

Chapter 2

ALTERNATIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

NEPA requires that an EIS consider a reasonable range of alternatives to the Proposed Action, including a No-Action Alternative. Reasonable alternatives are those that meet the purpose and need and are feasible to implement, given technical, economic, environmental, and other factors. NEPA also requires that the No-Action Alternative be evaluated to provide a baseline for comparison of the impacts of other alternatives, even if a No-Action Alternative may not be implemented as a result of legal, regulatory, or other considerations, including a legislative command to act.

NEPA requires that an EIS rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives. This comparative analysis of alternatives gives decision-makers and the public information that sharply defines the issues and provides a clear basis for choosing an alternative [40 CFR 1502.14].

This chapter contains descriptions of each of the alternatives for the CTA that are evaluated in this SEIS, as well as the process used to develop the alternatives. This chapter also contains summaries of the alternatives that were initially considered but subsequently eliminated from detailed analysis.

2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

The BLM Las Vegas Field Office hosted 10 public meetings during a 10-month period in 2005 to give the public opportunities to provide input for the CTA identified in the LVVDB FEIS (BLM 2004a). During those meetings, BLM received input on a variety of topics, including vision statements, goals and objectives, boundaries, infrastructure, recreation, education, and management options. Boundary recommendations for the CTA ranged from approximately 3,300 to almost 13,000 acres.

Potential alternatives, based on professional judgment of the investigators, were obtained from the USU Report (USU 2007a). Information from the USU Report and from other studies and documents was gathered to determine what components of the alternatives would be considered.

Based on the SNPLMA (as amended), LVVDB FEIS, USU Report, public input, and local BLM staff resource expertise, preliminary alternatives were developed for presentation at public scoping meetings held in Las Vegas on August 14 through 16, 2007. Comments received during those meetings and during the public scoping comment period (July 6, 2007–September 4, 2007) for the CTA SEIS were considered in formulating the alternatives presented in this SEIS. In addition, the resource knowledge of local BLM staff aided in further refining the alternatives.

2.2.1 Factors Considered in Developing the Alternatives

Reasonable alternatives must meet the purposes for action described in Chapter 1, which are to

- Protect the natural functioning of the ULVW; and
- Protect sensitive natural, cultural, and paleontological resources in the CTA.

Reasonable alternatives must also meet the needs for the project, which are to

- Comply with the LVVDB FEIS ROD, which provides for an adaptable final CTA boundary; and
- Respond to BLM's mandate to protect sensitive natural, cultural, and paleontological resources.

The following sections describe resource values and uses present in the CTA that may be affected by disposal and development as authorized by the SNPLMA and Clark County Act. These resource values and uses guided development of the alternatives described in Sections 2.3 through 2.5 below.

For detailed information on the resource values and current uses of the CTA, see Chapter 3, "Affected Environment." For a more thorough discussion of the nature of the issues, concerns, and opportunities identified for resolution through the SEIS process, see Chapter 1, "Purpose and Need."

Hydrology

BACKGROUND

The ULVW is the headwaters for the LVW, which serves as the main drainage channel for the LVV and its tributaries. The ULVW, located within the CTA boundary, drains approximately 500 square miles and conveys stormwater runoff from the mountains and alluvial fans generally north and northwest of the city of North Las Vegas, ultimately flowing into Lake Mead. The ULVW is a normally dry, very wide, sand-bed channel that is highly susceptible to erosion, headcutting, braiding, and lateral migration resulting from infrequent but intense cloudburst rainfall events, steep topography, and increased urbanization. The ULVW supports a variety of vegetation and provides access to outdoor activities. It has also been identified as important to Native American traditional uses. Erosional processes in the wash have exposed cultural and paleontological resources.

Land development in the watershed of the ULVW can alter the land surface and result in runoff and higher peak flows that affect the natural functioning of the wash. Urban runoff and higher sediment loads can result in higher levels of contaminants both in the watershed and downstream. Sensitive resource values associated with the ULVW can be affected, including riparian and other plant species such as catclaw acacia and mesquite, cultural resource sites, and fossil sites. Maintenance of adjacent open space, however, can help reduce these potential effects.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would affect the hydrologic functioning of the wash, the resource values found in proximity to the wash, and management of stormwater runoff.

Floyd Lamb Park at Tule Springs

BACKGROUND

Floyd Lamb Park, immediately southwest of the CTA, encompasses a total of 2,040 acres. The 680-acre park core (formerly known as Floyd Lamb State Park) is centered on Tule Springs, a series of small springs that historically formed an oasis in the middle of the Mojave Desert. The buildings of Tule Springs Ranch are listed in the NRHP, and the site is used by Las Vegas residents as an urban retreat. The remainder of the park includes 1,361 acres of lands leased from BLM under the R&PP Act. The park contains some of the best Pleistocene-era paleontological resources in western North America (San Bernardino County Museum [SBCM] 2004). In July 2007, the park, R&PP Act leases, and water rights were transferred from the Nevada Division of State Parks to the City of Las Vegas.

Proposed development of permanent recreation facilities (e.g., city park, trailheads, parking areas) within Floyd Lamb Park can result in the loss of the cultural and paleontological resources. While development can be mitigated by collecting physical remains and information from sites, surface disturbance can result in the permanent loss of the resources and their context with other elements of the site and surrounding environment. Active management of the park can provide protection of the cultural and paleontological resources present within the park.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would affect recreational opportunities, cultural resources, and paleontological resources at Floyd Lamb Park.

Paleontological Resources

BACKGROUND

The Pleistocene-age Las Vegas Formation (LVF) within the CTA is known to be highly fossiliferous and is considered to be the most significant assemblage of late Pleistocene invertebrate and vertebrate fossil remains known from the Mojave Desert and from the entire Great Basin (SBCM 2004). More than 430 fossil localities have been recorded within the CTA by paleontologists from the SBCM, and thousands of fossils have been excavated, prepared, curated, and interpreted. This work has contributed to a more complete, detailed understanding of the stratigraphy and paleoecology of the LVF. LVF fossils include a diverse assemblage of terrestrial and aquatic mollusks, amphibians, numerous species of birds, and small and large mammals. Representative fossils include ground sloth (*Nothrotheriops shastensis*), North American lion (*Panthera atrox*), camel (*Camelops* sp.), horse (*Equus* sp.), bison (*Bison* sp.), and mammoth (*Mammuthus columbi*). Many of these resources are found in Tule Springs, a 1,125-acre designated archeological site that has produced substantial important data relevant to the paleoenvironmental history of the Great Basin.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would affect paleontological resources in the CTA.

Eglington Preserve

BACKGROUND

Eglington Preserve is a 300-acre parcel of public land that is managed to protect two special-status plants—Las Vegas bearpoppy and Las Vegas buckwheat. Eglington Preserve is located south of Grand Teton Drive between Clayton Street and North 5th Street, within the city limits of North Las Vegas. Bordered by private lands to the west, south, and east, Eglington Preserve is protected through a Conservation Agreement between the BLM, USFWS, NDF, and City of North Las Vegas. The Conservation Agreement identifies allowable uses within and surrounding Eglington Preserve. In addition to special-status plants, Eglington Preserve contains fossils and the active portion of the ULVW, which terminates into the North Las Vegas detention basin.

