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**INTRODUCTION**



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The U.S. Government holds approximately 300 allotments in Douglas County, Nevada, within the Carson Watershed, in trust for hundreds of individual Indian landowners. The allotments vary in size from 40-160 acres. These allotments are collectively known as the Pine Nut Allotments. As trustee, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is charged with certain management responsibilities, but with long-term land use decisions generally being left to the Indian landowners themselves. BIA's role mainly involves the review and approval of those land use decisions.

A growth surge in early 2000 in Douglas County created a high demand for housing and related commercial development. Most of the suitable non-trust land in Douglas County has already been developed, and Indian landowners are being approached with residential and other long-term commercial lease proposals. Leases of allotted land are typically entered into between the Indian landowner(s) and the lessee, subject to BIA approval. The approval standards found in applicable statutes and regulations are minimal and provide little guidance for BIA in its review of these proposals. Moreover, the absence of either tribal or county land use jurisdiction creates a unique need for very detailed contractual building and operating standards and procedures to be administered or enforced by BIA.

To address these concerns, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Western Regional Office, contracted with Cascade Design Professionals, Inc. in May 2007 to prepare a Land Use and Development Plan for the Pine Nut Allotments. The purpose of the plan is to guide BIA decision making in its review of commercial (residential, investment and recreational) development proposals made by individual Indian landowners and potential lessees. In so doing, those landowners who wish to develop should be able to negotiate leases that are focused on a process that allows land to remain in Indian ownership, and not only provide the maximum economic benefit, but also ensure that the environment and the rights of surrounding landowners are adequately protected.

## STUDY AREA

Of the total number of Pine Nut Allotments, the BIA identified 176 allotments for inclusion in this planning effort. These allotments were selected as being potentially developable. The remaining allotments were located in very steep areas limiting their development potential. The study area is shown in Figure 1-1.

