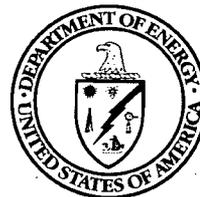


Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of
Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste
at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada –
Nevada Rail Transportation Corridor
DOE/EIS-0250F-S2D

and

Draft Environmental Impact Statement
for a Rail Alignment for the
Construction and Operation of a Railroad
in Nevada to a Geologic Repository at
Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada
DOE/EIS-0369D

Volume I



U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management

October 2007

COVER SHEET

RESPONSIBLE AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

TITLE: *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada – Nevada Rail Transportation Corridor* (DOE/EIS-0250F-S2D; the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS), and *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Rail Alignment for the Construction and Operation of a Railroad in Nevada to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (DOE/EIS-0369D; the Rail Alignment EIS)

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Information about this document is available on the Internet at the Yucca Mountain Project web site at <http://www.ocrwm.doe.gov> and on the DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) web site at <http://eh.doe.gov/nepa/>.

ABSTRACT: The Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS (DOE/EIS-0250F-S2D) analyzes the potential impacts of constructing and operating a railroad to connect the Yucca Mountain repository site to an existing rail line near Wabuska, Nevada (in the Mina rail corridor). The Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS analyzes the Mina rail corridor at a level of detail commensurate with that of the rail corridors analyzed in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (DOE/EIS-0250F). The Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS also updates relevant information regarding other rail corridors previously analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified) to identify any significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns.

The Rail Alignment EIS (DOE/EIS-0369D) analyzes the potential impacts of railroad construction and operation along common segments and alternative segments within the Caliente (selected in a previous Record of Decision, 69 *Federal Register* 18557) and Mina rail corridors for the purpose of determining an alignment for the construction and operation of a railroad for shipments of spent nuclear fuel, high-level radioactive waste, and other materials from an existing rail line in Nevada to a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain. The Rail Alignment EIS also analyzes the potential impacts of constructing and operating support facilities.

COOPERATING AGENCIES: The U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the Surface Transportation Board, and the U.S. Air Force are cooperating agencies in the preparation of the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: A 90-day comment period on this document begins with the publication of the Environmental Protection Agency Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. DOE will consider comments received after the 90-day period to the extent practicable. The Department will hold public hearings to receive comments on the document at the times and locations announced in local media and the DOE Notice of Availability. Written comments may also be submitted by U.S. mail to the U.S. Department of Energy at the above address in Las Vegas, via the Internet at <http://www.ymp.gov>, or by facsimile at 1-800-967-0739. This public comment period and the public hearings coincide with those of the *Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (DOE/EIS-0250F-S1D).

READERS GUIDE

READERS GUIDE TO

Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada – Nevada Rail Transportation Corridor
DOE/EIS-0250F-S2D

and

Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Rail Alignment for the Construction and Operation of a Railroad in Nevada to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada
DOE/EIS-0369D

This NEPA document contains two separate analyses—

- The Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS supplements and updates the information on Nevada rail corridors reported in the Yucca Mountain EIS (DOE/EIS-0250F), which DOE completed in 2002.
- The Rail Alignment EIS provides detailed analyses of two rail corridors (Caliente and Mina) at the alignment level.

The Repository SEIS (DOE/EIS-0250F-S1D), published simultaneously with the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS, is a separate, but related, analysis.

The Foreword, which immediately follows this Readers Guide, explains and graphically shows the relationship between the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, the Rail Alignment EIS, and the Repository SEIS. The Foreword also explains the relationship between those NEPA documents and the Repository SEIS, a separate, but related, environmental analysis.



Readers might want to know...

How is the document structured?

This document has a summary and four volumes, as follows:



The Summary provides an overview of the information and analyses provided in Volumes I, II, III, and IV. From the Summary, readers will gain a general understanding of the proposed project, the environmental analyses, and potential environmental impacts. By its very nature, the Summary does not provide the engineering and scientific detail of the full document.



Volume I contains the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS in its entirety, and Chapters 1 and 2 of the Rail Alignment EIS.



Volume II contains Chapter 3 of the Rail Alignment EIS, which describes the existing environmental setting and conditions for 15 environmental resource areas along the Caliente rail alignment and the Mina rail alignment.



Volume III contains Chapter 4 of the Rail Alignment EIS, which describes potential impacts to the existing environmental setting and conditions for 15 environmental resource areas along the Caliente rail alignment and the Mina rail alignment.



Volume IV contains Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the Rail Alignment EIS; a list of preparers, contributors, and reviewers; a glossary of terms, a reference list, Appendixes A through N, and an index.

In addition, DOE has developed a Map Atlas, which contains aerial photographs with digital overlays of the proposed railroad along the Caliente rail alignment and the Mina rail alignment. The Map Atlas is available on the Office of Radioactive Waste Management website at www.ocrwm.doe.gov.

The graphic on the next page shows the document structure and lists the contents of each volume.

Is this document difficult to understand?

This NEPA document is large and the subject of the proposed railroad project is complex. The analyses cover many environmental resource areas over long linear distances. DOE has endeavored to present this information in a logical format, and has included much of the information in tables and figures.

The Caliente and Mina rail alignments are treated fully and individually in the Rail Alignment EIS, Chapters 3 and 4. Although this approach results in repetition of some information, it allows readers interested in only one of the rail alignments easy access to information about that alignment.

The Department has provided tools and applied conventions to make the document as understandable and reader friendly as possible. For example:

- **Acronyms and Abbreviations** This document uses relatively few acronyms and abbreviations. Those used in text are spelled out at first use in each chapter; those used in tables and figures because of space limitations are defined in table and figure footnotes. The inside front cover of each volume of the document lists acronyms and abbreviations used in text. Each appendix has its own list of acronyms and abbreviations, as appropriate.
- **Definitions** Volume IV contains a glossary of terms. The glossary defines terms unique to this document and focuses on terms used in the environmental analyses and terms related to railroads. Glossary terms are shown in ***bold italics*** at first use in each chapter. Some glossary terms are also given in text boxes at appropriate places in the document.
- **Document Navigation** The Summary and each volume of this document contain detailed tables of contents, including lists of tables and figures. There is also a detailed index at the back of Volume IV.

Summary

High-level overview of the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS.

Volume I

Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS

- Chapter 1, Purpose and Need for Agency Action
- Chapter 2, Proposed Action and Alternatives
- Chapter 3, Affected Environment and Evaluation of Impacts -
Mina rail Corridor
- Chapter 4, Cumulative Impacts - Mina Rail Corridor
- Chapter 5, New Information Regarding Other Rail Corridors
- Chapter 6, Conclusion

Rail Alignment EIS:

- Chapter 1, Purpose and Need for Agency Action
- Chapter 2, Proposed Action and Alternatives

Volume II

Rail Alignment EIS

- Chapter 3, Affected Environment
 - Section 3.2, Caliente Rail Alignment
 - Section 3.3, Mina Rail Alignment

Volume III

Rail Alignment EIS

- Chapter 4, Environmental Impacts
 - Section 4.2, Caliente Rail Alignment
 - Section 4.3, Mina Rail Alignment

Volume IV

Rail Alignment EIS

- Chapter 5, Cumulative Impacts
- Chapter 6, Statutory, Regulatory, and Other Applicable Requirements
- Chapter 7, Best Management Practices and Mitigation
- Chapter 8, Unavoidable Adverse Impacts; Short-Term Uses and
Long-Term Productivity; Irreversible and Irrecoverable
Commitment of Resources

- List of Preparers, Contributors, and Reviewers
- Glossary
- References

- Appendix A, Federal Register Notices
- Appendix B, Interagency and Intergovernmental Interactions
- Appendix C, Evolution of Alternative Segments and Common Segments
- Appendix D, Aesthetic Resources
- Appendix E, Air Quality Assessment Methodology
- Appendix F, Floodplains and Wetlands Assessment
- Appendix G, Methodology for Assessing Impacts to Groundwater
- Appendix H, Biological Resources
- Appendix I, Noise and Vibration Assessment Methodology
- Appendix J, Socioeconomics
- Appendix K, Radiological Health and Safety
- Appendix L, Supplemental Transportation Information
- Appendix M, Cultural Resources Programmatic Agreement
- Appendix N, Distribution List

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- **Units of Measure** DOE has used standard units of measure, both metric and English. The Metric Conversion Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-168) and Executive Order 12770, *Metric Usage in Federal Government Programs*, require federal agencies to “seek out ways to increase understanding of the metric system of measurement through educational information and guidance and in Government publications.”

DOE believes that providing measures in both metric and English units ensures understanding by a wider audience of readers who speak English, including those more familiar with the metric system of measurement.

Generally, measurements given in text are provided in the metric unit followed by the English conversion in parentheses, and tables provide measures in metric units and include a footnote with the English conversion factor. The inside back cover of each volume of this document provides a conversion table (metric to English and English to metric).

- **Rounding** DOE has endeavored to provide numerical data at a level to permit a meaningful comparison of quantities. Some numbers in this document are rounded, others are not. Generally, DOE has not rounded numbers taken from source documents and used as inputs to analyses. Numbers resulting from analyses are rounded if the inclusion of more digits would not be meaningful for comparative purposes. Extremely large numbers or extremely small numbers might be given using what is known as scientific notation. The inside front cover of each volume of this document provides a brief explanation of scientific notation.

What is DIRS?

The acronym DIRS precedes technical references cited in this document. DIRS stands for Document Input Reference System, a Yucca Mountain Project database used to catalog and track the use of references in project documents. Documents in this system have been checked and verified suitable for use, including those requiring copyright permissions. Every reference cited in this EIS is traceable via its unique DIRS number. To the extent possible, each reference citation provides a pointer to the location of the cited information within the reference. If the citation is general and applies to the entire document, or if it is not possible to provide a specific pointer (for example, in large data sets), the citation is indicated as “all.”

What does DTN mean?

Data sets referenced in this document are preceded by the abbreviation DTN, which stands for Data Tracking Number. The Yucca Mountain Project uses a controlled system for cataloging and tracking all data used in project technical documents. Data in this system have been checked and verified suitable for use. All project data cited in this EIS are traceable to the unique DTN.

If I have comments on this EIS, where do I send them?

The Cover Sheet preceding this Readers Guide provides information on the public comment period and how to submit comments.

FOREWORD

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE or Department) has prepared two draft National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents associated with the proposed disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in a geologic repository at the Yucca Mountain Site in Nye County, Nevada:

- *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (DOE/EIS-0250F-S1; the Repository SEIS).
- *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada – Nevada Rail Transportation Corridor* (Part 1) (DOE/EIS-0250F-S2D; the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS), and *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Rail Alignment for the Construction and Operation of a Railroad in Nevada to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (Part 2) (DOE/EIS-0369D; the Rail Alignment EIS).

The Repository SEIS evaluates the potential environmental impacts of constructing and operating the Yucca Mountain repository under the current repository design and operational plans, the purpose of which is to assist the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in adopting, to the extent practicable, any EIS prepared pursuant to Section 114(f)(4) of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as amended (NWPA; 42 United States Code 10101 *et seq.*).

The Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS evaluate the potential environmental impacts of constructing and operating a railroad for shipments of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste from an existing rail line in Nevada to the repository at Yucca Mountain, the purpose of which is to help the Department decide whether to construct and operate a railroad, and if so, within which corridor and along which alignment.

Background and Context

The NWPA directs the Secretary of Energy, if the Secretary decides to recommend approval of the Yucca Mountain site for development of a repository, to submit a final EIS with any recommendation to the President. To fulfill that requirement, the Department prepared the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (DOE/EIS-0250F, February 2002) (Yucca Mountain FEIS).

On February 14, 2002, the Secretary transmitted to the President his recommendation (including the Yucca Mountain FEIS) for approval of the Yucca Mountain site for development of a geologic repository. The President considered the site qualified for application to the NRC for construction authorization and recommended the site to the U.S. Congress. Subsequently, Congress passed a joint resolution of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate designating the Yucca Mountain site for development as a geologic repository for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. On July 23, 2002, the President signed the joint resolution into law (Public Law 107-200). The Department is now in the process of preparing an application for submittal to the NRC seeking authorization to construct the repository, as required by the NWPA (Section 114(b)).

Since completion of the Yucca Mountain FEIS in 2002, DOE has continued to develop the repository design and associated construction and operational plans. As now proposed, the newly designed surface

and subsurface facilities would allow DOE to operate the repository following a primarily canistered approach in which most commercial spent nuclear fuel would be packaged at the reactor sites in transportation, aging, and disposal (TAD) canisters. Any commercial spent nuclear fuel arriving at the repository in packages other than TAD canisters would be repackaged by DOE at the repository into TAD canisters. DOE would construct the surface and subsurface facilities over a period of several years (referred to as phased construction) to accommodate an increase in spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste receipt rates as repository operational capability reaches its design capacity. To address the current repository design and operational plans, the Department announced its intent to prepare a Supplement to the Yucca Mountain FEIS (DOE/EIS-0250F-S1), consistent with NEPA and the NHPA. (*Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV*; 71 *Federal Register [FR]* 60490, October 13, 2006). The Repository SEIS supplements the Yucca Mountain FEIS by considering the potential environmental impacts of the construction, operation and closure of the repository under the current repository design and operational plans, and by updating the analysis and potential environmental impacts of transporting spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to the repository, consistent with transportation-related decisions the Department made following completion of the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

On April 8, 2004, the Department issued a Record of Decision announcing its selection, both nationally and in the State of Nevada, of the mostly rail scenario analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS as the primary means of transporting spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to the repository (*Record of Decision on Mode of Transportation and Nevada Rail Corridor for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV*; 69 *FR* 18557, April 8, 2004). Implementation of the mostly rail scenario ultimately would require the construction of a rail line to connect the repository site at Yucca Mountain to an existing rail line in the State of Nevada. To that end, in the same Record of Decision, the Department also selected the Caliente rail corridor from several corridors considered in the Yucca Mountain FEIS as the corridor in which to study possible alignments for a rail line. On the same day DOE selected the Caliente corridor, it issued a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS under NEPA to study alternative alignments within the Caliente corridor (the Rail Alignment EIS; DOE/EIS-0369) (*Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Alignment, Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV*; 69 *FR* 18565, April 8, 2004).

During the subsequent public scoping process, DOE received comments suggesting that other rail corridors be considered, in particular, the Mina route. In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE had considered but eliminated the Mina route from detailed study because a rail line within the Mina route could only connect to an existing rail line in Nevada by crossing the Walker River Paiute Reservation, and the Tribe had informed DOE that it would not allow nuclear waste to be transported across the Reservation.

Following review of the scoping comments, DOE held discussions with the Walker River Paiute Tribe and, in May 2006, the Tribal Council informed DOE that it would allow the Department to consider the potential impacts of constructing and operating a railroad to transport spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste across its reservation. On October 13, 2006, after a preliminary evaluation of the feasibility of the Mina rail corridor, DOE announced its intent to expand the scope of the Rail Alignment EIS to include the Mina corridor (*Amended Notice of Intent to Expand the Scope of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Alignment, Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV*; 71 *FR* 60484). Although the expanded NEPA analyses, referred to as the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS, evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the Mina rail corridor, DOE has identified the Mina alternative as nonpreferred because the Tribe has withdrawn its support for the EIS process.

Relationships Among the EISs

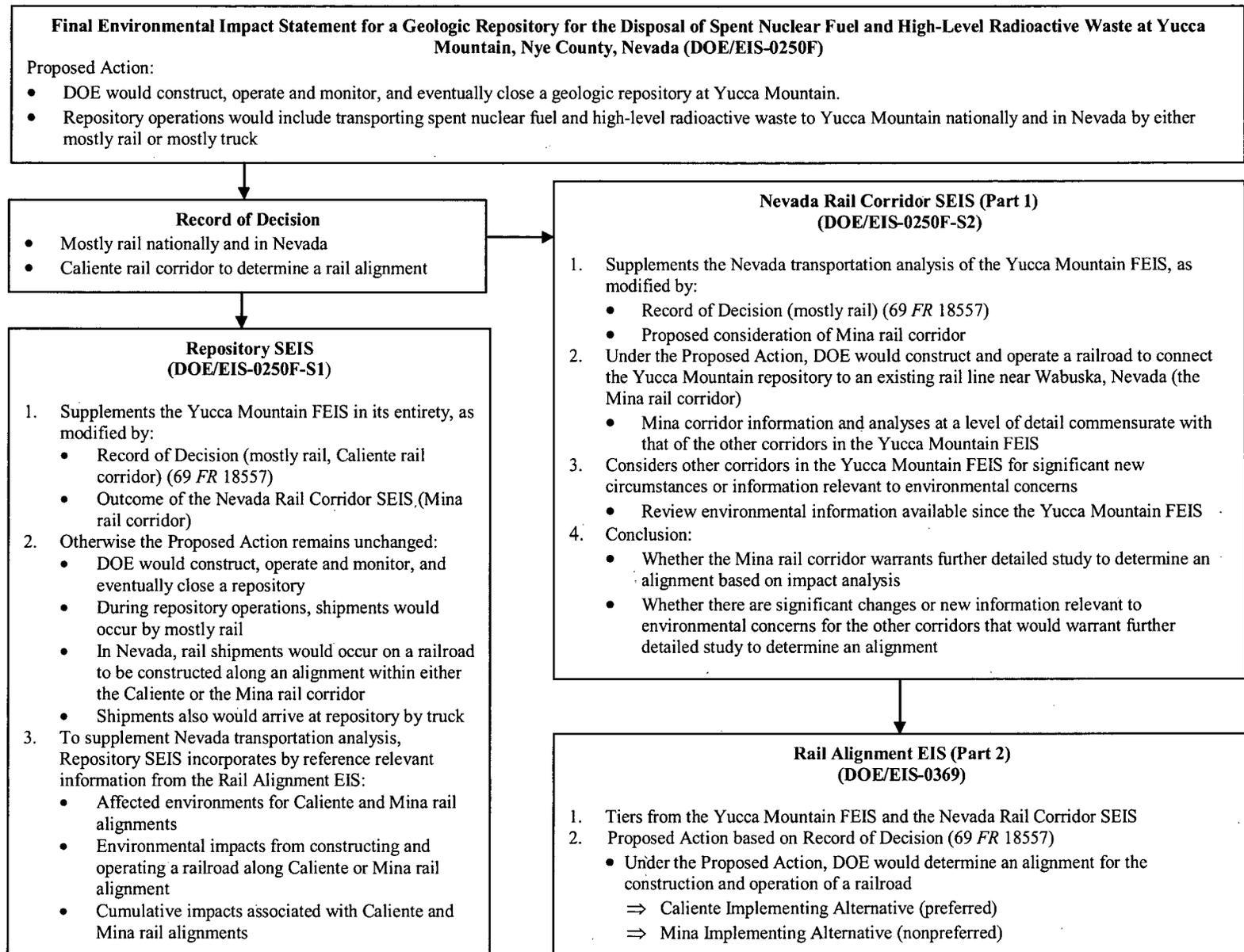
The Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Repository SEIS, and the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS are related in several respects. The Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS supplements the rail corridor analysis of the Yucca Mountain FEIS by analyzing the potential environmental impacts associated with constructing and operating a railroad within the Mina corridor. The Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS analyzes the Mina corridor at a level of detail commensurate with that of the rail corridor analysis in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, and concludes that the Mina corridor warrants further study in the Rail Alignment EIS to identify an alignment for the construction and operation of a railroad.

The Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS also updates relevant information regarding three other rail corridors previously analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified). The update demonstrates that there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns associated with these three rail corridors, and that they do not warrant further consideration in the Rail Alignment EIS. The Caliente-Chalk Mountain rail corridor, which also was included in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, would intersect the Nevada Test and Training Range, and was eliminated from further consideration because of U.S. Air Force concerns that a rail line within the Caliente-Chalk Mountain corridor would interfere with military readiness testing and training activities.

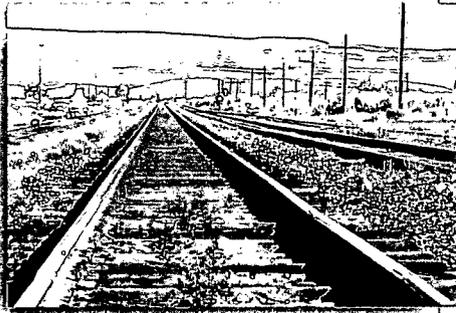
The Rail Alignment EIS tiers from the broader corridor analysis in both the Yucca Mountain FEIS and the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, consistent with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (see 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.28). Under the Proposed Action considered in the Rail Alignment EIS, DOE analyzes specific potential impacts of constructing and operating a railroad along common segments and alternative segments within the Caliente and Mina corridors for the purpose of determining an alignment in which to construct and operate a railroad for shipments of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste from an existing rail line in Nevada to a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain.