Eglington Preserve is the site of a newly approved, fee-based compensatory mitigation bank, under Section 404 of the CWA and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act regulatory programs. Under the restoration plan, titled *Protection, Restoration, and Enhancement Plan for the Project Area within Eglington Preserve* (BLM 2007b), as approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), 143

acres of ephemeral washes were identified for improvement and protection through Section 404 of the CWA permit fees.

Land development can result in fragmentation of habitat or disturbance and mortality of plants. Mitigation such as collection, transplanting, and/or seed bank salvage can reduce these impacts. Cooperative management of areas like Eglington Preserve can preserve viable populations of special-status plants, maintain the range of the species, protect sources of seed for expansion of the species to other areas of their range, and protect the functioning of wash systems.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary and management of Eglington Preserve as part of the CTA would affect populations of Las Vegas bearpoppy and Las Vegas buckwheat, as well as the functioning of the wash system.

Special-Status Species

BACKGROUND

Special-status plants and wildlife are known to occur in the CTA, including one BLM sensitive plant species (Merriam's bearpoppy), one State of Nevada protected plant species (Las Vegas bearpoppy), and one candidate for federal listing and proposed for State of Nevada protection (Las Vegas buckwheat). The rare plant species are local endemics that are limited to specialized habitats in the northern Mojave Desert ecosystem. The LVV contains a substantial proportion of extant populations of Las Vegas bearpoppy and Las Vegas buckwheat, and it contains potentially genetically unique populations of all three special-status plant species.

Conversion and fragmentation of habitat resulting from land development in the LVV has led to rapid declines in the number and distribution of special-status species. USFWS and NDF have stated that further loss of individuals and populations would be detrimental to the long-term viability of Las Vegas bearpoppy and Las Vegas buckwheat and would potentially lead to emergency listing under the ESA (BLM 2004a). Preservation of occupied and suitable habitats within the CTA can serve to eliminate or minimize impacts to these plants and avoid their being listed by the USFWS (USFWS 2004), as well as protecting suitable habitat for other special-status species.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would affect populations and habitat of special-status plants, including Las Vegas bearpoppy, Merriam's bearpoppy, and Las Vegas buckwheat.

Recreation

BACKGROUND

Recreation opportunities in the CTA are casual and dispersed and include hiking, camping, picnicking, mountain biking, horseback riding, climbing, sightseeing, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. There are no developed recreation sites on public lands in the CTA. The Las Vegas RMP (BLM 1998a) limited OHV use in the CTA to existing roads, trails, and dry washes. In November 1998, BLM issued a valley-wide closure to off-highway travel, as the LVV did not meet air quality standards under the Clean Air Act (CAA). Thus, the Las Vegas RMP places recreation emphasis in the CTA on non-motorized forms of recreation.

The Floyd Lamb Park Core, adjacent to the CTA, is managed by the City of Las Vegas for picnicking, hiking, biking, horseback riding, and fishing. The park includes 1,361 acres of public land that overlaps the CTA under two R&PP Act leases. Portions of the Las Vegas Valley Trail System cross the CTA.

Local communities have expressed a desire for open space and passive recreation access (City of Las Vegas 2004). The City of Las Vegas is preparing an open space plan and has identified its two most critical concerns for open space: to preserve natural areas and viewsheds and to provide habitat for wildlife and plants. The community's desire for open space can be at least partly met in the CTA.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would affect recreation use of the CTA.

Visual Resources

BACKGROUND

The landscape of the CTA is characterized by the floodplain of the ULVW and the adjacent alluvium, deposited from the Spring Mountains to the west and the Sheep and Las Vegas ranges and Gass Peak to the north. Vegetation is typical of low elevations of the Mojave Desert and includes creosote bush shrub, desert saltbush shrub, and desert wash shrub vegetation communities. Whereas the landscape is largely unmodified by human development, roads, power lines, and flood control structures (wash channelization and retention basins) have altered parts of the CTA.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would affect viewsheds within the CTA and user experiences. Consider how visual resource management (VRM) objectives would complement and support the management objectives for other resources within the CTA.

Las Vegas and North Las Vegas Infrastructure and Growth

BACKGROUND

Lands west of Decatur Boulevard in the CTA are within the incorporated limits of the City of Las Vegas, and lands east of Decatur Boulevard in the CTA are within the incorporated limits of the City of North Las Vegas. As these cities continue to grow, their need for infrastructure continues to grow.

The cities have expressed concerns regarding how their needs for infrastructure and development will be met.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would affect the growth and economic prosperity of the Cities of Las Vegas and North Las Vegas.

Las Vegas Paiute Indian Reservation

BACKGROUND

The Paiute Reservation is adjacent to the CTA in the northwestern part of the disposal area. The Las Vegas Paiute Tribe has noted that the ULVW has been used for countless generations as a trade and

migration route as part of the larger Salt Song Trail system and is spiritually significant to the Tribe. The LVW represents an important traditional landscape and potential Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) for the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe and other tribal communities in the areas, including the Chemehuevi and Moapa Paiute.

The Las Vegas Paiute Tribe has requested a buffer on the north and east sides of their reservation from potential future urban development and that the reservation be provided protection from visual and social disturbances associated with adjacent residential areas and transportation networks. The Tribe has also expressed concern for protection of the economic benefits of its golf resort, which may be diminished by nearby development and the loss or obstruction of views of the native desert and the Spring Mountains.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would affect the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe and its reservation as well as tribal cultural resources within the CTA.

Recreation and Public Purposes Act Leased Lands and Rights-of-Way

BACKGROUND

The R&PP Act authorizes the sale and lease of public lands for recreational or public purposes to state and local governments, federal and state instrumentalities, and nonprofit organizations. Currently, three authorized leases, a pending lease, and a pending ROW overlap the CTA. Two of the authorized leases are to the City of Las Vegas for the development of recreation facilities. Lease N-62830 comprises 320 acres, and lease N-36876-01 encompasses 1,041 acres. Preliminary plans for these R&PP Act leases are addressed in *Floyd Lamb Park Master Plan* (City of Las Vegas 2007a) and include conceptual trails for hiking and equestrian use and other forms of passive recreation. These leased lands connect the northwestern and southeastern portions of the ULVW in the CTA and maintain continuity for ecological and recreational functions.

The City of North Las Vegas's McCool Regional Park, lease N-49747-01, comprises 160 acres of public lands within the CTA. A portion of the park includes 40 acres of Tule Springs. The park includes sports fields, picnic areas, trails, a model airplane flying area, and a xeriscape demonstration garden. The leased lands connect existing residential areas south of the CTA to Tule Springs within the CTA.

The two pending actions for a ROW and an R&PP Act lease within the CTA are proposed for a water detention basin and additional regional park developments. Pending ROW N-37233 comprises 640 acres west of the Clark County Shooting Park and includes plans for development of a water detention basin of up to 1,773 acre-feet. Pending lease N-78462-01 requests 80 acres west of Decatur Boulevard for a detention basin and development of park-related facilities, such as picnic shelters, restrooms, parking, and recreational trails.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would affect management of lands under R&PP Act leases and ROWs within the CTA, both currently authorized and pending.

