

MASTER PLAN
ESMERALDA COUNTY, NEVADA

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INTRODUCTION

What is the Master Plan?

The Esmeralda County Master Plan has been developed by the Esmeralda County Commissioners, the Land Use Advisory Committee, and residents.

The Master Plan including [ESMERALDA COUNTY AND THE CODE OF THE WEST](#) guide the county's growth, management of natural resources, provision of public services and facilities, and the protection of the public's health, safety, and welfare.

The Master Plan is Esmeralda County's vision for the future and is an important mechanism that allows for economic expansion, preservation of community character, and allows dialogue with the State of Nevada, the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of Defense (DOD), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the US Forest Service.

The Master Plan details Esmeralda County's unique challenges and opportunities and provides policies that will further the intent of the citizens to maintain Esmeralda County's culture, economy, and attractiveness to residents and visitors.

Actions:

The Esmeralda County Commissioners may prepare and adopt, as part of the Master Plan, additional plans and reports dealing with such other subjects, which in the county commissioner's judgment relate to the physical development of the city, county or region, and nothing contained in [NRS 278.010](#) to [278.630](#), inclusive, prohibits the preparation and adoption of any such subject as a part of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan shall include such maps, descriptions, policies, recommendations, charts, drawings, diagrams, schedules, reports, or other printed or published material, or any one or a combination of any of the foregoing as may be considered essential to the purposes of [NRS 278.010](#) to [278.630](#), inclusive.

There are many benefits to Esmeralda County citizens by having a Master Plan, as required by NRS 278.150 and NRS 278.160. Without a Master Plan, there are no means available to local government, primarily the County Commissioners, to enact certain ordinances that benefit county citizens or to have authorized dialogue with Federal agencies. Such ordinances will include means to prevent exploitation of county resources with no benefit to the county or county tax-payers, as well as prevention of those developments that impose additional economic burdens to the county and existing county tax-payers.

COUNTY PROFILE

Location

Esmeralda County is located in west central Nevada and is bordered on the east by Nye County, on the north by Mineral and Nye Counties, and on the south and west by Inyo and Mono Counties in California. Goldfield, the County seat, is located along US95 almost equidistant between Las Vegas and Reno. The County is roughly trapezoidal in shape, measuring approximately 90 miles north to south and 60 miles east to west. It covers 2.29 million acres (3,589 square miles) and consists of broad valleys and high mountain ranges, including the State's highest peak, Boundary Peak, at 13,147 feet above sea level. A northern portion of the Death Valley National Park is in the southwestern corner of Esmeralda County. As of 2006, the population of the county was 1,262 persons, the least populous county in Nevada, and among the least densely populated counties in the United States.



Boundary Peak

Esmeralda County is one of the original Nevada counties, created in 1861 and contained approximately 35,000 square miles. The county has been reduced in size at least 11 times since 1864. The reductions included the formation of, either directly or indirectly, an additional eight of Nevada's seventeen counties. Lander (1862), Nye (1864), and Mineral (1911) counties were created directly from the original Esmeralda County. In addition, Esmeralda (1869), White Pine (1869), and Eureka (1873) counties were created out of Lander County, Lincoln County (1866) was created out of Nye County, and finally, Clark County (1909) was created out of the

southern portion of Lincoln County. *Esmeralda* is the Spanish word for emerald. Esmeralda was one of the names considered for the name of the state of Nevada. An early Nevada miner, J. M. Corey, named the Esmeralda Mining District. It is believed that Corey named the district after the gypsy dancer, Esmeralda, from Victor Hugo's novel, "*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*". Esmeralda has had three county seats: Aurora (also at the same time the county seat for Mono County, CA) until 1883, Hawthorne from 1883 to 1907, and finally Goldfield. Esmeralda grew from a gold mining boom in the first years of the 20th century. The mines were largely tapped out by the end of the 1910's and the economy and population declined afterwards. Today, the county continues to rely on a vibrant mining, ranching, and agricultural economy as well as tourism, abundant recreational resources, and an emerging potential for renewable energy production.



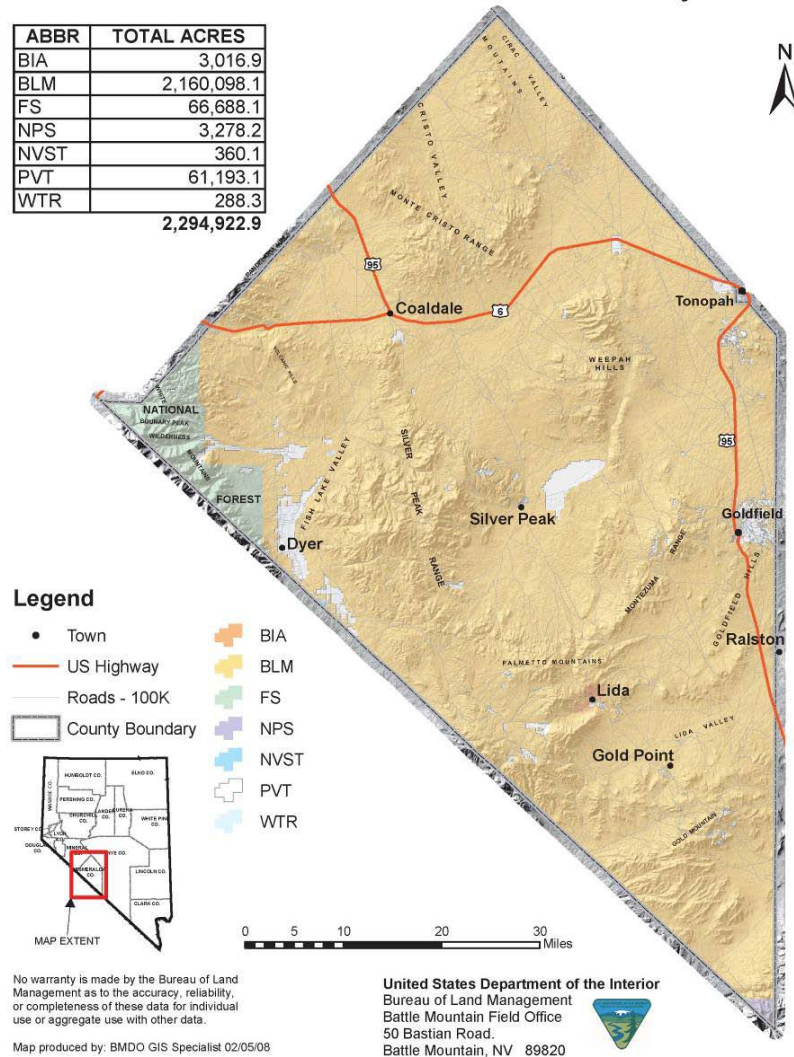
Location Map

Nevada is a state that is comprised predominately of federally-managed lands. Approximately 86.5% of all lands in the state are under the jurisdiction of federal agencies with the majority percentage under Bureau of Land Management (BLM) jurisdiction. The US Forest Service is secondary, followed by the Department of Defense, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Bureau of Reclamation. Additional lands are managed by the State of Nevada.

Land Status

Battle Mountain District Office Surface Landstatus of Esmeralda County

ABBR	TOTAL ACRES
BIA	3,016.9
BLM	2,160,098.1
FS	66,688.1
NPS	3,278.2
NVST	360.1
PVT	61,193.1
WTR	288.3
	2,294,922.9



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

Map produced by: BMDO GIS Specialist 02/05/08

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Battle Mountain Field Office
50 Bastian Road,
Battle Mountain, NV 89820

This land ownership pattern leaves very few areas under private control for economic development and community expansion. Of the county's 2,284,800 acres of surface area, 2,247,863 acres, or over 97% of the county's total area, is controlled and managed by the federal government. Esmeralda County ranks as the highest in terms of the percentage of federal land ownership relative to all other Nevada counties. Since over 97% of the county is under federal management and of the private land approximately 50% consists of Patented Mining Claims, little opportunity exists for community expansion on private land.

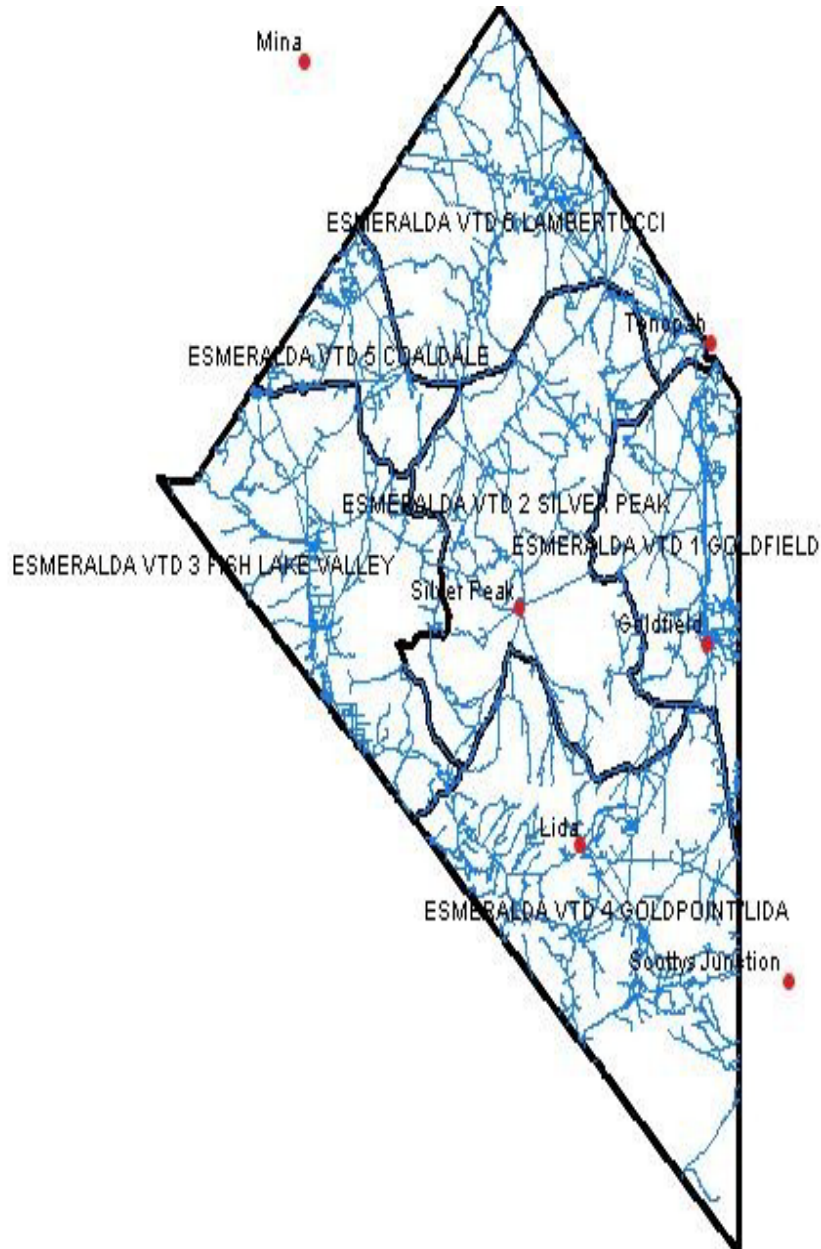
Land Status – Acres

Land Area	Acres	Land Area in Percent
Lands Administered by Federal Agencies	2,233,081	97.5
BLM	2,160,098	94.3
Forest Service	66,688	2.9
National Park Service	3,278	0.14
Tribal	3,017	0.14
State	360	minimal
Local Government/Private	61,481	2.68
Total Acres	2,294,923	100.0

Source BLM 2008. Note: Acreage Statistics total based on GIS database.

Voting Precincts

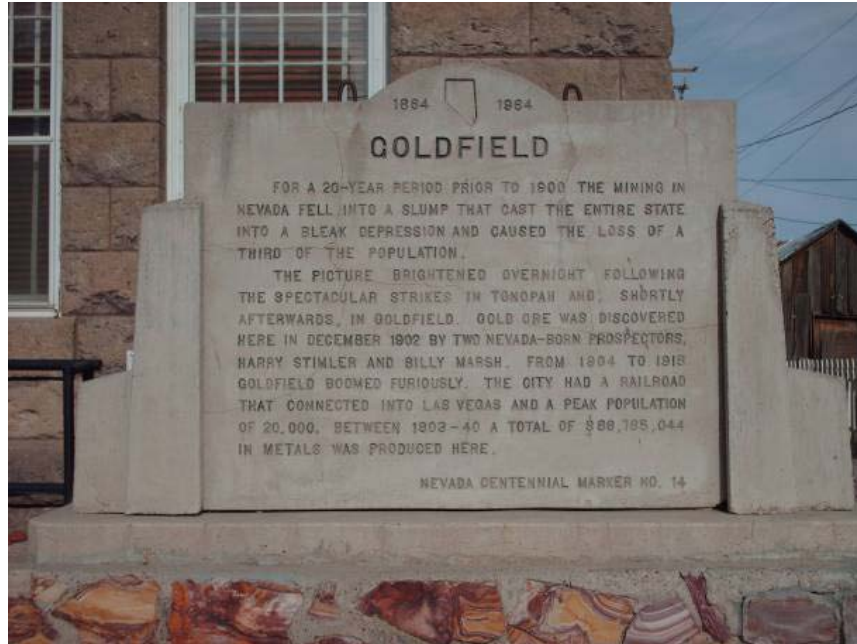
Esmeralda County contains 5 voting precincts. There are 3 Commissioner Districts, noting that District 2 consists of voting precincts 2, 4, and 5. The Board of Commissioners consists of one board member elected from each Commissioner District.



Goldfield:

The historic town of Goldfield, the Esmeralda County seat, is filled with the history of local mining. Located approximately 26 miles south of Tonopah on US Highway 95, Goldfield has the grand old buildings of yesteryear. The Goldfield Historical Society has been making strides to preserve the rich heritage and buildings of the area. As part of a beautification process, the town has put in new sidewalks and lighting.

Goldfield is a community with private businesses including a gas station, an auto repair shop, a grocery/convenience store, an antique store, U-haul, and several saloons. The Santa Fe Saloon (1905) is one of Goldfield's oldest continuously-operating businesses. Today, the Santa Fe, with eight motel rooms, is still a popular oasis. The Santa Fe saloon has slot machines for gaming. The former Mozart Club, built by Maurice Durand in 1934, has been remodeled and renamed Rebel Roadhouse serving spirits, soft drinks, sandwiches, pizza, and weekend Bar-B-Qs. You can dine at either of two locations, the Rebel Roadhouse or Dusty's Grill & Fill (the gas station and cafe). The county seat, originally in Aurora, was moved to Hawthorne, and finally to Goldfield in 1907 at a cost of \$125,000 which included office furniture and the construction of the jail. The district courtroom is furnished with the original steel bench and back-drop with Tiffany Lamps. Located in the rear of the courthouse, the jail was constructed by the Pauly Jail Company of St. Louis, Missouri. The jail contains three levels of metal cells; two levels still house inmates in 18 cells. The two-story stone building is occupied today by the elected county officials.