The Repository SEIS includes the potential environmental impacts of national transportation, and the potential impacts from the construction and operation of a rail line along specific alignments in either the Caliente or the Mina corridor, as described in the Rail Alignment EIS, to ensure that the Repository SEIS considers the full scope of potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed construction and operation of the repository. Conversely, the Rail Alignment EIS includes the potential impacts of constructing and operating the repository as a reasonably foreseeable future action in its cumulative impacts analysis. To ensure consistency, the Repository SEIS, the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, and the Rail Alignment EIS use the same inventory of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste and the same number of rail shipments for analysis. Thus, the associated occupational and public health and safety impacts within the Nevada rail corridors under consideration are the same in both documents. Furthermore, to promote conformity, where appropriate, consistent analytical approaches were used in both documents to evaluate the various resource areas.

The figure that follows summarizes the relationship among the EISs.

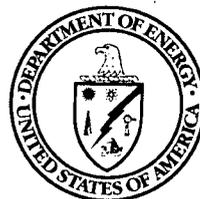


Relationship between the Repository SEIS, the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, and the Rail Alignment EIS.



Part 1

Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of
Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste
at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada –
Nevada Rail Transportation Corridor
DOE/EIS-0250F-S2D



U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management

October 2007

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1. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR AGENCY ACTION

This chapter explains why DOE needs to construct and operate a railroad in Nevada, summarizes the process leading to the addition of a rail corridor for further study, and describes the interests and roles of cooperating agencies. It also describes the Rail Alignment EIS and Nevada Rail Corridor scoping processes; summarizes public scoping comments and how DOE acted on those comments; describes interactions with American Indian Tribes and tribal organizations; and the relationship of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS to other environmental documents.

Glossary terms are shown in ***bold italics***.

1.1 Purpose and Need

The United States has focused a national effort on siting and developing a ***geologic repository*** for ***disposal*** of ***spent nuclear fuel*** and ***high-level radioactive waste***, and on developing systems in preparation for transporting these materials from their locations throughout the country to a repository. On July 23, 2002, the President signed into law (Public Law 107-200) a joint resolution of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate designating the Yucca Mountain Site in Nye County, Nevada, for development as a geologic repository for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.

After the Yucca Mountain Site was designated, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE or the Department) initiated preparation of a license application to be submitted to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission seeking authorization to construct the repository. In addition, to be in a position to transport spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to the repository should the Commission approve construction of the repository and receipt of these materials, DOE proceeded with certain decisions related to the transportation of these materials. On April 8, 2004, the Department announced that it would ship most spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to the repository by rail (train) (*Record of Decision on Mode of Transportation and Nevada Rail Corridor for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV*; 69 *Federal Register* [FR] 18557). Because rail access to Yucca Mountain is not currently available, DOE would have to build a rail line to connect to an existing rail line in Nevada.

Spent nuclear fuel is fuel that has been withdrawn from a reactor following irradiation.

- **Commercial spent nuclear fuel** comes from civilian nuclear power plants that generate electricity.
- **DOE spent nuclear fuel** comes from DOE production reactors, naval reactors, and university- and government-owned test and experimental reactors.

High-level radioactive waste is the highly radioactive material that results from the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel and other highly radioactive material, which the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission determines by rule requires permanent isolation.

1.2 Yucca Mountain Site-Selection and Recommendation Process

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (Public Law 97-425) acknowledged the Federal Government's responsibility to provide for the disposal of the Nation's spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. This Act, as amended (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 10101 *et seq.*), which the Nevada Rail

Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS refer to as the NWPA, identifies the Yucca Mountain Site in Nye County, Nevada, as the site to be studied as a potential location for a geologic repository.

After completion of site characterization studies at Yucca Mountain, the Secretary of Energy, finding the site to be scientifically and technically suitable for development of a repository, submitted his recommendation, along with a comprehensive statement of the basis for the recommendation, to the President of the United States, George W. Bush, for approval of the Yucca Mountain Site for the development of a nuclear waste repository. As required by the NWPA, the Department prepared the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (DOE/EIS-0250F, February 2002; DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, all) (Yucca Mountain FEIS), to accompany the Secretary's recommendation. The President considered the site qualified for application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for a construction authorization and recommended the site to the U.S. Congress. On July 23, 2002, the President signed into law (Public Law 107-200) a joint resolution of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate designating the Yucca Mountain Site for development as a geologic repository for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.

1.3 Rail Corridors Considered in the Yucca Mountain FEIS and this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE analyzed a proposed action to construct, operate and monitor, and eventually close a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain. As part of that action, DOE evaluated various modes of transporting spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to the Yucca Mountain Site from 72 commercial and 5 DOE sites (now 4 DOE sites because the Department is moving spent nuclear fuel from the Fort St. Vrain site in Colorado to the Idaho National Laboratory in Idaho). Figure 1-1 shows these sites.

DOE evaluated two national transportation scenarios, the "mostly legal-weight truck scenario" and the "mostly rail scenario," and three Nevada transportation scenarios, referred to as the "Nevada mostly legal-weight truck scenario," the "Nevada mostly rail scenario," and the "Nevada mostly heavy-haul truck scenario."

Under the Nevada mostly rail scenario, DOE considered in detail five potential **rail corridors** (Caliente, Carlin, Caliente-Chalk Mountain, Jean, and Valley Modified) within the State of Nevada in which the Department could construct a **railroad** to link an existing rail line to a repository at Yucca Mountain. Figure 1-2 shows these five corridors.

Rail corridor: A strip of land 400 meters (0.25 mile) wide through which DOE would identify an alignment (**rail alignment**) for the construction of a **rail line** in Nevada to a **geologic repository** at Yucca Mountain.

Rail route: A path that a rail line would follow within a rail corridor.

Rail line: An engineered feature incorporating the track, ties, **ballast**, and **subballast** at a specific location.

Railroad: A transportation system incorporating the rail line, operations support facilities, railcars, locomotives, and other related property and infrastructure.

Option: A strip of land from one point along a corridor to another point on the same corridor that provides a different route.

On April 8, 2004 (69 FR 18557), the Department issued a **Record of Decision** announcing its selection, both nationally and in the State of Nevada, of the mostly rail scenario analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS as the primary means of transporting spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to the

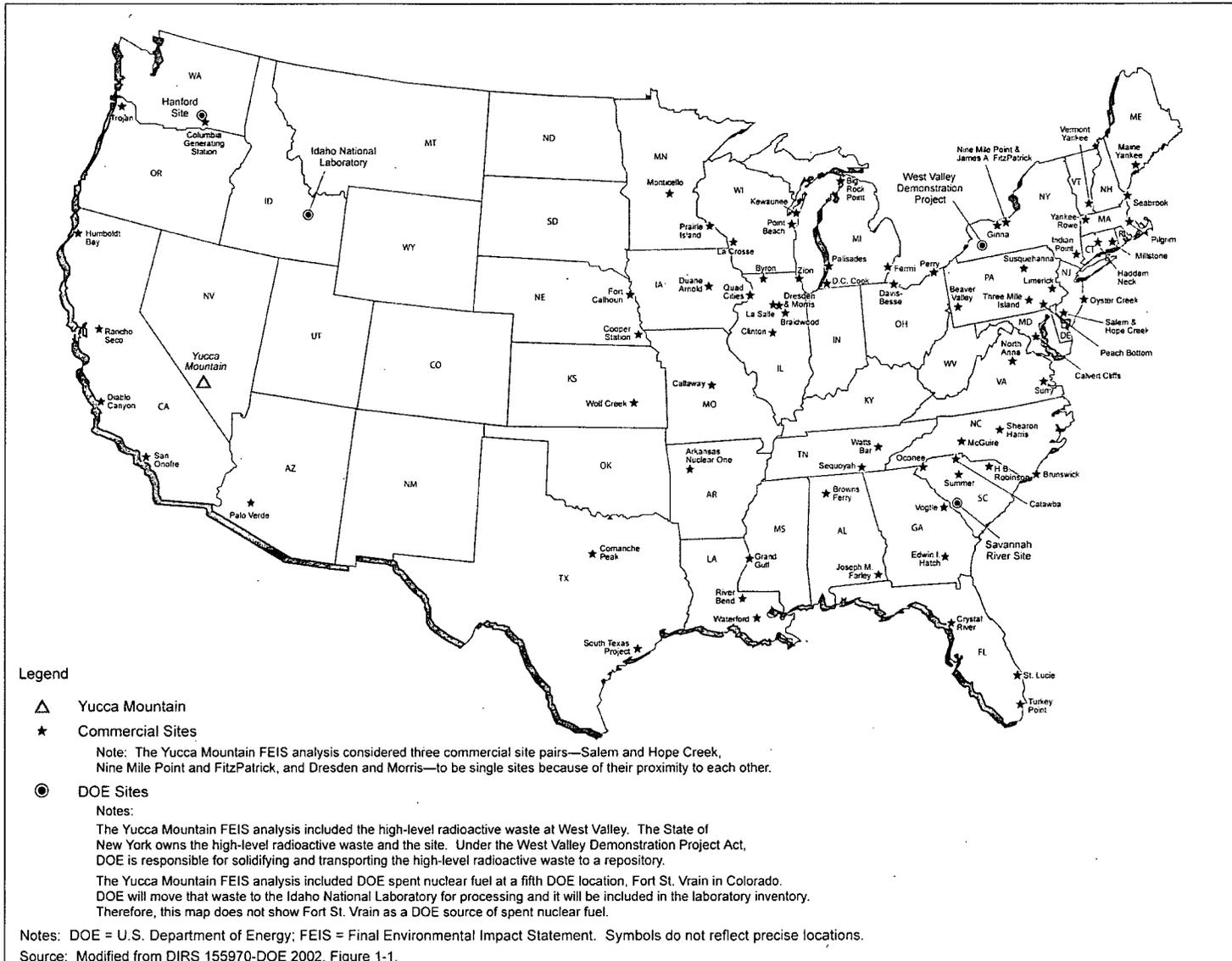


Figure 1-1. Locations of commercial and DOE sites that would ship spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to Yucca Mountain.

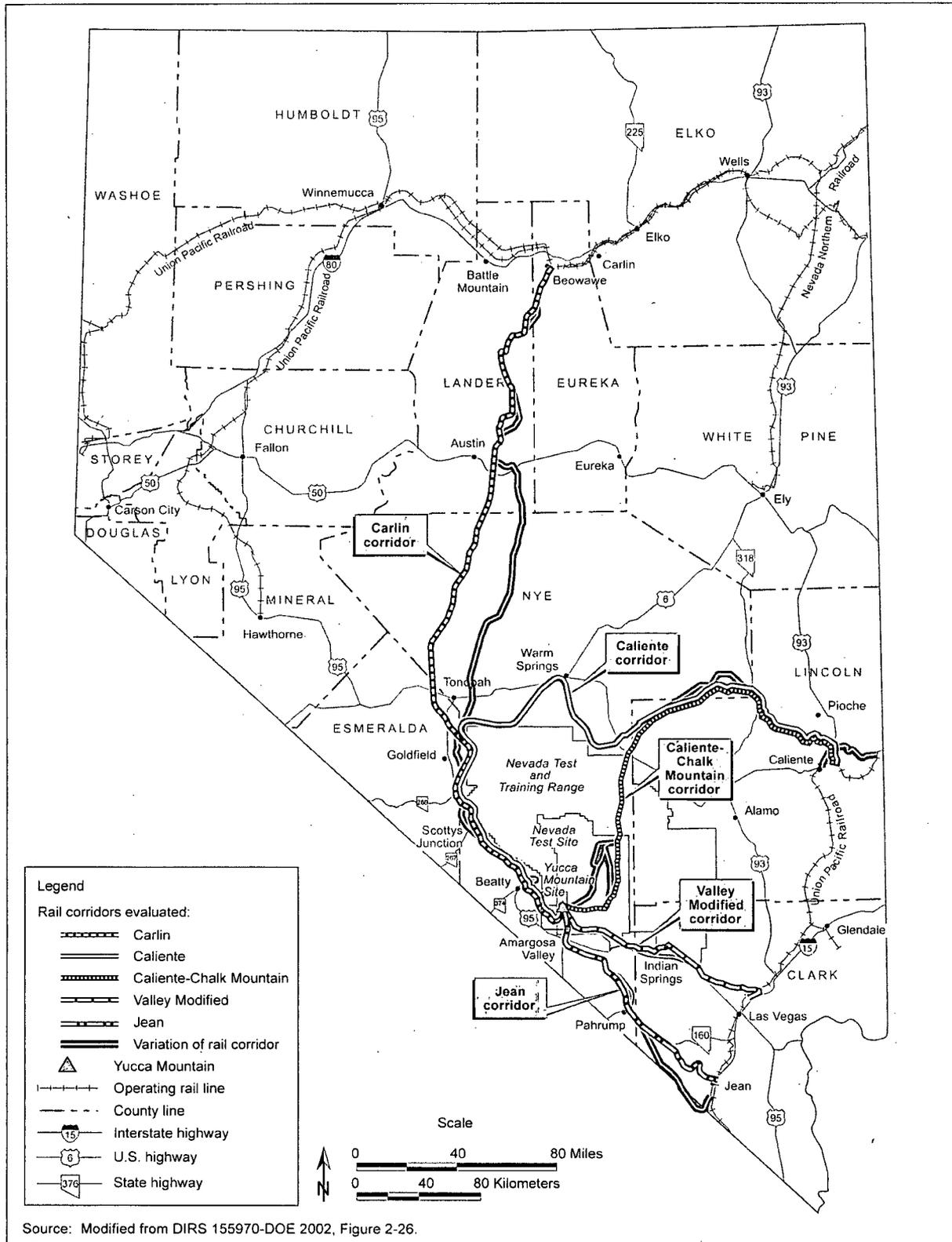


Figure 1-2. Five rail corridors evaluated in detail in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

repository. Implementation of the mostly rail scenario ultimately would require the construction of a rail line to connect the repository site at Yucca Mountain to an existing rail line in the State of Nevada. To that end, in the same Record of Decision, the Department also selected the Caliente rail corridor from several corridors considered in the Yucca Mountain FEIS as the corridor in which to study possible alignments for a rail line. On the same day DOE selected the Caliente corridor, it issued a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to study alternative alignments (now referred to as alternative segments) within the Caliente corridor (the Rail Alignment EIS; DOE/EIS-0369) (*Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Alignment, Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV*; 69 FR 18565).

During subsequent public scoping, DOE received comments suggesting that DOE consider other rail corridors that DOE had not previously considered in detail, in particular, the Mina route. In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE had considered but eliminated the Mina route from detailed study because a rail line within the Mina route could only connect to an existing rail line in Nevada by crossing the Walker River Paiute Reservation, and the Tribe had informed DOE that it would not allow nuclear waste to be transported across the Reservation (DIRS 182776-Collins 1991, all).

Following review of the scoping comments, DOE held discussions with the Walker River Paiute Tribe and, in May 2006, the Tribal Council informed DOE that it would allow the Department to consider the potential impacts of transporting spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste across its reservation (DIRS 182775-Williams 2006, all). DOE then prepared a preliminary feasibility study of the Mina rail corridor (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, all).

On October 13, 2006, after a preliminary evaluation of the feasibility of the Mina rail corridor, DOE announced its intent to expand the scope of the Rail Alignment EIS to include the Mina corridor (*Amended Notice of Intent to Expand the Scope of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Alignment, Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV*; 71 FR 60484). DOE also announced that it would update, as appropriate, the information and analysis for other rail corridors analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

This expanded NEPA analysis includes the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS (DOE/EIS-0250F-S2D), which updates the Nevada rail corridor analysis in the Yucca Mountain FEIS by analyzing the potential environmental impacts associated with constructing and operating a railroad within the Mina rail corridor (corridor-level analysis) and the Rail Alignment EIS (DOE/EIS-0369D), which analyzes the potential environmental impacts associated with constructing and operating a railroad along specific alignments within the Caliente rail corridor and the Mina rail corridor (alignment-level analysis). Figure 1-3 shows the location of the Mina rail corridor evaluated in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, and the Caliente rail corridor evaluated in the Rail Alignment EIS.

This Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS supplements the Nevada transportation-related element of the Yucca Mountain FEIS, but only the element that remains a part of the Yucca Mountain FEIS Proposed Action—the Nevada mostly rail scenario. Under the Proposed Action considered in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS (described in more detail in Chapter 2), DOE would construct and operate a railroad to connect the Yucca Mountain Repository to an existing rail line near Wabuska, Nevada (the Mina rail corridor). Accordingly, this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS analyzes the Mina rail corridor at a level of detail commensurate with that of the rail corridors analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (see Chapters 3 and 4 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS).

The analysis of the Mina rail corridor is intended to support Departmental conclusions about whether the potential attributes, characteristics, and environmental impacts of constructing and operating a railroad within the Mina rail corridor are such that DOE should proceed with analyzing specific alignments within the Mina rail corridor in the Rail Alignment EIS. In Chapter 6 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE concludes that the Mina rail corridor warrants further study to determine an alignment for the construction and operation of a railroad.

On April 17, 2007, the Tribal Council for the Walker River Paiute Tribe passed a resolution withdrawing support for the Tribe's participation in the preparation of the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS. The Tribal Council based its decision on a review of information gathered to that time and input from Tribal members. The Tribal Council's resolution also renewed the Tribe's past objection to the transportation of nuclear waste through their Reservation (DIRS 181604-Williams 2007, all). Thus, although Mina is analyzed in detail in the Rail Alignment EIS, DOE has identified the Mina Implementing Alternative as nonpreferred.

This Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS also updates relevant information regarding other rail corridors previously analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified) to identify any significant new circumstances or information that would cause DOE to further consider these corridors. The Caliente-Chalk Mountain rail corridor, also previously analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, would conflict with the mission of the U.S. Air Force. Therefore, DOE has eliminated this corridor from further consideration and has not updated information concerning the Caliente-Chalk Mountain rail corridor in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS.

Chapter 5 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS provides updated information and analyses for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors; Figure 1-3 shows the locations of these three rail corridors.

The updated information and analysis are intended to support Departmental conclusions about whether there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified corridors. Factors important to reaching a conclusion include the nature of the updated environmental information and associated changes to potential environmental impacts, including irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources and cumulative impacts, since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Other factors include, as appropriate, changes to potential land-use conflicts and their potential to adversely affect construction of a rail line, and the potential delays that could affect the availability of a rail line in these corridors. In Chapter 6 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE concludes that there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns regarding these corridors. Therefore, the Rail Alignment EIS considers implementing alignment alternatives only in the Caliente and Mina corridors.

As Chapter 6 discusses, although the amount of private land within the Carlin rail corridor appears to have decreased since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the complex land-ownership pattern resulting from the mix of private and public lands the corridor would cross remains unchanged. Such land-use complexity increases the potential to adversely affect construction of a railroad, and increases the potential for delays that could affect the availability of a rail line in the Carlin rail corridor. In contrast, the Mina rail corridor would cross less private land, and the corresponding land-ownership pattern would be less complex. Therefore, although DOE announced its preference for the Carlin rail corridor in the *Federal Register* (69 FR 74951, December 29, 2003) the Department has concluded that the Carlin rail corridor does not warrant further consideration at the alignment level in the Rail Alignment EIS.