Clark County Shooting Park

BACKGROUND

A shooting park was created by the Conveyance of Property to Clark County, Nevada Act of 2002 [(PL 107-350) 116 Statute 2975 *et seq.*], in response to the closure of recreational shooting in the LVV. The shooting park comprises approximately 2,800 acres north of Moccasin Road, adjacent to both the DNWR and CTA. A portion of the ULVW crosses the southwestern portion of the shooting park. Clark County has prepared a master plan for the shooting park that describes the type and location of the various facilities to be developed on 900 acres of the 2,800-acre conveyance. Construction of the public facilities began in May 2008. The shooting park will offer a safe place for citizens to participate in recreational shooting in a controlled environment. The first phase of development for the shooting park will include a day use range, hunter education area, trap and skeet field, archery range, and other support facilities. Clark County intends to focus intensive shooting park infrastructure development outside the ULVW.

The presence of the shooting park can affect the types of uses that would be allowed on lands adjacent to the park and the suitability of adjacent lands for disposal and future development.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would affect operation of the shooting range.

Desert National Wildlife Refuge

BACKGROUND

The DNWR encompasses 1.5 million acres north of the CTA and is managed by the USFWS. About one-half of the refuge is jointly managed with the U.S. Air Force as part of the Nevada Test and Training Range. The USFWS is in the process of preparing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and EIS for the entire Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex (DNWR is one of four refuges in the complex) in compliance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 and NEPA. As part of the CCP/EIS effort, the USFWS is evaluating several alternatives for management of the DNWR. These alternatives consist of various objectives and strategies that are derived from the refuge's primary goals. Refuge goals address managing bighorn sheep populations, maintaining natural diversity, managing specially designated areas, improving visitor services, and managing cultural resources.

A key aspect of managing the DNWR is ensuring compatibility with surrounding land uses. Encroaching development from the Cities of Las Vegas and North Las Vegas creates potential conflicts with the resource values of the refuge and increases the potential for illegal activities, such as OHV use and vandalism.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would affect the ecological, wildlife, recreation, and cultural resource management objectives of the DNWR. Consider how management of the refuge would affect land uses in the adjacent CTA.

Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act of 1998 and Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002

BACKGROUND

Congress enacted the SNPLMA to address concerns over federal management of lands in the rapidly urbanizing Las Vegas metropolitan area. The purpose of the SNPLMA is to provide for the disposal of certain federal lands in Clark County, Nevada, and to provide for the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands in the state of Nevada. The law authorized BLM to dispose of approximately 52,000 acres of public lands located within the disposal area of the LVV in accordance with other applicable laws. Title IV of the Clark County Act amended the SNPLMA to increase the disposal boundary area and to include regional governmental entities in the process for receiving funds for the development of parks, trails, and natural areas in Clark County. The Clark County Act increased the lands available for disposal by about 22,000 acres, including lands in the CTA.

Typically, local governments nominate parcels of federal land for disposal from within the disposal boundary. Generally, nominations are made in response to interest from potential buyers. Once an interest is expressed, the local government follows a joint selection process to ensure that the parcel is not needed for a public purpose. Nominations are then submitted to BLM one year in advance of the proposed sale date. BLM reviews each nominated parcel to verify ownership, existing rights, and pending applications or reservations and prepares an Environmental Site Assessment for each parcel before moving forward with the sale.

FACTOR

Consider how each alternative CTA boundary would meet the Congressional policies and the intent of the SNPLMA and Clark County Act.

2.2.2 Components of Each Alternative

Each alternative was developed to implement the requirements of the ROD for the LVVDB FEIS. This includes boundary definitions.

Boundary

The final boundary will be important for protection of sensitive resources, as well as for local governments that must plan for the growth of their communities. Although the ROD for the LVVDB FEIS identified approximately 5,000 acres of land to be withheld from disposal, it also stipulated that the boundaries were adaptable to the needs and concerns of interested parties participating in the development of the Conservation Agreement (BLM 2005). As the result of input during public meetings in 2005 and 2006 and its own internal analysis, BLM has expanded the CTA study area to 13,622 acres. Alternatives considered in this SEIS range in size from 1,448 to 12,952 acres. Each alternative described below is compared in size with the original CTA, defined as 5,000 acres, in the LVVDB FEIS and ROD (BLM 2004a).

Conservation Agreement

Based on the direction approved in the LVVDB FEIS ROD (BLM 2004b), BLM would dispose of lands within the CTA once all parties who are assuming management of the disposed lands sign a Conservation

Agreement. As noted above, this Conservation Agreement would stipulate mitigation measures and other restrictions to provide for long-term protection of sensitive resources within the disposed lands.

Specific conservation measures would be defined through a collaborative process involving BLM and members of the Mitigation Strategy Committee, which includes USFWS, NDF, Clark County Department of Air Quality and Environmental Management, Nevada Division of State Parks, and other federal, state, and regional agencies; the Las Vegas Paiute Indian Tribe; local governments; elected officials; environmental or other special interest organizations; and utility companies and other businesses (BLM 2004a).

2.3 ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL ACTION ALTERNATIVES

All the action alternatives include the following management actions:

- BLM has developed and would implement a treatment plan for eligible cultural sites within the CTA in compliance with the NHPA, except for Tule Springs, which is already protected.
- Conservation measures would be put in place for the protection of surface paleontological sites and sensitive plant habitats.
- BLM would inventory unauthorized surface disturbances in the CTA, including illegal dump sites, user-created trails and tracks, and other trespasses, and would seek to rehabilitate these disturbances to a more natural condition to improve management and protection of sensitive resources.
- Any future infrastructure would be authorized on a case-by-case basis, would incorporate BMPs identified by the BLM and the Nevada State Conservation Commission (1994), and would be subject to site-specific NEPA analysis.
- The authorized R&PP Act leases with the City of Las Vegas for Floyd Lamb Park (N-36876-01 and N-62830) would continue to be managed under a BLM-approved plan of development.

2.4 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS

Six alternatives were considered in order to adequately analyze a range of boundaries while continuing to meet the purpose of and need for the CTA. These boundaries were identified through agency and public scoping.

Each of these alternatives considered the original CTA boundary of 5,000 acres and either added or subtracted acreage from that boundary to meet the objectives of the alternative as well as the overriding purpose of and need for the CTA (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3). The LVVDB EIS allowed for the final CTA boundary to be modified in size and shape from its original designation and stated that a separate NEPA analysis must be completed to determine the final CTA boundary. Table 2.4-1 provides a comparison of the original CTA boundary, as defined in the LVVDB EIS, with the SEIS alternatives outlined above, while Table 2.4-2 shows a detailed comparison of the alternatives with the 13,662.7-acre CTA study area.