Courthouse Monument

From 1903 to 1910, Goldfield was the largest city in Nevada. From 1903 to 1940, Goldfield's mines produced more than \$86 million. Major fires in 1905 and in 1906 destroyed several businesses in the town. Another portion of the town was destroyed in 1913 by a flash flood, and in 1923 a fire leveled 54 square blocks. Opened in 1908, the Goldfield Hotel, designed by Architect George E. Holesworth, is four stories of stone and brick. The structure cost over \$300,000. The original plans called for 150 rooms and 45 suites with private baths. Each room had a telephone, and the building was heated by steam. The lobby had luxurious mahogany paneling and leather banquettes. Another Goldfield landmark is the "Tex" Rickard House. He and his partners operated the Northern Saloon in Goldfield. To promote Goldfield, he and others staged a prize fight on Labor Day, 1906. Joe Gans and Battling Nelson fought for the Lightweight Championship of the World. In the 42nd round Nelson was disqualified, and Joe Gans was declared the winner of the \$30,000 purse. Some of the more famous visitors and residents of Goldfield included Virgil and Wyatt Earp, George Wingfield, Death Valley Scotty, Jack Dempsey, and late Governor and U.S. Senator Tasker Oddie.



Historic Mining Area - Goldfield

Gold Point (Hornsilver):

Gold Point began in 1868 and was originally known as Lime Point. In 1908 the town was renamed Hornsilver, after the discovery of a type of high grade silver ore known as hornsilver. Mostly, silver was mined from 1908 to 1932 until a large gold discovery was located. From then on more gold than silver was being mined, and the camp was again renamed to Gold Point. Gold Point is located 30 miles southwest of Goldfield, eight miles off SR 266, at an elevation of 5,400 feet.

After gold mining declined, Gold Point nearly became a ghost town; however, some hardy souls hung on. Many of the original buildings have been, or are being restored. In a place where Chukar out-number humans 20 to 1 and rabbits stop traffic, a well-preserved ghost town

continues to exist. The old camp is a living history lesson with about 50 buildings still standing, including former Senator Harry Wiley's home and the post office. The Post Office building and the Hornsilver Town site Telephone and Telegraph building, which now serves as the local Saloon, are museums that are open on most weekends or are opened for large parties. From 2001 through 2010, Gold Point hosted Memorial Day Weekend festivities, which included the Dutch Oven Stew Contest and Chili Cook-Off with loads of prizes & drawings, food & drink, games for all ages, with live music all day and through most of the night. For a few days of the year, the population soars to 500 or more, but usually is only 7 full-time residents. Guest services are available year round, including electric hook-ups for RV's. One can take a guided tour of the town and mill site or explore on your own the remains of as many as 16 old mining camps and hundreds of mines within a short drive. Keep your eyes open for the abundant wildlife. Nearby nature sites include waterfalls and watering holes frequented by wild horses, burros, big horn sheep, and antelope. Additional attractions include Indian petro glyphs, fossils, petrified woods, and a breathtaking view of Death Valley National Park from Big Molly. Gold Point is truly a friendly ghost town.



“Hornsilver” (Gold Point) Town site

Dyer, Fish Lake Valley:



Fish Lake Valley Alfalfa Bales

Fish Lake Valley is the agricultural heart of Esmeralda County. Located between the White Mountains and the Silver Peak Range is the village of Dyer. Boundary Peak, Nevada's highest point at 13,147 feet, is to the northwest of the valley. This area has long been a place for alfalfa farms along with cattle and horse ranches and some fruit trees. There is BLM “open range” land in the area where cattle and wild horses are allowed to roam and feed on the natural grasses. The area has geothermal springs, mountains, and abundant wildlife. The surrounding mountains are havens for the outdoorsmen who love fishing, camping, and hiking or the rock hound who likes various mineral formations. Dyer is only about an hour from the Ancient Bristlecone Pine forest, which has living trees over 4,000 years old and remnants of trees over 10,000 years old (which were essential for calibrating the Carbon-14 dating cycles).

The village has a post office (which has moved many times over the decades), an elementary school (K-8), fitness center, volunteer ambulance and fire departments, VEA linemen shop, Dorcas Women’s Club, Esmeralda Market with a gas & diesel station and RV park including full hookups, Boonie’s Saloon and Restaurant, Dyer Bar and Café, Alfalfa King, Central Nevada Supply, and GFC Sales. The cemetery, near the ruins of the old stagecoach station, has been used for more than 150 years. The social center for the community is the community center complex near Mile Post 12 on NV-264. The complex includes a baseball field, rodeo facilities, a community center building, a library, and a park area. There is a designated area for shooting.

The Paiute and Shoshone tribes were the first to settle in the Fish Lake Valley, so named for the lake containing fish that still marginally exists in the northeastern region of the valley. Spanish explorers (mostly for mining opportunities) visited during the 1700’s. By the 1830’s, explorers of the Great Basin, such as Peter Ogden, Jedediah Smith, Kit Carson, and Joseph Walker may have

passed through the valley. Fish Lake Valley was first settled in approximately 1860 by the Hale's to provide hay and produce for mines in Candelaria, Blair, Silver Peak, and the various borax locations. By 1866 the Palmetto Mining District was discovered. The first miners to the area were from South Carolina and thought the Joshua trees in the area reminded them of the South Carolina state tree; thus, the name "Palmetto" was assigned (actually, Joshua trees are a member of the lily family).

From the 1850's through the 1890's, borax was extracted from the area. The Columbus and Teels Marsh sites were the location of the borax mines that eventually led to the formation of the Pacific Coast Borax Company and the 20-Muleteam logo, made famous in Death Valley. A post office was necessary by 1881 as the population had grown from all the agricultural activities to support regional mining. The village of Dyer was named after Alex P. Dyer, early farmer and first postmaster. The hills and mountains in the area are host to a number of old mining camps, as well as stagecoach and freight trails.

Local legend E.L. Cord (of the Cord car fame and fortune) built his ranch in Fish Lake Valley at the beginning of WWII. He selected this location because he could find no more isolated location in the USA where his family would be most protected from any war activities.

Silver Peak, Clayton Valley:

The original Silver Peak was founded in 1847 on the south end of Clayton Valley near the Oasis Divide and Big Springs. Modern Silver Peak, founded in 1863, is located on the edge of the Clayton Valley in the eastern foothills of the Silver Peak Range 30 miles southwest of Tonopah. Silver Peak is one of the oldest mining areas in Nevada. The town site was established in 1864 near a spring. Early investors included J. Tilden, who became Governor of New York, John Blair, a banker and railroad financier who created the now defunct town of Blair the rail stop for Silver Peak; W.H. Colvin, Chicago millionaire; and E.L. Cord, the automaker. Some of the more famous visitors and residents of Silver Peak include Wyatt and Josie Earp, Max Baer, and actor Tom Mix.

A 10 stamp mill was built in 1865 and a 20 stamp mill was built in 1867. The early mines produced substantial amounts of silver, gold, and other minerals. By 1942 when WWII suspended nearly all precious metal mining Silver Peak had already produced over 10 million dollars making it one of Nevada's 13 top mining districts.

However, mining was far from steady in the area and fluctuations in the population occurred as the mines changed ownership and new milling techniques were invented. Throughout history, "The Peak" has met any challenge be it fire, flood, boom, or bust with the most valuable resource of all creative, resilient residents. After that there was little activity until 1966, when the Chemetall Foote Corporation (Silver Peak Operations) started its lithium extracting operations in Clayton Valley.

Today, lithium, precious metals, and other industrial mineral mining are Silver Peak's prominent industry. Chemetall Foote Corporation is the area's largest employer and the only lithium producing mine in North America. Silver Peak has a rich volcanic history and known geothermal resources are easily seen by the presence of steam exiting the earth, a 375-foot high cinder cone

(an extinct volcano), and the Silver Peak caldera located in the Silver Peak Range. Silver Peak is also known for diversity in geology and vegetation; the Clayton Valley Sand Dunes; the Caneman petro glyphs; and is the “hub” of the exceptional Esmeralda County road system.

Lida:

Lida is a small town located on Nevada State Route 266, north of Magruder Mountain. The town was established and existed for mining, freight hauling, and ranching. Like other mining towns in Esmeralda County, its population sharply declined once the mines were exhausted. The historic Lida Ranch was one of the largest in the state. It’s most famous owner was Art Linkletter, famous television personality. The book “*The Outfit*” by J.P.S. Brown is based on his experiences working at Lida Ranch. Lida is listed on some websites as a ghost town, but there are still people living there and has the potential for residential development in the near future.



Lida Summit (looking West)

Population

	Goldfield	Silver Peak	County Total
Year	Population	Population	Population
2008	415	182	1,240
2007	448	125	1,236
2006	430	117	1,262
2005	438	126	1,276
2004	453	127	1,176
2003	439	124	1,116
2002	438	128	1,125

Source: Nevada State Demographer

Most of the remaining County population is distributed in the Dyer – Fish Lake Valley area, with some additional residents in other parts of the County.

Economics

Largest Employers

Employer	Location	Industry	# Employees
Esmeralda County	Goldfield	Executive & Legislative Offices Combined	60 - 69
Chemetall Foote Corp.	Silver Peak	Chemical/Fertilizer Mineral Mining	50 - 59
Esmeralda County School District	Goldfield	Elementary & Secondary Schools	30 - 39
Triple D Ranches LLC	Dyer	Hay Farming	10 - 19
Sanroc Inc.	Silver Peak	Highway, Street, & Bridge Construction	10 - 19
DC Minerals Inc.	Silver Peak	Potash/Soda/Borate Mining	10 - 19
Alfalfa King	Dyer	Animal Food Manufacturing	5 - 9
Arden Salvage Company	Dyer	Recyclable Material Merchant Wholesalers	5 - 9
General Store	Goldfield	Grocery	5 - 9

Source: Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (DETR), 1st Quarter 2009

Employment Level

Labor Force	447
Total Employed	408
Unemployment Rate	8.7%

Source: Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (DETR), August 2009

Environment

Climate: Monthly Temperature (°F)

	2005	2006*	2007*	Average
January		34.6	29.1	31.9
February	37.0	36.4	37.0	36.8
March	42.5	35.2		38.9
April		48.6		48.6
May		60.4		60.4
June	64.4	71.9		68.2
July	78.7	78.0		78.4
August		73.0		73.0
September		64.1		64.1
October	53.2	51.0		52.1
November	44.6	45.4		45.0
December	34.2		23.3	28.8
Average	50.7	54.4	29.8	52.2

Monthly Snowfall (inches)

	2004-2005	2005-2006*	2006-2007*	Average
July	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
August	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
September	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
October	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
November	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
December	0.00	0.00		0.00
January	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
February	0.00	2.00	0.50	0.83
March	0.00	0.00		0.00
April	0.00	0.00		0.00
May	0.00	0.00		0.00
June	0.00	0.00		0.00
Average	0.00	0.17	0.07	0.07

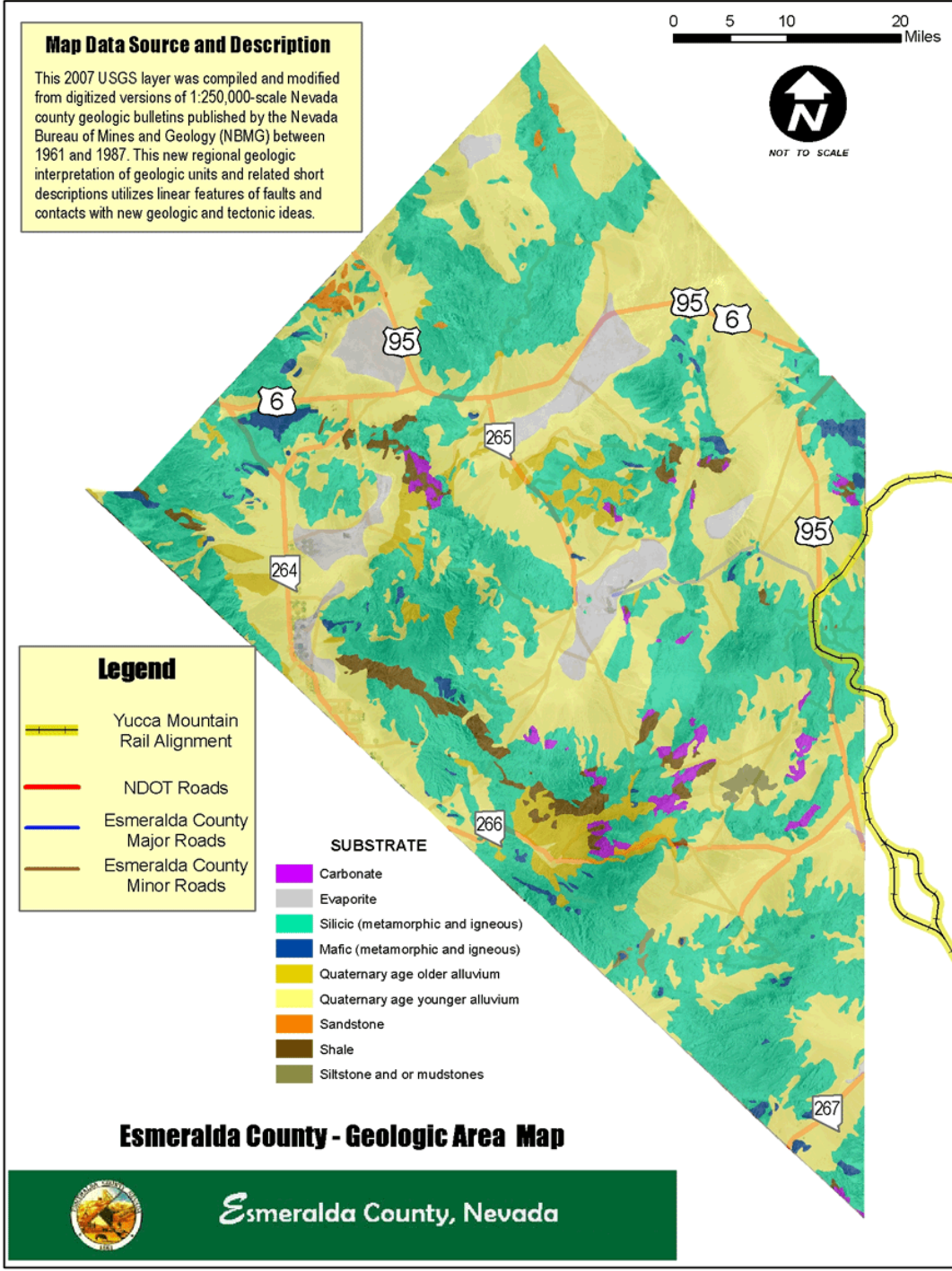
Monthly Precipitation (inches)

	2005	2006*	2007*	Average
January		0.00	0.31	0.16
February	1.71	0.08	0.61	0.80
March	0.32	0.21		0.31
April		0.73		0.75
May		0.09		0.05
June	0.00	0.32		0.20
July	0.78	0.71		0.50
August		0.00		0.63
September		0.00		0.00
October	0.12	0.14		0.49
November	0.09	0.05		0.32
December	0.40		0.00	0.20
Average	0.49	0.21	0.31	0.28

Source: Nevada Climate Summaries, *National Weather Service Forecast Office, Goldfield, NV

Geology

Geology is a dominant factor in Nevada’s population distribution, climate, economy, and most aspects of human activity in the state. The towering Sierra Nevada Mountains to the west in California produce a “rain shadow” effect, wringing most of the moisture from Pacific storms making Nevada the driest state in the country. What little moisture does fall on Nevada is mostly contained within the interior drainage of the Great Basin. This dry, desert region sustains limited population concentrations where modern technology and transportation make economic activities possible. The limitations geology imposes on Nevada’s climate and landscape are offset by the mineral bounty deposited by geological activity from the planet’s early years to very recent times. Nevada leads the nation in the production of gold, silver, barite lithium, and mercury. Nevada is also a major producer of geothermal electrical energy, copper, gypsum, diatomaceous earth, and other industrial minerals.