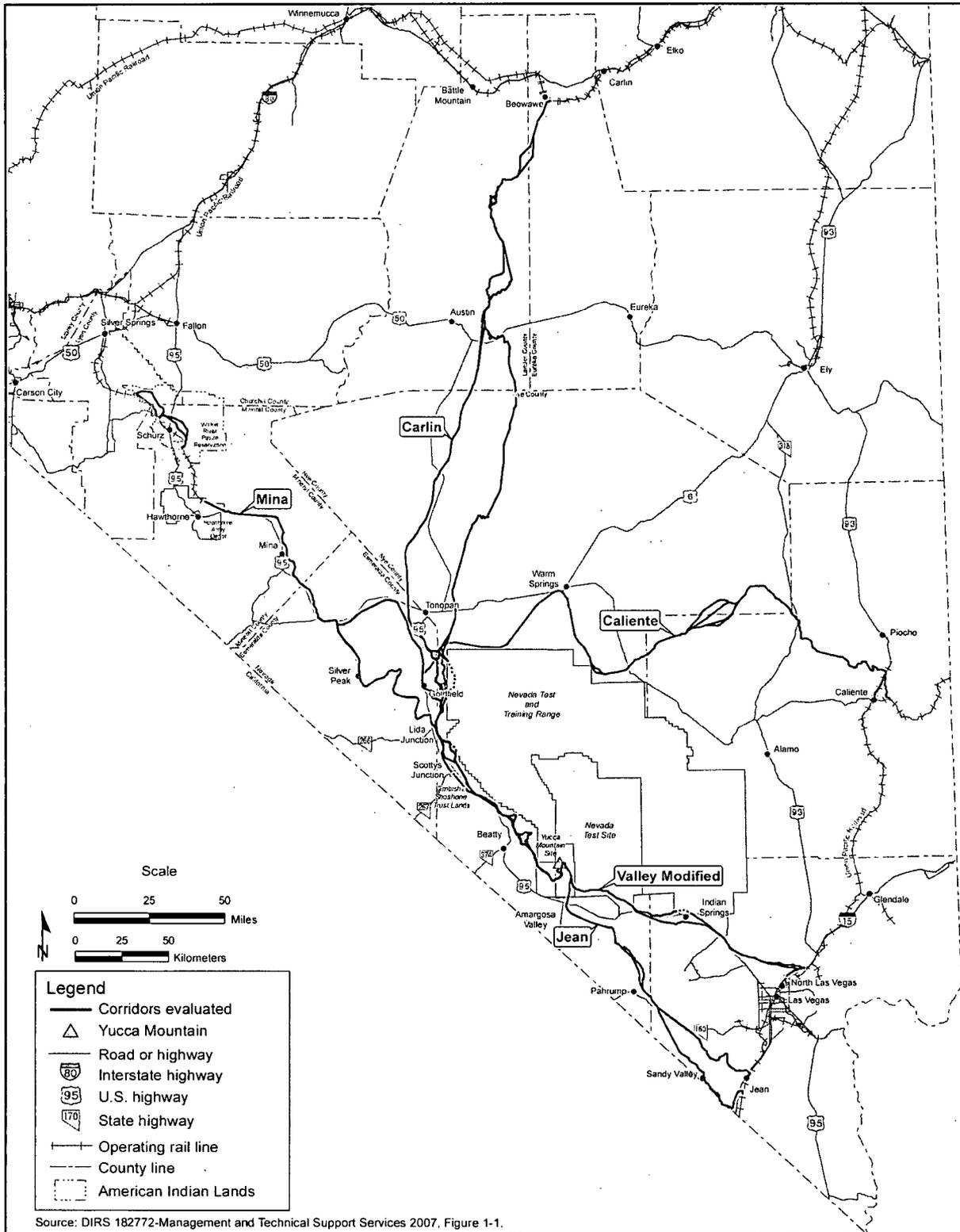


Figure 1-3. Four rail corridors and the Caliente corridor (pre-scoping, October 2006).

1.3.1 CALIENTE RAIL CORRIDOR

In its Record of Decision (69 *FR* 18557, April 8, 2004), DOE selected the Caliente rail corridor in which to evaluate possible *rail alignments* for construction and operation of a railroad within Nevada. The Department decided to evaluate alignments within the Caliente corridor based, in part, on the analyses of the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The Department, however, also considered other factors such as potential for construction delays, direct and indirect costs of each alignment, and comments received from the public.

DOE also considered potential land-use conflicts and their potential to adversely affect construction of a rail line. Compared to the other four corridors, the Caliente rail corridor appeared to have the fewest land-use or other conflicts that could lead to substantial delays in acquiring the necessary land and rights-of-way, or beginning construction. The Department concluded that the Valley Modified rail corridor could conflict with the Desert National Wildlife Range and local community plans for development in the greater Las Vegas metropolitan area. The Caliente-Chalk Mountain rail corridor would conflict with the U.S. Air Force mission on the Nevada Test and Training Range. The Jean rail corridor would require crossing relatively greater amounts of private land, and would pose greater potential land-use conflicts because of its proximity to the Las Vegas metropolitan area. The Carlin rail corridor also would require crossing relatively greater amounts of private land, and little infrastructure, such as roads and electric power, is available over long segments of the corridor, which would tend to make logistics and emergency response during construction more challenging.

The Department also considered concerns expressed by members of the public in Nevada. In these comments, the public stated that DOE should avoid rail corridors in the Las Vegas Valley.

DOE also considered the direct costs of constructing and operating a railroad, and the indirect costs resulting from potential delays in the availability of the railroad. The Jean and Valley Modified rail corridors would be the shortest among the five corridors and would have the lowest estimated construction costs. The Carlin and Caliente rail corridors would be the longest and, on the basis of construction costs alone, would be more expensive to develop. However, delays in rail line construction because of land-use or other conflicts and the resulting inability to accept spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste transported by rail to the repository in a timely manner would add to both the liability costs for delayed acceptance of commercial spent nuclear fuel and the costs of continued storage of high-level radioactive waste.

The Department considered irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources in making its decision, recognizing that resources such as electric power, fossil fuels, construction materials, and water would be consumed during rail line construction within any of the five rail corridors considered in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. On balance, DOE concluded that these commitments would not significantly diminish the resources in question.

DOE concluded that the Caliente rail corridor would be preferable to the other corridors, and therefore decided to evaluate possible alignments for the rail line connecting the repository to an existing rail line in Nevada. This evaluation is included in the Rail Alignment EIS.

1.3.2 MINA RAIL CORRIDOR

DOE had previously considered, but eliminated the Mina rail corridor from detailed study because a rail line in that corridor could only connect to an existing rail line by crossing the Walker River Paiute Reservation, and the Tribe had informed DOE that it would not allow nuclear waste to be transported across its Reservation (DIRS 182776-Collins 1991, all).

Following review of the scoping comments, DOE held discussions with the Walker River Paiute Tribe and, in May 2006, the Tribal Council informed DOE that it would allow DOE to consider the potential impacts of constructing and operating a rail line to transport spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste across its Reservation (DIRS 182775-Williams 2006, all). On October 13, 2006, after a preliminary evaluation of the feasibility of the Mina rail corridor, DOE announced its intent to expand the scope of the Rail Alignment EIS to include the Mina rail corridor (71 FR 60484).

The analysis of the Mina rail corridor is intended to support DOE conclusions about whether the potential attributes, characteristics, and environmental impacts of constructing and operating a railroad in that corridor are such that DOE should proceed with analyzing specific alignments within the corridor in the Rail Alignment EIS.

However, in May 2007, the Walker River Paiute Tribal Council informed DOE that it was withdrawing its support for the Tribe's participation in the preparation of the Supplemental Rail Corridor EIS and Rail Alignment EIS. The Tribal Council based its decision on a review of information gathered to that time and input from Tribal members. The Tribal Council's resolution also renewed the Tribe's past objection to the transportation of nuclear waste through its Reservation (DIRS 181604-Williams 2007, all). Accordingly, in the Rail Alignment EIS DOE has identified the Mina Implementing Alternative as nonpreferred.

1.3.3 CARLIN, JEAN, AND VALLEY MODIFIED RAIL CORRIDORS

In the Amended Notice of Intent (71 FR 60484, October 13, 2006), DOE also announced that it would update, as appropriate, the information and analyses for other rail corridors analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified) to identify any significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns. DOE eliminated the Caliente-Chalk Mountain rail corridor, which would intersect the Nevada Test and Training Range, from detailed study because of U.S. Air Force concerns that a rail line within the Range would interfere with the military's mission; therefore, DOE did not include the Caliente-Chalk Mountain rail corridor in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS.

Chapter 5 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS provides updated information and analyses for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors.

The updated information and analyses for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors are intended to support Departmental conclusions about the status of those corridors and whether, based on environmental considerations, any of those corridors should be further analyzed at the alignment level. In Chapter 6 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE concludes that there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns that would warrant further consideration of the Carlin, Jean, or Valley Modified rail corridors at the alignment level. DOE also concludes that the Mina rail corridor warrants further study to determine an alignment for the construction and operation of a railroad.

1.4 Cooperating Agencies

Pursuant to the NWPA, DOE is responsible for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to protect public health, safety, and the environment, and for developing and implementing a plan for transporting spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to a repository at Yucca Mountain. The Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1501.6 emphasize agency cooperation early in the NEPA process and allow a lead agency (in this case, DOE) to request the assistance of other agencies that either have jurisdiction by law or have special expertise regarding issues considered in an EIS. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Surface

Transportation Board (STB), and the U.S. Air Force are cooperating agencies in the development of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS, pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, and have participated in its preparation. Cooperating agencies that could issue decisions concerning the Proposed Action and alternatives to the Proposed Action could adopt this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS or the Rail Alignment EIS, in whole or in part, and use them as a basis for their decisions. These agencies have management and regulatory authority over lands and resources that would be crossed by or be close to the proposed railroad or they have special expertise related to the Proposed Action.

The Walker River Paiute Tribe, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the U.S. Army were cooperating agencies until the Walker River Paiute Tribe withdrew from participating in the EIS process. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the U.S. Army withdrew as cooperating agencies after the Tribe withdrew.

1.4.1 BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The BLM is an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior and is responsible for administering more than 1 million square kilometers (250 million acres) of public lands, mostly in 12 western states, including Alaska. Congress enacted the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) "to establish public land policy; to establish guidelines for its administration; to provide for the management, protection, development, and enhancement of the public lands; and for other purposes." It is the primary legislation guiding the BLM in its responsibility to manage the public lands and resources in a combination of ways that best serve the present and future needs of the American people.

To construct that portion of the proposed rail line that would cross public land, DOE would obtain a right-of-way from the BLM. BLM regulations at 43 CFR Part 2800 establish the procedures for processing right-of-way applications from federal agencies. The right-of-way application would include public land facilities that would be part of the proposed railroad. The BLM may adopt this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS, as authorized by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1506.3) to satisfy its NEPA requirements for the right-of-way application. *Right-of-way grants* on public lands must be consistent with the applicable BLM *resource management plan(s)*. The BLM is a cooperating agency in the preparation of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS and could adopt and use the document to process a DOE right-of-way application for access to the public lands that would be required for construction and operation of the proposed railroad. The procedures for BLM adoption of another agency's EIS (*National Environmental Policy Act Handbook*, BLM Handbook H-1790-1; DIRS 182299-BLM 1988, all) specify that the BLM conduct an independent review of the EIS and issue its own Record of Decision. Cooperating agency status provides the BLM the opportunity to work closely with DOE during development of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS to encourage a product that meets the NEPA requirements for processing a right-of-way application.

Resource management plan: A land-use plan for public lands as described by the Federal Land Management and Policy Act. Among other things, it establishes land areas for limited, restricted, or exclusive use; allowable resource uses; resource condition goals and objectives; general management practices to achieve the goals; the need for more specific management plans for certain areas; general implementation sequences; and monitoring intervals and standards (43 CFR Part 1610).

1.4.2 SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

The STB is a regulatory agency that Congress charged with the fundamental missions of resolving railroad rate and service disputes and reviewing proposed railroad construction, acquisitions, mergers, and abandonments. The STB is decisionally independent, although it is administratively affiliated with the U.S. Department of Transportation. The ICC [Interstate Commerce Commission] Termination Act

of 1995 (Public Law No. 104-88) created the STB, which is the successor agency to the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The STB has jurisdiction over railroad rate and service issues, and rail structuring transactions such as new line construction, line sales, line abandonments, and railroad mergers. The STB also has jurisdiction over common-carrier rail lines that are part of the interstate rail network. A common-carrier rail line is one that holds itself out to the public for service and has an obligation to provide rail service to any and all shippers that request service along that line.

If the proposed railroad is to be operated as a common-carrier rail line, the Department would have to apply to the STB for a license to construct and operate (certificate of public convenience and necessity). As part of the licensing process, the STB must consider the environmental effects of rail line construction and operation. The STB Section of Environmental Analysis is responsible for preparing the appropriate NEPA documentation for rail line construction and operation cases that come before the STB. Because the STB is a cooperating agency in the preparation of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS, these NEPA documents are intended to satisfy the STB Section of Environmental Analysis NEPA obligations.

1.4.3 U.S. AIR FORCE

The mission of the U.S. Air Force, in conjunction with the other armed services, is to preserve the peace and security and provide for the defense of the United States, its Territories, Commonwealths, and possessions, and any U.S.-occupied areas. The U.S. Air Force agreed to become a cooperating agency as a consequence of its jurisdiction over airspace and land associated with the Nevada Test and Training Range that would have been affected by one or more of the potential rail line options (segments) analyzed in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS. DOE coordinates with and, at times, obtains approval from the responsible armed service when DOE actions might encroach on U.S. Department of Defense land and potentially affect military operations. Although DOE has decided not to pursue potential rail line options that would have entered the Nevada Test and Training Range, DOE is coordinating with the U.S. Air Force (for example, on the nature, extent, and location of U.S. Air Force overflights) to minimize impacts of the proposed rail line to the U.S. Air Force mission. In addition, the U.S. Air Force offers special expertise associated with portions of the rail corridors near the Nevada Test and Training Range.

1.5 Environmental Impact Statement Process

Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508) that implement the procedural requirements of NEPA, and DOE NEPA regulations (10 CFR Part 1021) provide procedures to use when preparing an EIS. A major emphasis of the EIS process is to promote public awareness of the Proposed Action and its alternatives and to provide opportunities for public involvement. An agency prepares an EIS in a series of steps: (1) by publishing a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS and implementing a process known as "public scoping," as further discussed in Section 1.5.1, whereby comments are solicited from federal, state, and local agencies, American Indian tribes and organizations, other organizations, and the general public to assist in defining the proposed action, alternatives, and issues requiring analysis; (2) by preparing a Draft EIS for public review and comment; (3) by preparing a Final EIS that incorporates and responds to all substantive comments received on the Draft EIS; and (4) by preparing a Record of Decision to announce the agency's decision on a project and explain the reasons for the decision.

1.5.1 DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY NOTICES OF INTENT AND SCOPING MEETINGS

On April 8, 2004, DOE published a Notice of Intent (69 *FR* 18565) announcing that it would prepare an EIS for the alignment, construction, and operation of a railroad (called the rail line in the Notice of Intent) for the shipment of spent nuclear fuel, high-level radioactive waste, and other materials from a site near Caliente, Lincoln County, Nevada, to a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada. The Notice also announced the schedule for public scoping meetings, and invited and encouraged comments on the scope of the Rail Alignment EIS to ensure that all relevant environmental issues and reasonable alternatives would be addressed. To facilitate the scoping process, in the Notice of Intent DOE identified a preliminary list of issues and environmental resources that might be considered in the Rail Alignment EIS, and specifically invited comments on the following six questions to help define the scope of the EIS:

1. Should additional alternatives be considered that might minimize, avoid, or mitigate adverse environmental impacts (for example, looking beyond the corridor, avoiding Wilderness Study Areas, American Indian Trust Lands, or encroachment on the Nevada Test and Training Range)?
2. Should any of the preliminary alternatives be eliminated from detailed consideration?
3. Should additional environmental resources be considered?
4. Should DOE allow private entities to ship commercial commodities on its rail line?
5. What mitigation measures should be considered?
6. Are there national security issues that should be addressed?

The scoping comment period began with publication of the Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* and was originally scheduled to close on May 24, 2004. In response to a request from the State of Nevada, DOE extended the comment period by 7 days, to June 1, 2004 (69 *FR* 22496, April 26, 2004), bringing the total length of the scoping comment period to 55 days. DOE held five public scoping meetings on the Rail Alignment EIS at the following locations on the following dates in Nevada:

- Amargosa Valley – Longstreet Hotel Casino, Nevada State Highway 373, May 3, 2004
- Goldfield – Goldfield Community Center, 301 Crook Street, May 4, 2004
- Caliente – Caliente Youth Center, U.S. Highway 93, May 5, 2004
- Reno – University of Nevada, Reno, Fifteenth and North Virginia, May 12, 2004
- Las Vegas – Cashman Center, 850 North Las Vegas Boulevard, May 17, 2004

In addition to the *Federal Register* notices announcing the meetings, DOE advertised the meetings in five local newspapers that have a total circulation of approximately 250,000; sent four separate press releases to media outlets, industry, and stakeholders; mailed several thousand letters to stakeholders, members of the public, and other interested parties; and distributed over 1,000 handbills in Esmeralda, Lincoln, and Nye Counties.

DOE conducted the public scoping meetings in an open-house format. Members of the public were invited to attend the meetings at their convenience, any time during meeting hours, and submit their comments in writing at the meeting, or in person to a court reporter who was available throughout the meeting. The open-house format provided for one-on-one discussions with DOE representatives responsible for the preparation of the Rail Alignment EIS. Approximately 440 people (number is approximate because some attendees did not sign in) attended the meetings and 86 submitted oral comments (that the court reporters transcribed) on the scope of the EIS.

DOE considered comments received during the scoping comment period on the scope of the Rail Alignment EIS, along with information BLM received, including results of interviews with grazing allotment permittees and other interested parties documented in *Proposed Yucca Mountain Corridor Affected Grazing Permittees* (DIRS 173845-Resource Concepts 2005, all). DOE sponsored an American Indian perspectives document in *American Indian Perspectives on the Proposed Rail Alignment Environmental Impact Statement for the U.S. Department of Energy's Yucca Mountain Project* (the American Indian Resource Document; DIRS 174205-Kane et al. 2005, all) (see section 1.5.3). DOE also considered information obtained through sources such as interviews with officials from Lincoln and Nye Counties.

On October 13, 2006, after a preliminary evaluation of the feasibility of the Mina rail corridor (DIRS 180222-BSC.2006, all), DOE announced its intent to expand the scope of the Rail Alignment EIS to include the Mina rail corridor as an alternative (*Amended Notice of Intent to Expand the Scope of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Alignment, Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV*; 71 FR 60484). DOE specifically invited comments on the following four questions relative to the Mina rail corridor to help define the scope of the analysis:

1. Should additional alternative alignments (now called alternative segments) be considered that might minimize, avoid, or mitigate adverse environmental impacts (for example, looking beyond the Mina rail corridor, avoiding environmentally sensitive areas)?
2. Should any of the preliminary alternatives be eliminated from detailed consideration?
3. Should additional environmental resources be considered?
4. What mitigation measures should be considered?

In addition, DOE indicated interest in identifying any significant changes to, or significant new information relevant to, the rail corridors analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The second scoping comment period began with publication of the Amended Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* and was originally scheduled to close on November 27, 2006. In response to requests from the public, DOE extended the comment period by 15 days, to December 12, 2006 (71 FR 65785, November 9, 2006), bringing the total length of the scoping comment period to 61 days. DOE held eight public scoping meetings during the second public scoping period at the following locations on the following dates in Nevada and Washington, D.C.:

- Washington, D.C. – L'Enfant Plaza Hotel, 480 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, October 30, 2006
- Amargosa Valley – Longstreet Hotel Casino, Nevada State Highway 373, November 1, 2006
- Las Vegas – Cashman Center, 850 North Las Vegas Boulevard, November 2, 2006
- Caliente – Caliente Youth Center, U.S. Highway 93, November 8, 2006
- Goldfield – Goldfield School Gymnasium, Hall and Euclid, November 13, 2006
- Hawthorne – Hawthorne Convention Center, 932 E. Street, November 14, 2006
- Fallon – Fallon Convention Center, 100 Campus Way, November 15, 2006
- Reno – University of Nevada, Reno, Lawlor Event Center, 1500 N. Virginia Street, November 27, 2006

In addition to the *Federal Register* notices announcing the meetings, DOE advertised the meetings in eight local newspapers, including the *Washington Post*. Total circulation of the newspapers is approximately 280,000 plus an additional 750,000 for the *Washington Post*. DOE sent four separate press releases to media outlets, industry, and stakeholders; mailed several thousand letters to stakeholders,

members of the public, and other interested parties; and distributed over 1,300 handbills in Washoe, Churchill, Lyon, Mineral, Esmeralda, Lincoln, and Nye Counties.

DOE conducted the public scoping meetings in an open-house format. Members of the public were invited to attend the meetings at their convenience, any time during meeting hours, and submit their comments in writing at the meeting, or in person to a court reporter who was available throughout the meeting. The open-house format provided for one-on-one discussions with DOE representatives responsible for the preparation of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS. Approximately 330 people (number is approximate because some attendees did not sign in) attended the meetings, and 63 submitted oral comments (that the court reporters transcribed) on the scope of the expanded NEPA analysis.

