains two parts: PART 1: MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENTS, which meet the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976; and PART 2: DECISION RECORD, which meets the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Additional copies of the Approved Amendment and Decision Record may be obtained from the BLM Winnemucca Field Office at 5100 E. Winnemucca Boulevard, Winnemucca, Nevada 89445, or by calling (775) 623-1500.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Abbey
State Director, Nevada

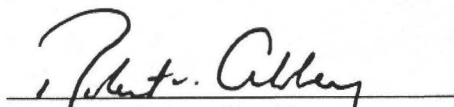
Enclosure
As stated

WINNEMUCCA FIELD OFFICE

Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach
Management Framework Plan

Approved
Lands Amendment
and
Decision Record

Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Winnemucca Field Office


Robert V. Abbey
State Director, Nevada

Date: 1.15.99

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
PART 1: MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENTS	1
A. RESOURCE DECISIONS	1
Management Objective	6
B. MONITORING AND EVALUATION	7
C. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	7
PART 2: DECISION RECORD	7
A. RESOURCE DECISIONS	8
B. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	8
C. RATIONALE FOR DECISION	8
D. COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING	8
E. APPROVAL	8
LIST OF FIGURES	
MAP 1 (ENCLOSED)	

INTRODUCTION

The Winnemucca Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management administers approximately 8.3 million acres of public land located in portions of Humboldt, Pershing, Washoe, Lyon, and Churchill Counties in Nevada. These lands are located in the northwest corner of Nevada.

After a careful review of the land use plan decisions contained in the 1982 Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach Management Framework Plans (MFPs), it was concluded that changes were needed in the MFP guidelines for land ownership adjustments. It was determined that because of the narrow guidance and the age of the existing MFP decisions, that an amendment to these land use plans will give the Winnemucca Field Office more flexibility to consider proposals involving parcels that were not specifically identified for disposal or acquisition in the land use plans.

This approved Amendment details the changes to the Lands Sections of the Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach Management Framework Plans (MFPs), dated July 9, 1982, and is consistent with the goals and objectives of other Federal, State, and local plans and policies that affect the planning area.

PART 1: MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENTS

A. RESOURCE DECISIONS

The approved Amendment gives the Winnemucca Field Office more flexibility to consider proposals involving parcels that have not been specifically identified for acquisition or disposal in previous land use plans. Lands considered for acquisition will possess significant resource values. Land considered for disposal will be evaluated based on criteria, including public resource values or concerns, accessibility, investment in facilities or improvements, manageability, and other factors. Decisions regarding lands identified for community expansion, in Section L1.1 of the Paradise-Denio MFP and Sections L1.3, L2.1, L2.2 of the Sonoma-Gerlach MFP, **are not** affected by this amendment. All other decisions in Sections L2, L3, and L4 of the Paradise-Denio MFP, and Sections L2, L3, and L5 of the Sonoma-Gerlach MFP are amended to incorporate these changes.

In addition, public lands described as T. 30 N., R. 25 E., Sec. 6, were previously identified for retention in error. These lands are managed by the Winnemucca Field Office, but were identified for disposal in the Wade/Fernley Land Exchange Proposal, being processed by the Carson City Field Office. The subject lands had previously been identified for disposal in both the Notice of Exchange Proposal, dated February 21, 1997, and the Notice of Intent to Prepare a Planning Amendment, dated June 9, 1997. The Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach Plan Amendment Map (enclosed) has been modified to reflect the shift of the subject lands from retention (Zone 1), to suitable for disposal (Zone 3). All impacts to that portion of the California Emigrant Trail that traverses the subject lands will be analyzed and mitigated in the NEPA documentation analyzing the impacts of the of the proposed Wade/Fernley Exchange. All NEPA documentation will be reviewed by the Winnemucca Field Office prior to issuing a decision.

These changes apply only to lands administered by the Winnemucca Field Office.

The public lands administered by in the Winnemucca Field Office have been placed into land tenure zones, based on national, statewide or local significance of the resource values found there. These zones are shown on the enclosed district-wide map.

The zones are described as follows:

Public lands in **Zone 1** are generally well blocked up, and possess significant wildlife habitat, including threatened or endangered species habitat, recreation, cultural, and/or scenic values. All lands in Zone 1 will be retained. Consideration of disposal of any Zone 1 lands will be accomplished through the planning process.