Esmeralda County deviates from the basin and range topology found in most of the rest of the state, where north-south trending mountain ranges separate long valleys. Several ranges in the southern portion of Esmeralda County trend east and west rather than north to south and little of the complex geology show the basin and range trend. With lowest valley floors around 3,700 feet and mountaintops approaching 10,000 (and above in the White Mountains), Esmeralda County does experience severe weather influenced by geology. The White Mountains (at the same elevation as the Sierra Nevada) that border the western edge of Esmeralda County provide an additional rain shadow, especially for the western regions of the county.

The close proximity to the Sierra Nevada's also produces an enhanced level of geologic hazard. This active seismic zone is subject to numerous earthquakes. The historic record shows a long geologic history of major seismic and volcanic activity. Nearby Long Valley Caldera is the location of an historic super-volcano that rivaled the power of Yellowstone (one of the three largest in the world that have been active during human existence). The USGS monitors a shallow magma chamber that could erupt at any time, which is at June Lake north of Bishop, California. Esmeralda County would certainly experience negative effects from renewed activity at either location or from volcanic activity within the county.

Esmeralda County has enjoyed limited prosperity from boom periods associated with the discovery of and extraction from bonanza ore deposits. As with most of Nevada's precious metal production, the profits, refining, and value-added manufacturing from the mineral resource were not retained in the region. Often the infrastructure improvements made to support development and mineral extraction were removed at the close of operations to avoid tax payments and due to reclamation requirements. Other less dramatic mineral production in the county provided local residents jobs for the life of the mine, but little in long term benefit to the county.

The same magmas that deposited valuable commodities over geologic time now provide a new opportunity for another extractive activity. Geothermal power generated from the waters heated by rock deep underground promise the potential for a renewable energy resource to replace the fossil fuels we currently use. Temperature and air pressure differentials, influenced by geology and topology, produce winds that may be suitable for additional renewable energy generation. Excellent solar energy generation potential also exists locally.

Geographic Features

Esmeralda County contains several notable geographic features to those who live in and pass through the county. Perhaps the most prominent feature is Boundary Peak, highest elevation in Nevada at 13,147 feet. Though not visible from all parts of the county, Boundary Peak, the White Mountains, and the distant Sierra Nevada Mountains will dazzle the viewer with a fresh blanket of snow in the winter. The color and variety of the many mountains and hills throughout Esmeralda County are striking.



Boundary Peak

Scattered amidst the numerous hills and mountains are playas, remnants of the wet climate following the last Ice Age. These evaporite basins were once much larger lakes fed by the melting of glaciers and a wetter climate. Without an outlet to the sea, minerals concentrated in these lakes and closed basins. There are a number of playas, or dry lakes, throughout Esmeralda County.

Another notable geographic feature is also a product of the past Ice Age. Aeolian sand is the wind-blown silica remnants of the rock ground away and pulverized by glaciers, swept out into the valleys by the glacial outwash, and blown into concentrations where the wind loses the ability to carry the grains further. These locations may be at the end of valleys where the wind strikes slopes, or it may be in the middle of a larger valley where temperature and pressure differentials naturally subside.

Perhaps the most striking geographical characteristic found in Esmeralda is that of the man-made structures. The presence of turn of the century mines, mills, and dwellings is found around many bends of the road throughout the county. Most of the dirt roads in the county terminate at a mine or mining district. With a dry climate that helps retard rot, the County retains the turn of the century structures of western mining. Goldfield is a particularly notable location for the remnants of mining activity. The Esmeralda County Courthouse is one of the dwindling numbers of period courthouses still in use.

The western portion of Esmeralda is home to the rancher and farmer rather than the miner, and has a totally different geographical feel to it. Tall trees surround most homes and farms as

windbreaks. Green fields deep with lush alfalfa dot the landscape, and the aroma of tilled earth fills the air. The pace is relaxed here, and it feels like home. The greenery results from the irrigation of all added flora. The water is pumped from the deep aquifer under Fish Lake Valley; however, the water table is steadily declining, which severely limits further growth in agriculture or population.

Hydrology and Water Resources

As noted previously, Esmeralda County is located entirely within the closed drainage system of the Great Basin. None of the precipitation that falls in Esmeralda County travels very far. Although Esmeralda County has no delineated flood hazard zones to estimate extreme flood events and consequences to those located within flood zones, the historic record details several major events in Goldfield. Physical evidence in numerous outwash plains detail the enormous power of concentrated local runoff from storm events.

The White Mountains show evidence of glacier valleys, and several major drainages from these towering peaks into Fish Lake Valley have terminal moraines where the glaciers receded upon entering the valley. Several of these drainages flow year round until diversion for agricultural and residential use.

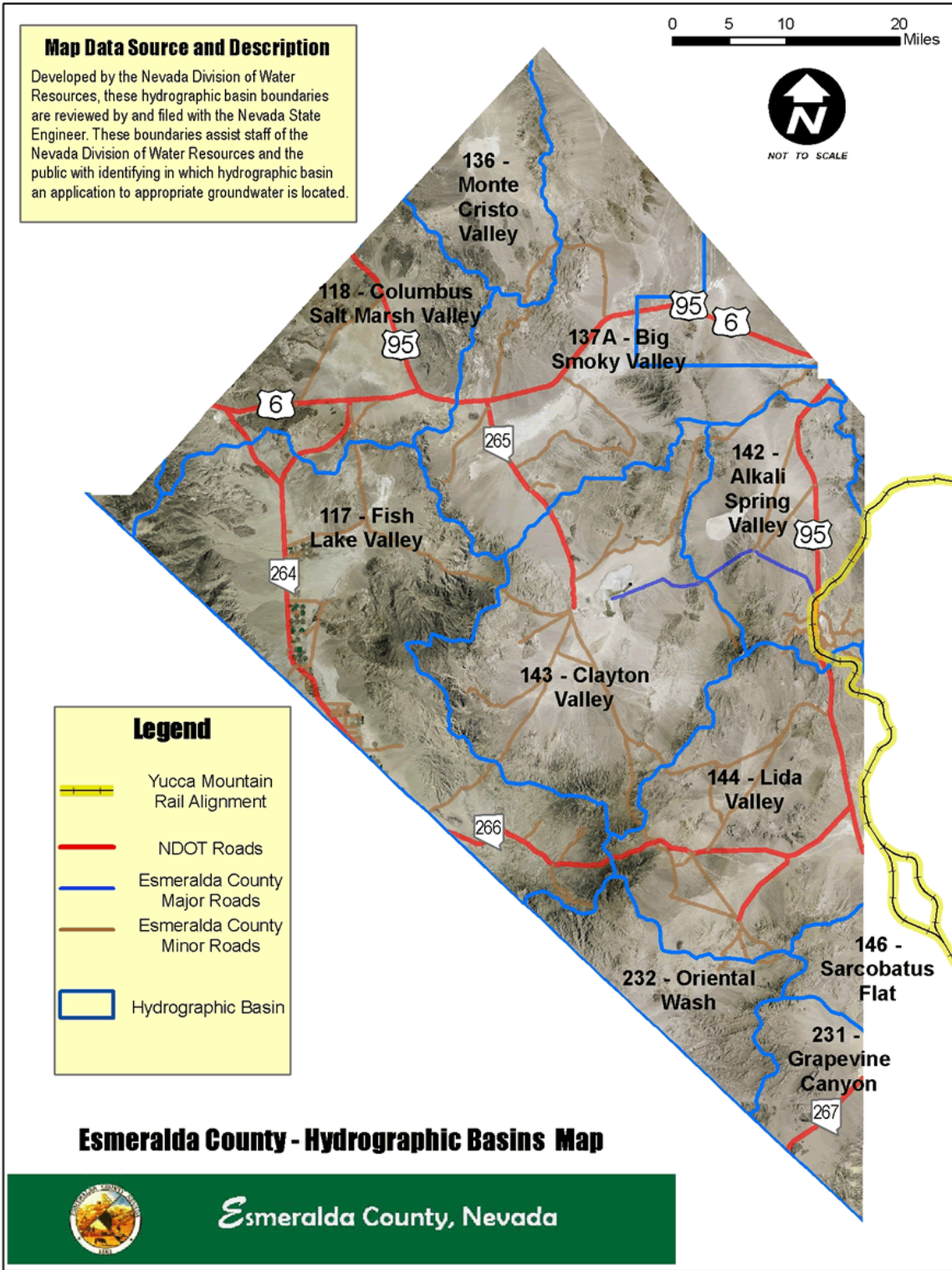


White Mountains

Two major types of storm events contribute runoff to the county hydrology to absorb and disperse. During the winter months, storms may linger and drop moisture in sustained events. Much of this moisture is absorbed into the parched soils and percolates to the aquifers below. During summer months, precipitation often comes from moisture laden southern air masses that produce powerful thunderstorms. These events may be very localized and intense. When the

saturated soils in a contributing drainage can no longer absorb this intense downpour, the desert washes are subject to flash flood events with often-disastrous consequences.

Esmeralda County currently has no codes to restrict residents for where they build or locate their structures. Individual landowners are responsible for examining the physical evidence in the vicinity of their property and using prudent judgment concerning the potential for negative impacts from runoff and flood possibilities. The hydrology map shows the major drainage courses and the playas that receive occasional inundation.



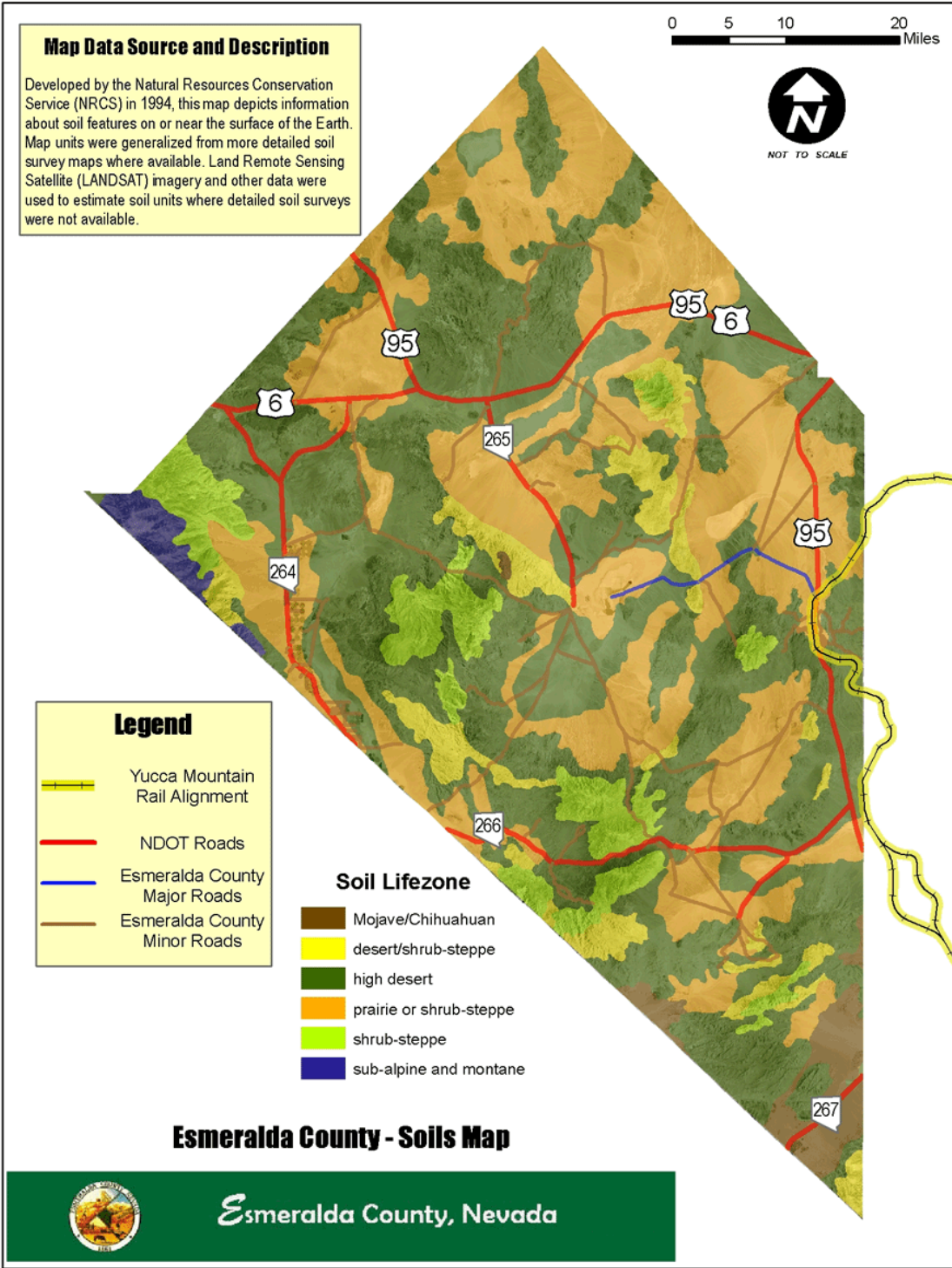
Vegetation

Esmeralda County contains areas that fall into an incredibly diverse number of climate and vegetation zones. One can begin a hike amidst the lizards, scorpions, and rattlesnakes of the Mojave Desert, transition through sage and riparian pockets of Great Basin habitat, and emerge on a mountain in tundra above tree level. Though there is no Critical Habitat for Endangered Species within Esmeralda County, the county is host to a wide variety of vegetative species and habitat zones.