1.5.2 PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENTS

DOE received more than 4,100 comments during the first public scoping period for the Rail Alignment EIS, and some after the close of the scoping period. DOE summarized all comments received in *Summary of Public Scoping Comments, Related to the Environmental Impact Statement for the Alignment, Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV* (DIRS 176463-Craig, Lechel, and Morton 2004, all) and considered the content of all substantive comments in determining the scope of the Rail Alignment EIS. During this scoping period, DOE also received comments suggesting that other rail corridors be considered in the Rail Alignment EIS, in particular the Mina corridor. Compelling arguments were presented in comments that the Mina rail corridor should be given a full evaluation.

The scoping period for this expanded NEPA document (this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS) began on October 13, 2006, and ended on December 12, 2006. DOE received approximately 790 comments during this second public scoping period, and some comments after the close of the scoping period. DOE summarized all comments received (including those submitted after the close of the scoping period) in *Summary of Public Scoping Comments on the Expanded Scope of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Alignment, Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV* (DIRS 181379-DOE 2007, all) and considered the content of all comments in determining the scope of this expanded NEPA analysis.

Many of the comments received were applicable to this expanded EIS, including the Mina rail corridor, and the review of the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors (Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS). Other comments related to the Repository SEIS (DOE/EIS-0250F-S1).

Table 1-1 summarizes the public scoping comments DOE received during both scoping periods held in 2004 and 2006, as they relate to corridor identification and evaluation.

1.5.3 TRIBAL INTERACTIONS MEETINGS

In 1987, DOE initiated the Native American Interaction Program to solicit input from and interact with tribes and organizations on the characterization of the Yucca Mountain Site and the possible construction and operation of a repository. These tribes and organizations—Southern Paiute; Western Shoshone; and Owens Valley Paiute and Shoshone people from Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah—have cultural and historic ties to both the Yucca Mountain area and to the larger region that includes portions of the Mina rail corridor as well as the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors.

Table 1-1. Public comments specific to this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS resulting from the 2004 and 2006 scoping periods (page 1 of 3).

Comment Issue	Scoping comment summary	DOE comment summary response
Basis of corridor selection	Commenters sought clarification for, or questioned the basis of, the DOE decision to select the Caliente corridor. Commenters also questioned the basis for not selecting the other corridors such as Valley Modified or Caliente Chalk-Mountain.	On December 29, 2003, DOE announced its preference for the Caliente corridor (68 FR 74951). In that announcement, the Department also announced the Carlin corridor as its secondary preference. On April 8, 2004, the Department issued a <i>Federal Register</i> Notice that documented the detailed bases for the rail corridor decision. In large part the decision was based on the preference to avoid and minimize crossing of private lands.
Scope of Rail Alignment EIS	Two commenters suggested that before completing the comparative analysis of impacts of the Caliente, Mina, and No-Action Alternatives, DOE should update and distribute in draft form its comparative analysis of all previously considered rail routes (Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified). This report should be the basis for development of the EIS and be a justification for inclusion or elimination of a particular route.	In its October 13, 2006, <i>Federal Register</i> Notice (71 FR 60484), DOE announced its intent to expand the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Alignment Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV. Part of the intended expanded scope of the EIS was to proceed with the review of the environmental analyses presented in the Yucca Mountain FEIS for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified corridors along with changes in the affected environment. As appropriate the environmental information and analyses were updated. This information is presented in Chapter 5 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS.
Carlin corridor	<p>A few commenters preferred the Carlin rail corridor to either the Mina or Caliente rail corridor because Carlin would be more protected and have less chance of sabotage.</p> <p>The EIS should address the concerns raised by Eureka County in its 2001 report on the Carlin rail corridor (see www.yuccamountain.org/impact_report/impact01.htm). Activities at Barrick Gold Mines' property in Crescent Valley have increased substantially since the Yucca Mountain FEIS was released. Other mining activities are occurring near Beowawe and it's possible that this part of Eureka County could one day rival the famous Carlin trend farther east near Elko.</p>	<p>The environmental information and analyses for the Carlin corridor have been reviewed and updated as appropriate. Based on these reviews and updates, the Department had found that for the most part, the environmental conditions and associated environmental impacts for each of the original corridors, including Carlin, remain unchanged from, or are substantially similar to, those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. A DOE alignment-level evaluation of potential impacts from possible sabotage indicated that such impacts would not be a discriminator in the selection of a rail alignment; and therefore, would not be a discriminator in the selection of a rail corridor. Potential impacts from possible sabotage would be the same for any corridor.</p> <p>DOE acquired the cited Eureka County report and factored the information provided into its review of the Carlin corridor. Changes as appropriate can be found in Section 5.2 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS. DOE noted that potential land use conflicts in the Carlin corridor have increased since publication of the Yucca Mountain FEIS.</p>
Jean corridor	One commenter preferred the Jean Corridor because it would be the least expensive to construct.	DOE reviewed and updated the environmental information and impact analyses reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, as appropriate. DOE found that potential land-use conflicts and air quality concerns have increased since the Department completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS conflicts.

Table 1-1. Public comments specific to this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS resulting from the 2004 and 2006 scoping periods (page 2 of 3).

Comment Issue	Scoping comment summary	DOE comment summary response
Valley Modified corridor	The EIS should consider substantial changes that have occurred elsewhere in Clark County relative to the Department's continued consideration of routes other than Mina and Caliente. Annexation of land by both the City of North Las Vegas and the City of Henderson, as well as privatization of BLM lands in the valley, have resulted in substantial real and planned changes since issuance of the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The development of the Ivanpah Airport in the southwestern part of Clark County should also be taken into consideration when evaluating both rail and truck routes.	DOE reviewed land-use changes for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors and updated that information. Section 5.4.1 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS reports updated land-use information for the Valley Modified rail corridor; the Ivanpah Airport is addressed under several resource categories.
Changes in land use in Las Vegas and Clark county since 2002	The EIS should consider the many land-use changes that have occurred in the Las Vegas Metropolitan area since the Yucca Mountain FEIS was released. For example, as of June 2006, there were 105 projects planned or being built within 1 mile of the existing Union Pacific Railroad, I-15, State Route 160, and the beltway. Within this area are 132,951 housing units and 33,368,223 square feet of commercial property.	DOE reviewed land-use changes for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors and updated that information. Section 5.4.1 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS reports updated land-use information for the Valley Modified rail corridor; the Ivanpah Airport is addressed under several resource categories.
Chalk Mountain corridor	Several commenters suggested that national security concerns by themselves should not have eliminated the Caliente Chalk-Mountain corridor.	In a letter to the U.S. Air Force (dated December 1, 2004), DOE eliminated from detailed study alignments within the Caliente rail corridor that would intersect the Nevada Test and Training Range because of concerns regarding military readiness testing and training activities. This letter was in response to a May 28, 2004, letter from the U.S. Air Force. DOE based its decision not to provide updates for the Caliente-Chalk Mountain rail corridor on the same rationale.

Table 1-1. Public comments specific to this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS resulting from the 2004 and 2006 scoping periods (page 3 of 3).

Comment Issue	Scoping comment summary	DOE comment summary response
Suggested new routes and routes eliminated in 2002	<p>Several commenters suggested new rail line routes to Yucca Mountain and alternatives to rail transport. One person suggested a new rail corridor originating from Baker, California, and extending through Death Valley Junction to Yucca Mountain. According to the commenter, this corridor would be shorter than the Mina rail corridor and easier to construct. Another commenter said that a rail route through the Tonopah Test Range would be reasonable considering that the Range will be closing in 2010. Another person suggested a rail route from Fallon southward through Gabbs Valley.</p> <p>Another person said that a route through the Nevada Test Site should be used, along with part of the Caliente corridor. One person questioned why the shortest distance to Yucca Mountain, via a 100-mile-long rail line through the Las Vegas Valley, was not being considered.</p> <p>One person suggested that all possible corridors to Yucca Mountain be considered in the EIS (such as one from Barstow, California, and Apex, Nevada), including those previously examined in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. One commenter requested that DOE study the Feather River rail line as an alternative to the Donner Pass rail line that passes through Reno.</p> <p>One commenter said that DOE should eliminate those routes that had already been eliminated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, and focus only on the Mina and Caliente rail corridors. According to this commenter, there is no reason for DOE to reconsider in this EIS its decision that the Caliente corridor is preferred to the other four corridors previously evaluated; to do so would add unnecessary cost and complexity to preparation of the ongoing EIS and delay its issuance.</p>	<p>Most of the routes suggested in these scoping comments were eliminated from consideration for reasons similar to those for eliminating routes considered in the 1990 <i>Preliminary Rail Access Study</i> (DIRS 104792-1990, all).</p> <p>Over the years, DOE has evaluated numerous rail corridor modes for transporting spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to Yucca Mountain. Before DOE prepared the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Department identified 10 potential rail line routes to Yucca Mountain (Valley, Arden, Crucero, Ludlow, Mina, Caliente, Carlin, Cherry Creek and Dike) in the 1990 <i>Preliminary Rail Access Study</i> (DIRS 104792-1990, all).</p> <p>Options within each route were developed wherever possible. The routes were chosen to maximize the use of federal lands, provide access to regional rail carriers, avoid obvious land-use conflicts, and meet current rail line engineering practices. After the development of these rail routes, Lincoln County and the City of Caliente identified three additional routes (identified as Lincoln County Routes A, B, and C).</p> <p>DOE evaluated the 10 rail line routes plus Lincoln County A, B, and C, for a total of 13 routes. In 1995 DOE reevaluated the routes in the <i>Nevada Potential Repository Preliminary Transportation Strategy, Study 1</i> (DIRS 104795-CRWMS M&O 1995, all) and in the second part of the study in 1996 (DIRS 101214-CRWMS M&O 1996, all). One new route, Valley Modified, was added in the 1995 study based on updated information from the Bureau of Land Management. Three additional alignments – Caliente-Chalk Mountain, Elgin/Rox, and Hancock Summit-were evaluated in the <i>Nevada Potential Repository Preliminary Assessment of the Caliente-Chalk Mountain Rail Corridor</i> (DIRS 132219- CRWMS M&O 1997, all).</p> <p>The evaluation reviewed each potential rail corridor to identify land-use issues and access to regional carriers. The evaluations compared other factors for the routes, including favorable topography and avoidance of lands withdrawn from public use by federal action. DOE eliminated the Valley, Arden, Crucero, Ludlow, Mina, Cherry Creek, Dike, Elgin/Rox, Hancock Summit, and Lincoln County A, B, and C rail routes from further study. In 1995 (DIRS 104795-CRWMS M&O 1995, all) and 1996 (DIRS 101214-CRWMS M&O 1996, all) studies DOE determined that the Mina and Cherry Creek rail corridors should be assigned a status of “Eliminated from Detailed Evaluation – Monitor.”</p> <p>For the most part, the environmental conditions and associated potential environmental impacts for each rail corridor remain unchanged from, or are substantially similar to, those considered in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. For these reasons, DOE concludes there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns that would warrant further consideration of these three rail corridors at the alignment level. DOE did not update the information and analysis for the Caliente-Chalk Mountain rail corridor.</p>

The Native American Interaction Program concentrates on the protection of cultural resources at Yucca Mountain and contributes to a government-to-government relationship with the tribes and organizations. Its purpose is to help DOE comply with various federal laws and regulations, including the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (42 U.S.C. 1996); the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 470aa et seq.); the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.); the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. 3001); the American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Government Policy; DOE Order 1230.2, American Indian and Tribal Government Policy; Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites, and Executive Order 13084, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments. These regulations and Executive Orders mandate the protection of archaeological sites and cultural items and require agencies to include American Indians and federally recognized tribes in discussions and interactions on major federal actions.

Initial ethnographic studies identified three tribal groups – the Southern Paiute, the Western Shoshone, and the Owens Valley Paiute and Shoshone – whose cultural heritage includes the Yucca Mountain region. Additional ethnographic efforts eventually led to the involvement of 17 tribes and organizations in the Yucca Mountain Project American Indian and cultural resource studies.

The 17 tribes and organizations have formed the Consolidated Group of Tribes and Organizations, which consists of tribal representatives who are responsible for presenting their respective tribal concerns and perspectives to DOE. A major priority of the Group has been the protection of cultural resources and environmental restoration at Yucca Mountain. Members of the Consolidated Group of Tribes and Organizations have participated in many ethnographic interviews and have provided DOE valuable insights into American Indian cultural and religious values and beliefs. These interactions have produced several reports that record the regional history of American Indian people and the interpretation of American Indian cultural resources in the Yucca Mountain region. On June 2, 2004, DOE met with the Consolidate Group of Tribes and Organizations to introduce the rail alignment project and learn of its members' concerns.

In October 2004, a group of designated tribal representatives participated with DOE representatives in a field reconnaissance trip along the proposed rail alignment, followed by a meeting with the consolidated group in late November 2004. Based on these efforts, these tribal representatives known as the American Indian Writers Subgroup, a subgroup of the Consolidated Group of Tribes and Organizations, prepared the American Indian Resource Document (DIRS 174205-Kane et al. 2005, all). This document provides insight into American Indian viewpoints and concerns regarding cultural resources along the Caliente rail alignment and long-term impacts of the DOE selection of a rail system to transport spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. This document is a supplement to the American Indian Writers Subgroup document produced in 1998 titled *American Indian Perspectives on the Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Project and the Repository Environmental Impact Statement* (DIRS 102043-AIWS 1998, all).

In July 2005, DOE held a tribal update meeting with the Consolidated Group of Tribes and Organizations. The rail alignment project and the document prepared by the American Indian Writers Subgroup were topics of discussion. In September 2005, DOE held a special meeting with the Group for discussions on the Environmental Assessment associated with a DOE request for the Public Land Order and associated regulatory actions. In April 2006, DOE again met with the American Indian Writers Subgroup for continued discussions and updates on the Caliente rail alignment. After each meeting the tribal representatives prepared a series of recommendations for DOE consideration. DOE received recommendations, categorized them, and assigned personnel to respond to the recommendations. On November 29, 2006, DOE met with the Group to present the proposed inclusion of the Mina rail corridor for analysis in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and in the Rail Alignment EIS and to provide an update on the ongoing analysis of the Caliente rail alignment.

DOE met with Walker River Paiute tribal representatives on several occasions in 2006 and 2007 to discuss their interest in allowing DOE to evaluate a potential rail corridor, the Mina rail corridor, which would cross the Walker River Paiute Reservation. Tribal members toured the Yucca Mountain Site and attended scoping meetings.

1.6 Relationship to Other Environmental Documents

On October 13, 2006, the Department announced its intent to prepare a Supplement to the Yucca Mountain FEIS (DOE/EIS-0250F-S1), consistent with the NEPA and the NWP, to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the current repository design and operational plans (71 *FR* 60490). The primary purpose of the Repository SEIS is to assist the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission in adopting, to the extent practicable, any EIS prepared pursuant to Section 114(f)(4) of the NWP. As stated in the Foreword to this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and the Rail Alignment EIS, the Repository SEIS supplements the Yucca Mountain FEIS in its entirety, except for those transportation-related elements that were eliminated from the Department's Proposed Action (such as the mostly legal-weight truck scenario) by the 2004 Record of Decision. Therefore, under the Repository SEIS Proposed Action, DOE would construct, operate and monitor, and eventually close a repository at Yucca Mountain.

During repository operations, most shipments of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste would arrive at the repository by rail, and in Nevada such shipments would be via a rail line constructed within either the Caliente or the Mina rail corridors. Accordingly, the Repository SEIS analyzes the potential environmental impacts from the construction, operation, and closure of the repository, and updates the analysis of the impacts of shipping most spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste by rail.

This Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS supplements the Yucca Mountain FEIS, to the extent that it analyzes the potential impacts of constructing and operating a rail line to connect the Yucca Mountain repository site to an existing rail line near Wabuska, Nevada (in the Mina rail corridor). This Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS analyzes the Mina rail corridor at a level of detail commensurate with that of the rail corridors analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. It also updates relevant information regarding the other rail corridors analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified) to identify any significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns.

The Rail Alignment EIS tiers from the broader corridor analysis in the Yucca Mountain FEIS and in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS. Under the Rail Alignment EIS Proposed Action, DOE analyzes the potential impacts of specific common segments and alternative segments within the Caliente and Mina rail corridors for the purpose of determining an alignment in which to construct and operate a railroad for shipments of spent nuclear fuel, high-level radioactive waste, and other materials from an existing rail line in Nevada to a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain.

The Repository SEIS, this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, and the Rail Alignment EIS are related to the extent that the potential transportation impacts associated with shipments to the repository are part of the total impacts associated with the Repository SEIS Proposed Action. Thus, the Repository SEIS incorporates by reference the rail alignment impact evaluations of the Rail Alignment EIS to ensure that the Repository SEIS considers the full scope of potential environmental impacts associated with its Proposed Action. Moreover, because the potential transportation impacts associated with shipments to the repository are part of the total impacts associated with the Repository SEIS Proposed Action, the Rail Alignment EIS considers potential impacts from constructing the repository as a reasonably foreseeable future action in its cumulative impacts analysis. To ensure consistency, the Repository SEIS, this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, and the Rail Alignment EIS use the same inventory of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste and the same number of rail shipments for analysis. Thus, the associated

occupational and public health and safety impacts within the Nevada rail corridors under consideration are the same in all three NEPA analyses. Furthermore, to promote conformity, in both EISs DOE used consistent analytical approaches to evaluate the various resource areas where appropriate.

A number of completed, in-preparation, or proposed DOE NEPA-related documents relate to this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS. In addition, other federal agencies have prepared related documents. Consistent with Council on Environmental Quality regulations that implement the procedural requirements of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508), DOE has used information from these documents in its analysis and has incorporated this material by reference as appropriate throughout this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS.

Table 1-2 lists these documents.

Table 1-2. NEPA documentation related to the proposed rail corridor (page 1 of 3).

Document	Relationship to this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS
DOE documents	
<i>Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Nevada Test Site and Off-Site Locations in the State of Nevada.</i> Las Vegas, Nevada: U.S. Department of Energy, Nevada Field Office. 1996 (DOE/EIS-0243).	Examines the impacts from the continued operations of the Nevada Test Site.
<i>Supplement Analysis for the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Nevada Test Site and Off-site Locations in the State of Nevada.</i> U.S. Department of Energy, Nevada Field Office (DOE/EIS-0243-SA-01)	Documents the affected environment in 2002 and discusses any changes from the 1996 site-wide EIS (DOE/EIS-0243). Provides the status of new programs as of 2002.
<i>Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada.</i> U.S. Department of Energy (DOE/EIS-0250F).	Examines the impacts of construction, operation, monitoring, and eventual closure of a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain. Examines the potential impacts of transporting spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste nationally and in the State of Nevada.
<i>Notice of Preferred Nevada Rail Corridor</i> (68 FR 74951, December 29, 2003).	Announces the Caliente rail corridor, from the five rail corridors studied in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, as the DOE preferred rail corridor in which to construct a rail line.
<i>Record of Decision on Mode of Transportation and Nevada Rail Corridor for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada</i> (69 FR 18557, April 8, 2004).	Selects the mostly rail scenario analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS as the mode of transportation on a national basis and within the State of Nevada. Selects the Caliente rail corridor for alignment, construction, and operation of a proposed railroad to Yucca Mountain.
<i>Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Alignment, Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV</i> (68 FR 18565, April 8, 2004).	Announces DOE intent to prepare an EIS for the alignment, construction, and operation of a railroad for the shipment of spent nuclear fuel, high-level radioactive waste, and other materials from a site near Caliente, Lincoln County, Nevada to a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada.
<i>Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Withdrawal of Public Lands within and Surrounding the Caliente Corridor.</i> U.S. Department of Energy, (DOE/EA-1545).	Examines the environmental impacts of withdrawing public lands from surface and mineral entry for up to 20 years to allow evaluation of the land for the proposed rail corridor.
<i>Amended Notice of Intent to Expand the Scope of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Alignment, Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV</i> (71 FR 60484, October 13, 2006).	Announced DOE intent to expand the scope of the Rail Alignment EIS to include the Mina rail alignment.

Table 1-2. NEPA documentation related to the proposed rail corridor (page 2 of 3).

