

### 3.12 SOCIOECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The project area covers approximately 15,354 acres of public land in Churchill County, Nevada. Churchill County was identified as the ROI for socioeconomic analysis, since most of the effects on the population and economy would occur within this local region. Data for the city of Fallon is presented where appropriate, since Fallon is the county's only incorporated city and the city closest to the project area.

#### **Population**

Between 1990 and 2005, the population of Churchill County increased by 48.2 percent, which is two thirds the state's growth rate of 66.3 percent. Thirty-one percent of the county's population resides in Fallon, which grew by 28.7 percent between 1990 and 2005. By 2026, the population of Churchill County is projected to grow by 8,530 to 35,115 (an increase of 32 percent over 2005) (NSBDC 2006a), while the population of Nevada as a whole will have increased by 1,851,652, or 73 percent, to 4.3 million (Table 3-4).

**Table 3-4 Population Changes, 1990-2005**

	1990	2000	2005	% Change 1990-2005
Churchill County	17,938	23,982	26,585	48.2%
Fallon	6,438	7,536	8,339	28.7%

US Census Bureau 1990a, 1990b, 2000a; NSBDC 2006b

#### **Housing**

Between 1990 and 2000 the total number of housing units in Churchill County, Fallon, and the state increased by 33.5 percent, 20.7 percent, and 59.5 percent, respectively. Owner occupancy increased in Churchill County and the state but decreased in Fallon from 47.8 percent in 1990 to 45.2 percent in 2000 (see Table 3-5). In all of these areas vacancy increased between 1990 and 2000, and renter vacancy was greater than owner vacancy (US Census Bureau 1990b, 2000b).

**Table 3-5 Housing**

	Churchill County
Total Units	
1990	7,290
2000	9,732
Percent Change	33.5%
Owner Occupied <sup>1</sup>	
1990	63.1%
2000	65.8%
Vacancy	
1990	8.6%
2000 (number)	8.4% (820)

Source: US Census Bureau 1990b, 2000b

<sup>1</sup>Percent of units that are occupied by owner

**Employment and Economy**

Churchill County, with a labor force of 12,415, had an unemployment rate of 4.2 percent in 2005 (BLS undated). Between 2001 and 2004, the largest decreases in employment in Churchill County were in the manufacturing sector (18.2 percent) (BEA 2006a). The top five employers in Churchill County include the Churchill County School District, Churchill Community Hospital, the Department of Defense, Wal-Mart Stores, and Boeing Aerospace Operations (Nevada Workforce 2006).

Of the private employment sectors, the retail trade sector, administrative and waste sector, and the real estate and rental and leasing sector employed the largest portions of the labor force with 10.3 percent, 8.5 percent, and 7.8 percent of total employment, respectively. The government sector employed the highest percentage (20 percent) of workers, with most in state and local government (9.0 percent) and the military (7.0 percent).

For Churchill County in 2004 the per capita personal income was \$32,171, an increase of 22.6 since 2001 (BEA 2006b). In terms of earnings, the largest industries in 2004 in Churchill County were government and services (with \$196.6 million and \$101.3 million in earnings, respectively) (BEA 2006c).

**Schools**

The Churchill Unified School District includes ten schools (six elementary schools, a junior high school, a high school, a charter high school, and an alternative education school) and provides K-12 education for approximately 4,185 students (NCES 2006). All but one of the schools within this district are within Fallon.

**Environmental Justice**

On February 11, 1994, President Clinton signed EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations. It requires federal agencies to identify and avoid disproportionate impacts on minority or low-income communities. This section identifies minority and low-income communities that could be affected by the proposed project.

Table 3-6 provides demographic information for Churchill County from 1990 to 2000. According to US Census Bureau data, the white population increased by 33 percent, and it remained the dominant race in Churchill County. The largest minority within the county is Hispanic/Latino, followed by American Indian/Alaska Native. The largest percent change in race occurred in the Hispanic/Latino population, which increased 76.2 percent during the decade. To be noted, however, is that the 2000 census included the option to report oneself as a member of two or more ethnic groups, and this factor may affect the reporting for certain ethnic groups.

**Table 3-6 Demographic Changes in Churchill County (1990-2000)**

	Churchill County			
	1990	2000	Percentage (2000)	Percent Change
Total Population	17,938	23,982	N/A	33.7
White	16,216	20,192	84.2	24.5
Black/African American	251	384	1.6	53.0
American Indian/ Alaska Native	968	1,151	4.8	18.9
Asian	502	648	2.7	29.1
Pacific Islander*	N/A	48	.2	N/A
Other	N/A	767	3.2	65.2
Two or more*	N/A	791	3.3	N/A
Hispanic/Latino**	1,184	2,086	8.7	76.2

Source: US Census Bureau 2000c.

Notes:

\* These categories did not exist in the 1990 census; Asians and Pacific Islanders were grouped together, and the option to choose multiple races did not exist.

\*\* In combination with other races. The categorical figures/percentages may add up to more than the total population (100 percent) because individuals may report more than one race.

The Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe of the Fallon Reservation and Colony consists of 60 acres two miles northeast of Fallon, and the reservation covers 8,000 acres 12 miles to the northeast of Fallon. The Walker River Paiute Tribe is located within southwestern Mineral County, approximately 10 miles south of the project area.

Table 3-7 provides income statistics for Churchill County and Nevada. Churchill County has a median and per capita income slightly lower than the Nevada average. In addition, Churchill County has a poverty rate of 10.5 percent, a rate slightly lower than the statewide poverty level of 11 percent.

**Table 3-7 Income and Poverty Statistics (2003)**

	Churchill County	Nevada
Median Household Income (2003)	\$43,069	\$45,249
Percentage of Population Living in Poverty (2003)	10.5%	11%

Source: US Census Bureau 2003.

Approximately 28.9 percent of Churchill County is made up of children (under 18 years of age) (US Census Bureau 2000a).