The predominant vegetation zones are those familiar to the desert; scrub and sage distributions dominate the valley bottoms. Various pine, e.g., limber, Piñon, juniper, bristlecone, are found at elevations between ~ 7,000 and ~ 12,000 feet. As the slopes transition to higher elevations, orientation to the sun, amount of moisture, protection from the wind, and other factors influence what species will thrive and survive. Numerous desert and temperate zones are found on the slopes, meadows, and in the valleys of Esmeralda County.

Similarly, different soil types will influence what species will thrive in certain locations. Obviously, elevation determines whether habitat is classified as salt flat or tundra, but the type of rock from which the soil is derived determines which species might inhabit those zones. Nutrient poor soils derived from mudstones may be more restricted in species than soils eroded from volcanic rock. Certain constituent chemical elements in particular rock will attract some species while repelling others.

The vegetation map that follows was derived from the digital manipulation of satellite imagery that examines different signatures in the light spectrum that reveal surface characteristics, such as light reflectivity and absorption within the different bands of the light spectrum, to determine surface cover and moisture content among other characteristics. Mathematical modeling of these light characteristics groups areas with similar characteristics and classifies them based on their physical characteristics. The legend of the map breaks down the number of zones within Esmeralda County and briefly describes them.



Wildlife

Esmeralda County is home to a diverse collection of small desert dwellers capable of withstanding hot, dry summers and cold winters, but does not contain sufficient habitat to support large numbers of larger predators and other large mammals. There are desert bighorn sheep, antelope, deer, and the occasional bear and mountain lion foraging within the county. Coyotes, foxes, bobcats, and birds of prey are as plentiful as the population of rodents (rabbits, squirrels, mice, rats) and other small prey that they feed on. Also present are the herds of wild horses and burros that roam the county. There are a number of different types of lizards, insects, and snakes. While the permanent bird population is small, e.g., owls, hawks, crows, ravens, several hundred species of birds migrate through the county. Game species such as Chukar, quail, grouse, and doves are also found throughout the county.



Wild Horses

Culture

The residents of Esmeralda County and visitors to the region cherish the small-town atmosphere and the western tradition that is alive in the county. While new economic opportunities are actively sought, many residents prefer that new development be compatible with the existing historic fabric of the local communities.



Memorial Day Flag Ceremony at Gold Point

Several annual celebrations bring former residents back from far away locations, friends from surrounding and distant communities, and visitors from across the country and around the world. Notable among these celebrations are the Memorial Daze celebration in Gold Point, the Goldfield Days celebration and annual land auction at the County Seat in historical Goldfield, and the Fourth of July Parade, western shootouts and rodeo in Fish Lake Valley. Here artists, musicians, craftsman, and many others gather to share the camaraderie and hospitality famous throughout the Old West.

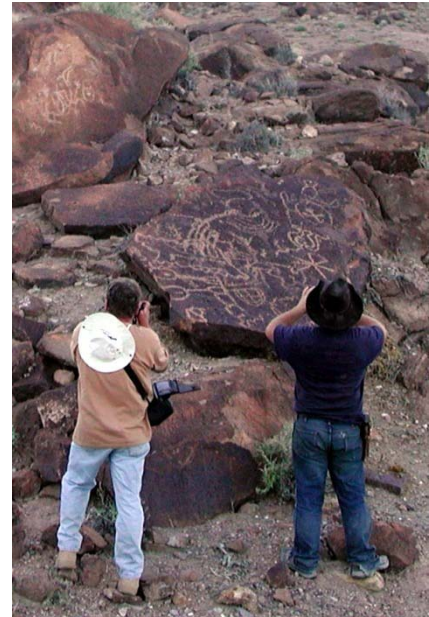
Esmeralda County residents are proud of their historic past and celebrate the fortitude of those pioneers who braved the elements and primitive conditions to forge a mining, farming, and ranching civilization on the wilderness frontier.

Recreation

Esmeralda County does not have any designated parks, except for a small portion of Death Valley National Monument, but it does have numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation such as the White Mountains. Esmeralda County residents treasure the pace of life in the county and its distance from major population centers. Outdoor recreation is one of the multiple uses guarded by Esmeralda County residents.

The wide-open backcountry of Esmeralda County is readily accessible through a well-developed network of roads and highways. Though most of the roads penetrating remote portions of the county are dirt roads, many are graded and well maintained. The visitor using this road network is cautioned to take adequate precautions prior to setting out on a backcountry expedition, and should inquire locally as to conditions and access.

Evidence abounds that man has spent time in Esmeralda County for thousands of years. Petro glyphs and artifacts such as stone tools and arrowheads attest to man's presence from the distant past. When Western miners arrived in the 1800s, old Spanish placer mining evidence was found in Tule Canyon. Modern mining artifacts range in age from the 1870s through every stage of development to the present. Many modern Ghost-Town aficionados love to visit and explore such sites that abound in Esmeralda County. Though they are



welcome in Esmeralda County, these visitors must remember most of such sites are private property. If they are posted against trespass, visitors are reminded to respect the owner's right to forbid access. Wanton destruction is repugnant for any reason, and will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Rock hounds are drawn to the county in search of a wide variety of gems, crystals, and mineral specimens. Although not numerous, some fossils are found in the ancient rock formations within the county. Plant and animal species from recent to ancient geologic periods are occasionally found. Many varieties of unusual gold and silver minerals can be found on the numerous mine dumps and prospect pits throughout the county. Turquoise and other copper minerals abound and delight the dedicated enthusiast. The Gemfield chalcedony deposit west of Goldfield draws visitors from around the world.

Trout fishing from streams and ponds in the White Mountains is always good and the pond near Boundary Peak is stocked frequently by the Nevada Department of Wildlife. Chukar, dove, and quail hunting is popular in the County. Big game hunting is enjoyed by local and out-of-state hunters.

PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND WANTS

The majority of citizens in Esmeralda County choose to reside here because of the minimal congestion, freedom of movement, clean air and water, no unnecessary regulations, reasonable taxes, small local government, wide-open spaces, and the rural desert atmosphere.

Future growth, if any, should be limited by the amount of water available. The local citizens and their elected officials know the best decisions regarding the use of land within the county. Experienced valley septic tank contractors report that 5-acre parcels should be the minimum parcel size to avoid water well pollution problems.

CHALLENGES

Approximately 97.5% of the land area in the county is managed by federal agencies, primarily the Bureau of Land Management. Therefore, the BLM and other government (federal or state) agencies must include Esmeralda County as a participating or cooperating, as applicable, local government agency in any decisions or plans regarding the use of land, e.g., grazing, mining rights, renewable energy resource utilization. **ALL** decisions by **ANY** government agency affecting lands located in Esmeralda County shall be correlated with the ECLUAC. **ALL** such decisions shall be subject to the approval of the County Commissioners **PRIOR TO** enactment.

Specific challenges regarding the Bureau of Land Management include the frequent BLM personnel changes. BLM personnel are transferred too frequently to really understand and appreciate specific local situations. BLM must notify the County Commissioners and ECLUAC prior to contemplating or enacting any land use changes, pursuant to the Esmeralda County Public Lands Policy Plan.

The Esmeralda County Sheriff Department is the only recognized law enforcement agency for the County including public lands. Federal agencies are encouraged to cooperate fully for any and all issues regarding law enforcement within Esmeralda County.

There is too much Federal intervention in the grazing and mining activities of private citizens. Management of wild horses often is to the detriment of ranchers with grazing leases on Federal lands. Wild horse grazing areas should not be expanded, especially if such expansion would reduce ranching access to water or grazing. Over-grazing by cattle also needs to be properly managed.

Unless effective interstate water agreements can be made soon, it is conceivable that the "over-pumping" of water in the California half of Fish Lake Valley can ultimately dry up the irrigation wells in the Nevada half. Nevada water diversion and usage laws effectively guard against the pumping of wells in excess of normal recharge rates from the surrounding mountains. California has no such laws. Current extensive irrigation developments in the California end of the valley are causing the serious concern that the entire valley's highly permeable water table may be bled to an uneconomical depth and possibly stimulate salt intrusion into the fresh aquifers from the nearby saline flats.

People from outside the area are coming into Esmeralda County in increased numbers for off-road vehicle (ORV) recreation. These people often do significant damage to the county roads,

land, livestock, and historical artifacts. Certain actions by the BLM actually encourage the over-use of fragile areas rather than protecting them. Examples include designations of "primitive", which tend to flag areas for more intensive use; the establishment of hunting and fishing camps in areas where fish and game are not that plentiful; designation of recreation areas where sanitation and other services are not available or inadequate.

A recent Fish Lake Valley survey revealed that there is a small group that can tolerate off road vehicles, such as dune buggies, tote goats, etc., if they are confined to existing roads and trails. An almost equal-sized group wants all such vehicles prohibited in open desert and mountain areas. An even smaller group sees no need of any restriction at all for such recreational vehicles. Although not a serious problem yet, the appearance of these vehicles in increasing numbers every season, primarily from California, is beginning to cause some concern and recognition that this trend will ultimately become a serious problem. There is general admission that any effort at control not only presents an enforcement problem beyond local capability to handle, it also threatens a form of valued freedom of movement, ironically of a sort that is highly prized and enjoyed by most of the local citizens. This situation will undoubtedly blossom into a very controversial local issue in the not too distant future.

A majority of the residents of Goldfield have been contacted regarding their views on off road vehicles. Everyone contacted felt that there should be no restrictions placed on ORV's anywhere within Esmeralda County. The use of these vehicles is essential for prospecting, mining, grazing, and recreational activities.

Other problems in Esmeralda County include:

1. New fences and locked gates on public land restricting movement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Resolution

WHEREAS, the County Planning Commission and ECLUAC of Esmeralda County, as representatives of the citizens of Esmeralda County and in concurrence with the opinion of the majority of those citizens, feel that there should be local control of any and all decisions made concerning lands located within Esmeralda County, and

WHEREAS, Resource Management Plans and other plans are under revision by the Bureau of Land Management and other Government Agencies that will have a direct effect upon lands located within Esmeralda County,

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that all decisions by any Government agency regarding lands located in Esmeralda County should be correlated first with the Esmeralda County Public Lands Policy Plan as defined herein, then for any exceptions with the ECLUAC, then the Board of County Commissioners of Esmeralda County, and all decisions affecting lands within the county shall be subject to approval or concurrence by said Board prior to enactment.

DATED, this _____

By ECLUAC

ESMERALDA COUNTY AND THE CODE OF THE WEST

The Code of the West was first chronicled by the famous western writer, Zane Grey. The men and women who came to this part of the country during the westward expansion of the United States were bound by an unwritten code of conduct. The values of integrity and self reliance guided their decisions, actions, and interactions. In keeping with that spirit, this information is offered to help the residents and potential residents of Esmeralda County who wish to follow in the footsteps of those rugged individualists by living outside of urban areas.

Introduction

Life in Esmeralda County is different from life in the city and other relatively heavily populated urban areas. County governments are not able to provide the same level of service that urban governments provide, given the smaller tax base and lower tax rates. To that end, the following information is provided to help you make an educated and informed decision to purchase and live on rural land.

Access

The fact that you can drive to your property does not necessarily guarantee that you, your guests, and emergency service vehicles can achieve that same level of access at all times. Please consider:

1.1 - Emergency response times ([sheriff](#), fire suppression, medical care, etc.) cannot be guaranteed. Under some extreme conditions, you may find that emergency response is extremely slow and expensive. Public services are limited and primarily voluntary.

1.2 - There can be problems with the legal aspects of access, especially if you gain access across property belonging to others. You would be wise to obtain legal advice and understand the easements that may be necessary when these types of questions arise.

1.3 - You can experience problems with the maintenance and cost of maintenance of your access road. Esmeralda County maintains ~ 3576 miles of unpaved county roads and ~ 20 miles of paved roads. There are some county roads that are infrequently maintained by the county - no grading or snow plowing. Make sure you know what type of maintenance to expect and who will provide that maintenance. Property taxes do not pay for road maintenance. Road maintenance is funded from other sources, e.g., gas tax.

1.4 - Extreme weather conditions can damage roads. You would be wise to determine whether or not your access road was properly engineered and constructed in order to prepare for alternative routes.

1.5 - Many large construction vehicles cannot navigate small, narrow roads. If you plan to build, you would be prudent to check out access for construction vehicles.

1.6 - School buses travel only on maintained federal, state, and county roads that have been designated as school bus routes by the school district. You may need to plan transportation (e.g., drive, walk) of your children to the nearest road to access the school bus.

1.7 - In extreme weather, even federal, state, and county maintained roads can become impassable. You may need a four wheel drive vehicle with chains for all four wheels to travel during those episodes, which could last for several days.

1.8 - Natural disasters, especially floods, can damage roads. Esmeralda County will repair and maintain county roads as appropriate and practical; however, private residential, farm, ranch, mine, and subdivision roads are the responsibility of the landowners who use those roads. A dry creek bed during a flash flood can wash out roads, bridges, and culverts. Residents served by private roads and/or bridges may have large bills for repairs and/or reconstruction after floods.

1.9 - Unpaved roads generate dust. When traffic levels reach specific levels, Esmeralda County may treat county system roads to suppress the dust.

1.10 - Esmeralda County is unlikely to pave any county roads in the foreseeable future. Check carefully with the [Esmeralda County Road Department](#) when any statement is made by the seller of any property that indicates any unpaved roads will be paved!

1.11 - Unpaved roads are not always smooth and are often slippery when they are wet. Vehicle maintenance costs will increase when used on unpaved county roads. Excessive speed will cause “wash-boarding”.

1.12 - Mail delivery is not available to all areas of the county. Ask the local postmaster for options in your area.