Table 2.4-1. Comparison of Original CTA Boundary with SEIS Alternatives

Alternative	Alternative Boundary (acres)	Original CTA Boundary (acres)	Change in Acres between Original CTA and Alternative	% Change between Original CTA and Alternative
Alternative A	12,952.5	5,000.0	7,952.5	159% increase
Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)	11,007.6	5,000.0	6,007.6	120% increase
Alternative C	6,362.3	5,000.0	1,362.3	27% increase
Alternative D*	5,301.4	5,000.0	301.4	6% increase
Alternative E	3,313.8	5,000.0	-1,686.2	34% decrease
No-Action Alternative	1,448.2	5,000.0	-3,551.8	71% decrease

* Alternative D represents the original CTA boundary as subsequently adjusted to correct for acreage discrepancies in the LVVDB FEIS and reflect greater accuracy in acreage calculation.

Table 2.4-2. Comparison of SEIS Alternatives

Alternative	Alternative Boundary (acres)	Lands outside Alternative Boundary (acres)	Tule Springs (state lands)—outside Alternative Boundary (not available for disposal)	Eglington Preserve—outside Alternative Boundary (not available for disposal)	Lands Available for Disposal (acres)*
Alternative A	12,952.5	670.2	299.4	0.0	370.8
Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)	11,007.6	2,615.1	299.4	0.0	2,315.7
Alternative C	6,362.3	7,260.4	299.4	0.0	6,961.0
Alternative D	5,301.4	8,321.3	0.0	298.6	8,022.7
Alternative E	3,313.8	10,308.9	0.0	298.6	10,010.3
No-Action Alternative	1,448.2	12,174.5	24.5	0.0	12,150.0

* Lands available for disposal = (Total acres outside alternative boundary) – (Eglington Preserve and Tule Springs if outside the alternative boundary).

2.4.1 Alternative A

Alternative A (Figure 2.4-1) emphasizes preservation of the sensitive resources located within the CTA and ensures the natural functioning of the ULVW.

Alternative A is the alternative with the largest boundary and provides the greatest amount of protection for the functioning of the wash, habitat for special-status species, and paleontological resources. Alternative A provides the most protection to the DNWR and provides the Paiute Reservation with the most protection from encroachment. This alternative has the most connectivity to traditional and tribal resources within the wash.

Under Alternative A, the CTA would comprise 12,952.5 acres (see Figure 2.4-1); this alternative extends the boundary to the DNWR to the north and 1 mile north and east around the Paiute Reservation in order to maintain the natural character of the landscape and setting. The area designated as Eglington Preserve would be included in the CTA. Alternative A adds 7,952.5 acres to the original CTA boundary. Under this alternative, 370.8 acres within the CTA study area would remain available for private development purposes. Alternative A would include within the CTA 3,200 acres surrounding the Paiute Reservation that would not be available for private development.

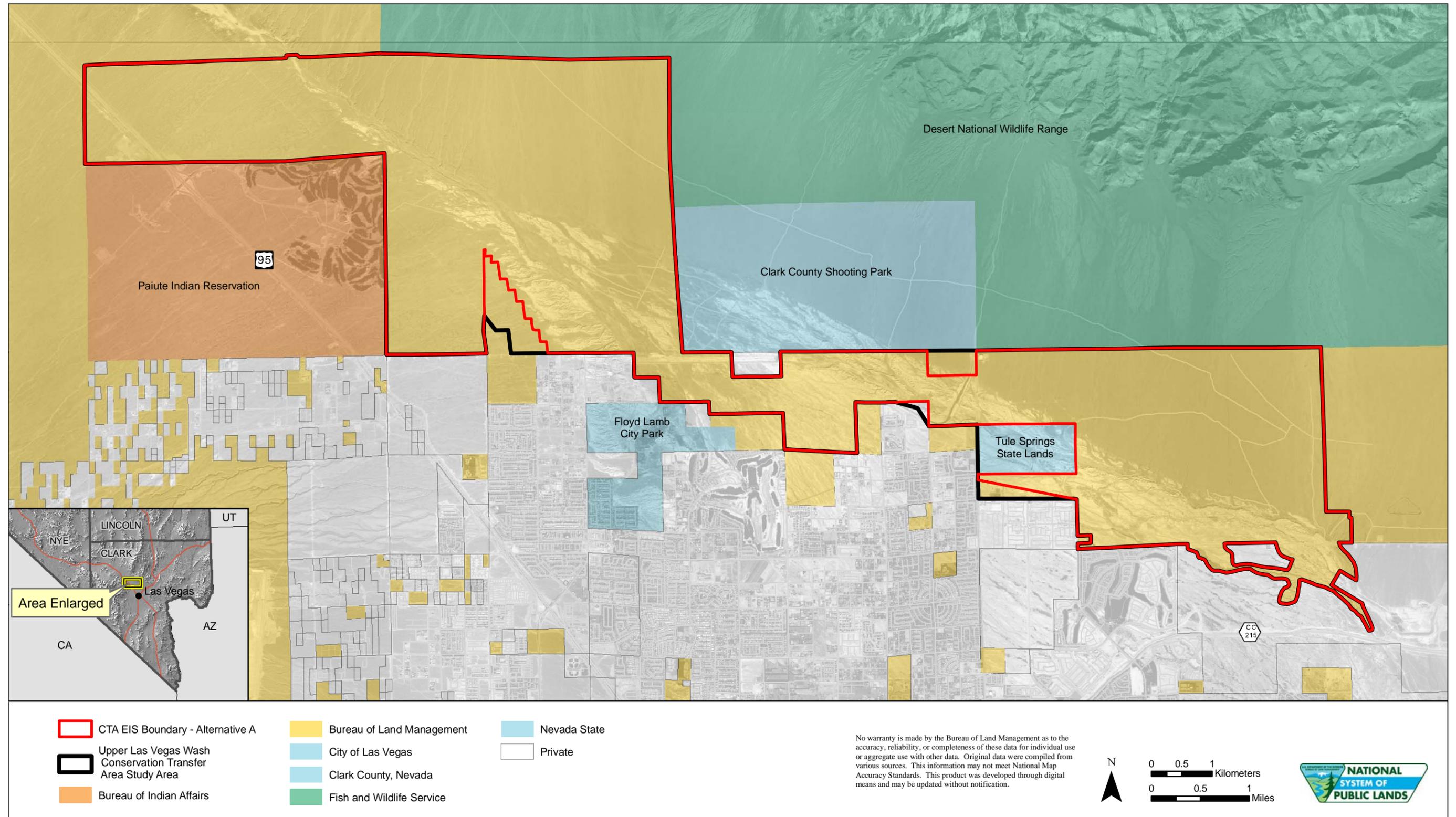


Figure 2.4-1. Conservation Transfer Area Alternative A boundary.

2.4.2 Alternative B (BLM Preferred Alternative)

Alternative B, which is the BLM Preferred Alternative (Figure 2.4-2), emphasizes the protection of the natural functioning of the ULVW and other sensitive resources while providing lands for disposal. Alternative B maintains existing stormwater volume, velocity, and depth, along with sediment load, flow location, and flow pattern of stormwater moving down the alluvial fans of the Sheep and Las Vegas ranges. Alternative B protects the LVF, ephemeral wash plant communities, and sensitive plant habitats. Alternative B includes lands to the north and east of the Paiute Reservation to protect traditional and tribal resources in the wash.