Public lands in **Zone 2** are generally fragmented, but may have potentially high resource values for recreation, watershed, and riparian habitat. They could also contain threatened or endangered species habitat, cultural resources, and wildlife values. Public lands identified in Zone 2 will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if they are suitable for disposal.

Public lands in **Zone 3** are generally scattered parcels, which possess characteristics that indicate that they may hold little or no significant resource value. These lands are potentially suitable for disposal, provided that significant recreational, wildlife, watershed, threatened or endangered species, and/or cultural values are not identified. Public lands identified in Zone 3 are more likely to meet the suitability requirements for disposal than lands identified in Zones 1 and 2, but will also be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

1. Lands Identified for Retention

In general, all public lands administered by the Winnemucca Field Office (Zones 1 - 3) will be retained unless, through environmental analysis and public scoping, it is determined that the lands meet the criteria identified for disposal, and that the disposal action is in the public's interest. As stated above, all lands within Zone 1 will be retained in federal ownership.

Certain lands have been excluded from disposal through the planning process or Congressional action. Excluded from disposal are crucial wildlife habitat areas as identified in the Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach MFPs. Crucial wildlife habitat has been identified as the Lahontan cutthroat trout Natural Area, Granite Range crucial mule deer habitat, Granite Range crucial bighorn sheep habitat, and lands in the Soldier Meadows Desert dace Research Natural Area. Lands that have been withdrawn from appropriation under the public land laws are also excluded from disposal. Lands within designated wilderness areas are required by law to be retained in Federal ownership.

2. Lands Identified for Acquisition

Land acquisitions will be considered on a case-by-case basis through exchange, purchase, or donation. Lands to be acquired must: a) facilitate access to public lands and resources; b) provide resource protection; c) facilitate implementation of the MFPs; d) provide for a more manageable land ownership pattern; e) maintain or enhance public uses and values; f) be reviewed for water rights and other encumbrances (easements, right-of-ways, access, etc.); g) be inventoried for noxious weeds.

Acquisition Criteria

Land acquisition actions, that may adjust county and local tax base and grazing preference, will be coordinated with the appropriate government entity and/or permittee.

All water rights appurtenant to the lands identified for acquisition will be verified prior to any acquisition action. Any agreements between the BLM, private land owners, and persons holding water rights, will be presented to the Nevada State Engineer's office for review. The State Engineer will be notified of any change of ownership.

Site-specific decisions regarding land ownership adjustments for the Winnemucca Field Office will be made based on the following criteria through the environmental analysis process.

The following criteria list is not considered all-inclusive but represents the major factors to be evaluated when considering acquisition actions:

- a. Public resource values or concerns, including but not limited to: threatened, endangered, or BLM and/or State sensitive species habitat; riparian areas; floodplains and wetlands; fisheries; nesting/breeding habitat for game and non-game birds or animals; key big game seasonal habitat; wild horse and burro habitat; developed recreation and recreation access sites; municipal watersheds; energy and mineral potential; visual resources; cultural resources; paleontology; Native American traditional cultural properties; cultural resource sites eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places; wilderness and areas being studied for wilderness; and other statutory-authorized designations.
- b. Accessibility of the land for public uses.
- c. Manageability (difficulty or cost of administration).
- d. Suitability and need for change in land ownership, for management and use by other State and Federal Agencies.

3. Lands Identified for Disposal

All land disposal actions are discretionary. Exchange is the preferred method of disposal in order to assure an optimum final land ownership pattern and provide better overall land management. However, sales will be considered where more efficient. The Recreation and Public Purposes Act may be used to dispose of lands to qualified applicants. Disposal of lands will be done on a case-by-case basis, and will be completed using the most appropriate disposal authority.

Zone 1 Lands

All lands in Zone 1 will be retained in federal ownership. Upon inventory and application of the public benefits criteria, lands in Zone 1, identified as suitable for disposal will be classified for disposal, and this plan amended, in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.5-5.

Zone 2 Lands

Upon inventory and application of the public benefits criteria, lands in Zone 2 identified as suitable for disposal will be classified for disposal and this plan amended through an Administrative Determination. A Federal Register notice, identifying the parcel(s) will be published to afford a 30 day protest period by the public in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.5-2.

Zone 3 Lands

Upon inventory and application of the public benefits criteria, lands in Zone 3 may be identified as suitable for disposal within the discretionary authority of the authorized officer without amendment to this plan.

Disposal Criteria

Land disposal actions, that adjust county and local tax base and grazing preference, will be coordinated with the appropriate government entity and/or permittee.