1.13 - Newspaper home delivery is not always available to rural areas. Check with the newspaper of your choice before assuming you can get delivery.

1.14 - Standard parcel and overnight package delivery can be slower for those who live in the county. Confirm with the service providers as to your status.

1.15 – Building a rural residence may be more expensive and time consuming due to delivery fees and the time required for installers to reach your site.

Utility Services

Water, sewer, electric, telephone, and other services may be unavailable or may not operate at urban standards. Repairs can often take much longer than in towns and cities.

2.1 - Telephone communications can be a problem, especially in the mountain areas of Esmeralda County. If you have an existing land line, obtaining another line for fax or computer modem uses may be difficult. Even cellular phones will not work in all areas.

2.2 - If sewer service is available to your property, hooking to and maintaining the sewer line may be expensive.

2.3 - If sewer service is not available, you will need to use a septic system per the applicable NAC. The type of soil you have available for a leach field will be very important in determining the cost and function of your system. Spacing of septic systems is per NAC 444.792 “Location”.

2.4 - If you do not have access to a supply of treated domestic water, you will have to locate an alternative supply. The most common method is use of a water well. Permits for wells are granted by the state engineer and the cost for drilling and pumping can be considerable. The quality and quantity of well water can vary considerably from location to location and from season to season. Some well water may require additional treatments to meet minimum potable standards. You would be strongly advised that you research this issue very carefully.

2.5 - Not all wells can be used for watering of agriculture and/or livestock. Permits from the State Engineer may be required for water usage. If you have other needs, make certain that you have the proper approvals before you invest. Finding enough water to provide for your needs may be difficult and expensive, even if you can secure the proper permit and water is available.

2.6 - Electric service is not available to every area of Esmeralda County. You must determine the proximity of electrical power. Extending power lines to remote areas is very expensive.

2.7 - Crossing property owned by others may be necessary in order to extend electric service to your property in the most cost efficient manner. You must make sure that the proper easements are in place to allow lines to be built to your property.

2.8 - Electric power may not be available in three phase service configurations. If you have special power requirements, you must know what level of service can be provided to your property.

2.9 - If you are purchasing land with the plan to build at a future date, there is a possibility that electric lines (and other utilities) may not have sufficient capacity to accommodate you if others connect during the time you wait to build.

2.10 - The cost of electric service consists of a fee to hook into the system and then a monthly charge for energy consumed and service, in addition to the cost of the electrical infrastructure. You should know all costs before making a decision to purchase a specific piece of property.

2.11 - Power outages and sags can occur with more frequency than in more developed areas. A loss of electric power can interrupt your supply of water from a well. You may also lose food in freezers or refrigerators and power outages can cause problems with computers as well. You should plan on being able to survive for up to a week in severe cold with no utilities. You should plan on using voltage regulation equipment for electronic devices, e.g., TV, computers.

2.12 - Trash removal can be much more expensive in a rural area than in a city. In some cases, your trash dumpster may be several miles from your home. Creating your own trash dump is illegal, even on your own land. You should know the cost for trash removal as you make the decision to move into the country. In some cases, your only option may be to haul your trash to the landfill or transfer station yourself. Recycling is more difficult because pick-up is not available in most rural areas.

2.13 – Internet and TV service is often by satellite.

Property

There are many issues that can affect your property. You must research these items before purchasing land.

3.1 - Esmeralda County has parcels that may not be suitable for construction. The County accepts only the minimum state requirements for buildings.

3.2 - Easements may require you to allow construction of roads, power lines, water lines, sewer lines, etc. across your land. Check these issues carefully. Check for existing easements and underground services prior to digging. Call USA Dig at 1-800-277-2600 for information about existing underground services.

3.3 - Many property owners do not own the mineral rights under their property. You must know what minerals may be located under the land and who owns them. Much of the public rural land in Esmeralda County can be used for mining; however, a review by the [Esmeralda County Commissioners](#) is usually required. Be aware that adjacent mining uses can expand and cause negative impacts.

3.4 - You may be provided with a plat of your property, but unless the land has been surveyed and pins placed by a professional land surveyor, you cannot assume that the plat is accurate.

3.5 - Fences that separate properties are often misaligned with the property lines. A survey of the land is the only way to accurately confirm the location of your property lines.

3.6 - Many subdivisions and planned unit developments have covenants that limit the use of the property. You must obtain a copy of the covenants (or confirm that there are none) and make sure that you can live with those rules. A lack of covenants or enforcement of covenants can cause problems between neighbors. A lack of knowledge of the covenants can cause misunderstandings between neighbors and/or the county.

3.7 - Homeowners associations (HOAs) may be required to take care of common elements, roads, open space, etc. A dysfunctional homeowners association or poor covenants can cause problems for you and even involve you in expensive litigation.

3.8 - Dues are often a requirement for those areas with a HOA. The by-laws of the HOA will tell you how the organization operates and how the dues are set.

3.9 - The surrounding properties will probably not remain as they are indefinitely. The view from your property may change.

3.10 - If you have a ditch running across your property there is a high probability that the owners of the ditch have the right to come onto your property with heavy equipment to maintain the ditch.

3.11 - Water rights that are sold with the property may not give you the right to use the water from any ditches or streams crossing your land without coordinating with a neighbor who also uses the water. Other users may have senior rights to the water that can limit your use or require

you to pay for the over-sizing or other improving of the ditch or stream. You should understand the limits of your surface, ground, or other water rights.

3.12 – You must make sure that any water rights you purchase with the land will provide enough water for your anticipated uses, e.g., to maintain fruit trees, pastures, gardens, livestock.

3.13 - The water flowing in irrigation ditches and streams belongs to someone. You cannot assume that because the water flows across your property, you can use the water.

3.14 - Flowing water can be a hazard, especially to young children. Before you decide to locate your home near an active ditch or stream, consider the possible danger to your family.

Environment

Residents of the country usually experience more problems when the weather turns severe. Here are some thoughts for you to consider.

4.1 - The physical characteristics of your property can be positive and negative. Trees are an environmental necessity, but can also involve your home in a forest fire. Building at the top of a forested draw should be considered as dangerous as building in a flash flood area. Defensible perimeters are very helpful in protecting buildings from forest fire and inversely can protect the forest from igniting if your house catches on fire. If you start a forest fire, you are responsible for paying for the cost of extinguishing that fire. For further information, you can contact [Esmeralda County Emergency Management](#).

4.2 - Steep slopes can slide in unusually wet weather. Large rocks can also roll down steep slopes and present a great danger to people and property.

4.3 - Expansive soils can buckle concrete foundations and twist steel I-beams. You can identify the soil conditions on your property if you have a soil test performed.

4.4 - North facing slopes or canyons rarely see direct sunlight in the winter. There is a possibility that snow will accumulate and not melt throughout the winter.

4.5 - The topography of the land can tell you where the water will go in the case of heavy precipitation. When property owners fill in ravines, they have found that the water that drained through that ravine now drains through their house.

4.6 - A flash flood can occur, especially during the summer months, and turn a dry gully into a river. You would be wise to take this possibility into consideration when building.

4.7 - Spring run-off can cause a very small creek to become a major stream. Residents may use sand bags to protect their homes. The county does not provide sand bags, equipment, or people to protect private property from flooding.

4.8 - Nature can provide you with some wonderful neighbors. However, animals like horses and cows can cross the road unexpectedly. Rural development encroaches on the traditional habitat of coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, bears, scorpions, and other animals that can be dangerous and you need to know how to deal with them. In general, you should enjoy wildlife

from a distance and know that if you do not handle your pets and trash properly, you will have problems.

Agriculture

The people who tamed this wild land brought water to the arid Great Basin through an ingenious system of wells. This water has allowed agriculture to become an important part of our environment. Owning rural land means knowing how to care for the land. There are a few things you need to know:

5.1 - Farmers often work around the clock, especially during planting and harvest time. Hay is often swathed or baled at night. Adjoining agriculture uses may disturb your peace and quiet.

5.2 - Land preparation and other operations can cause dust, especially during windy and dry weather.

5.3 - Farmers occasionally burn their fields to keep them clean of debris, weeds, and other obstructions. This burning creates smoke that you may find objectionable.

5.4 - Chemicals (mainly fertilizers and herbicides) are often used in growing crops. You may be sensitive to these substances and some people actually have severe allergic reactions.

5.5 - Animals and their manure can cause objectionable odors. What else can be said?

5.6 - Agriculture is an important business in Esmeralda County. If you choose to live among the farms and ranches of our rural countryside, do not expect county government to intervene in the normal day-to-day operations of your agri-business neighbors. In fact, Nevada has "Right to Farm" legislation that protects farmers and ranchers from nuisance and liability lawsuits.

5.7 - Nevada has an open range law. This means if you do not want cattle, sheep, or other livestock on your property, your responsibility is to fence them out. The rancher is not responsible to keep his/her livestock off your property.

5.8 - Before buying land you should know if there are any noxious weeds that may be expensive to control and you may be required to control. Some plants are poisonous to horses and other livestock.

5.9 - Animals can be dangerous. Bulls, stallions, rams, boars, etc. can attack human beings. Children need to know not to enter pens where animals are kept.

5.10 - Much of Esmeralda County receives less than 5 inches of precipitation per year. As a result, there can be problems with overgrazing and fugitive dust. Without irrigation, grass does not grow very well. There is a limit to the amount of grazing the land can handle.

Conclusion

Even though you pay property taxes to the county, the amount of tax collected does not cover the cost of the services provided to rural residents. Esmeralda County receives less than 1/3rd of the annual revenue/budget from local property taxes.

This information is by no means exhaustive. There are other issues that you may encounter that we have overlooked and we encourage you to be vigilant in your duties to explore and examine those things that could cause your move to be less than you expect.

These comments are offered in the sincere hope that this information can help you enjoy your decision to reside in the county. The intent is not to dissuade you, only to inform you.

POLICIES

Specific policy statements are the essential part of the Master Plan. These policies are designed to direct future public and private decisions regarding the development and use of land in Esmeralda County.

The following policies and recommendations are hereby established for Esmeralda County:

1. Economic Activity

Agriculture, mining, tourism, and private industry are, and should remain, the basic economic activities in the county.

Policies:

1-1 The entire county shall be kept open for prospecting, mining, agriculture, and related activities.

1-2 The Federal Mining Law of 1872 shall remain in effect as the basic law relating to mining activities.

1-3 Appropriate State, Federal, and private institutions may be called upon to assist the development of small businesses in all parts of the County.

1-4 The land subdivision requirements of existing state laws, such as [NRS 278.320](#), affecting parcels less than 40 acres in size, and [NRS 278.461](#), affecting filing fees and State Engineer approval of water rights, shall be adhered to. All new lot sizes shall meet the requirements of [NAC 444.790](#). County ordinances should identify minimum lot sizes to address specific concerns of the geographic area.

1-5 Any designation of any public lands for any non-public purpose is opposed, including but not necessarily limited to designations for Wilderness, Wilderness Study Area, or Wild Land.

1-6 Conversion of private property, including water rights, for incompatible use is opposed.

1-7 Conversion of private lands for wild horse or burro preserves or wilderness or wild lands areas shall be opposed.

1-8 Designated primitive areas in public lands are not recommended because these tend to encourage vandalism.

1-9 Designated county and privately operated public recreation areas are recommended.

1-10 State level agencies are encouraged to negotiate a Nevada-California water agreement for Fish Lake Valley to insure that the more liberal irrigation water pumping practices permissible in the California portion of the valley do not deplete the underground water table in the Nevada portion of the valley.

1-11 Agriculture, e.g., farming and ranching, provide both substantial revenues and employment. Existing grazing permits should be continued. In those areas where there is a

conflict between wildlife (e.g., antelope, deer, and bighorn sheep) or cattle with wild horses or burros, a reasonable removal and management of the wild horses or burros is required.

2. Population Growth

Population growth in the appropriate portions of the county should proceed at a slow, steady rate.

Policies:

2-1 All land use designations proposed in Esmeralda County by district shall be within the constraints of natural resource limitations, particularly water resources.

2-2 County officials, in conjunction with the Division of State Lands, should investigate all possibilities for making available some of the public domain for eventual private ownership.

2-3 Regarding present Bureau of Land Management plans to transfer public lands in Fish Lake Valley to private ownership for agricultural use "... if sufficient water becomes available", such transfer should not occur without the use and application of the concepts of "Public Land Sale Act" of September 19, 1964, 78 Statute 988.43, U.S.C. 1421-27, as is specifically required by Article 2, Esmeralda County Ordinance No. 120 of October 6, 1970.

3. Land Use

Land use planning matters should be entirely within the jurisdiction of the local government.

Policies:

3-1 An active ECLUAC, with representation from all parts of the county, should be retained by the County Commissioners. One of the main purposes of the ECLUAC is the preparation and implementation of the Public Lands Policy Plan.

3-2 For Goldfield District, Silver Peak District, and Fish Lake Valley District, each District should always have a local resident as:

- a. A member of the County Commissioners;
- b. A member of any appointed committee functioning on behalf of the county;
- c. A member of the County School Board;
- d. A Deputy Sheriff, and
- e. A member of the ECLUAC.

3-3 The Agenda and Minutes of the County Commissioner's meetings shall be posted in the three districts and on the Esmeralda County web site.

3-4 County Ordinances should be compiled, revised, or otherwise brought up to date so that they may be more effective and precise.

3-5 Esmeralda County shall remain in existence. Any efforts for consolidation with any other county or portion thereof shall be opposed.

3-6 Municipal and community water systems shall have meters installed and maintained at wells, water sources, and service points.

3-7 No post office may be closed in Esmeralda County without public notices being filed 90 days in advance. Public hearings held under the jurisdiction of appropriate local government authority will determine socio-economic impact upon the citizens.

3-8 Adequate public notice shall be given for all public hearings and meetings regarding Federal, State, and local planning and land management matters in Esmeralda County. In addition to required legal notices, informational news articles should be published on the Esmeralda County web site, along with posted notices at the Courthouse, Post Offices, and Libraries in the County. All planning matters regarding public lands shall be consistent with the Public Lands Policy Plan.

3-9 Generalized land use patterns desired for the future are shown on the Esmeralda County Master Plan Map. For the purposes of this Plan, the county has been divided into three basic categories: multiple use, agriculture, and community and commercial/industrial use.

a. Multiple Use - A multiple use category is designated for Public Lands. Grazing, mining, prospecting, recreation, renewable energy, and other activities are recommended under the multiple-use concept. Esmeralda County supports that all existing Wilderness Study Areas be released for multiple use and no new Wilderness designations be created.

b. Agriculture - This category is suggested for those existing and potential agricultural lands within Esmeralda County.

c. Community and Commercial/Industrial Use - Residential and commercial/industrial development should be concentrated in the existing communities of Goldfield and Silver Peak, where public facilities can be most economically concentrated. Additional development may occur where resources allow, e.g., along existing federal or state highways.