Alternative B would comprise 11,007.6 acres (see Figure 2.4-2). Alternative B encompasses most of the upper alluvial fans in the CTA study area and stretches north to the boundary of the DNWR. The eastern boundary would be offset 1,200 feet from the edge of the CTA study area, leaving approximately 373.1 acres available to the City of North Las Vegas for development. East of the Paiute Reservation, the southern boundary of Alternative B would be offset 700 feet from the LVF. Northwest of the Paiute Reservation, the northern boundary would start at the western edge of the golf course and run due north to the edge of the disposal boundary, leaving a total of 1,942.6 acres available to the City of Las Vegas for development. Within the CTA study area, a total of 2,315.7 acres would be available for disposal. The Alternative B boundary would protect the hydrologic functioning of the ULVW and allow waters flowing down the alluvial fans of the Sheep and Las Vegas ranges to continue in their current condition. Alternative B would protect Native American resources within the wash. Lands designated as Eglington Preserve would be included in Alternative B.

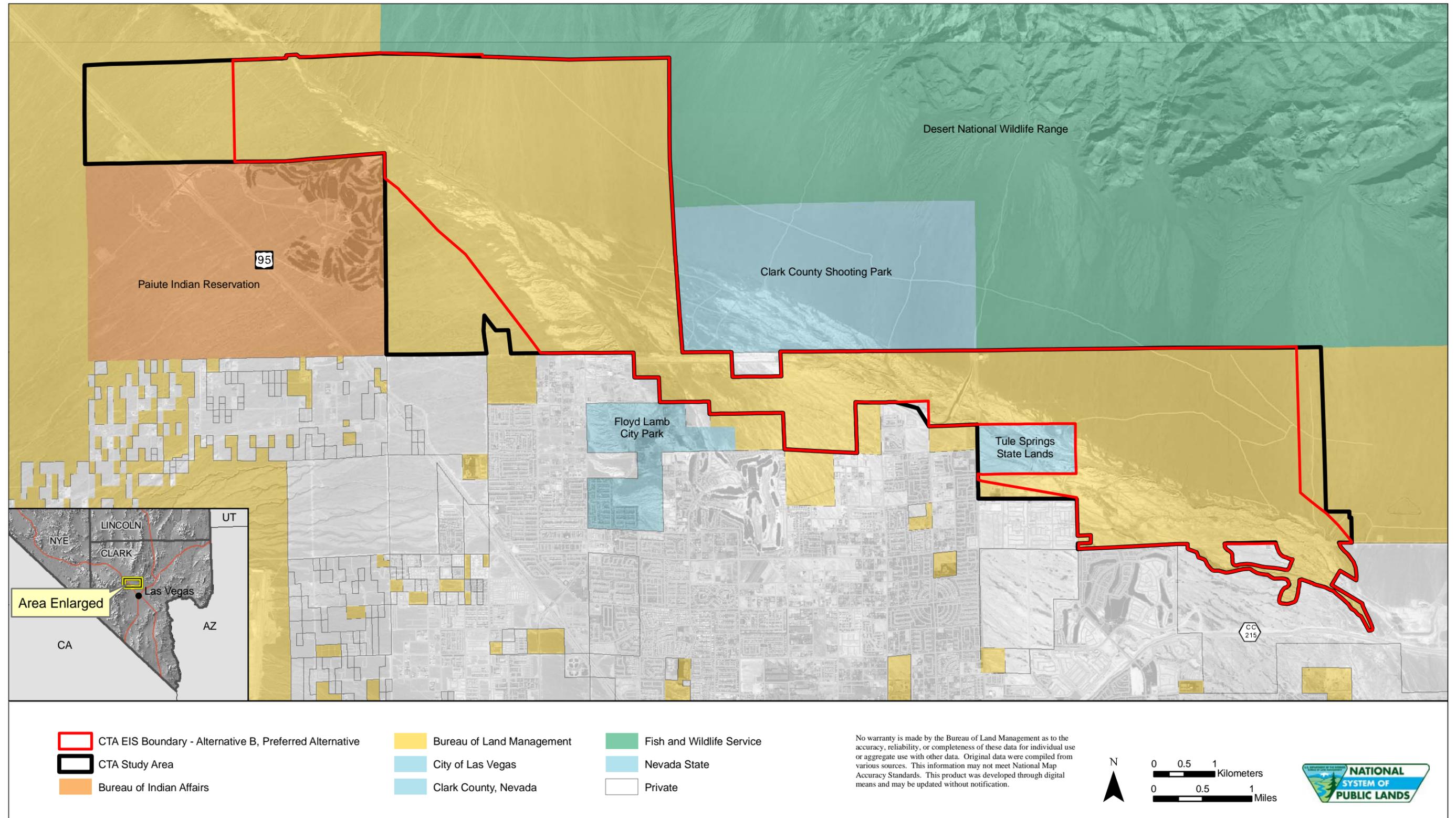


Figure 2.4-2. Conservation Transfer Area Alternative B, Preferred Alternative boundary.

2.4.3 Alternative C

Alternative C (Figure 2.4-3) continues to meet the resource conservation purposes for paleontological resources and special-status plants and incorporates the 100-year floodplain. Alternative C adds 1,362.3 acres to the original CTA boundary. Alternative C includes lands surrounding the northwest corner of the Paiute Reservation that would not be available for private development. Lands designated as Eglington Preserve would be included in the CTA.

Under Alternative C, the CTA would comprise 6,362.3 acres (see Figure 2.4-3); 6,961.0 acres within the CTA study area would remain available for disposal. Alternative C includes a portion of the upper alluvial fans in the CTA study area but does not extend to the boundary of the DNWR. The northeastern boundary would leave approximately 2,063 acres available to the City of North Las Vegas for development. East of the Paiute Reservation, the southern boundary of Alternative C, combined with the area north of the wash, would leave a total of 4,898 acres available to the City of Las Vegas for development. Within the CTA study area, a total of 6,961 acres would be available for disposal. The Alternative C boundary does not allow waters flowing down the alluvial fans of the Sheep and Las Vegas ranges to continue in their current condition.