Document	Relationship to this Yucca Mountain Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS
DOE documents (continued)	
<i>Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada</i> (DOE/EIS-0250F-S1).	Updates the Yucca Mountain FEIS and examines the impacts of construction, operation, monitoring, and eventual closure of a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain. Examines the potential impacts of transporting spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste nationally.
<i>Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Infrastructure Improvements for the Yucca Mountain Project, Nevada</i> , U.S. Department of Energy (71 FR 38391, July 6, 2006).	DOE released a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) in 2006 that evaluated several proposed improvements to infrastructure at the Yucca Mountain Repository Site and adjacent portions of the Nevada Test Site. Proposed infrastructure improvements that were analyzed in the Draft EA are being analyzed in the Yucca Mountain Repository Supplemental EIS. Hence, a Final Infrastructure EA will not be published.
<i>Notice of Intent to Prepare a Supplement to the Stockpile Stewardship and Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement-Complex 2030</i> (71 FR 61731, October 19, 2006).	Announced DOE intent to prepare a supplement to the Stockpile Stewardship and Management Programmatic EIS to analyze the environmental impacts from continued transformation of the United States' nuclear weapons complex.
<i>Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal of Greater-Than-Class-C Low-Level Radioactive Waste</i> (72 FR 40135, July 23, 2007).	Announced DOE intent to prepare an EIS to evaluate disposal options for Greater-Than-Class-C low-level radioactive waste.
<i>Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement-Designation of Energy Corridors on Federal Land in 11 Western States</i> , (70 FR 56647, September 28, 2005).	DOE is preparing an EIS as a co-lead agency with the BLM and other cooperating agencies to evaluate the impacts of designating corridors in the Western U.S. for use as electric transmission, communications, and natural gas transmission corridors. Potential corridors cross Nevada.
Other agency documents	
<i>Proposed Tonopah Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement</i> (DIRS 101523-BLM 1994, all).	Examines implementation of BLM management goals and actions in the Tonopah area.
<i>Record of Decision for the Approved Las Vegas Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement</i> . (DIRS 176043-BLM 1998, all).	Examines implementation of BLM management goals and actions in the Las Vegas area.
<i>Notice of Proposed Withdrawal and Opportunity for Public Meeting; Nevada</i> (68 FR 74965, December 29, 2003).	Announced the BLM receipt of a request from DOE to withdraw public land in the Caliente corridor from surface and mineral entry for a period of 20 years to evaluate the land for the potential construction, operation, and maintenance of a rail corridor for the transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in Nevada. Segregates the land from surface and mineral entry for up to 2 years while various studies and analyses are made to support a final decision on the withdrawal application.
<i>Draft - Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Ely District</i> (DIRS 174518-BLM 2005, all).	Examines implementation of BLM resource management plans, actions, and goals in the Ely area.
<i>Final Environmental Impact Statement: Weber Dam Repair and Modification Project</i> , (DIRS 182302-Bureau of Indian Affairs 2005, all).	Examines potential environmental impacts to the Walker River from repair and modification of the Weber Dam.

Table 1-2. NEPA documentation related to the proposed rail corridor (page 3 of 3).

Document	Relationship to this Yucca Mountain Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS
<i>Public Land Order No. 7653; Withdrawal of Public Lands for the Department of Energy to Protect the Caliente Rail Corridor, Nevada (70 FR 76854, December 28, 2005).</i>	Withdraws public lands within the Caliente rail corridor from surface and mineral entry, subject to valid existing rights, for 10 years to allow DOE to evaluate the lands for the potential construction, operation, and maintenance of a rail corridor.
<i>Notice of Proposed Withdrawal and Opportunity for Public Meeting; Nevada (72 FR 1235, January 10, 2007).</i>	Announced BLM receipt of an application from DOE to withdraw public lands from surface and mineral entry through December 27, 2015, to evaluate the lands for the potential construction, operation, and maintenance of a rail line. This covers the Mina rail alignment and segments of the Caliente rail alignment not covered in Public Land Order No. 7653. Segregates the land from surface and mineral entry for up to 2 years while various studies and analyses are made to support a final decision on the withdrawal application.
<i>Notice of Intent to "Prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Associated Environmental Impact Statement for the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex" (67 FR 54229, August 21, 2002).</i>	The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the Desert National Wildlife Refuge in Southern Nevada. Part of the Valley Modified rail corridor would pass near the refuge.

- a. BLM = Bureau of Land Management; DOE = U.S. Department of Energy; EA = environmental assessment; EIS = environmental impact statement; FEIS = final environmental impact statement; FR = *Federal Register*.

2. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

This chapter describes the Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternative analyzed in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS. Section 2.2 describes the Proposed Action. Section 2.3 describes the No-Action Alternative. Section 2.4 summarizes the potential environmental impacts under the Proposed Action for the Mina rail corridor.

Glossary terms are shown in ***bold italics***.

2.1 Introduction

This Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS analyzes a ***Proposed Action*** and a ***No-Action Alternative***. It supplements the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (Yucca Mountain FEIS; DOE/EIS-0250F; DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, all), to the extent that it analyzes the potential impacts of constructing and operating a railroad to connect the Yucca Mountain Site to an existing rail line near Wabuska, Nevada, within the Mina rail corridor. Under the Proposed Action, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE or the Department) has analyzed in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS the Mina rail corridor at a level of detail commensurate with that of the rail corridors (Caliente, Caliente-Chalk Mountain, Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified) analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. This Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS further provides updated information on the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors (see Chapter 5 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS). DOE eliminated the Caliente-Chalk Mountain rail corridor, which would cross part of the Nevada Test and Training Range, from further consideration because of U.S. Air Force concerns that a rail line would interfere with military mission activities (see Section 1.3 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS).

Council on Environmental Quality and DOE regulations that implement the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) require consideration of the alternative of no action. Under the No-Action Alternative in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE would not select a rail alignment within the Mina rail corridor for the construction and operation of a railroad. As such, the No-Action Alternative provides a basis for comparison to the Proposed Action.

This Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS also analyzes a Shared-Use Option for the Mina rail corridor under which DOE would allow commercial shippers to use the railroad for shipments of general freight.

2.2 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS is to construct and operate a railroad within the Mina rail corridor to connect the Yucca Mountain repository to an existing rail line near Wabuska, Nevada. The purpose of this railroad would be to transport, in Nevada, spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste and other materials for repository constructions and operations to the Yucca Mountain Site.

The Proposed Action includes construction and operation of a railroad and the infrastructure necessary to support the construction and operation of a railroad within the Mina rail corridor. Construction would occur primarily within the rail corridor right-of-way and would require obtaining water, ballast, subballast, steel for bridges, concrete ties, and rail. DOE would first construct a rail roadbed and then track construction would occur. The rail roadbed would form the base upon which the ballast, concrete

ties, and rail would be laid. Track construction would include the placement of concrete ties, rail, and ballast on top of the rail roadbed and establishing power and communication systems. DOE would also need to construct bridges, place *culverts*, and create *at-grade* and *grade-separated crossings* along the rail line.

In this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE analyzes construction of a rail line in the Mina rail corridor. During the construction and operations phases, certain support facilities and access features (for example, a staging yard and access roads) would be needed, and those are addressed insofar as information is available for this corridor-level analysis. However, DOE does not consider impacts from construction and operations support facilities a discriminator at the corridor level. A detailed analysis of construction and operations support facilities, including their locations, is provided in the Rail Alignment EIS.

On April 8, 2004 (69 FR 18557), the Department issued a *Record of Decision* announcing its selection, both nationally and in the State of Nevada, of the mostly rail scenario analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS as the primary means of transporting spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to the repository. In the same Record of Decision, the Department also selected the Caliente rail corridor from several corridors considered in the Yucca Mountain FEIS as the corridor in which to study possible alignments for a rail line. The Proposed Action in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS does not change the Department's decision to select the mostly rail scenario nor the selection of the Caliente rail corridor in which to study possible alignments for a rail line.

TERMS RELATED TO THE PROPOSED ACTION IN THIS NEVADA RAIL CORRIDOR SEIS

Rail corridor – A strip of land 400 meters (0.25 mile) wide through which DOE would identify an alignment for the construction of a railroad in Nevada to a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain.

Rail alignment – A strip of land less than 400 meters (0.25 mile) wide through which the location of a rail line would be identified. In the Rail Alignment EIS, the location of a rail line within a rail corridor.

Option – In the Yucca Mountain FEIS the terms for describing separate routes within a corridor were alternates, variations and options. For this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, only option is used and is applied more generally; option refers to a strip of land from one point along a corridor to another point on the same corridor that provides a different route.

Common corridor segment - Geographic region for which a single route has been identified.

2.2.1 MINA RAIL CORRIDOR

The Mina rail corridor is about 450 kilometers (280 miles) in length; however, construction of new rail line would range between about 386 kilometers (240 miles) and 409 kilometers (254 miles) because the corridor includes existing Department of Defense rail line between Wabuska and the Hawthorne Army Depot in Hawthorne, Nevada (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p. 5). Figure 2-1 shows the Mina rail corridor and its options.

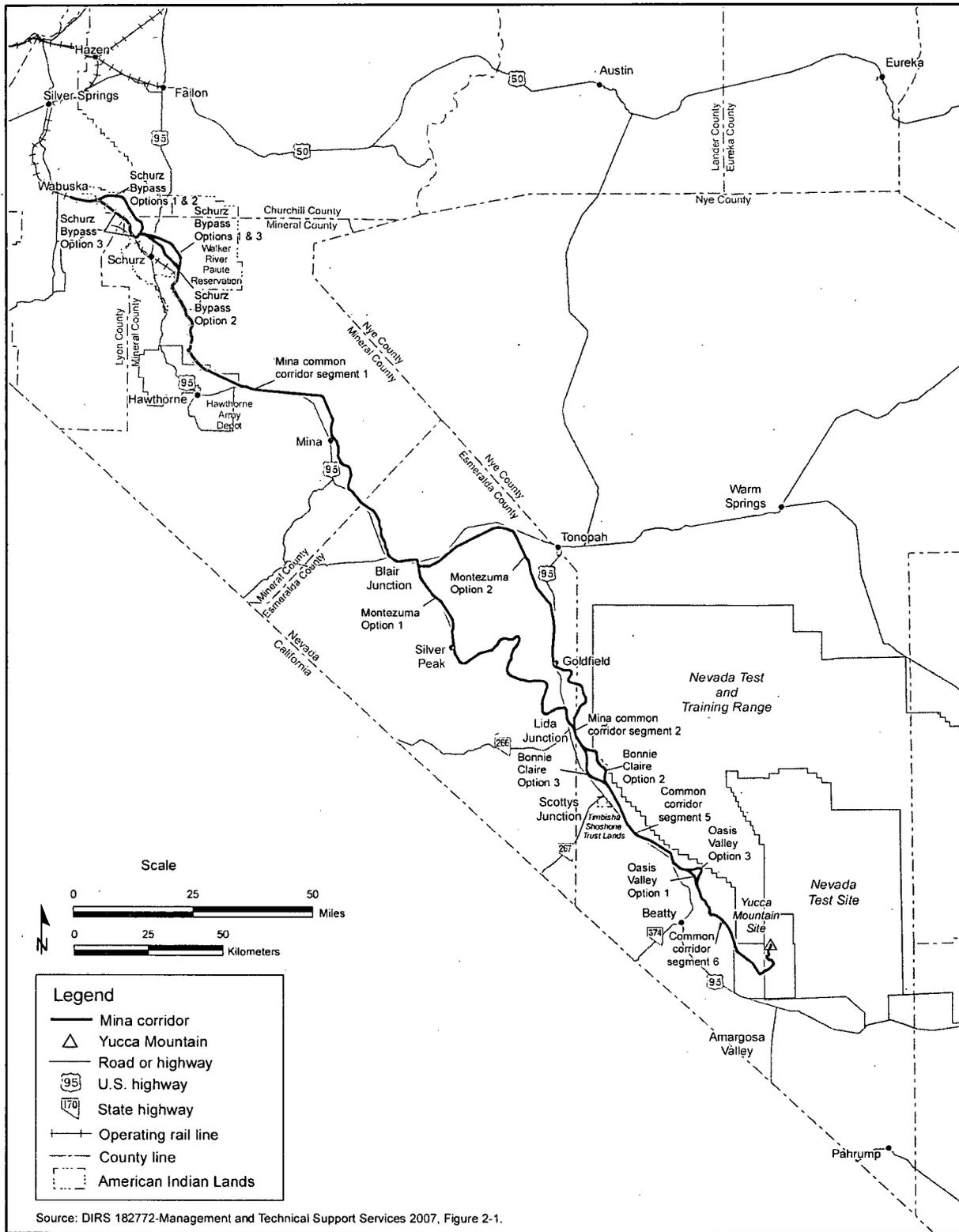


Figure 2-1. Mina rail corridor and options (pre-scoping, October 2006).

In the summer of 2006, DOE initiated a study to consider the feasibility of the Mina rail corridor and to identify specific common corridor segments and associated preliminary options (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, all). In this feasibility study the Department identified rail line options on the Walker River Paiute Reservation to bypass Schurz, around the Montezuma Range, north of Scottys Junction (referred to as Bonnie Claire), and in Oasis Valley.

The Mina rail corridor originates at an existing rail line near Wabuska, Nevada, where it proceeds southeasterly through Hawthorne, to Blair Junction, and then on to Lida Junction. The construction of the new rail line from Hawthorne south would follow an abandoned rail line nearly to Yucca Mountain. At Lida Junction, the rail corridor trends southeasterly through Oasis Valley before turning north-northeast to Yucca Mountain. Sections 2.2.1.1 through 2.2.1.9 describe the Mina rail corridor common corridor segments and options.

2.2.1.1 Department of Defense Branchline

The Mina rail corridor would begin near Wabuska, Nevada, east of the Fort Churchill Siding on the Department of Defense rail line. The rail corridor proceeds southeast to a point about 29 kilometers (18 miles) northwest of the Town of Schurz. The Department of Defense Branchline is about 8 kilometers (5 miles) long (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p. 9). The rail corridor then crosses the Walker River Paiute Reservation, along one of three options that would bypass the town of Schurz.

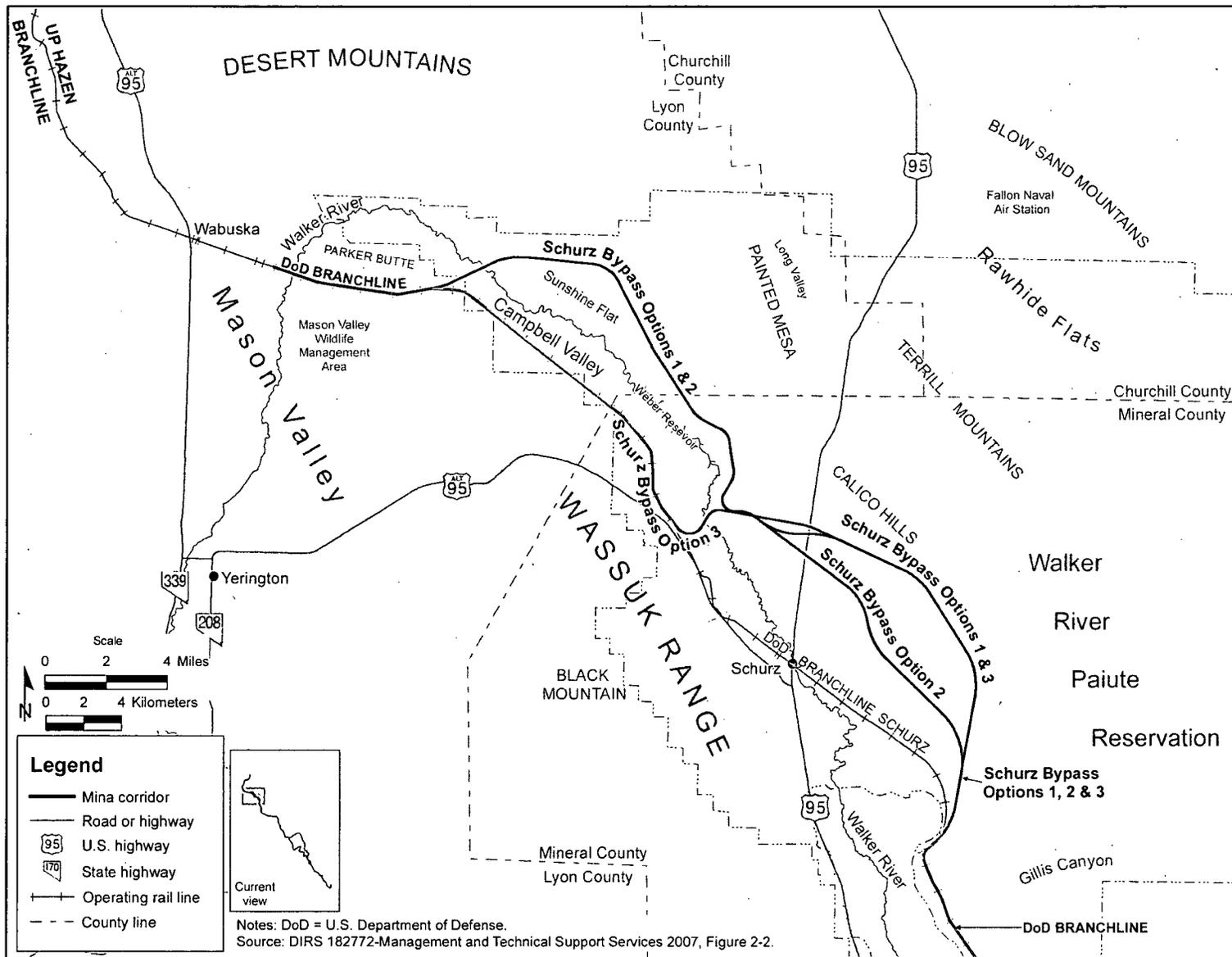
2.2.1.2 Schurz Bypass Options

A May 2006 letter from the Tribal Council for the Walker River Paiute Tribe (DIRS 182775-Williams 2006, all) indicated that if DOE were to build a new rail line through the Reservation, the Tribe would prefer that the rail line avoid the town of Schurz. At present, an existing rail line travels through the middle of town. In response to the Tribe's letter, DOE identified three options to bypass Schurz, as shown in Figure 2-2. All the Schurz bypass options would cross the Walker River and the Walker River Paiute Reservation.

Schurz bypass option 1 would begin at the existing Department of Defense Branchline about 29 kilometers (18 miles) northwest of Schurz and pass along the eastern side of Sunshine Flat. From there, it would pass east of Weber Reservoir and cross U.S. Highway 95 about 8 kilometers (5 miles) north of the intersection of U.S. Highway 95 and Alternate U.S. Highway 95. Schurz bypass 1 would be about 51 kilometers (32 miles) long and would reconnect with the Department of Defense Branchline about 13 kilometers (8 miles) south of Schurz (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, pp. 9 and 27).

Schurz bypass option 2 would begin at the existing Department of Defense Branchline at the same point as Schurz bypass option 1. From there, it would pass east of Weber Reservoir and cross U.S. Highway 95 about 6.4 kilometers (4 miles) north of the intersection of Highway 95 and Alternate U.S. Highway 95. From there, it would trend to the southeast but stay to the east of Schurz and west of the location of Schurz bypass option 1 until it rejoined the existing Department of Defense Branchline about 13 kilometers (8 miles) south of Schurz. Schurz bypass option 2 would be about 50 kilometers (31 miles) long (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, pp. 9 and 27).

Schurz bypass option 3 would begin at the Department of Defense Branchline about 9.7 kilometers (6 miles) northwest of Schurz. It would cross U.S. Highway 95 about 8 kilometers (5 miles) north of the intersection of U.S. Highway 95 and Alternate U.S. Highway 95, at which point it would continue southeast to a point where it would rejoin the existing Department of Defense Branchline about 13 kilometers (8 miles) south of Schurz. Schurz bypass option 3 would be about 50 kilometers (31 miles) long (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, pp. 9 and 27).



PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Figure 2-2. Schurz bypass options (pre-scoping, October 2006).

