

## BLM has wildfire prevention plan for New Washoe City

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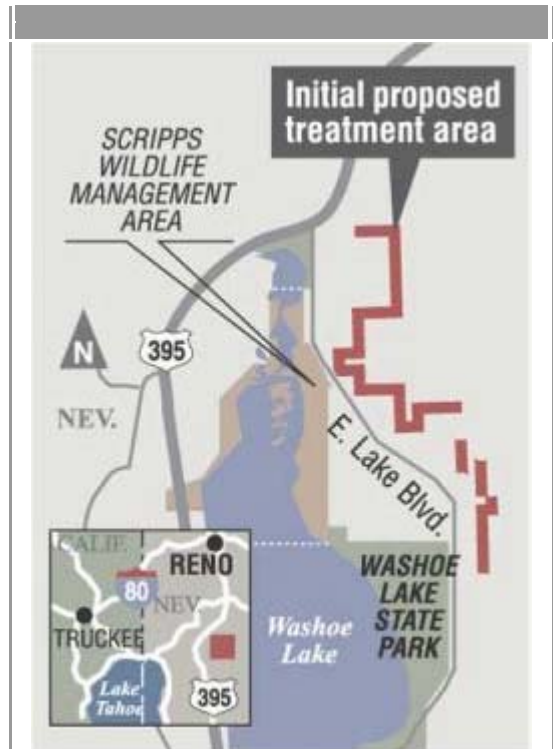
As a resident of the New Washoe City area, John Davis is sure about one thing: A proposed wildfire prevention plan for 150 to 200 acres north of Carson City is a must.

"It's a tinderbox, that is what it is," Davis said. "The fuel mass there is just tremendous. We have just been very, very lucky."

The Carson City office of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management is proposing a mechanical and hand fuel-treatment of land adjacent to residential property on New Washoe City's eastern edge. The proposal is part of a national effort to protect communities considered at high risk from wildfires.

"These wildfires are dangerous," said Mike McQueen, a BLM fire ecologist in Carson City. "By creating these fuel breaks, we are increasing safety, creating areas where firefighters can actually set up to fight these fires and protect communities."

"If a fire starts on public land, it kind of gives us time with this fuel break in place so we can react so we can stop it from ... getting on private land. It is kind of a two-way street," McQueen said.



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The proposed cost for the treatment plan is between \$200 and \$350 per acre, paid for by the Bureau of Land Management.

Under the plan, brush would be shredded on the eastern boundary of New Washoe City, with material left in place to stabilize soils and reduce dust. Officials would start their work prior to the next wildfire season but are seeking additional input from area residents. They can contact McQueen at 885-6120 or send comments to him at the BLM-Carson City Field Office, 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, NV 89701.

“One of the (residents’) issues is, ‘Is this a done deal?’ I have to tell them, ‘No, it is not a done deal. You as a community have a big say as to whether this occurs or not,’ ” McQueen said.

At least 80 percent of the land in the proposed treatment area is publicly owned, he estimated. Concerns raised so far by residents include the visual impact of clearing vegetation, the increased use of off-road vehicles, creation of dust, elimination of nearby wildlife and government intrusion.

“It’s kind of a lifestyle issue,” McQueen said. “They moved there to be next to public lands, undisturbed lands.”

The BLM does not treat private property without landowner permission, he said.

Davis, a private contractor who creates fire breaks, is sold on additional defensible space in his community.

“Whether I get the job or not, I live here. It needs to be done,” he said, noting the area’s proximity to Carson City, Reno, Incline Village and Virginia City.

Working with the Reno Fire Department and the Nevada Fire Safe Council, the BLM’s McQueen envisions the fuels treatment plan tying in with work by local fire safe councils.

“A lot of those lots in that community are big lots with a lot of brush between homes there,” he said. “You need this two-point strategy.”