All water rights appurtenant to the lands identified for disposal will be verified prior to any disposal action. Any agreements between the BLM, private land owners, and persons holding water rights, will be presented to the Nevada State Engineer's office for review. The State Engineer will be notified of any change of ownership.

Lands may be disposed of through the Desert Land Act. In addition to the criteria cited below, the soils identified in a proposed Desert Land Act entry, must have a Land Capability Class of I, II, or III, and must possess adequate water, as determined by the State of Nevada Water Engineer.

All lands considered for disposal must meet one or more of the criteria outlined in Section 203(a) of the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act*. These are lands that are difficult or uneconomical to manage; lands acquired for a specific purpose, but no longer required for that or another Federal purpose; or lands that will serve important public objectives, including, but not limited to, expansion of communities and economic development, and that outweigh other public objectives and values. Disposal lands may serve the purpose: 1) of community expansion and economic development; 2) of local governmental needs; or 3) to facilitate Federal land management, by blocking up land ownership patterns, thus reducing BLM administrative costs.

The Winnemucca Field Office will not dispose of lands occupied by listed or proposed threatened or endangered species, or identified as crucial wildlife habitat, unless other public uses outweigh the value of a parcel identified as Federally-owned threatened or endangered species habitat. Disposal will be considered on a case-by-case basis. When disposal of public land which serves as habitat for threatened or endangered species is proposed, consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the *Endangered Species Act* is required. Exchange for other parcels of habitat will be encouraged. Other mitigation may also be required.

Any impacts to cultural resources from proposed disposal actions will be mitigated by plans developed in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, affected tribes, and interested publics.

The following criteria list is not considered all-inclusive but represents the major factors to be evaluated when considering disposal actions:

- a. Public resource values or concerns, including but not limited to: sensitive species habitat; riparian areas; floodplains and wetlands; fisheries; nesting/breeding habitat for game and non-game birds or animals; key big game seasonal habitat; wild horse and burro herd management areas; developed recreation and recreation access sites; municipal watersheds; energy and mineral potential; visual resources; cultural resources; paleontology; Native American traditional cultural properties; cultural resource sites eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places; wilderness and areas being studied for wilderness; and other statutory-authorized designations.
- b. Accessibility of the land for public uses.
- c. Amount of public investments in facilities or improvements (i.e., range improvements, wildlife projects) and the potential for recovering those investments.
- d. Manageability (difficulty or cost of administration).
- e. Significance of the decision in stabilizing business, social and economic conditions, and/or lifestyles.
- f. Encumbrances or conflicts of record; such as water rights, consistency of the decision with cooperative agreements and plans or policies of other agencies.
- g. Suitability and need for change in land ownership or use for purposes including community development (State and local), but not limited to community expansion, or other purposes such as industrial, residential or agricultural (other than grazing) development.

Management Objective

Manage public lands in the Winnemucca Field Office on a sustained yield basis, while considering acquisition and disposal proposals that are identified to be in the public interest, and are consistent with the goals and objectives of BLM, other Federal, State, and local plans and policies.

B. EVALUATION

This Amendment will be evaluated at five-year intervals (consistent with the Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach MFPs, dated July 9, 1982) to determine if there is sufficient cause to warrant additional changes.

C. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A "Notice of Intent" to amend the Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach MFPs was published in the *Federal Register* on August 26, 1996. A draft amendment was completed and made available for comment on June 10, 1997. Two comments were received, one regarding Rangeland Management and one regarding Recreation Management. The two comments have been incorporated into the current document. The draft amendment was reissued, and made available for comment on February 19, 1998. At this time it was also sent to the Governor of Nevada for a 60-day consistency review. Press releases regarding the availability of the Amendment/Environmental Assessment were distributed to local media sources. Letters were sent to interested/affected organizations, agencies, and individuals advising them of the availability of the document. Public Meetings were held on March 3, 1998 in Reno, Nevada and on March 4, 1998 in Winnemucca, Nevada. Six people attended the Reno meeting, and zero people attended the Winnemucca Meeting. Eight oral comments were received at the Reno meeting. A total of seven written responses were received. The draft amendment was also discussed by the members of the Sierra Front-Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council, at their April 2, 1998 meeting.

A "Notice of Availability" for the Final Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact of the Proposed Plan Amendments to the Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach Management Framework Plans was also published in the *Federal Register* on October 19, 1998, with the protest period ending December 1, 1998. No protests were received.