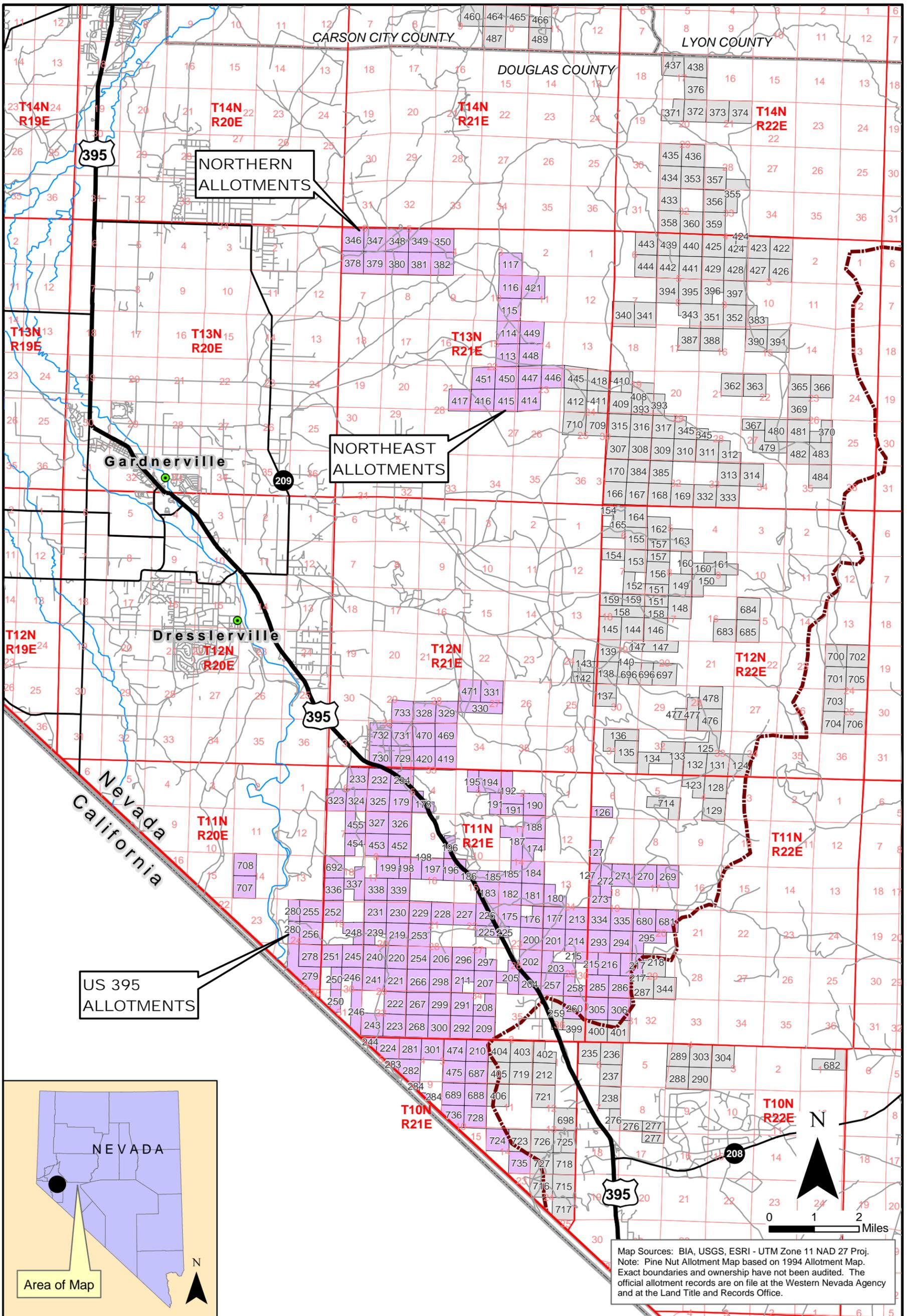


Figure 1-1

# Study Area

Pine Nut Allotments, Douglas County, Nevada

Map Prepared by Cascade Design Professionals, Inc., Jan. 2009

### Legend

-  Carson River Watershed Boundary
-  Allotment Included in Land Use Plan
-  Allotment Not Included in Land Use Plan
-  Local Road
-  50 Meter Contours

For purposes of this plan, the allotments have been divided into three clusters: the North Allotments (north-northeast of the Minden/Gardnerville urban area and east of the Minden-Tahoe Airport), Northeast allotments (east and slightly to the south of the North Allotments), and the US 395 Allotments (southeast of Minden/Gardnerville urban area along the US 395 corridor).

The North Allotments include 10 contiguous allotments. They are in an area of flat to rolling terrain and are accessed by various earth roads. The Northeast Allotments include 16 allotments and are also characterized by flat to rolling terrain. Elevations in both of these areas are less than 5800 feet.

The US 395 Allotments total 150. These allotments are in the Pine Nut Mountain Range which is very rugged, and elevations exceed 8,000 feet in many areas. US 395 climbs to around 6,000 feet within this highway corridor. Many of these allotments are in areas of steep slopes, and many do not have access or are far from the highway.



US 395 Allotments



## PLANNING PROCESS

Taking into consideration contractual, regulatory and jurisdictional components, the planning effort included:

- Designation of “highest and best use” for each allotment based on a site suitability analysis, groundwater feasibility study, and development trend analysis.
- An analysis of the impacts of development of the allotments on the environment and public health and safety, and identification of appropriate mitigative actions.
- Development and recommendation of development standards based on the type and scale of potential land development.
- Development of lease structures and lease recommendations that ensure the landowners will receive revenues commensurate with the value of the property over the entire lease term.

**The plan pertains only to developments that involve leasing structures. It does not and will not preclude personal development projects on allotments.**

During the course of this planning effort, the consultant team maintained contact and consultation with federal agencies, and state/local government, and tribal governing bodies. In addition, “public meetings” were held in and around Carson City, one at the beginning of the project to disseminate information about the project and obtain information relative to community issues, needs and objectives, and prior to completion of the Plan to present a Draft Plan and obtain comments on it from affected landowners, federal agencies, and state/local and tribal governing bodies. Based on these comments, the draft was revised as appropriate. Summaries of the meetings are included in Appendix B of this Plan.



## PLAN ORGANIZATION

This document includes:

- Background Data – A description of the physical features and socio-economic characteristics of the study area
- Plan Development – A summary of the results of the land use suitability analysis based on physical characteristics and identification of the highest and best use designations based on a growth trend analysis and results of the land use suitability analysis.
- Land Use and Development Procedural Plan – A description of the plan structure and the development process
- Impact Analysis – An evaluation of the impact of the various designated land uses on the allotments and surrounding environment and identification of measures to mitigate those impacts
- Implementation Measures/Strategies – A description of development standards and lease recommendations

Detailed descriptions of the analyses and their results are provided in Working Papers included in the Appendices to this document.