3-10 All existing land uses are allowed. New agricultural and residential land use is allowed anywhere within the county, provided adequate resources are available. All other proposed uses require a special use permit. Existing land uses have priority over new proposed uses for resources and for any disputes, e.g., an existing agricultural use takes precedence for any issues (e.g., noise, dust) with a new adjacent residence; an existing residence takes precedence for any issue with a new adjacent industrial facility.

4. Public Services and Facilities

The majority of Esmeralda County land is managed by the Federal Government and is not populated. Most of the existing population is concentrated in or near Goldfield, Silver Peak, and Fish Lake Valley. The towns of Goldfield and Silver Peak have some urban services; the other areas are more rural and have fewer services. The goal is to maintain the existing adequate levels of county services and infrastructure and expand as necessary. Therefore, Esmeralda County

inhabitants must provide or arrange for their own essential public services on an austere, self-help, and cooperative basis.

Policies:

4-1 Any new development shall pay for any and all necessary planning, infrastructure, and services. Developers will coordinate with Esmeralda County for the provision of necessary services to support population growth. Provision of water, sanitary sewer, streets and roads, public education, and other public services and facilities shall be funded by those who develop the areas through impact fees, special assessment districts, and/or other fees. [NRS-278B Impact Fees for New Developments](#) identifies the applicable state requirements for impact fees. See section 5. Capital Improvement Plan.

4-2 Each resident should ensure that plumbing, irrigation systems, and open water are accessible and compatible with the mobile firefighting equipment.

4-3 Per NRS 278.585, the applicable building codes for Esmeralda County are NRS 278.582 “Minimal standards for plumbing fixtures in certain structures”, NRS 278.583 “National Electrical Code: Applicability; approval; modification”, and NRS 701.220 “Adoption of regulations for energy conservation in buildings; exemptions; applicability and enforcement; procedures for adoption”. As applicable, new or re-modeled buildings shall comply with these state requirements. Esmeralda County is not responsible for verifying compliance.

4-4 Establish, when and where needed, multiple public landfills and appropriate transfer stations for waste disposal. Refer to the [Solid Waste Management Plan](#).

4-5 Standardize the provision of public services and facilities within each appropriate district.

4-6 Maintain consistency with the Water Resources Policy ([9. Water Resources](#)).

4-7 Maintain minimum well and septic density per unit area, consistent with the water capacity and sewage/septic capabilities specific to a geographic area in the county. Septic leach lines installations shall comply with State Health requirements as of date of installation.

4-8 Residential subdivision (5 or more lots), commercial, and industrial developers must provide all necessary streets, access roads, electric power, water, septic systems and other required services, and/or connection to public utilities..

4-9 The Sheriff Department is the primary law enforcement agency throughout the county.

4.1 Schools

The goal is to maintain existing schools and provide for new schools as the need is identified.

Policies:

4.1-1 Each community within the county should coordinate with the School District to determine both short and long-term needs concerning classroom space for re-modeling or construction of new facilities.

4.1-2 Future school sites should be identified and reserved as soon as possible.

4.2 Medical and Health Services

Esmeralda County relies on volunteer ambulance services within each commission district, with volunteer EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians). Esmeralda County does not currently contain any medical and health facilities. Such facilities exist at other locations that are some distance from the populated districts within the county. The goal is to improve accessibility to services, within the constraints of a rural area.

Policies:

4.2-1 Medical emergency response times cannot be guaranteed and the county imposes charges for this service.

4.3 Fire Protection Services

Esmeralda County relies on volunteer fire protection and highway rescue services throughout the county, with volunteer firemen. The goal is to improve services, given the remote and rural location of county residents.

Policies:

4.3-1 Fire protection and highway rescue response times cannot be guaranteed and the county may impose charges for this service.

4.4 Community Facilities

Community facilities proposed for the future may be listed and planned for in the Master Plan. Timing schedules, budgetary requirements, and land acquisition needs are typically included.

Policies:

4.4-1 The Master Plan may be amended from time to time to reflect community facility needs and priorities.

5. Capital Improvement Plan

This section constitutes the Capital Improvement Plan, per NRS 278B. A subdivision consists of a parcel that a developer subdivides into five (5) or more lots. Each new lot must still meet the lot size requirement of NAC 444.790 and any minimum lot size per county ordinance.

Policies:

5-1 The developer shall pay for all associated costs for their development. The developer shall provide a plan that identifies all required services (e.g., power, sanitation, waste disposal, fire, ambulance, communication, school, roads, road maintenance, adequate drainage) and how the developer and future owners shall pay for all improvements and all services.

5-2 The developer’s plan shall include all lot boundaries, roads, utility rights of way, easements, and public and private land access. New developments shall not obstruct access to adjoining public or private lands.

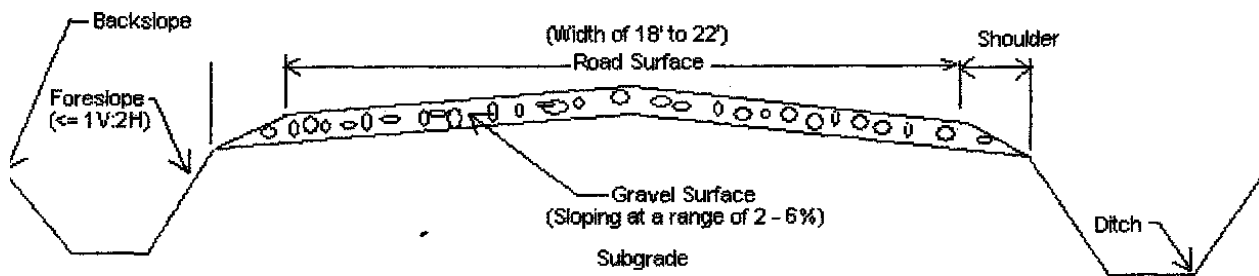
5-3 Any proposed development plan shall prove compatibility with available resources, in particular identifying water needs and sources.

5-4 Per NRS 278.585, the applicable building codes for Esmeralda County are NRS 278.582 “Minimal standards for plumbing fixtures in certain structures”, NRS 278.583 “National Electrical Code: Applicability; approval; modification”, and NRS 701.220 “Adoption of regulations for energy conservation in buildings; exemptions; applicability and enforcement; procedures for adoption”. As applicable, new or re-modeled buildings shall comply with these state requirements. Esmeralda County is not responsible for verifying compliance.

5-5 Roads for new developments should meet the following criteria:

- a. The gravel layer should be a minimum of 9 inches thick and 90% compacted. Gravel shall be Type 2 aggregate.
- b. Sub-grade material requires a minimum compaction of 85%, including undisturbed material.
- c. All utility poles and underground utility structures must be away from the road on the other side of the back slopes, but within the right-of-way (ROW) or easement.
- d. Drainage culverts should be installed as needed and approved by the Road Department.
- e. All new development road plans must be approved by Esmeralda County.

5-6 All new roads shall comply with the typical roadway cross-section below.



Typical Road Cross-Section for New Developments

6. Public Lands Policy Plan

Manage and utilize public lands on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield concepts and in a manner that will conserve natural resources, protect and preserve the quality of life, and provide for long-term benefits for the people of Esmeralda County and future generations. The following policy refers to the Esmeralda County [Public Land Policy Plan](#) (PLPP), an element of this Master Plan.

Policies:

6-1 Promote the intent and policies of the Esmeralda County PLPP.

6-2 No public lands shall be designated as Wilderness, Wilderness Study Area, Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC), Wild Lands, or any such similar designation, since a designation of this type would reduce the multiple use aspect of the land.

7. Economic Development

Socioeconomic data, specifically related to population and employment, is a critical component of the planning process. Population and economic trends as well as forecasts are essential in developing a basis for projections of the future demand of both land and the services required by the land users. The amount, distribution, and density of existing and future population provides a basis for determining the type, location, character, and extent of public facilities and services that will be required to meet present as well as future needs of Esmeralda County. Economic data relating to employment and commerce is required for each commission district to evaluate the tax base and revenue sources in order to determine the availability of any public facilities and services the county is responsible for providing.

7.1 Commercial Development

The goal is to achieve a diversified and stable economy that is compatible with minimum planned growth and quality of life objectives, provides adequate employment and business opportunities for current and future generations, and strengthens the tax base.

Policies:

7.1-1 Provide the minimum necessary commercial and business service needs for the residents of the county, consistent with the county budget and the finite natural resources.

7.1-2 Use citizen friendly land use regulations, expedited county processing, and planned capital facility improvement programming to implement the county's economic development goals.

7.1-3 Promote existing or new landing strips to encourage one or more airports within the county for viable economic use; while providing fiscally responsible services for development and improvement.

7.1-4 Provide fiscally responsible services so that local businesses are competitive in the regional, state, national, and international markets.

7.1-5 Provide fiscally responsible public facilities and services necessary to retain or expand existing businesses and to attract targeted industries.

7.1-6 Encourage public and private partnerships to achieve a diversified and stable economy.

7.1-7 Per NRS 278.585, the applicable building codes for Esmeralda County are NRS 278.582 “Minimal standards for plumbing fixtures in certain structures”, NRS 278.583 “National Electrical Code: Applicability; approval; modification”, and NRS 701.220 “Adoption of regulations for energy conservation in buildings; exemptions; applicability and enforcement; procedures for adoption”. As applicable, new or re-modeled buildings shall comply with these state requirements. Esmeralda County is not responsible for verifying compliance.

7.2 Resource Development

The goal is to maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries including mining, agriculture, ranching, recreation and tourism, and seek value-added manufacturing of those resources. Reference the [Public Lands Policy Plan](#) for more information.

Policies:

7.2-1 Identify and manage important natural resource lands to be used for resource-based industries.

7.2-2 Promote opportunities for additional products based on local resources and to increase production of resources that are underutilized.

7.2-3 Encourage increased retail trade and tourism by protecting and enhancing the appearance of the historic man-made and natural environments.

7.2-4 Develop the Esmeralda County energy resource areas and through-county transmission lines.

7.3 Business Development

The goal is to promote business development that provides continuing employment, economic vitality, and an increased tax base.

Policies:

7.3-1 Periodically analyze the local business sector to identify needs and opportunities within each commission district.

7.3-2 Encourage home-based occupations.

7.3-3 Support the partnership between the business community, the local government, and the educational system in order to increase the employability of the local workforce.

7.3-4 Encourage usage of advanced technologies by the County and businesses, such as information technology (IT), to increase the efficiency and production of local businesses and to facilitate local participation in regional, state, national, and international markets.

7.3-5 Facilitate assistance and counseling for local businesses in cooperation with the Small Business Development Center, the Small Business Administration, Great Basin College, the University of Nevada, and the Cooperative Extension service and other agencies.

8. Transportation

Esmeralda County is served by federal highways, state highways, and county roads. The federal highways are US-6 and US-95, totaling ~ 20 miles of US-6, ~ 40 miles of US-6 and US-95 combined, and ~ 60 miles of US-95. The state highways are NV-264 (~ 30 miles), NV-265 (~ 19 miles), NV-266 (~ 38 miles), NV-267 (~10 miles), NV-773 (~11 miles), and NV-774 (~ 8 miles). There are ~ 3,500 miles of county roads, of which ~ 25 miles are paved.

The federal highways support a large amount of traffic, especially transport trucks. US-95 passes directly through the town of Goldfield. The state highways primarily provide transportation to populated areas, e.g., Silver Peak, Fish Lake Valley, Gold Point, and Lida. Both federal and state highways require regular maintenance because of heavy use, e.g., trucks, and weather conditions, e.g., snow, freeze-thaw cycles.

County roads provide most of the access to residences, farms, ranches, mines, historical/cultural, and other locations within the county. Given the relatively harsh weather conditions and varying patterns of usage, many roads require regular maintenance; but road maintenance is not always available. Excessive speed will cause “wash-boarding”.

Policies:

8-1 Maintain, through fiscally responsible methods, county roads, based on usage, need, available funding, and weather conditions.

8-2 Develop a road capital improvement program to improve county roads when necessary and fiscally responsible.

8-3 Maintain public access to all existing roads, trails, washes, and RS2477 rights-of-way.

8-4 Require reasonable compensation for county roads damaged by commercial users; examples include drilling operations, organized racing events, or other heavy equipment operations.

8-5 There shall be no regulations for Off-Highway-Vehicles (OHV’s), except for permitted or commercial events. All commercial tours or events, including those requiring BLM permits, must be approved by Esmeralda County. Encourage the “Tread Lightly” policy on public lands. OHV use on private land should only occur with the permission of the owner. OHV’s are subject to existing laws and speed limits. OHV’s operated in or near residential areas should not cause excessive noise or dust, which impedes enjoyment of the area by residents.

9. Water Resources

Water is fundamental to Esmeralda County’s present and future. Water is the most precious natural resource of Esmeralda County and is basic to all efforts to preserve the environment,

resident lifestyles, and to meet the needs of area citizens by providing for their economic well-being and improving their quality of life.

Nevada Water Law

The water in Nevada on the surface and below the ground surface belongs to the people of the State. Entities within the State can apply for the right to use that water. Nevada Water Law is founded on the doctrine of prior appropriation - "first in time, first in right". Under the appropriation doctrine, the first user of water from a water course acquired a priority right to the use and to the extent of its use (Shamberger, H.A., Evolution of Nevada's Water Laws, as Related to the Development and Evaluation of the State's Water Resources from 1866 to about 1960, U.S. Geological Survey Water Resources Bulletin 46, 1991). Nevada Water Law is set forth in Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS), Chapters 533 and 534. In addition, there are numerous court decisions which have helped define Nevada water law. The State Engineer is the water rights administrator and is responsible for the appropriation, adjudication, distribution and management of water in the State. To carry out these duties he is vested with broad discretionary powers. As state statute cites, entities within Nevada are permitted to file and acquire water rights.

Public interest is not defined by statute and the State Engineer can consider different issues, depending upon the individual application.

All water rights are considered real property and thus are conveyed by deed. Water rights can be bought and sold, and the location and type of use changed. The attributes of appropriative water rights in Nevada are:

- 1) Beneficial use is the measure and the limit of the right to the use of the water;
- 2) Rights are stated in terms of definite quantity, manner of use, and period of use; and
- 3) A water right can be lost by abandonment or forfeiture.