2.2.1.3 Common Corridor Segment 1

Common corridor segment 1 would begin north of Hawthorne and would trend southeast before turning east at U.S. Highway 95. It would trend east along U.S. Highway 95 through Soda Springs Valley for approximately 40 kilometers (25 miles). Continuing to parallel U.S. Highway 95, the rail line would cross State Route 361 and turn south for approximately 64 kilometers (40 miles). It would pass Luning and Mina along U.S. Highway 95. The rail line would then turn east before crossing U.S. Highway 95 in the area of Blair Junction and continuing for about 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) before joining the selected Montezuma options. Common corridor segment 1 would be approximately 160 kilometers (92 miles) long, which includes 21 miles of existing Department of Defense rail line (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, pp. 9 and 27).

2.2.1.4 Montezuma Options

Montezuma option 1 would depart Common corridor segment 1 just southeast of Blair Junction. It would trend roughly southeast along State Route 265 passing to the east of Silver Peak in Clayton Valley. It would then turn to the northwest through Clayton Valley. It would then trend south between Clayton Ridge on the west and Montezuma Peak on the east before turning east, passing to the south of Montezuma Peak. The rail alignment would again turn roughly south, traveling to the west of the Goldfield Hills. It would then travel northwest, cross U.S. Highway 95, and turn south before joining Common corridor segment 2 near Lida Junction. Montezuma option 1 would be approximately 120 kilometers (73 miles) long (DIRS 180222-Nevada Rail Partners 2006, pp. 10 and 27).

Montezuma option 2 would depart Common corridor segment 1 just southeast of Blair Junction. It would trend northeast just south of U.S. Highway where it would follow an abandoned rail *roadbed* of the former Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad to north of Lone Mountain. Northeast of Lone Mountain, it would turn south into Montezuma Valley and run south before turning east and crossing U.S. Highway 95 south of Goldfield. It would then trend south before joining Common corridor segment 2 near Lida Junction. Montezuma option 2 would be approximately 120 kilometers (74 miles) long (DIRS 180222-Nevada Rail Partners 2006, pp. 10 and 27).

2.2.1.5 Common Corridor Segment 2

Common corridor segment 2 would begin at the end of the selected Montezuma option and run roughly southeast as a single route for about 3 kilometers (2 miles) before reaching the Bonnie Claire area. Common corridor segment 2 would be approximately 3 kilometers long (DIRS 180222-Nevada Rail Partners 2006, pp. 10 and 27).

2.2.1.6 Bonnie Claire Options

DOE is considering two options in the Bonnie Claire area, Bonnie Claire 2 and 3. The Department did not evaluate Bonnie Claire option 1 because it would cross Timbisha Shoshone Trust Lands (see Appendix C). Bonnie Claire option 2 would begin about 8 kilometers (5 miles) north of Stonewall Pass and trend east toward the Nevada Test and Training Range for about 5 kilometers (3 miles) before turning south for an additional 18 kilometers (11 miles). Bonnie Claire option 2 would generally follow the Nevada Test and Training Range boundary and end in Sarcobatus Flats north of Scottys Junction near the intersection of State Route 267 and U.S. Highway 95. Bonnie Claire option 2 would be approximately 19 kilometers (12 miles) long (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, pp. 10 and 27).

Bonnie Claire option 3 would begin about 8 kilometers (5 miles) north of Stonewall Pass. It would trend generally south, parallel to U.S. Highway 95 to the east. Bonnie Claire option 3 would end in Sarcobatus Flats north of Scottys Junction near the intersection of State Route 267 and U.S. Highway 95. Bonnie

Claire option 3 would be approximately 19 kilometers (12 miles) long (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, pp. 11 and 27).

2.2.1.7 Common Corridor Segment 5

Common corridor segment 5 would begin approximately 4 kilometers (2 miles) north of Scottys Junction and trend generally southeast through the Sarcobatus Flat area. Common corridor segment 5 would end approximately 6 kilometers (4 miles) north of Springdale, where it would connect to one of the selected Oasis Valley options. Common corridor segment 5 would be approximately 40 kilometers (25 miles) long (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p. 11).

2.2.1.8 Oasis Valley Options

DOE is considering two options in the Oasis Valley area, Oasis Valley 1 and 3. The Department did not evaluate Oasis Valley option 2 because the option's engineering factors and environmental and land-use features are similar to those for Oasis Valley option 1 (see Appendix C). Oasis Valley option 1 would begin about 3.2 kilometers (2 miles) north of Oasis Mountain, and run southeast. It would be approximately 9.7 kilometers (6 miles) long (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p 11).

Oasis Valley option 3 would begin about 3.2 kilometers (2 miles) north of Oasis Mountain, and run generally east and then south before it crossed Oasis Valley farther to the east than Oasis Valley option 1. Oasis Valley option 3 would be about 14 kilometers (9 miles) long (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p 11).

2.2.1.9 Common Corridor Segment 6

Common corridor segment 6 would begin about 3 kilometers (2 miles) east of U.S. Highway 95. Common corridor segment 6 would trend generally southeast for 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Oasis Valley to Beatty Wash. It would then turn north near the southern end of Busted Butte and then trend generally north, terminating at the Yucca Mountain Site. Common corridor segment 6 would be approximately 51 kilometers (32 miles) long (DIRS 180222-Nevada Rail Partners 2006, p. 11).

2.2.2 SHARED-USE OPTION

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Department considered a Shared-Use Option as reasonably foreseeable and evaluated that option under cumulative impacts. For this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, the Department considers the Shared-Use option under the Proposed Action.

Construction and operation of a rail line in the Mina rail corridor could provide an option for shared use and operation of commercial rail service to serve communities along the corridor. The presence of a rail line could influence further development and land use in the corridor. The Shared-Use Option would not require any changes in design to that described for the Proposed Action in this Nevada rail corridor SEIS. However, shared use would require design and construction of additional commercial sidings and facilities to provide access and operational capabilities for commercial shippers. Trains carrying commercial shipments would be separate from trains carrying spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.

2.2.3 OVERVIEW OF DESIGN EVOLUTION

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS and in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS and Rail Alignment EIS, DOE based its rail corridor design and associated construction and operations plans on standard railroad industry practices and in consideration of applicable regulations. Since issuing the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE has advanced its proposed design and associated plans to determine an alignment for the construction and

operation of a railroad within the Caliente rail corridor (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, all). These current design and construction and operations plans, which meet standard industry practices and objectives, have advanced from those of the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The following engineering design details and associated operations plans for the Caliente rail alignment have been used in developing the Mina rail corridor for purposes of evaluating the potential environmental impacts from constructing and operating a railroad from Wabuska, Nevada, to Yucca Mountain.

- More detailed aerial mapping and contour analysis of the Caliente rail corridor and its options
- Corridor options to further avoid areas of environmental concern
- Use of material excavated from one area within the corridor to provide subballast for other areas; the use of any excess for widening the rail roadbed or development of a service road, thereby reducing the need for spoils areas
- Final grading requirements of slopes, installation of rock-fall protection devices, replacement of topsoil, revegetation and installation of other permanent erosion control systems, and an adjacent maintenance road within the corridor
- Changes to design criteria to now include a maximum horizontal curvature of 6 degrees with 2 percent compensated curves, use of 62-kilogram (136 lbs) rail and 30 centimeters (12 inches) of ballast, and a 9.4-meter (31-foot) top of cross section
- Use of a centralized train control signal system (monitoring equipment, signals, communications equipment) for train operations
- An increase in the total number of trains of up to 17 trains per week during the operations phase
- An operations period of up to 50 years
- More detailed design of certain facilities that would interface with the Union Pacific Railroad near Caliente, Nevada
- The average width land disturbed is 100 meters (325 feet) within the corridor based on conceptual rail alignment engineering and construction design (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, all)

DOE analyzed the construction and operations of a rail line within the Mina rail corridor. Where details regarding supporting facilities within the Mina rail corridor are known (staging yards, maintenance roads), they were analyzed in the appropriate resource area. Regardless of where in the document they are analyzed or considered, supporting facilities are not considered a discriminator at the corridor level. A detailed analysis of supporting facilities, including locations, is done at the alignment level in the Rail Alignment EIS.

2.2.4 RAIL LINE CONSTRUCTION IN THE MINA RAIL CORRIDOR

Unless otherwise indicated, all construction activities would occur inside the rail line *construction right-of-way* (nominally 150 meters [500 feet] on either side of the centerline of the rail alignment, for a *nominal* width of 300 meters [1,000 feet]). The total construction *footprint* would be approximately 140 square kilometers (35,000 acres), but would vary depending on the corridor options selected. However, based on land disturbance computations from the Air Quality Emission Factors and Socio-Economic Input Caliente Rail Corridor (DIRS 180921-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, all), DOE used an average width of the Caliente rail alignment of 100 meters (325 feet) to estimate land disturbance for the Mina rail corridor at 41 square kilometers (10,000 acres) (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-10).

DOE would implement *best management practices* during the entire construction process, such as dust suppression and the use of silt fencing to control soil erosion during construction activities.

DOE anticipates that it would take a minimum of 4 years, and possibly up to 10 years, to construct the railroad in the Mina rail corridor. Construction would begin with the procurement of concrete ties and rail for track construction and steel for bridge construction. DOE would start constructing major bridges, culverts, and grade-separated crossings before other infrastructure because they would take longer to construct (DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, Section 7.0).

Water, *subballast*, *ballast*, steel for bridges, concrete ties, and rail would be required for rail line construction.

Approximately 90 percent of the water that would be used during construction would be used for earthwork compaction and control of excavation dust (DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, pp. 9 and 10).

Ballast is the coarse rock that is placed under the railroad tracks to support the railroad ties and improve drainage along the rail line.

Subballast is a layer of crushed gravel that is used to separate the ballast and roadbed for the purpose of load distribution and drainage.

Approximately 4.5 metric tons of subballast per meter (1.5 tons of subballast per foot) of track construction would be required. The Department would obtain subballast from materials excavated during rail roadbed construction, or from existing *borrow sites* in the rail corridor (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-3).

Approximately 5.1 metric tons of ballast per meter (1.7 tons of ballast per foot) of track construction would be needed along the rail line. Approximately one concrete tie for every 0.61 meter (2 feet) of track construction would be needed along the entire length of the rail line. DOE would obtain rail from commercial sources and weld it into 440-meter (1,440-foot) strings at a portable welding plant located within the construction right-of-way (DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, pp. 3-1 to 3-10).

DOE would install grade crossings where the rail line would cross a roadway. In places where the rail line would cross a highway (for example, U.S. Highway 95), the routes would be grade-separated. Where the rail line would cross paved public roadways, the routes would cross at-grade and active warning devices, such as flashing lights and gates, would be installed. Where the rail line would cross unpaved roads, DOE would install passive warning devices such as crossbucks and stop signs (DIRS 180923-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 6-9).

The rail roadbed would be constructed along the centerline of the rail line. Construction of the rail roadbed would require clearing, excavating earth and rock on previously undisturbed land and removing and stockpiling topsoil where needed. Construction would require both cuts and fills (DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, Section 2.0).

During rail line construction, DOE would install an unpaved road parallel to the rail line inside the construction right-of-way. The Department could leave this access road in place to provide additional access to the rail line for maintenance. Because maintenance would be performed using on-rail vehicles or trains, no bridges would need to be constructed for access roads (DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, Section 4.5).

DOE would construct *sidings* approximately every 40 kilometers (25 miles) so that trains running in opposite directions could pass one another. This spacing would result in approximately 10 to 12 sidings for the rail line. Sidings would be placed inside the *operations right-of-way* (nominally 61 meters [200 feet] on either side of the rail line centerline) (DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-3).

The Department would build a distribution line for electric power along the entire length of the corridor. Power to the distribution system would be fed from locations where existing high-voltage transmission lines intersected the corridor (DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 4-6).

DOE would install a communications system utilizing a fiber-optic communications cable, very-high-frequency (commonly called VHF) radio, satellite radios, and possibly satellite or cellular telephones. The Department would position communications towers at the beginning, end, and approximately every 16 to 32 kilometers (10 to 20 miles) along the rail line. These towers would be approximately 23 to 30 meters (75 to 100 feet) tall and would enable very-high-frequency radio communication between rail line personnel working in remote locations along the rail line. DOE would install 4.6-meter (15-foot)-tall *wayside signals* along the rail line to control train movements (DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, pp. 2-2 and 2-3).

The final step in the construction of the railroad would be the commissioning of train operations. Each time a section of the track was completed and the signals and communications systems installed and tested, integrated testing would commence, utilizing train equipment to validate that all components were operating as designed. Successful testing would result in final jurisdictional inspection and commissioning, by the appropriate regulatory authority, of the rail line for normal operations (DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 7-4).

2.2.5 RAILROAD OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

The rail line would be expected to operate for up to 50 years for the shipment of spent nuclear fuel, high-level radioactive waste, and other materials to the repository at Yucca Mountain. DOE would operate and maintain the rail line in accordance with applicable regulations, guidelines, and standards of the Federal Railroad Administration, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the Association of American Railroads.

2.2.5.1 Railroad Operations

Railroad operations would begin immediately after construction was completed. The railroad would operate dedicated trains carrying spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste and trains carrying other materials, which could include construction materials, diesel fuel, and repository equipment. During the operations phase, DOE would use the rail line to transport approximately 9,500 railcars, each with a cask of spent nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste, and approximately 29,000 railcars of construction materials, diesel fuel, and supplies for the repository and facilities. The frequency of trains going to the repository would vary slightly, but would average 17 one-way trains or 8.5 round trips per week (derived from DIRS 175036-BSC 2005, Table 4.2).

Union Pacific Railroad trains carrying casks of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste would arrive in Nevada via the Union Pacific Railroad Mainline, travel to Wabuska via the Union Pacific branchline, and then proceed to a staging yard.

The dedicated cask trains on the rail line would be assembled at the staging yard and would consist of two or three 4,000-horsepower diesel-electric locomotives followed by a *buffer car*; one to five *cask cars* followed by another buffer car; and one *escort car* carrying security personnel. *Naval spent nuclear fuel* trains would typically include two or three locomotives, 1 to 12 cask cars, a buffer car in front of the first cask car and after the last cask car, and one to two escort cars. Trains would depart a staging yard and proceed along the rail line to the Yucca Mountain Site. Trains would require

A **buffer car** is a railcar that would be placed at the front of a cask train between the locomotive and the first cask car and at the back of the train between the last cask car and the escort car.

A **cask car** is a railcar that would be used to transport a cask of spent nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste.

An **escort car** is a passenger car that would carry security personnel.

fewer than 10 hours for the trip between a staging yard and the Yucca Mountain Repository (DIRS 180923-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 5-1). After casks were unloaded at the site, the empty casks would be returned to service.

Freight trains carrying construction and other materials would arrive in Nevada via the Union Pacific Railroad Mainline, travel to Wabuska via the Union Pacific branchline, and then proceed to a nearby staging yard. From a staging yard, locomotives would transport the materials along the rail line to the repository.

A railroad control center, in coordination with a national transportation operations center, would control the operations along the rail line. DOE would use a satellite-based transportation tracking and communication system to track rail shipments of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to the repository (DIRS 180923-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 6-6).

2.2.5.2 Railroad Maintenance

Maintenance of the rail line would be an ongoing process that would be concurrent with the operations phase of the railroad. The primary maintenance and inspection functions would include track inspection; signal testing and inspection; minor rail, tie, and turnout replacement; and routine ballasting and surfacing tasks. Maintenance activities would be scheduled to minimize the impact on planned train movements (DIRS 180923-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, Section 10.0).

Maintenance crews would access the work area using *hi-rail trucks* (vehicles capable of traveling on roads or on railroad tracks), rail mounted machinery (tamper, track liner, etc), or maintenance trains. During rail line construction, DOE would construct unpaved roads parallel to the rail line inside the construction right-of-way. The Department could leave these access roads in place to provide additional access to the rail line for maintenance.

Following the final shipment of spent nuclear fuel, high-level radioactive waste, and other materials to the repository, DOE could abandon the rail line or could make it available to local communities or the private sector for other uses (DIRS 180923-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, Section 10.0).

2.3 No-Action Alternative

Council on Environmental Quality and DOE regulations that implement the procedural requirements of NEPA require consideration of the alternative of no action. Under the No-Action Alternative in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE would not construct and operate a railroad within the Mina rail corridor from Wabuska to Yucca Mountain. Therefore, the No-Action Alternative provides a basis for comparison to the Proposed Action.

2.4 Summary of Potential Environmental Impacts for the Mina Rail Corridor

Sections 2.4.1 through 2.4.12 summarize the potential environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of a railroad in the Mina rail corridor. Table 2-1 provides an overview of these potential impacts for the Mina rail corridor.

Table 2-1. Potentially affected resources – Mina rail corridor (page 1 of 2).

Resource	Impact/indicator
<i>Land use</i>	
Disturbed land ^a	9,000 to 10,000 acres (37 to 41 square kilometers), depending on rail corridor option
<i>Land ownership/management authority</i>	
Private land	400 to 670 acres (1.6 to 2.7 square kilometers) (1 to 2 percent of total ownership/authority)
Tribal trust lands and reservations	3,100 to 5,100 acres (12.5 to 20.5 square kilometers) (5 to 12 percent of total ownership/authority)
BLM-administered land	32,600 to 33,100 acres (132.1 to 133.9 square kilometers) (80 to 85 percent of total ownership/authority)
Department of Defense land (Hawthorne Army Depot)	1,200 acres (4.7 square kilometers) (3 percent of total ownership/authority)
DOE land (Nevada Test Site)	1,300 acres (5.3 square kilometers) (3 percent of total ownership/authority)
<i>Air quality</i>	
National Ambient Air Quality Standards attainment status	Areas in attainment or unclassifiable for air quality standards; small impacts from construction and operations
<i>Hydrology</i>	
Surface water	Small impacts associated with the alteration of drainage patterns or changes to erosion and sedimentation rates
Groundwater use	5,950 acre feet (7.32 million cubic meters)
<i>Biological resources and soils</i>	
Small impacts to habitat, wildlife, vegetation, and soils	
<i>Cultural resources (records search)</i>	
Five percent of area surveyed with 132 recorded sites; eligible affected sites would require mitigation during construction; indirect impacts would be small during operations.	
<i>Occupational and public health and safety</i>	
Construction and operations	
Industrial hazards	
Total recordable cases	379
Lost workday cases	215
Fatalities	0.92 (combined involved and noninvolved workers)
Transportation (construction phase only)	
Traffic fatalities	4.0
Cancer fatalities	0.54
Operations only	
Incident-free radiological impacts (latent cancer fatalities)	
Public	0.00082
Workers	0.33
Radiological transportation accident fatalities	
Radiological accident risk (latent cancer fatalities)	0.0000074
Cancer fatalities from vehicle emissions	0.40

Table 2-1. Potentially affected resources – Mina rail corridor (page 2 of 2).

Resource	Impact/indicator
<i>Occupational and public health and safety (continued)</i>	
Operations phase only	
Transportation accident fatalities	
Worker commuting and material delivery	3.3
Radiological waste transportation	0.31
<i>Socioeconomics</i>	
	Construction employment: 6,500 worker-years over a minimum 5-year construction phase, primarily from Clark County and the Carson City/Washoe County area
	Construction economic measures: Less than a 2-percent increase in gross regional product, real disposable personal income, and spending by state and local governments
	Construction public services: Small increase in local populations
	Operations employment: 42 workers
	Operations economic measures: less than a 2-percent increase in gross regional product, real disposable personal income, and spending by state and local governments
	Operations public services: Small to moderate increase to local populations in Lyon, Mineral, Nye, and Esmeralda Counties
<i>Noise and vibration</i>	
	Construction noise levels would be below the Federal Transit Administration noise guidelines. Construction- and operations-train noise would be audible to receptors in Silver Peak and Goldfield. No adverse impacts from vibration.
<i>Aesthetics</i>	
	Small; construction and operation of a railroad primarily in BLM visual resource management Class III and IV would be consistent with BLM management objectives for those areas
<i>Utilities, energy, and materials</i>	
Diesel fuel	33 million gallons (125 million liters)
Gasoline	660,000 gallons (2.5 million liters)
Steel	74,000 tons (67,000 metric tons)
Concrete	287,000 tons (260,000 metric tons)
<i>Wastes</i>	
Construction-related municipal waste; limited quantities of other waste types	1.7 tons (1.5 metric tons) per day
<i>Environmental justice (disproportionately high and adverse impacts)</i>	
	None identified

a. Land disturbance is based on an average construction right-of-way of 100 meters (325 feet) (DIRS 180877-BSC 2007, p. 2-10).

