

**PROPOSED MILL CANYON VEGETATION TREATMENT
INFORMATION SHEET
JUNE 5, 2007**

INTRODUCTION

The Carson City Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing a vegetation treatment project on 2,625 acres of public land in the Pine Nut Mountains east of Dayton, Nevada (see attached map). The proposed project is part of a nationwide initiative to reduce wildland fire risk to communities and to restore and maintain the health of the land within fire-prone areas.

BACKGROUND

The proposed fuels treatment project is located in the north central portion of the Pine Nut Mountains southwest of Mill Canyon. Vegetation in the area is typical of the western Great Basin and consists of a diverse mix of pinyon, juniper, sagebrush, bitterbrush, rabbitbrush, Mormon tea, grasses and forbs. The area is subject to light public recreation use throughout the year. A portion of the area proposed for treatment includes the Mill Canyon Chaining Rangeland Improvement Project that was completed in the late 1960's. That project included dragging a large anchor chain between two pieces of heavy equipment to reduce the pinyon and juniper overstory and increase grass, browse, and forb production. Now, more than forty years after completion of the range improvement project, pinyon and juniper trees are again encroaching on the area.

PURPOSE

The purposes of the proposed project are to: 1) reduce fuel loads and break up the horizontal continuity of the fuel supply to encourage smaller lower intensity fires, 2) maintain tree crown cover under 20 percent to enhance post fire native vegetation recovery, 3) promote creation of a mosaic of early, mid and late seral stage habitats on the landscape, 4) reduce the threat of wildfire damage to known sage grouse habitat, and 5) enhance existing sage grouse habitat.

NEED

The proposed project is located in a north-south trending valley between two mountainous and forested areas of the Pine Nut Mountains. Pinyon and juniper dominate the mountain slopes as well as the majority of the project area. Fuels in these areas are heavy and would support an intense wildfire under the hot windy conditions common during the summer months.

The potential plant community in the project area is primarily sagebrush, bitterbrush and perennial grasses (Soil Survey of Lyon County Area, Nevada, 1984). Pinyon and juniper trees have encroached into the proposed project area and are in the process of forming a horizontally continuous bed of heavy fuels between the mountainous forested areas. If this situation is not addressed fuel loads would continue to increase, understory vegetation would be stressed and eventually depleted, and the stage would be set for a widespread destructive high intensity wildfire. Such a wildfire would be difficult and dangerous to control and could destroy sage grouse habitat including a lek and seasonal habitat.

One of the few known active sage grouse leks in the Northern Pine Nut Mountains is located less than 2 miles from the northeastern edge of the project. The majority of the project area ranges from 2 to 6 miles from the lek. Areas this distance from a lek often are utilized by sage grouse for a variety of purposes such as nesting, brooding, migration corridors and other seasonal uses. High quality habitat adjacent to leks is needed to support viable sage grouse populations. Encroachment of pinyon and juniper trees into the shrub community, have degraded sage grouse habitat quality in the project area. Thinning and/or removal of the trees combined with restoration of the understory vegetation community would improve habitat quality.

PROPOSED TREATMENT

The proposed project has been developed in collaboration with the local sage grouse working group (Pine Nut Population Management Unit), the Nevada Division of Wildlife and the Carson City Field Office Fuels, Wildlife and Forestry programs.

Over a 5-7 year period, vegetation height and density on up to 2,625 acres, within the project area, would be reduced in order to modify fire behavior, enhance fire suppression capabilities and improve sage grouse habitat characteristics. Within the treatment areas pinyon and juniper trees would be cut and removed and/or shredded; understory vegetation such as grass, sagebrush and bitterbrush would not be targeted for treatment; and the outside edges of the treatment areas would be irregular in shape. Shredded vegetation would be left in place to reduce dust generation and stabilize the soil surface.

BLM personnel would conduct a pre-treatment sweep of the BLM lands in the project area to flag any current mining claim markers, survey monuments, above ground improvements, or other vulnerable infrastructure for avoidance during vegetation treatment activities.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

We are interested in your comments regarding the proposed Mill Canyon Project. You may submit your comments at the Lyon County Board of Commissioners meeting on Thursday June 21, 2007 or you may send written comments to the following address:

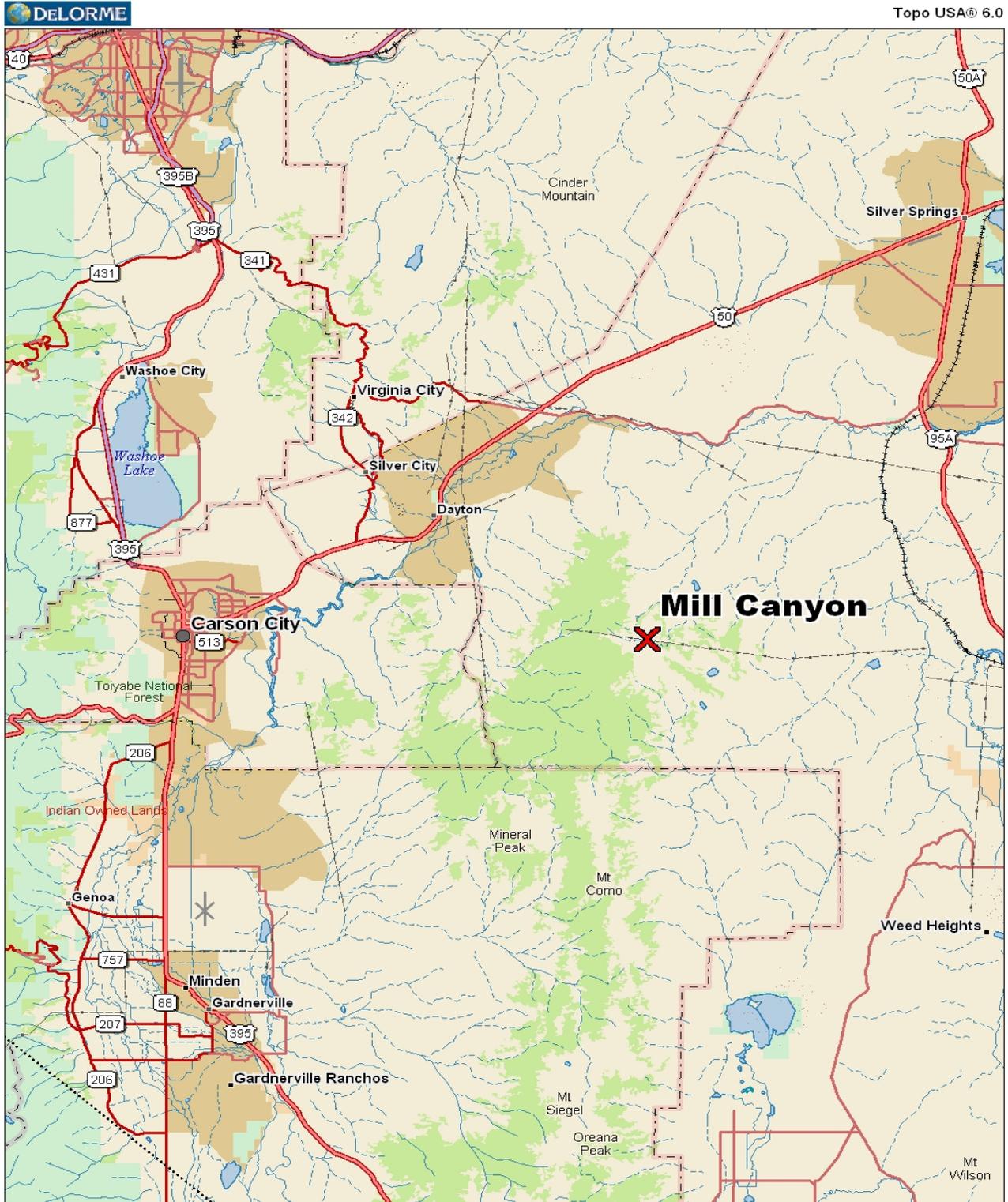
BLM, Carson City Field Office
Attn: Keith Barker
5665 Morgan Mill Rd.
Carson City, NV 89701

Comments should be submitted before July 1, 2007.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: For additional information regarding this vegetation treatment project you may contact the following BLM staff by phone or email

BLM Fire Ecologist: Keith Barker, phone (775) 885-6120, email kdbarker@blm.gov
BLM Fuels Specialist: Tim Roide, phone (775) 885-6185, email troide@blm.gov
BLM Wildlife Biologist: Rita Suminski, phone (775) 885-6129, email rsuminsk@blm.gov

MILL CANYON GENERAL VICINITY MAP



Data use subject to license.
© 2006 DeLorme. Topo USA® 6.0.
www.delorme.com


MN (14.5° E)

 mi
Data Zoom 9-0

MILL CANYON PROJECT MAP