Abandonment is determined by the intent of the water user to forsake the use of the water. A water right is lost by forfeiture if the right is not used for 5 years. Water lost through abandonment or forfeiture reverts back to the public and is subject to future appropriation. The Nevada Division of Water Resources is responsible for administering and enforcing Nevada water law, which includes the adjudication and appropriation of groundwater and surface water in the state. The appointed administrative head of this division is the State Engineer, whose office was created by the Nevada Legislature in 1903. The purpose of the 1903 legislation was to account for all of the existing water use according to priority. The 1903 act was amended in 1905 to set out a method for appropriation of water not already being put to a beneficial use.

After the passage of the Nevada General Water Law Act of 1913, the Nevada Division of Water Resources was granted jurisdiction over all wells tapping artesian water or water in definable underground aquifers. The 1939 Nevada Underground Water Act granted the Nevada Division of Water Resources total jurisdiction over all groundwater in the state.

The 1913 and 1939 acts have been amended a number of times, and Nevada's water law is considered one of the most comprehensive water laws in the West. The above-mentioned acts

provide that all water within the boundaries of the state, whether above or beneath the surface of the ground, belongs to the public, and is subject to appropriation for beneficial use under the laws of the state.

All waters in Esmeralda County belong to the public and are managed by the State of Nevada in accordance with the provisions of Nevada Water Law (NRS 533 and 534). The Nevada State Engineer determines the limit and extent of water rights including the quantity of appropriative right and any conditions that must be met for the water to be placed to a beneficial use. In ruling on a water right application, the State Engineer must consider four criteria:

- 1) Is there un-appropriated water available for the proposed use?
- 2) Will the proposed use impair senior water rights?
- 3) Is the proposed water use in the public interest?
- 4) Is the proposed project feasible and not filed for speculative purposes?

The guiding principles used to develop Esmeralda County's objectives, goals, and policies for water resources are:

- All of the water resources of Esmeralda County, whether above or below ground, belong to the public and are managed by the State of Nevada Division of Water Resources, the State Engineer, and the Nevada Revised Statutes.
- The water resources needs of future generations of Esmeralda County residents must be protected with a balanced approach that provides for the County's economic goals without detriment to the social, aesthetic, cultural, and ecological values of the County.
- The appropriation and beneficial use of Esmeralda County's water resources are administered by the Nevada State Engineer in accordance with the requirements of Nevada Water Law, and by state and federal court decrees and regulations.
- Public education and public input are vital aspects of water resources planning and all units of local government, water users, and interested parties should be allowed to participate in the planning process.
- Planned growth must consider Water Resources within the various commission districts of the County.
- Water rights in Esmeralda County are private property that may be bought, sold, or traded under free market conditions.
- Esmeralda County should adopt a Water Resources Plan, based on sound science, that integrates water supply, water quality, water use, and environmental issues, and to guide decisions that affect the water resources of the County.
- All water resources development and use in Esmeralda County should be conducted in a manner that is technically, environmentally, and economically sound, and consistent with state and federal laws.
- Water conservation is an important component of the planning and management of Esmeralda County's water resources.
- Esmeralda County, in filing for ground and surface rights within the county, is only interested in augmenting and enhancing the water resources for Esmeralda County citizens and economic diversity within Esmeralda County.

Policies:

- 9-1 Develop an Esmeralda County Water Resources Plan as soon as practical.
- 9-2 Ensure that all area land use plans include projections of water demand to support future land use and economic development needs.
- 9-3 Proposals for development or land use requiring county approval, e.g., a sub-division, energy generation, shall include accurate projections of water demand, identify the proposed source of supply, and include the process, action, and compensation to mitigate current or future detrimental effects. The developer should bear the cost of preparing these plans.
- 9-4 Approve development only where sufficient water resources exist.
- 9-5 Water supply planning and development shall not adversely impact adjacent water users or other existing uses of water.
- 9-6 Support technologies that make the most efficient use of available water.
- 9-7 Encourage development of possible water sources, e.g., springs, streams, for potential recreation.
- 9-8 That parties interested in purchasing or developing lands in Esmeralda County shall be notified that:
- a. Developers are required to pay for and construct water facilities to serve their developments, and the facilities may be dedicated to Esmeralda County to own and operate. The water rights for the development shall be provided by the developer and dedicated to the County.
 - b. To the maximum extent practical, new water facilities must integrate into existing County Systems.
 - c. Esmeralda County shall have planning, design, construction oversight, operation, and maintenance responsibility for all municipal water supply facilities.
- 9-9 Review the output of the Division of Water Planning's forecast models regarding Esmeralda County to ensure that they are compatible with Esmeralda County's demand forecasts and acceptable to the Esmeralda County Board of County Commissioners.
- 9-10 Transportation of water outside of Esmeralda County is prohibited. If county policy is over-ridden by state or federal agencies, then Esmeralda County shall be compensated. The state or federal agency that approves transporting the water must prove using accepted scientific methods that no detrimental effects will occur to any water basin within Esmeralda County.
- 9-11 Develop, as soon as practical, a project permitting process that addresses mitigation of possible future effects on water quality, quantity, and existing users.

9-12 Review and respond to any applications involving inter-basin transfer of water affecting Esmeralda County.

9-13 Un-appropriated water rights shall not be granted to any federal, state, or local agency or any private entity without the express concurrence and approval of the Esmeralda County Board of County Commissioners.

9-14 Well-head protection zones for municipal water supplies and other critical wetland and riparian areas shall have no development that could affect water quality or quantity.

10. Solid Waste

The following policy refers to the Esmeralda County Solid Waste Management Plan, an element of this Master Plan.

10-1 Promote the intent and policies of the Esmeralda County [Solid Waste Management Plan](#).

11. District Plans

The following sections identify concerns and policies for the three primary districts within Esmeralda County.

11.1 District 1, Goldfield Policies

Goldfield is a small historic mining town with ties to the neighboring towns from the early 1900's. With a current population of about three hundred people, Goldfield has room to grow. In addition to mining and ranching, more permanent industries and businesses are welcome to the area. In the early 1900's, Goldfield was the largest city in the state of Nevada, with economic and political clout. For growth of Goldfield and the District 1 area for the long term, the following policies are supported and encouraged.

1. Mining, ranching, tourism, and recreational activities are encouraged and will continue to be at the center of District 1's success.
2. Within the constraints of the local resources, mainly water, growth is encouraged.
3. Water reservoirs may be constructed in the area to accommodate growth needs.
4. Manufacturing, commercial, and retail industries are encouraged to build and residences are encouraged to be built in Goldfield and within District 1.
5. Historical preservation and restoration are encouraged, of county and privately owned properties.
6. Builders, individuals, and corporations alike are encouraged to build structures in a turn of the 20th century style, to maintain the historic character of Goldfield and the surrounding area. Large industry should locate outside of the Goldfield Town limits.
7. Rebuild one of the railroads connecting Las Vegas and Reno stopping at historical locations with additional spurs to new industrial or recreational areas. The railroad should be for multiple uses, including cargo, tourism, and passenger cars with restaurant, gaming, and retail use.
8. Develop the Goldfield Airport and Industrial Park.

9. Develop a local fishing pond for Goldfield, which provides a recreational area, a habitat area, and wildlife viewing area.
10. Esmeralda County has traditionally promoted freedom and self responsibility, believing that rural residences and businesses should be self-regulated. The goal is to have county, private, and small business regulations at an absolute minimum, including minimal or no zoning, permitting, and inspections (see section 4-3). All disputes should be resolved using existing state laws, primarily resolving disputes using the Justice of the Peace or the Board of Commissioners.
11. There should be no new animal regulations in Goldfield.
12. Wild horses, wild burros, and range cattle should be kept outside of Goldfield by rebuilding and maintaining the fence around Goldfield.

11.2 District 2 Policies

District 2 of Esmeralda County occupies the entire center of Esmeralda County from the northern to southern border and includes precincts 2, 4, and 5. Population centers include the towns of Silver Peak, Gold Point, Lida, and areas adjacent to Tonopah. This district also contains several large areas of privately owned land, which could be developed, or changed in use. The existing major industry is mining, followed by grazing. The district, especially the Clayton Valley, has established geothermal resources that are expected to be producing in the near future. The following policies are supported and encouraged district wide for long term growth, stability, and prosperity.

1. Mining, ranching, tourism, recreational activities, and geothermal power are encouraged and will continue to be at the center of District 2's success.
2. Within the constraints of the local resources, mainly water, growth is encouraged.
3. Water reservoirs may be constructed in the area to accommodate growth needs.
4. New residence based, owner operated service and retail businesses that do no impact neighborhoods should be allowed in all areas. Retail and services businesses other than the above should be allowed adjacent to a main thoroughfare where sufficient parking is available.
5. Industrial and large commercial expansion should be subject to special use permits and located a minimum of 1 mile from residence or area designated for residential expansion. Mining and any enterprise using hazardous materials, or explosive materials; generating noise, noxious odor, or dust shall be located a minimum of 2 miles from a residence or area designated for residential expansion. Feed lots, dairies, and commercial egg production facilities are included.
6. Agriculture including the keeping and breeding of livestock animals should be allowed in all areas.
7. Animal breeding operations other than livestock breeding may be regulated to insure the welfare of animals.

8. Keeping of wild or exotic animals that can pose a threat to humans or livestock should be banned.
9. Historical preservation and restoration are encouraged.
10. Encourage protection of existing ghost towns, historic mining sites, county owned historic buildings, and privately owned historic property.
11. Natural and historic scenery and landscapes should be protected, sustaining the value of the tourism industry.
12. Esmeralda County has traditionally promoted freedom and self responsibility, believing that rural residences and businesses should be self-regulated. The goal is to have county, private, and small business regulations at an absolute minimum, including minimal or no zoning, permitting, and inspections (see section 4-3). All disputes should be resolved using existing state laws, primarily resolving disputes using the Justice of the Peace or the Board of Commissioners.
13. No public lands shall be designated as Wilderness, Wilderness Study Area, Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC), or Wild Lands.
14. There shall be no new county inspections of residences or small businesses.
15. There shall be no residential or small business building permits.
16. There shall be no county regulations regarding any items collected or stored on private property, whether residential or small business. Examples include cars, trucks, art, industrial items, farm equipment, or antiques. Applicable state and federal regulations still apply.

Area Specific Policies for District 2

Silver Peak Vicinity

Town expansion is desired to increase the permanent population by 100 persons and attract water efficient industries, while operations continue at the lithium mine. Residential expansion should be concentrated and occur south of Silver Peak and east of existing fresh water wells. All new expansion will be served by the municipal water system and individual septic systems. Residential lots should be a minimum size of 1 acre.

Residence based, owner operated service and retail businesses that do not affect the residential character of the neighborhood should be allowed in all areas. Retail and services businesses other than the above should be allowed adjacent to a main thoroughfare.

Industrial and large commercial expansion should be subject to special use permits and located to the north and east of the existing town and be a minimum of 1 mile from a residence or area designated for residential expansion. Mining and any enterprise using hazardous or explosive materials and that generate noise, noxious odor, or dust shall be located a minimum of 1 mile from a residence or area designated for residential expansion.

All wells should be metered. No domestic wells should be allowed.

No additional development is to be allowed in Township 2 South Range 39 East MDM, in the undeveloped remainder of section 22 or the south half, southeast quarter of section 18 because of flood protection, flood potential, and access. This area is to be reserved for open space.

No development is to be allowed within the well head protection zone for the Silver Peak Water system.

Goldpoint

A transition/buffer zone, where future public facilities and open space may be located, should be designated to divide the existing historic portion of the town from any new development, resulting from the resolution of the trespass issue (constraining the ability to sell county owned lots). New development on any disposal land or county lots relieved from trespass should be served by a community or municipal water metered water system.

Tonopah Vicinity

Industrial, large-commercial, and retail development should occur subject to special use permits. Development should be connected to existing water and sewer systems.

Millers, Coaldale

Development in these areas should be focused on industrial, large commercial, and retail, accompanied by concentrated residential, and is of sufficient size to be classed as a small community to warrant the provision of services.

Lida Town and Vicinity

The historic aspects of the town should be preserved. Any new lots created should be a minimum of 5 acres and served by a community or municipal metered water systems. Development should be chiefly residential accompanied by small retail to serve the residents (e.g., convenience, gas, restaurant) located by SR 266.

11.3 District 3, Fish Lake Valley Policies

District 3 of Esmeralda County consists of Fish Lake Valley and the village of Dyer. The primary commercial activities are farming, ranching, and mining. Facilities include a kindergarten through eighth grade school, a library, a community center with sports fields, and a park area. Services include a Post Office, a convenience store, a hardware store, a farm supply business, a saloon with restaurant, a bar, and churches.

There are approximately 360 inhabitants of diversified ancestry, including ~ 48% Western European, ~ 48% Hispanic, and ~ 4% Native American. There is a significant retired population, in addition to the inhabitants who work in the various commercial and service industries.

The majority of the citizens of District 3 are united behind the proposition that the public and private land policies should focus on limited growth in order to maintain the existing lifestyles.

Any significant increase in population will further reduce the limited water resources and impose additional burdens on the county tax-payers to provide new or expanded services by the county.

Economic development that does not require significant additional population is encouraged. Examples include geothermal, solar, and wind renewable energy, or small businesses.

Policies:

1. The commissioners shall not approve BLM lands to be transferred within Fish Lake Valley to developers or other entities for the purposes of private land ownership for housing development or serial parceling.
2. The geothermal spring park in a remote area of the valley shall be maintained for public use.
3. Public lands shall be for diverse uses, including exploration, rock hounding, fishing, hunting, hiking, prospecting, cattle grazing, and other uses with no restrictions on access.
4. No public lands shall be designated as Wilderness, Wilderness Study Area, Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC), or Wild Lands.
5. Water rights within the valley have been over allocated by the state; therefore, any new development, including residential, industrial, agricultural, mining, or energy, must have the necessary water rights.
6. Esmeralda County has traditionally promoted freedom and self responsibility, believing that rural residences and businesses should be self-regulated. The goal is to have county, private, and small business regulations at a bare minimum, including minimal or no zoning, permitting, and inspections (reference section 4). All disputes should be resolved using existing state laws, primarily resolving disputes using the Justice of the Peace or the Board of Commissioners.
7. District 3 encourages responsible use of Off-Highway-Vehicles (OHV's) on existing roads, trails, paths, or RS2477 rights-of-way only. OHV use in so designated Special Recreation Management Areas is allowed.

IMPLEMENTATION

Esmeralda County will implement this Master Plan through adoption of County Ordinances that relate to specific policies. The Master Plan and County Ordinances will be revised as appropriate.