Where practical, DOE has *quantified* potential impacts and other characteristics of the Proposed Action. In other instances, it is not practical to quantify impacts and DOE provides a *qualitative* assessment of potential impacts. In this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, the Department has used the following descriptors to qualitatively characterize impacts only where quantification of impacts was not practical:

- **Small** – For the issue, environmental effects would not be detectable or would be so minor that they would neither destabilize nor noticeably alter any important attribute of the resource.
- **Moderate** – For the issue, environmental effects would be sufficient to alter noticeably, but not to destabilize, important attributes of the resource.
- **Large** – For the issue, environmental effects would be clearly noticeable and would be sufficient to destabilize important attributes of the resource.

Unless otherwise noted, potential impacts described in Table 2-1 would be adverse and are for both the construction and operations phases.

2.4.1 LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

Construction of a railroad in the Mina rail corridor would disturb approximately 37 to 41 square kilometers (9,000 to 10,000 acres) of land, depending on the option selected (DIRS 180877-BSC 2007, p. 2-10). The Mina rail corridor would cross up to 15 separate grazing allotments. The approximate disturbance area associated with the Mina rail corridor would constitute less than 1 percent of the land within those 15 grazing allotments. Within this regional perspective of nearby existing and reasonably foreseeable land uses and land ownership, the commitment of land for the Mina rail corridor would constitute a minor proportion of overall land commitment. Impacts to private land could be approximately 1.6 to 2.7 square kilometers (400 to 670 acres), depending upon the option selected, which consists of primarily agricultural and mineral uses and contain no private residences.

The Mina rail corridor would not cross or affect any Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, or areas of Critical Environmental Concern. The Mina rail corridor would be consistent with the goals and policies of the resource management plans in the BLM-administered areas through which it passes. A rail line in the Mina rail corridor could cross private lands. If, in locating the final alignment, DOE could not avoid private lands, the Department would need to acquire access to them to construct and operate the railroad. If private property was divided by the rail line, access to the property could be disrupted.

The rail corridor would cross land on the Walker River Paiute Reservation. Construction and operation of a rail line on this land will require land agreements between DOE, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Walker River Paiute Tribe. Prior to construction, DOE would be required to obtain both the permission to survey for a right-of-way and a right-of-way grant in accordance with 25 CFR Part 169, "Rights-of-Way over Indian Lands." These regulations state that "Rights-of-way for railroads shall not exceed 15 meters (50 feet) in width on each side of the centerline of the road, except where there are heavy cuts and fills, when they shall not exceed 30 meters (100 feet) in width on each side of the road."

A portion of the Mina rail corridor, approximately 13 kilometers (8 miles) long, would cross through the Hawthorne Army Depot. A right-of-way grant to construct and operate a railroad through this area would require an agreement with the Department of Defense and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the use of the land and the existing rail line.

Approximately 27 kilometers (17 miles) of common corridor segment 6 of the Mina rail corridor would be within the boundaries of the Nevada Test Site, which is managed by the DOE. Construction of a rail line within this area would require land use authorization from the DOE Nevada Site Office and the BLM.

BLM would require the DOE to obtain a *right-of-way grant* to construct and operate a railroad on public land. The Department would adjust the width of the construction right-of-way where practicable to avoid or minimize land-use conflicts and restrictions. Construction and operation of the railroad in the Mina rail corridor through existing rights-of-way would require an evaluation of the impact to the road or utility or use of the right-of-way with both the right-of-way holder and the BLM. DOE would protect existing utility rights-of-way from damage so that disruption to utility service or damage to lines would be at most small and temporary.

The implementation of several mining engineering practices in these areas could allow access to mining claims without affecting the claimant or the rail line, depending on the exact locations of the claims and access needs. Construction of the rail line would result in loss of forage. Because the corridor intersects grazing allotments, a rail line could create a barrier to livestock movement. Livestock could have difficulty accessing water if there was a deep cut or a high fill associated with the rail line. Ranch operations and livestock rotations could be disrupted. Livestock mortality could occur along roads used during rail line construction and operations and possibly by trains during the operations phase. Construction and operation of a rail line through the Mina corridor could impact access to land used by the public for recreation, requiring individuals to alter their access routes.

2.4.2 AIR QUALITY

The Mina rail corridor would pass through rural parts of Nevada that are in areas that are considered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to be either *in attainment* or unclassifiable for *criteria pollutant* standards pursuant to *National Ambient Air Quality Standards*. Most rural areas of the United States are either in attainment or unclassifiable for all pollutants.

The impacts to air quality during rail line construction and subsequent operation would be small. During the relatively short-term period for construction of a rail line in the Mina Corridor, equipment emissions would result in a minimal contribution of criteria pollutants to the region. The criteria pollutants emitted would primarily come from the operation of construction equipment in rural areas or areas that are currently uninhabited. Construction activities would also emit *fugitive dust* that would require DOE to implement dust suppression measures. Impacts to these air quality criteria pollutant concentrations and fugitive dust generation should decrease as the rail line and rail facility construction is completed and the railroad becomes operational. During operations these impacts would be smaller but would last longer during the period of operation.

Impacts associated with railroad operations and maintenance activities would be small.

2.4.3 HYDROLOGY

Hydrologic hazards in the Mina rail corridor could include flash floods. Impacts to surface water associated with the alteration of drainage patterns or changes to erosion and sedimentation rates or locations would be small and localized. Impacts on surface-water resources resulting from construction activities would generally be small and limited to within the nominal width of the construction right-of-way. Impacts to springs near the corridor would be small. DOE would use appropriate engineering standards and construction practices to help avoid minimize potential impacts on surface water resources.

Impacts associated with railroad operations and maintenance activities on surface water would be small.

The groundwater analysis for this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS based its calculations of water demand for the construction of a rail line in the Mina rail corridor on earthwork needs and subsequent water for requirements for compaction. Based on these considerations, total water demand for the Mina rail corridor would be approximately 7.32 million cubic meters (5,950 acre-feet). Groundwater use during the construction phase could result in a short-term decrease in the amount of available water in some hydrologic basins.

DOE would request the Nevada State Engineer to approve any potential plans to pump groundwater from new or existing wells and otherwise obtain groundwater from other regional resources, so as to not adversely affect groundwater resources in the region. Groundwater demands during operation of the railroad would be small and be limited to water needed to support maintenance activities and a reduced workforce. These needs would be small and have little effect on regional resources.

2.4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND SOILS

The Mina rail corridor would primarily cross through remote areas that are characterized by a variety of vegetation communities, special status species (plants and animals including their habitats), game habitats, surface water flows, and soil conditions. The corridor only crosses one riparian area along the Walker River and one spring near Goldfield.

Some vegetation communities would be disturbed during construction activities within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. With the exception of the few riparian areas in the corridor, none of the plant communities encountered are considered by BLM to be sensitive (unique or rare). The total land area disturbed within these vegetation communities in the corridor would be small when compared to the other land areas in Nevada that also support them.

The Mina rail corridor would cross through habitat that supports a low abundance of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), a federally listed threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Disturbance of this habitat could disrupt normal movements or possibly result in some individual tortoise deaths. DOE would work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services to help limit impacts to the desert tortoise.

The rail corridor would also cross riparian habitat for the Lahontan cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii henshawi*), a federally listed threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Construction of a bridge over the Walker River downstream of Walker Dam would have to occur when the water flow is low and the species would be rare or absent. Construction activities could temporarily degrade downstream water quality. As such, impacts would be temporary and small.

The rail corridor would cross habitat for some game species including bighorn sheep, pronghorn sheep, mule deer, and mountain lions, as well as herd management areas for wild horses and burro herds. During construction activities, the movement of these animals could temporarily be disrupted due to noise and land disturbance and they would likely move away from the area. Noise from passing trains during rail road operations could minimally disturb some animals. Impacts would be small and would likely diminish over time as animals acclimated to the presence of passing trains.

Soil erosion could increase from land disturbance during construction activities within the construction right-of-way. Prime farmland occupies less than 1 percent of the soils in the corridor. DOE would use erosion control methods to help reduce the potential of direct impacts during construction. Use of hazardous materials would be controlled to limit the potential for soil contamination. Impacts to soil would be temporary and small.

Impacts associated with railroad operations and maintenance activities would be small.

2.4.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

There could be impacts to cultural resources at different locations in the Mina rail corridor. There are several cultural resources, which include archaeological and historic sites and structures, in the corridor that are eligible or potentially eligible for inclusion on the *National Register of Historical Places*. Construction activities could degrade, cause the removal of, or alter the setting of cultural resources sites and cause the loss of cultural resources.

Before starting construction, DOE would perform additional field surveys and inventories to further locate and identify cultural resources along the corridor. The Department would work closely with other federal agencies, tribal authorities, and the state agencies to help avoid and mitigate potential adverse impacts to identified cultural resources in the corridor. DOE would use procedures and work with other agencies to help protect cultural resources encountered during the construction phase as a result of surface disturbances. Steps would be taken to avoid and protect them and to mitigate potential adverse impacts from both project related activities and the actions of others.

Railroad operations and maintenance activities are not expected to result in any additional impacts to cultural resources at archeological or historic sites.

2.4.6 OCCUPATIONAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

The impact analysis for occupational health and safety focused on transportation impacts, worker industrial safety impacts, incident-free radiological impacts and nonradiological impacts, and radiological impacts with respect to accidents.

Nonradiological transportation impacts during the construction phase of the project are expected to primarily result from traffic accidents involving workers commuting to and from the construction sites and transporting rail line construction materials to the construction sites and from vehicle emissions produced by commuting workers and material deliveries. Those impacts during the construction phase of the project are estimated to be 4 fatalities from traffic accidents and 0.54 latent cancer fatalities from vehicle emissions.

The largest potential for radiological exposure during the operations phase of the railroad would be to workers involved in the transportation of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive high level waste. That impact could be about 0.40 latent cancer fatalities.

Industrial safety impacts resulting from railroad construction and operation are estimated to be about 0.92 fatalities for the combined involved worker and noninvolved worker population.

DOE estimated nonradiological occupational health and safety impacts in terms of exposure of workers to physical hazards and nonradioactive hazardous chemicals over the region of influence for the Mina corridor. These estimates were based on the estimated number of hours worked and occupational incident rates for total recordable cases, lost workday cases, and fatalities. DOE estimated radiological impacts to workers and the public for incident-free transportation, transportation accidents and severe transportation accidents.

DOE estimated the following fatalities:

- Less than one latent cancer fatality to workers and the public from radiological impacts for up to 50 years of railroad operations in the Mina rail corridor.
- Nonradiological fatality impacts to workers from industrial hazards from railroad construction and operation in the Mina rail corridor could be 0.92.
- During railroad construction in the Mina rail corridor, there could be four vehicular-related fatalities.

- During railroad operations in the Mina rail corridor, there could be 3.6 vehicular-related fatalities.
- During railroad construction and operations in the Mina corridor, there could be 1.3 rail-related fatalities.

2.4.7 SOCIOECONOMICS

The socioeconomic impacts analysis used a set of socioeconomic variables to provide a socioeconomic profile of conditions in the Mina rail corridor region of influence. Those variables considered changes to employment, population, economic measures, housing, and public services. The expected employment levels are a significant contributor to the analysis of socioeconomic impacts.

During the construction phase of the project, DOE estimated that the workforce employment levels for construction would range from about 340 to 2,100, depending on the length of the rail line, earthwork requirements, and phase of the project. Based on the identified levels of worker employment and the temporary nature of a linear construction project, the socioeconomic impacts to the local communities would be both short term and small.

During the operations phase of the project, DOE estimated that the workforce levels for operating and maintaining the railway would be much less than that estimated for the construction phase. There would be an estimated 42 workers involved in railroad operations. Given the relatively low number of employees necessary for railroad operations, the potential for socioeconomic impacts in the corridor are estimated to be small.

These socioeconomic for both the construction and the operations phase are generally considered positive because of jobs created, increased disposable income, increases in gross regional product, and increases in services to local citizens as a result of increased tax revenue to local and state governments.

2.4.8 NOISE AND VIBRATION

2.4.8.1 Noise

For the most part, the Mina rail corridor would pass through areas that are remote from human habitation. Thus, the potential impacts for noise from the construction of a rail line would be temporary. The distances from construction activities to the nearest receptors would be great; therefore, construction noise levels would be below the Federal Transit Administration noise guidelines.

DOE estimates that construction noise and construction- and operation-train noise would be audible to receptors in Silver Peak and Goldfield. There would be no adverse noise impacts associated with these receptors because they would not experience a 3 dBA increase and 65 DNL or greater noise levels. The purpose of the 3 dBA increase component of STB noise guidelines is to identify potential impact areas and areas where train noise would be particularly audible. However, because transportation noise sources are audible throughout the United States, the audibility of train noise itself does not constitute an adverse noise impact.

2.4.8.2 Vibration

Based on the proposed construction equipment and Federal Transit Administration vibration data, DOE estimated potential ground-borne vibration levels due to construction activity. The vibration levels are below Federal Transit Administration building vibration damage criteria (0.20 inch per second for fragile buildings, and 0.12 inch per second for extremely fragile historic buildings). Therefore, DOE would expect no damage to buildings due to vibration during construction. In addition, because of relatively low

vibration levels and the temporary nature of construction, human annoyance due to construction vibration would be low.

DOE evaluated the potential impacts from vibration for construction and operations trains by using train-induced vibration levels as a function of distance from a rail line, along with vibration levels likely to result in building damage or annoyance, in combination with information on the location of residences or other buildings in relation to the rail line. Because vibration is a function of train speed, construction-train vibration would be lower than operations-train vibration. Freight trains operating at 80 kilometers (50 miles) per hour would produce an annoyance-based vibration contour extending approximately 24 meters (80 feet) from the tracks (DIRS 177297-Hanson, Towers, and Meister 2006, p. 10-3). There are no buildings within approximately 24 meters of the Mina rail corridor, so construction and operations trains would produce no adverse vibration impacts.

2.4.9 AESTHETICS

The Mina rail corridor would pass primarily through Class III (the BLM designation that provides for the partial retention of the existing character of the landscape) and IV (the BLM designation that provides for management activities that require major modifications of the existing character of the landscape) areas. Railroad construction and operations in these areas would be consistent with the BLM management objectives for these areas. Therefore, DOE expects potential impacts to aesthetic resources would be small.

2.4.10 UTILITIES, ENERGY, AND MATERIALS

Potential impacts to utilities, energy and materials would be small. Construction and operations needs would place limited demands on utilities such as public water and waste water systems, telecommunications systems and electric power. Regional service providers can be expected to adjust to increasing needs. Needs for motor fuel during construction and operations activities would represent a very small fraction of Nevada's motor fuel consumption and not affect regional availability. Raw materials consumed during the construction phase such as concrete, steel, and rock are expected to be available from regional or national sources.

2.4.11 WASTE MANAGEMENT

DOE would store and use hazardous materials such as oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, and solvents during railroad construction and operations, primarily for the operation and maintenance of equipment and cleaning of equipment and facilities, and associated hazardous wastes would be generated. Ample disposal capacity for hazardous wastes is available in the western United States.

DOE would dispose of nonrecyclable or nonreusable waste in permitted landfills. During construction, it is likely that while some of the larger landfills would not see an appreciable change in the amount of waste received if they were utilized, some of the smaller landfills, if utilized, might see a substantial, although manageable, change in daily receipt of solid and industrial and special wastes. The estimated average daily disposal mass would be about 1.5 metric tons (1.7 tons).

During the railroad operations phase, the generation of wastes would be substantially less than during the construction phase.

2.4.12 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Because there would be small changes in long-term population attributable to activities in the corridor, impacts or stresses to the housing stock, infrastructure systems, or social services would be unlikely. A portion of the Mina rail corridor would cross lands in Esmeralda County where most of the land is managed by the BLM or owned by the Department of Defense, resulting in a sparse population. As a consequence, there are no concentrations of low-income or minority populations in Esmeralda County that the construction or operation of a railroad in the Mina rail corridor would be likely to affect.

Likewise, a rail line in the corridor would be unlikely to affect low-income or majority populations in Lyon County.

Nye County has a minority population of approximately 13 percent with approximately 11 percent of the total population considered low income.

Impacts from rail line construction and operations in the Mina rail corridor would be small overall and would be unlikely to cause a disproportionately high and adverse effect on the low-income or minority populations along the corridor. There are no special pathways for minority populations.

3. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND EVALUATION OF IMPACTS – MINA RAIL CORRIDOR

This chapter describes the affected environment along the Mina rail corridor and potential impacts to environmental resources from constructing and operating a railroad in the corridor. Section 3.1 describes the bases and methodology DOE used to perform the evaluation; Section 3.2 describes the affected environment for each resource area and potential impacts to those resources.

Glossary terms are shown in ***bold italics***.

3.1 Bases and Methodology

3.1.1 BASES FOR EVALUATION

To evaluate potential environmental ***impacts*** and determine if the Mina ***rail corridor*** warrants further study, the bases for corridor evaluation are the *Mina Rail Route Feasibility Study* (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, all); baseline and affected environment information from federal, state, and local sources; public scoping comments; and design and engineering knowledge the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE or the Department) has derived from its analyses of the Caliente rail corridor at the alignment level (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, all). This Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS presentation of the Mina rail corridor analysis is commensurate in content and detail with the presentation of corridor-level information in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (Yucca Mountain FEIS; DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, Chapter 6). This chapter describes the environmental attributes of the Mina rail corridor and potential impacts from implementing the Proposed Action.

3.1.2 METHODOLOGY

For the Mina rail corridor analysis, DOE performed a rail corridor design study to provide engineering, construction, and operations feasibility information (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, all). The study used many of the same methods used to advance the Caliente rail corridor design, as described in Section 2.2.3. DOE established baseline environmental conditions for each resource area through the collection of federal, State of Nevada, and local data commensurate with the information in the Yucca Mountain FEIS for the Mina rail corridor. Using the established baseline and ***affected environment***, while considering the evolution of engineering and design changes, DOE evaluated the magnitude and range of potential ***impacts*** for the Mina rail corridor.

For each resource area in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE evaluated impacts within a specified ***region of influence***. Table 3-1 lists information on the region of influence for each resource area; DOE used these same regions of influence for the cumulative impacts analysis (see Chapter 4).

Table 3-1. Regions of influence for each resource area analyzed in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS.

Resource area	Region of influence ^a
Land use and ownership	Land use and ownership entirely or partially within the 400-meter-wide rail corridor. Includes land use and ownership outside the corridor that could incur cumulative impacts.
Air quality	The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-designated air basins through which the corridor would pass.
Hydrology	The 400-meter width of the corridor and a 1-kilometer-wide area along each side of the corridor. <i>Surface Water:</i> Areas near where construction would take place that would be susceptible to erosion, areas affected by permanent changes in flow, and areas downstream of construction that could be affected by eroded soil or potential spills of construction contaminants. <i>Groundwater:</i> Aquifers that would underlie areas of construction and operation and aquifers DOE could use to obtain water for construction and operations support.
Biological resources	Resources within the 400-meter-wide corridor and a 5-kilometer-wide area along each side of the corridor. Includes habitat (including wetlands and riparian areas), sensitive species, and migratory ranges of big game animals and wild horses and burros that a rail line could affect.
Cultural resources	Coverage within the 400-meter-wide corridor. This area includes the area of potential disturbances that could have indirect impacts on cultural resources.
Occupational and public health and safety	<i>Traffic impacts:</i> The 400-meter width of the corridor and public highways used by workers and for shipments during construction and operations. <i>Worker industrial safety impacts:</i> The 400-meter-wide rail corridor. <i>Incident-free radiological and nonradiological impacts:</i> The 800-meter area on either side of the centerline of the rail corridor. <i>Radiological impacts with respect to accidents:</i> An area within an 80-kilometer radius from a potential occurrence location in the rail corridor.
Socioeconomics	Counties in Nevada the rail line would cross (Churchill, Lyon, Mineral, Esmeralda, and Nye) and the two areas where most workers would live, Clark County and the Carson City/Washoe County area.
Noise and vibration	Inhabited commercial and residential areas where noise and vibration from rail line construction and operations could be a concern.
Aesthetic resources	The viewshed around the rail corridor.
Utilities, energy, and materials	The regional supply infrastructure that would support rail line construction and operations.
Waste management	Counties in Nevada that a potential rail line would cross and that have existing municipal sanitary waste landfills; disposal facilities for other types of wastes.
Environmental justice	Locations of minority, low-income, and Native American populations along the rail corridor; this includes the regions of influence listed above.

a. To convert meters to feet, multiply by 3.2808; to convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.62137.