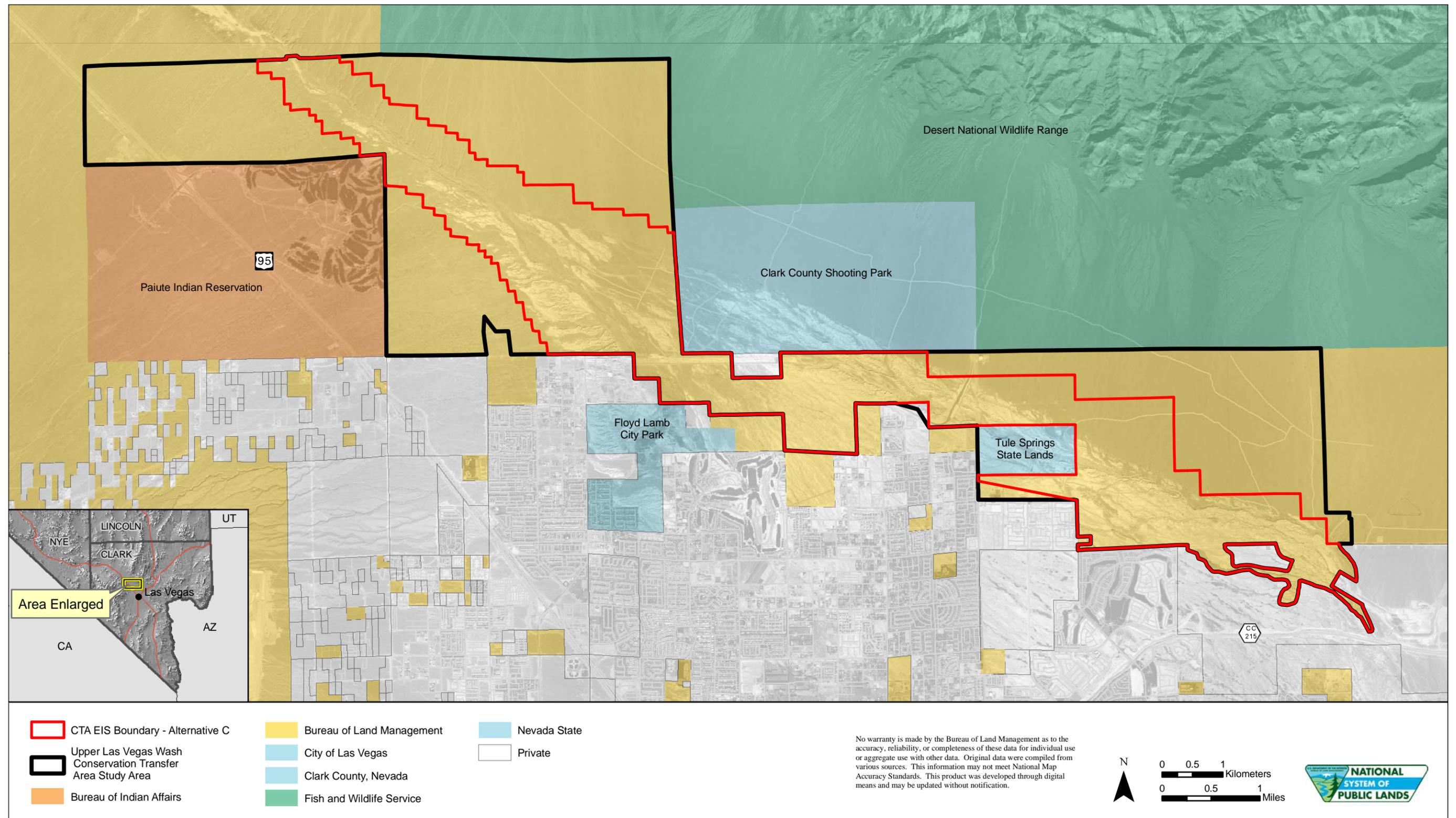


Figure 2.4-3. Conservation Transfer Area Alternative C boundary.

2.4.4 Alternative D

Alternative D (Figure 2.4-4) protects the surface paleontological localities identified in the LVVDB FEIS, special-status plant habitat outside Eglington Preserve, and the active wash channel. Alternative D adds 301.4 acres to the original CTA boundary. Lands around the Paiute Reservation would be available for private development.

Under Alternative D, the CTA would comprise 5,301.4 acres. Under this alternative, 8,022.7 acres of the CTA study area would remain available for disposal (see Figure 2.4-4); Alternative D includes active portions of the wash. The upper alluvial fans north of the wash would be available for disposal. The northeastern boundary would leave 1,980 acres available to the City of North Las Vegas for development. The southern boundary of Alternative D, combined with the area north of the Paiute Reservation and the wash, would leave a total of 6,043 acres available to the City of Las Vegas for development. Within the CTA study area, a total of 8,023 acres would be available for disposal. The Alternative D boundary does not allow waters flowing down the alluvial fans of the Sheep and Las Vegas ranges to continue in their current condition.