Identify additional Master Plan elements, and establish a schedule for development and adoption. Conduct periodic review of the Esmeralda County Master Plan to ensure that the plan continues to meet the needs of the county and county citizens.

APPENDICES

Appendix I Glossary

Adverse impact: a condition that creates, imposes, aggravates, or leads to inadequate, impractical, unsafe, or unhealthy conditions on a site proposed for development or on off-site property or facilities. Usually relates to circulation, drainage, erosion, potable water, and sewage collection and treatment. May also relate to lighting and glare, aesthetics, quality of life, and impact on environment.

Aesthetics: the pleasantness of the total environment. Aesthetics relates to the perceptual aspects of the physical surroundings; their appearance to the eye and the comfort and enjoyment offered to the other senses.

Affordable housing: housing that is affordable for a family with a total gross income less than 110 percent of the median gross income for the county concerned based upon the estimates of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development of the most current median gross family income for the county.

Appeal: a private individual, group, or public agency taking the decision of the zoning administrator or planning commission to a higher authority for review of that decision.

Bulk regulations: zoning ordinance restrictions on the density, height, location, and lot coverage of buildings for the purpose of providing buildings with sufficient access, air, fire protection, light, and open space.

Capital improvements program (CIP): a program of when, where, and how much a governing body plans to invest in public services for the next five to ten years. Items commonly included in a capital improvements program are roads and bridges; school buildings; sewer, water lines, and treatment plants; municipal buildings; solid waste disposal sites; and police and fire equipment.

Carrying capacity: the ability of an area or unit of land to absorb human development without experiencing a significant decline in environmental quality.

Concurrency: a policy that development can occur only if and when adequate public services are in place.

Conditional use: a land use in a certain zone that is neither permitted outright nor prohibited outright. A conditional or special land use permit may be granted after review by the planning commission.

Conservation easement: the grant of a property right stipulating that the described land will remain in the natural state and precluding future or additional development.

Dedication: the deeding of land by a developer or landowner to the public. Dedications of land commonly occur in the subdivision process; a sub-divider may donate land for schools, parks, roads, and other public uses.

Density: the number of buildings, offices, or housing units on a particular area of land.

Design review: a formal process for reviewing the design and aesthetics of proposed new developments and building alterations; and for determining what improvements or changes might be made to make new developments compatible with the surroundings. A design review board appointed by the governing body or the planning commission can draft a design review ordinance listing design standards and design control district (such as a historic district). Design standards may also be incorporated into the zoning ordinance.

Downzone: a change in a property's zone designation to require a lower density or a less intense use.

Duplex: a building containing two single-family dwelling units totally separated from each other by an unpierced wall extending from ground to roof.

Dwelling unit: a building designed for and intended for human habitation. A dwelling unit generally, but not always, contains the following facilities: toilet and bath or shower; separate room for sleeping accommodations; kitchen for the preparation and storage of food; space, other than that listed above, for eating and/or living.

Easement: a grant of one or more of the property rights by the property owner to and/or for use by the public, a corporation, or another person or entity.

Essential services: services and utilities needed for the health, safety, and general welfare of the community, such as electrical, gas, telephone, water, sewerage, and other utilities. The equipment and appurtenances necessary for such systems to furnish an adequate level of service for the area in which is the equipment and appurtenances are located.

Floor area ratio: the gross floor area of all buildings or structures on a lot divided by the total lot area.

Highest and best use: an appraisal concept that determines the use of a particular property likely to produce the greatest net return in the foreseeable future.

Improvement: facilities that aid in land development. Improvements include streets, sewer and water lines, curbs, sidewalks, street lights, fire hydrants, and street signs.

Infill development: the development of new housing or other buildings on scattered vacant sites in a built-up area.

Infrastructure: includes water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, streets, schools, parks, fire, police, and flood protection.

Intensity of use: the number of dwelling units per acre for residential development and floor area ratio (FAR) for nonresidential development, such as commercial, office, and industrial.

Labor force: all the population sixteen years of age or older, having the potential for active work for wages.

Land use: a broad term used to classify land according to present use and according to the suitability for future uses, e.g., for housing, open spaces and parks, commercial, industrial, etc.

Level of service: a description of traffic conditions along a given roadway or at a particular intersection.

Lot coverage: the amount of a total lot covered by buildings. Limits on the area of a lot a building can cover. For example, in single-family residential zones maximum lot coverage of 35 percent is common. This restriction is designed to ensure adequate light, privacy, and open space.

LULU: Locally Unwanted Land Use.

Maintenance guarantee: any security that may be required and accepted by a governmental agency to assure that necessary improvements will function as required for a specific period of time.

Minimum lot size: the smallest lot or parcel that can be built on in a particular land use zone or the smallest lot that can be created by dividing a larger parcel.

Mitigation: methods used to alleviate or lessen the impact of development.

Mixed-use development: the development of a tract of land, building, or structure with a variety of complementary and integrated uses, such as, but not limited to, residential, office, manufacturing, retail, public, or entertainment in a compact urban form.

Mixed-use zoning: regulations that permit a combination of different uses within a single development.

Multi-family dwelling: a building containing three or more dwelling units including units that are located one over the other.

NIMBY: Not In My Back Yard.

Nonconforming use: a land use that does not comply with the ordinance of the zone the land is in or does not comply with other land use regulations. A nonconforming use that existed prior to the zoning regulation will generally be allowed to continue under a “grandfather” arrangement.

Nuisance: The use of land or behavior that brings harm or substantial annoyance to adjacent property owners or the public in general. Nuisances typically involve noise, odors, visual clutter, and dangerous structures.

Open space: any parcel or area of land or water essentially unimproved and set aside, dedicated, designated, or reserved for public or private use or enjoyment, or for the use and enjoyment of owners, occupants, and their guests of land adjoining or neighboring such open space.

Overlay zone: a zoning district that encompasses one or more underlying zones and that imposes additional requirements above that required by the underlying zone.

Performance guarantee: any security that may be accepted by a municipality to assure that improvements required as part of an application for development will be satisfactorily completed.

Performance zoning: the use of standards in regulating land use location and density, rather than specific zones and districts. Performance standards regulate the impacts of land uses. Performance standards typically refer to noise, traffic, odors, air pollution, and visual impact.

Plans: the master plan, comprehensive plan, or general plan explores the present condition of an area, projects possible futures, and investigates needs in order to develop the general policy goals and objectives through which planning can be implemented.

Police power: the right of government to restrict an owner's use of property to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. Restrictions must be reasonable and be conducted according to due process.

Public improvement: any improvement, facility, or service together with the associated site or right-of-way necessary to provide transportation, drainage, utilities, or similar essential services and facilities and that are usually owned and operated by a governmental agency.

Public lands: Lands managed by an agency of the federal, state, or local government that have not been withdrawn for common use, e.g., by the Department of Defense.

Public lands: The general public domain; unappropriated lands; lands belonging to the United States and which are subject to sale or other disposal under general laws, and are not reserved or held back for any special governmental or public purpose.

Right-of-way: the right to cross over property. A right-of-way (ROW) usually refers to public land. For example, public land on which a street is built is a right-of-way and includes the street, the sidewalk, and the land between the street and sidewalk. Rights-of-way across private property are usually for utility lines or driveways.

Setback: the distance required to separate a building from a road, property line, or other building.

Spot zoning: the zoning of a particular lot for a use that is different from the uses permitted in the surrounding zone, i.e., a lot zoned for commercial use in the middle of an R-1 single-family residential zone. This practice should be avoided because of a potentially negative impact on neighborhoods and likely invalidation by the courts.

Steep slope: land areas where the slope exceeds 20 percent. Construction on slopes in excess of 20 percent requires additional safeguards against erosion and other potential problems.

Subdivision: the separation of a parcel of land into lots for future sale and/or development.

Swale: a depression in the ground that channels runoff.

Transfer of development rights: the removal of the right to develop or build, expressed in dwelling units per acre or floor area, from land in one zoning district to land in another district where such transfer is permitted.

Trip: a term used in transportation planning and analysis to denote travel within the planning area. Origin and destination studies, used to describe the trip process, attempt to interpret the point at which an individual trip originates, the path which the trip takes, and the final destination of the trip. ADT: average daily trips.

Variance: the decision to alter the provisions of a land use ordinance in order to avoid unnecessary hardship to a landowner. The burden is on the landowner to prove the hardship.

Zone: an area or areas in which certain land uses are permitted and other uses are prohibited by the zoning ordinance.

Zoning ordinance: a set of land use regulations enacted by the local governing body to create districts that permit certain land uses and prohibit others. Land uses in each district are regulated according to type, density, heights, and the coverage of buildings.

Appendix II Planning Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAG	Association of American Geographers
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)
ADT	Average Daily Traffic (or Average Daily Trips)
ADU	Accessory Dwelling Unit
AF	Acre Foot
AFT	American Farmland Trust
AICUZ	Air Installation Compatible Use Zone
AICP	American Institute of Certified Planners
AOD	Airport Overlay District
APA	American Planning Association
APTA	American Public Transit Association
APWA	American Public Works Association
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
ATV	All Terrain Vehicle
B – 1, 2 ...	Business zone/use of specified intensity
BAT	Best Available Technology
BLM	Bureau of Land Management (US)
BMP	Best Management Program (or Practice)
BOA	Board of Appeals or Board of Adjustment
BoCC	Board of County Commissioners
BOCA	Building Officials and Code Administrators, International

BoS	Board of Supervisors
BP	Building Permit
BTS	Bureau of Transportation Statistics
BZA	Board of Zoning Adjustment
C – 1, 2 ...	Commercial zone/use of specified intensity
CAA	Clean Air Act (see also FCAA)
CAD	Computer Aided Design
CBD	Central Business District
CCD	Census County Division
CC&Rs	Conditions, Covenants and Restrictions
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CofAs	Conditions of Approval
CF/S	Cubic Feet per Second
CIP	Capital Improvements Plan (or Program)
CMSA	Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (see also MSA, SMSA, PMSA)
CO	Certificate of Occupancy
COG	Council of Governments
CUP	Conditional Use Permit
DOE	Department of Energy (US)
DOT	Department of Transportation (US)
DRI	Developments of Regional Impact
DU	Dwelling Unit
EDA	Economic Development Administration
EIR	Environmental Impact Report

EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMF	Electromagnetic Field
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EZ	Enterprise Zone
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
FCAA	Federal Clean Air Act
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHA	Federal Housing Administration
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FIRE	Finance, Insurance and Real Estate
FIA	Fiscal Impact Analysis (also Federal Insurance Administration)
FMHA	Farmers Home Administration
FNMA	Federal National Mortgage Administration (or Fannie Mae)
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GDP	General Development Plan
GFA	Gross Floor Area
GID	General Improvement District
GIS	Geographic Information System
GLA	Gross Leasable Area
GM	Growth Management
GNIS	Geographic Names Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System

HO	Home Occupation
HOA	Home Owners Association
HOD	Highway Overlay District
HOV	High Occupancy Vehicle
HUD	US Department of Housing and Urban Development
I – 1, 2 ...	Industrial Zone/use of specified intensity
IDA	Industrial Development Authority
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
ICMA	International City/County Managers Association
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
LAFCO	Local Agency Formation Committee/Council
LCB	Legislative Counsel Bureau
LEPC	Local Emergency Planning Committee
LBCS	Land Based Classification System
LMC	Land Management Code
LOS	Level of Service (traffic flow rating)
LRV	Light Rail Vehicle
LUI	Land Use Intensity (standards developed by the Federal Housing Administration)
LULU	Locally Unwanted Land Use
LUR	Land Use Ratio
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
M – 1, 2 ...	Manufacturing Zone/use of specified intensity
MGD	Millions of Gallons per Day
MF	Multi-family

MH	Manufactured Housing
MPC	Master Planned Community
MPD	Master Planned Development
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area (see also CMSA, PMSA, SMSA)
MTS	Metropolitan Transportation System
MXD	Mixed Use Development
NAHB	National Association of Home Builders
NAHRO	National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials
NAICS	North American Industrial Classification System
NARC	National Association of Regional Councils
NBGN	National/Nevada Board of Geographic Names
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NHS	National Highway System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service)
NRI	Natural Resources Inventory
NRS	Nevada Revised Statutes
NTHP	National Trust for Historic Preservation
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
ORV	Off-Road Vehicle
PC	Planning Commission

PCD	Planned Commercial Development
PCS	Personal Communication Services
PHT	Peak Hour Traffic (or Peak Hour Trips)
PID	Planned Industrial Development
PMSA	Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area
PRD	Planned Residential Development
PDR	Purchase of Development Rights
PPB	Parts Per Billion
PPM	Parts Per Million
PWS	Public Water Supply
PUD	Planned Unit Development
QOL	Quality of Life
R – 1, 2 ...	Residential Zone/use of specified intensity
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RDA	Redevelopment Authority
RFP	Request for Proposals
RFQ	Request for Qualifications
RFRA	Religious Freedom Restoration Act
RPA	Regional Planning Agency
RPC	Regional Planning Commission
RTPA	Regional Transportation Planning Agency
RV	Recreation Vehicle
ROW	Right-of-way
SFD	Single-family dwelling

SAD	Special Assessment District
SCPEA	Standard City Planning Enabling Act
SEPC	State Emergency Planning Committee
SF	Single-family
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification (Code)
SID	Special Improvement District
SIG	Street Index Guide
SLAPP	Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation
SLO	Sensitive Lands Ordinance
SLUPA	State Land Use Planning Agency
SLUPAC	State Land Use Planning Advisory Council
SMSA	Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area
SOI	Sphere of Influence
SOV	Single Occupancy Vehicle
SPA	Specific Plan Area
SRO	Single Room Occupancy
STP	Surface Transportation Program
SUP	Special Use Permit
TAZ	Traffic Analysis Zone
TIF	Tax Increment Financing
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TDR	Transfer of Development Rights
TDS	Total Dissolved Solids
TMA	Transportation Management Association (also Transportation Management Area)

TOD	Transit Oriented Design (or Development)
TRPA	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
TSM	Transportation System Management
ULI	Urban Land Institute
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
USDI	US Department of Interior
USFS	US Forest Service
USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	US Geological Survey
USPLS	US Public Land Survey
UTM	Universal Transverse Mercator Grid
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds
WHPA	Wellhead Protection Area
WMP	Watershed Management Program
WP	<i>Western Planner</i> organization and publication
WPR	Western Planning Resources
WQMP	Water Quality Management Plan
ZLL	Zero Lot Line
ZO	Zoning Ordinance