PART 2: DECISION RECORD

A. RESOURCE DECISIONS

The Proposed Lands Amendment is the preferable alternative and is selected as the Approved Lands Amendment for The Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach Management Framework Plans. The decisions contained in the Proposed Amendment, as displayed in PART 1: MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENTS section of this document, are the same and are not repeated here.

B. RESOURCE DECISIONS

A finding of no significant impact was made on October 5, 1998, by the Nevada State Director. This determination was based on the analysis of the potential environmental impacts as addressed in the proposed amendment and environmental assessment document. The Nevada State Director determined that the impacts are not expected to be significant and that an environmental impact statement is not required (see page 20, FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT, of the Winnemucca Field Office Proposed Lands Amendment and Environmental Assessment of the Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach Management Framework Plans.)

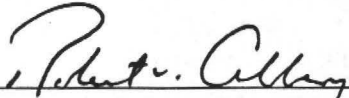
C. RATIONALE FOR DECISION

The decision, as outlined in the above approved amendment, was made to facilitate management of public lands administered by the Winnemucca Field Office of BLM. This was done by identifying retention and disposal zones, and by defining criteria that will be applied to acquisition and disposal proposals, to help evaluate whether a proposal is in the public interest.

D. COMPLIANCE AND EVALUATION

The decision made in the amendment does not conflict with the resource management decisions for the Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach Management Framework Plans, as amended. This decision has also been coordinated with local and state plans concerning management of public lands. No conflicts were communicated by the Governor's Office during the 60-day consistency review period. Where conflicting direction involving the management of public lands may occur between this plan amendment and those of the state and local governments, this amendment will comply with the laws and statutes as enacted by Congress to protect the interests of the citizens of the United States. This amendment will be evaluated at least every five years.