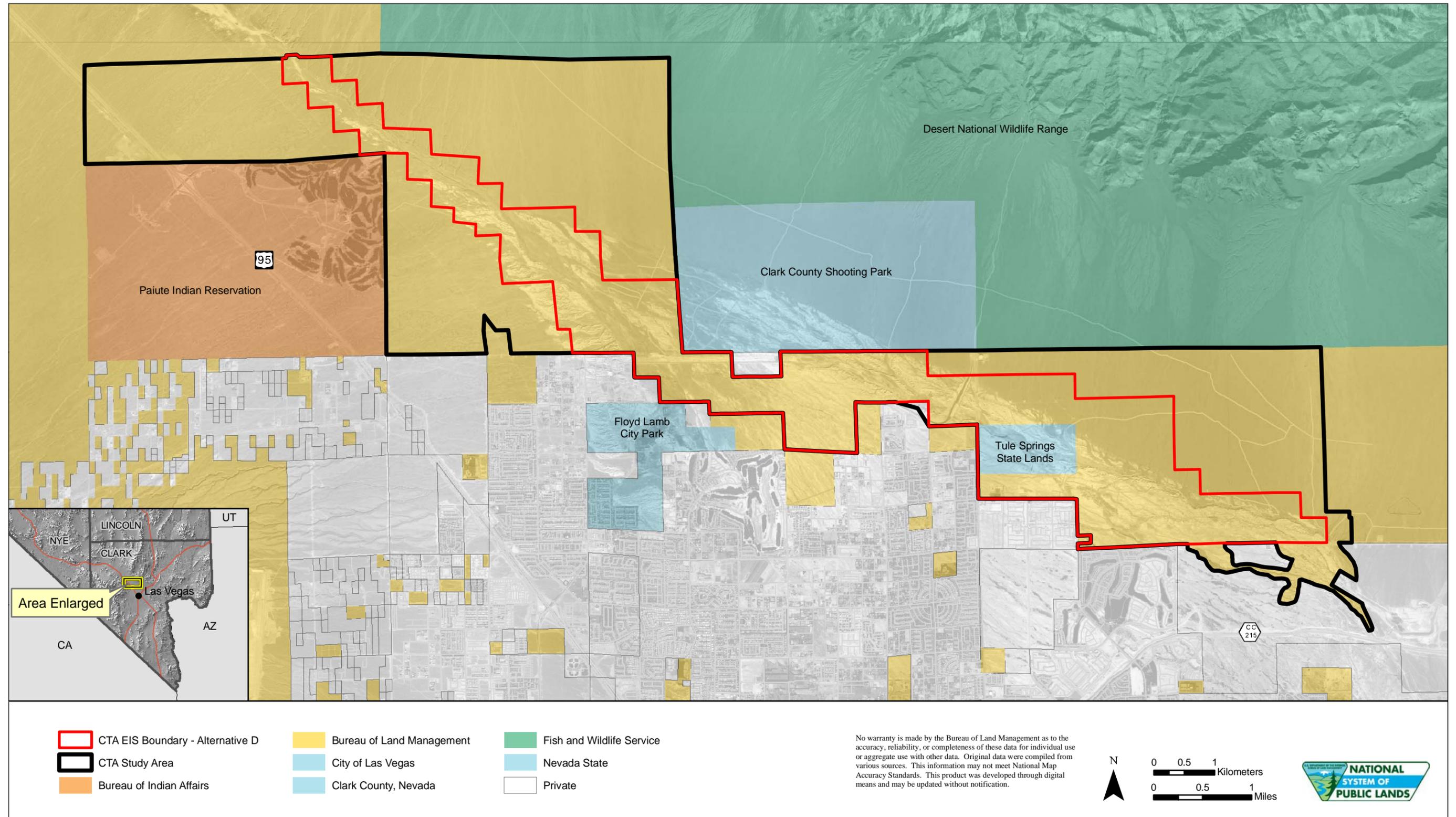


Figure 2.4-4. Conservation Transfer Area Alternative D boundary.

2.4.5 Alternative E

Alternative E (Figure 2.4-5) incorporates the occupied special-status plant habitat outside Eglington Preserve and a portion of the active wash outside the R&PP Act leases and Eglington Preserve. Alternative E reduces the original CTA boundary by 1,686.2 acres. Lands around the Paiute Reservation would be available for private development. Under Alternative E, lands within the CTA would comprise 3,313.8 acres (see Figure 2.4-5) and would continue to be managed for conservation of the sensitive resources and natural functioning of the wash. The 298 acres designated as Eglington Preserve would not be included in the Alternative E boundary.

The boundary would leave 2,402 acres available to the City of North Las Vegas for development and 7,609 acres available to the City of Las Vegas for development. Under this alternative, 10,010.3 acres within the CTA study area would be available for disposal. The Alternative E boundary does not allow waters flowing down the alluvial fans of the Sheep and Las Vegas ranges to continue in their current condition.

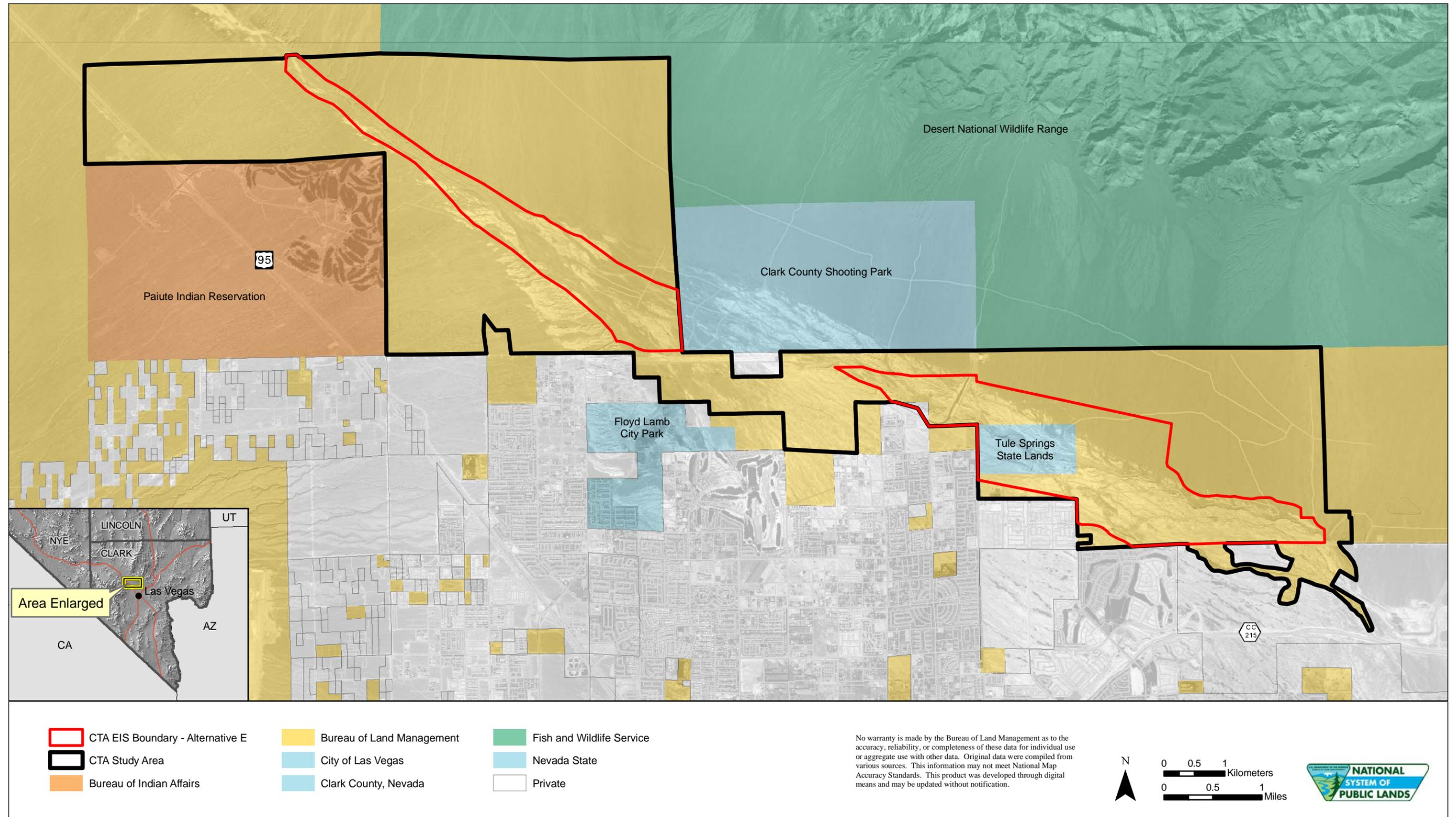


Figure 2.4-5. Conservation Transfer Area Alternative E boundary.

2.4.6 No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative comprises 1,448.2 acres and includes the BLM portion of Tule Springs and Eglinton Preserve.

Under the No-Action Alternative (Figure 2.4-6), the entire CTA, with the exception of 1,448.2 acres (Eglinton Preserve and Tule Springs), would be available for disposal in accordance with the SNPLMA, FLPMA, other applicable laws subject to valid existing rights, and stipulations established by the Conservation Agreement. Under the No-Action Alternative, 12,174.5 acres would be available for disposal—3,111 within the City of North Las Vegas and 9,064 within the City of Las Vegas.

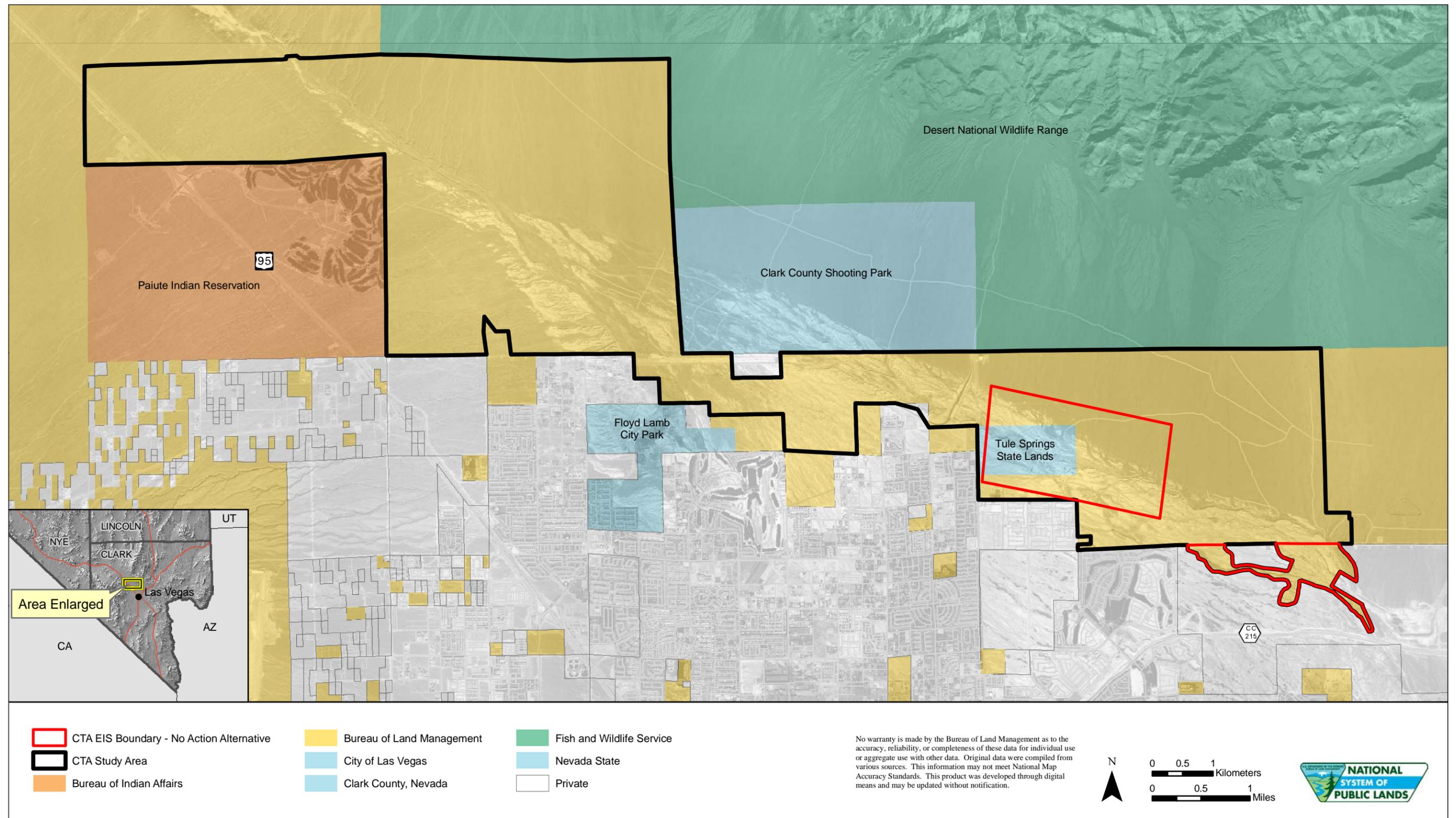


Figure 2.4-6. Conservation Transfer Area No-Action Alternative boundary.

2.5 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

2.5.1 Expanded Wash Alternative—9,054 Acres

The BLM developed the expanded wash alternative during initial CTA stakeholder meetings. The expanded wash alternative would have added to the original 5,298-acre CTA No-Action Alternative an approximately 400-acre portion of the creosote bajada to the north as a buffer to future development, resulting from a 1-mile buffer north and 0.5 mile east of the Paiute Reservation plus the 300-acre Eglinton Preserve.

Up to 4,568.7 acres would have been made available for disposal and private development. Future potential development north of the CTA would have required some supporting infrastructure consistent with protection of the resources. West of Decatur Boulevard, up to three 100-foot-wide ROWs for new roads and utilities would have been considered. East of Decatur Boulevard, only ROWs and land use authorizations that would facilitate the resource protection goals of the CTA would have been allowed. All ROWs and land use authorizations not consistent with the resource protection goals of the CTA would be located outside the CTA.

Although the expanded wash alternative would meet the project purpose and need, it was eliminated from further consideration because the boundary was not sufficiently different from the other alternatives to contribute to the analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives.

2.5.2 Protected Area Designation Alternative—13,622 Acres

During public scoping, BLM received a number of comments requesting that the entire 13,622-acre CTA study area be designated an NCA or National Monument and retained under BLM management. While BLM can have management responsibility for NCAs and National Monuments, BLM has no authority to make those designations. NCAs are established by Congress through enabling legislation. National Monuments are established through Presidential Proclamation under authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906. Congress can also designate National Monuments through monument-specific legislation. This alternative was eliminated from further consideration in the SEIS because these designations require Presidential and/or Congressional action.

2.5.3 Addition of 160 Acres of Lands East of Floyd Lamb Park

A number of comments focused on a request to include within the CTA the 160 acres located in the NW ¼ of Section 11, Township 19 South, Range 60 East. This parcel is part of an R&PP Act lease (N-62830) to the City of Las Vegas but was not previously identified in any of the public stakeholder meetings. Comments focused on the resources, such as fossils, plants, and wash function, as a reason to incorporate the land into the CTA alternatives. The site was evaluated by a BLM botanist, hydrologist, and paleontologist and by the SBCM during their 2003 fossil inventory. BLM concluded that although the parcel contains evidence of the LVF, the parcel does not contain habitat for any special-status species, does not contain surface fossil material, and does not contribute significantly to the function of the ULVW. BLM will provide direction to the City of Las Vegas to use a Discovery Plan for any excavations on the parcel in order to treat subsurface fossils that may be uncovered during future construction.

2.5.4 Consideration of Allowable Uses

Stakeholders suggested a number of specific allowable uses consisting of trails, roads, and utilities. The allowable uses identified by the stakeholders were considered to be allocative and would require a land use plan amendment in order to implement, which is beyond the scope of this SEIS process, which is to establish a CTA boundary. The BLM used the stakeholder suggestions to define future development scenarios. Based on these scenarios, disturbance footprint acreages were estimated and included in chapter 4 as an assumption for analysis in order to conduct alternative and cumulative impacts analysis.

2.5.5 Consideration of Alternative Managing Entities

Although the LVVDB ROD directed the BLM to transfer land in the CTA to another entity pursuant to an approved and signed conservation strategy agreement, stakeholders expressed a desire for the BLM to retain management of the CTA. The SNPLMA operates under other applicable laws, and BLM is not required to dispose of all lands within the disposal area as established by SNPLMA and amended by Title IV of the Clark County Act of 2002 (PL 107-282). BLM would continue to manage resources within the final established boundary until such time as an outside entity meets the requirements of a BLM-approved conservation management strategy.

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