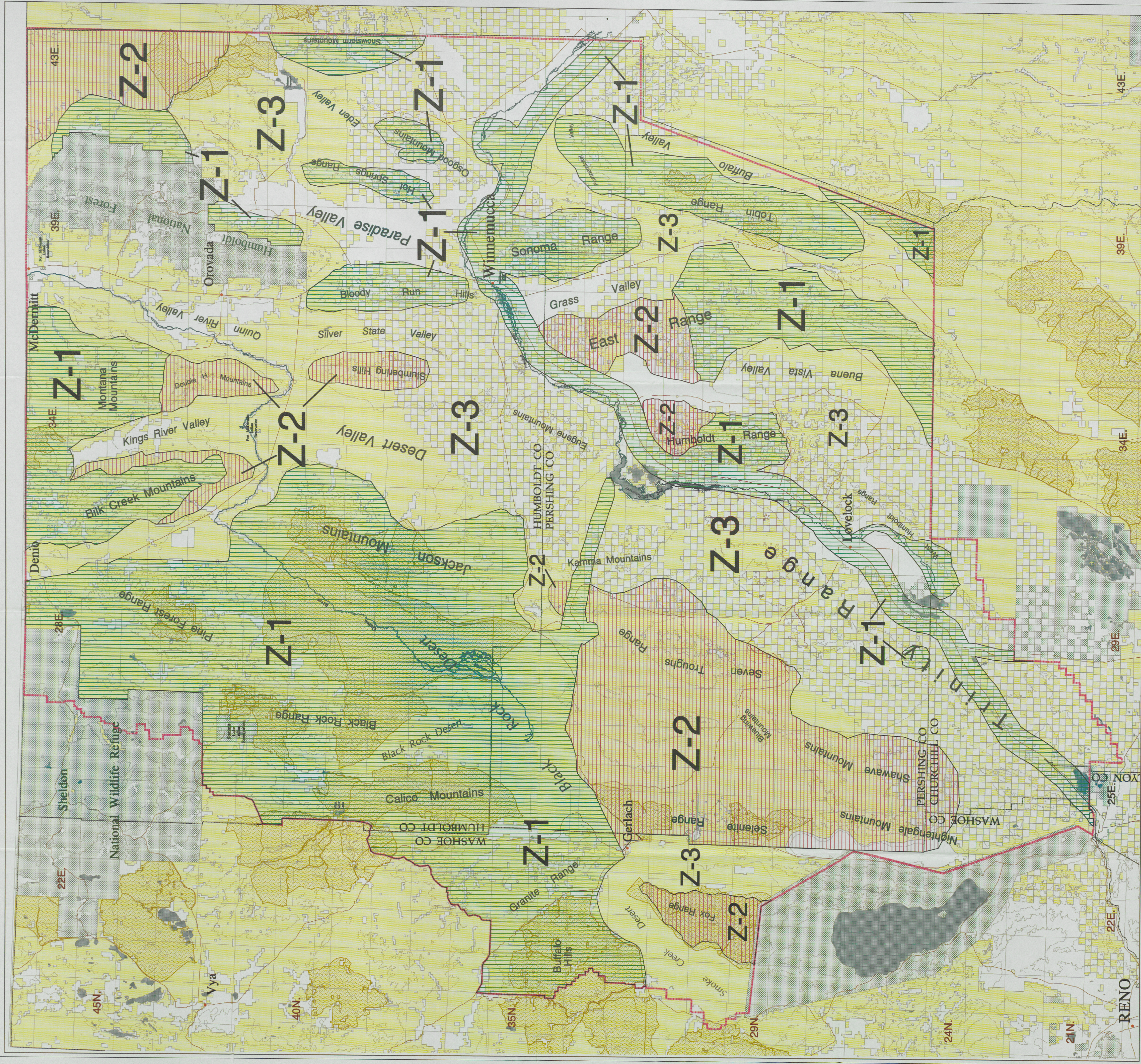
E. APPROVAL



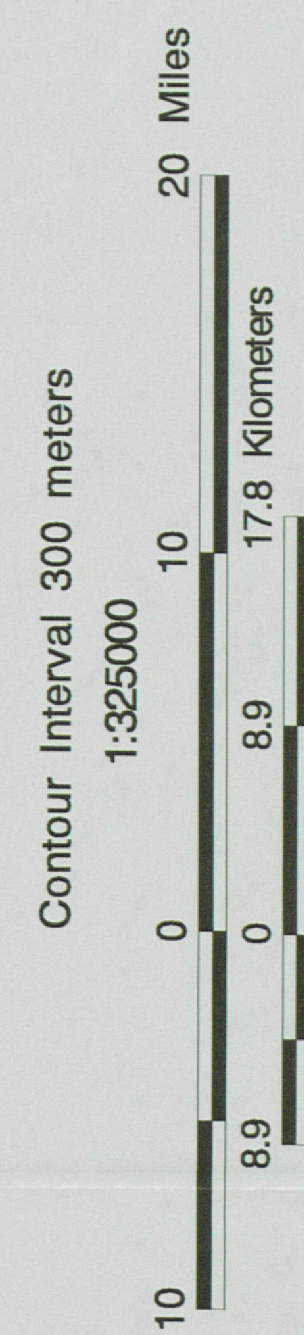
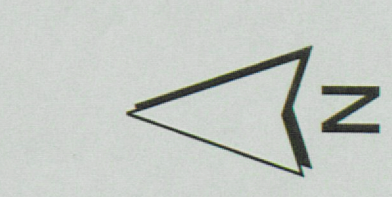
Robert V. Abbey, State Director, Nevada

1-15-98

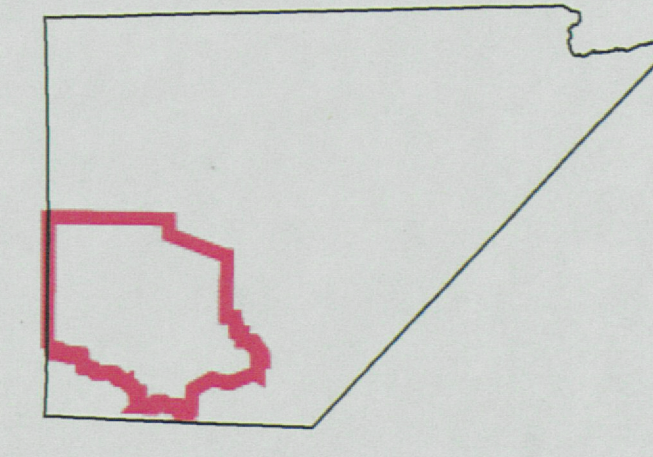
Date



Paradise-Denio and Sonoma-Gerlach Lands Section Management Framework Plan Amendment 1998



United States Department of the Interior
 Bureau of Land Management
 Winnemucca Field Office
 5100 E. Winnemucca Blvd.
 Winnemucca, NV 89445



- Z-1** Areas currently identified as having high public resource values
- Z-2** Areas with potential for high public resource values
- Z-3** Areas with public lands which may be suitable for disposal through transfer to another agency, exchange or public sale
- Winnemucca District Boundary
- Road
- Bureau of Land Management
- Other Lands
- Private
- Wilderness Study Area

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This product information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.