3.2 Affected Environment and Potential Impacts – Mina Rail Corridor

3.2.1 LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE determined that an evaluation of impacts to land use and ownership should identify the current ownership of the land that its activities could disturb, and the present and anticipated future uses of the land. The Department defined the region of influence for land use and ownership impacts as land areas that would be disturbed or the ownership or use of which would change as a result of constructing and operating a railroad. In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE evaluated land use and ownership in the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. The Department chose this width to provide enough space for final alignment to route the rail line around sensitive land features or engineering obstacles. The Yucca Mountain FEIS anticipated actual construction and operation in the corridor would mostly require less than about 61 meters (200 feet) of the 400-meter width. DOE has since determined, based on the Department's conceptual engineering for the Caliente rail alignment, that actual construction in the corridor would likely require less than 300 meters (1,000 feet) of the 400-meter width (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-10). However, for consistency with the Yucca Mountain FEIS analysis, this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS analysis uses the 400-meter corridor width.

Based on these criteria, DOE evaluated the potential impacts to land use and ownership from proposed railroad construction and operations. The BLM administers more than 45,000 square kilometers (11 million acres) in Lyon, Mineral, Esmeralda, and Nye Counties. Traditional land uses in most of the Mina rail corridor region of influence that would be directly and indirectly affected include grazing, mining, energy development, general recreation, utility rights-of-way, and wildlife management. Much of this land is not extensively disturbed, although it has been modified through activity such as grazing and mining.

Some BLM-administered lands have special designations that identify their uses or why they have been set aside. These include Wildlife Habitat Management Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wilderness Areas, and Wilderness Study Areas. Public lands in the Mina rail corridor region of influence provide a number of diverse recreation opportunities, and the BLM has designated certain lands as Special Recreation Management Areas.

Figures 3-1 and 3-2 show land ownership along the Mina rail corridor and its options. Most of the land that would be used for construction and operation of rail road in the Mina rail corridor would be BLM-administered land in Lyon, Mineral, Esmeralda, and Nye Counties. The proposed Mina rail corridor would cross three BLM administrative areas: Carson City, Battle Mountain, and Las Vegas. Each BLM Field Office manages lands within its administrative boundaries according to one or more Management Framework Plan or Resource Management Plan. The Las Vegas, Tonopah, and Carson City plans would apply to the Mina rail corridor. In addition to BLM authority, the range of potentially affected land ownership and management authority includes private land holdings (including land designated for commercial development), DOE lands, U.S. Department of Defense lands, and American Indian trust lands and reservations.

To evaluate land use and ownership in the Mina rail corridor, DOE obtained data from the latest editions of BLM Master Title Plats and online land record databases, such as BLM LR2000 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 21). The Department also evaluated county and state land records and information from other federal agencies, universities, or commercial developments.

In response to a DOE application for a public land order, the BLM has segregated specific lands encompassing the Mina rail corridor from surface and mineral for 2 years (until January 10, 2009), as described in the *Notice of Proposed Withdrawal and Opportunity for Public Meeting; Nevada* (72 *Federal Register* [FR] 1235, January 10, 2007).

3.2.1.1 Land Use and Ownership Affected Environment

Approximately 1 to 2 percent (1.6 to 2.7 square kilometers [400 to 670 acres) of the land in the Mina rail corridor is privately owned, with another 5 to 12 percent (12.5 to 20.1 square kilometers [3,100 to 5,000 acres], depending on option) on the Walker River Paiute Reservation (see Figures 3-1 and 3-2). Of the remaining land, approximately 3 percent (5.3 square kilometers [1,300 acres) is DOE-managed land on the Nevada Test Site. Approximately 3 percent (4.7 square kilometers [1,200 acres) has been withdrawn to the U.S. Department of Defense for the Hawthorne Army Depot, through which the Mina rail corridor would pass. Most of the land in the Mina rail corridor, approximately 80 to 85 percent (132.1 to 133.9 square kilometers [32,900 to 34,000 acres]), depending on option, is BLM-administered public land. Specifically, the BLM Carson City Field Office manages the land containing portions of the three Schurz bypass options and the first half of Mina common corridor segment 1 in accordance with the *Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan* (DIRS 179560-BLM 2001, all). The remainder of the land encompassing the Schurz Bypass options is on the Walker River Paiute Reservation. South of the Reservation, the corridor would cross through land managed by the BLM Battle Mountain Field Office/Tonopah Field Station, with land use and management objectives governed by the *Tonopah Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision* (DIRS 173224-BLM 1997, all). The BLM Las Vegas Field Office manages the remaining land the corridor would cross from approximately Beatty Wash to Yucca Mountain in accordance with the *Record of Decision for the Approved Las Vegas Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement* (DIRS 176043-BLM 1998, all).

Construction of a railroad in the Mina rail corridor would begin near Wabuska, Nevada. From there, on the Walker River Paiute Reservation, the corridor proceeds southeast toward the town of Schurz. The three Schurz bypass options would be primarily on the Walker River Paiute Reservation. Schurz bypass options 1 and 2 would leave the existing Department of Defense Branchline approximately 29 kilometers (18 miles) northwest of Schurz, continue east of the Weber Reservoir, and cross U.S. Highway 95 east of Schurz. The first 1.8 kilometers (1.1 miles) of Schurz bypass options 1 and 2 would cross BLM-administered land; the remaining portions would cross the Walker River Paiute Reservation. Schurz bypass options 1 and 2 would not cross any private allotments on the Reservation (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p. 16). Both bypass options cross the Black Mountain Grazing allotment (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 21).

Schurz bypass option 3 would be almost entirely on the Walker River Paiute Reservation. This option would come within 91 meters (300 feet) of a private allotment along the Walker River and, as it bypassed the town of Schurz, would be about 800 meters (0.5 mile) east of private allotments that are used for agriculture and contain no private residences (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p. 16). Schurz bypass option 3 would also cross the Parker Butte Grazing Allotment (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 22).

South of Schurz bypass options 1, 2, and 3, the Mina rail corridor would include common corridor segment 1, which would be approximately 150 kilometers (92 miles) long, with 34 kilometers (21 miles) on an existing Department of Defense-managed rail line. The remaining 110 kilometers (71 miles) of common corridor segment 1 would cross predominantly BLM-administered public lands.

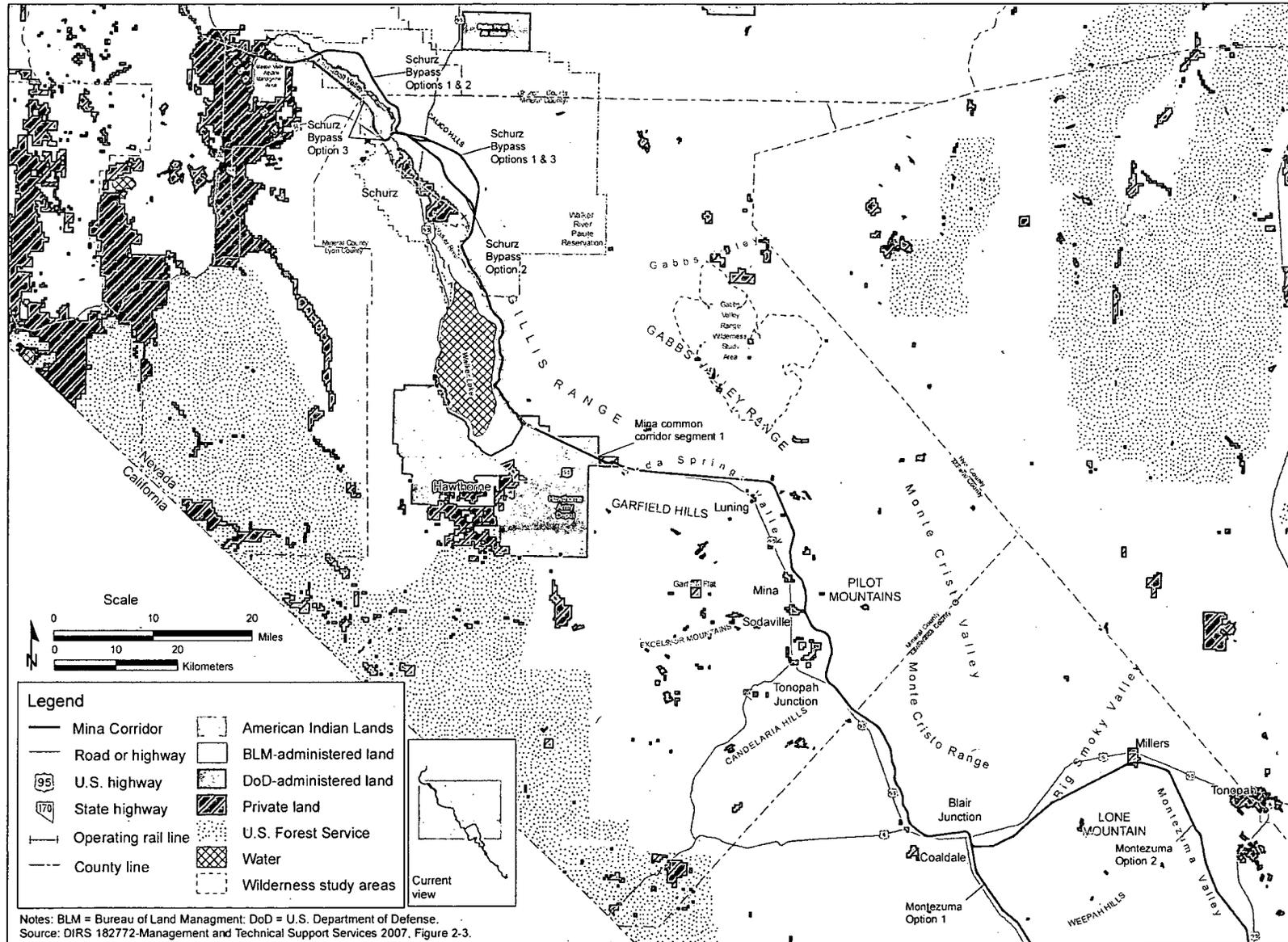


Figure 3-1. Mina rail corridor land use (north).

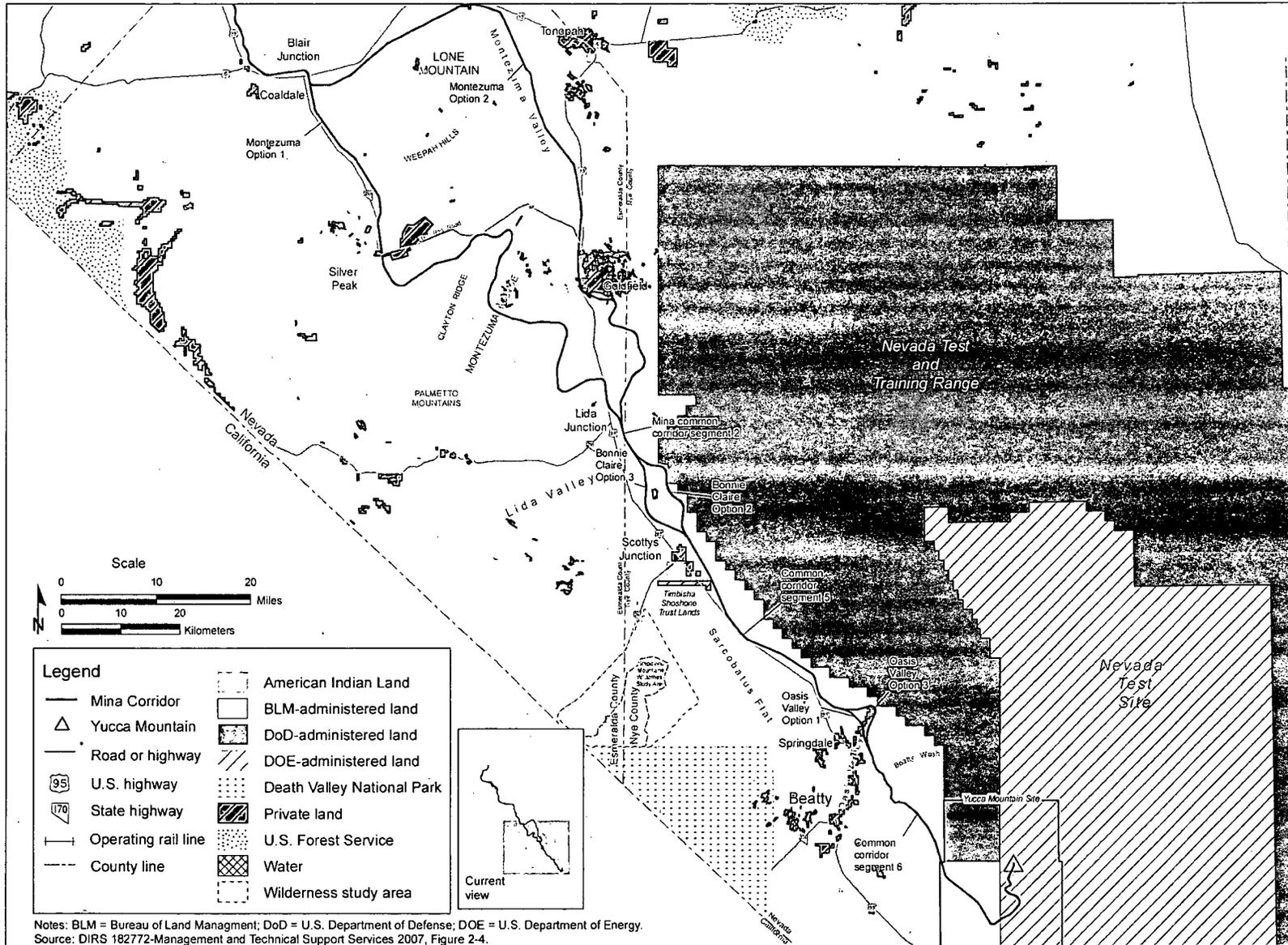


Figure 3-2. Mina rail corridor land use (south).

Due east of the Hawthorne Army Depot, common corridor segment 1 would cross approximately 3.2 kilometers (2 miles) of private property. As it traveled south, the center of the corridor would be within 150 meters (500 feet) of three other private land parcels and then pass just to the east of private property in Soda Springs Valley, southeast of Luning, and near Sodaville. It would pass through a mineral material site (an area in which the BLM has granted temporary rights to another party to obtain materials such as sand and gravel) at Redlich Pass. Common corridor segment 1 would cross a portion of a mineral material site at Coaldale and Blair Junction and then pass through another mineral material site. In addition, it would cross the Gillis Mountain, Garfield Flat, Pilot-Table Mountain, Bellville, Monte Cristo, and Silver Peak grazing allotments and an allotment the BLM Battle Mountain District/Tonopah Field Office has designated as the Columbia Salt Marsh. The corridor would also cross linear rights-of-way that include power transmission lines, telephones lines, State Route 361, U.S. Highway 95, water pipelines, and roads (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 22).

At this point, there are two options for the Mina rail corridor, Montezuma options 1 and 2, to bypass the Montezuma Range. From about 5.3 kilometers (3.3 miles) north to 5 kilometers (3 miles) south of Silver Peak, Montezuma option 1 would cross land the BLM has designated as suitable for disposal (sale). Montezuma option 1 would cross rights-of-way for power transmission lines, State Route 265, and access roads. Specifically, it would cross three mineral material sites at Goldfield Hills, touch one site at Lida Junction, and cross another at Scottys Junction. Montezuma option 1 would cross the Sheep Mountain, Silver Peak, Yellow Hills, Montezuma, and Magruder Mountain grazing allotments. It would also cross an allotment the BLM Battle Mountain District/Tonopah Field Office has designated as the Columbia Salt Marsh, and another listed as an unallocated allotment. The BLM administers most of the land along Montezuma option 1, except for one small piece of private property near Silver Peak (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 22).

Montezuma option 2 would tend to follow an abandoned rail line of the former Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad through Montezuma Valley, bypassing Tonopah on the west side and continuing through the town of Goldfield to the south until it connected to common corridor segment 2. As with Montezuma option 1, the BLM administers most of the land along Montezuma option 2; a small percentage of the land is privately owned. Montezuma option 2 would cross approximately 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) of a private allotment commonly called Millers. This property had been the location of a mill site for silver ore and a station on the former Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad; a portion of this property is of cultural significance (see Section 3.2.5). The BLM has designated lands to the east and west of this property as suitable for disposal. The corridor would cross more than 40 privately owned parcels of land near the town of Goldfield. Montezuma option 2 would cross rights-of-way for access roads, power transmission lines, and water pipelines. It would pass through two mineral material sites. Montezuma option 2 would also cross the Monte Cristo and Montezuma Grazing Allotments and an allotment the BLM Battle Mountain District/Tonopah Field Office has designated as the Columbia Salt Marsh (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 22).

Common corridor segment 2 would begin at the end of Montezuma option 1 or 2 at a point just east of Lida Junction. All of common corridor segment 2 would cross BLM-administered land and the Montezuma and Razorback Grazing Allotments (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 22).

The Mina rail corridor would continue south into Bonnie Claire options 2 and 3, common corridor segment 5, Oasis Valley options 1 and 3, and common corridor segment 6. Bonnie Claire options 2 and 3 would cross the Montezuma Grazing Allotment. Common corridor segment 5 would cross the Montezuma and Magruder Mountain Grazing Allotments. Oasis Valley options 1 and 3 would cross private property the Razorback Grazing Allotment. Common corridor segment 6 would cross the Montezuma and Razorback Grazing Allotments and a grazing allotment in Crater Flat west of Yucca Mountain the BLM has designated as unused (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 24).

DOE queried information for *unpatented mining claims* from the BLM LR2000 database (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 24) using the legal description for the Mina rail corridor (meridian, township, range, and section) and plotted locations of unpatented mining claims by sections (Figures 3-3 and 3-4). Of these, most of the unpatented mining claims are within the Goldfield area of the Mina rail corridor.

The Mina rail corridor and its options would not cross any Wilderness Areas or Wilderness Study Areas, Special Recreation Management Areas, or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. It would cross areas used by the public for dispersed recreation, such as off-highway vehicle use and hunting.

3.2.1.2 Potential Impacts to Land Use and Ownership

The predominant land-use and ownership conflicts associated with the Mina rail corridor would involve private land holdings, the Walker River Paiute Reservation, the Hawthorne Army Depot, the Nevada Test Site, land the BLM has proposed as suitable for disposal, unpatented mining claims, rights-of-way, and grazing allotments.

Construction of a railroad in the Mina rail corridor would disturb approximately 37 to 41 square kilometers (9,000 to 10,000 acres) of land, depending on option. The Mina rail corridor would cross up to 15 separate grazing allotments. The approximate disturbance area associated with the proposed Mina rail corridor would constitute less than 1 percent of the land within those 15 grazing allotments. Within this regional perspective of nearby existing and reasonably foreseeable land uses and land ownership, the commitment of land for the proposed Mina rail corridor would constitute a minor proportion of overall land commitment. Impacts to private land could be approximately 1.6 to 2.7 square kilometers (400 to 670 acres), depending on option. This land consists of primarily agricultural and mineral uses and contains no private residences.

The Mina rail corridor would cross public lands managed by the BLM Carson City Field Office, the Battle Mountain/Tonopah offices, and the Las Vegas Field Office. Each has a resource management plan that establishes goals and objectives for the management of resources, which include public land uses and designations (DIRS 179560-BLM 2001, all; DIRS 173224-BLM 1997, all; DIRS 176043-BLM-1998, all). The Mina rail corridor would not cross or affect any Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, or areas of Critical Environmental Concern. The Mina rail corridor would be consistent with the goals and policies of the resource management plans in the BLM-administered areas through which it passes.

As described in Section 3.2.1.1, a rail line in the Mina rail corridor would cross private lands. If in locating the final rail alignment DOE could not avoid private lands, the Department would need to acquire access to them to construct and operate the railroad. If private property was divided by the rail line, access to the property could be disrupted.

The rail corridor would cross land on the Walker River Paiute Reservation. Construction and operation of a railroad on this land would require an agreement between DOE, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Walker River Paiute Tribe. Prior to construction, DOE would be required to obtain both the permission to survey for a right-of-way and a right-of-way grant in accordance with 25 CFR Part 169, "Rights-of-Way Over Indian Lands." These regulations state that "Rights-of-way for railroads shall not exceed 15 meters (50 feet) in width on each side of the centerline of the road, except where there are heavy cuts and fills, when they shall not exceed 30 meters (100 feet) in width on each side of the road."

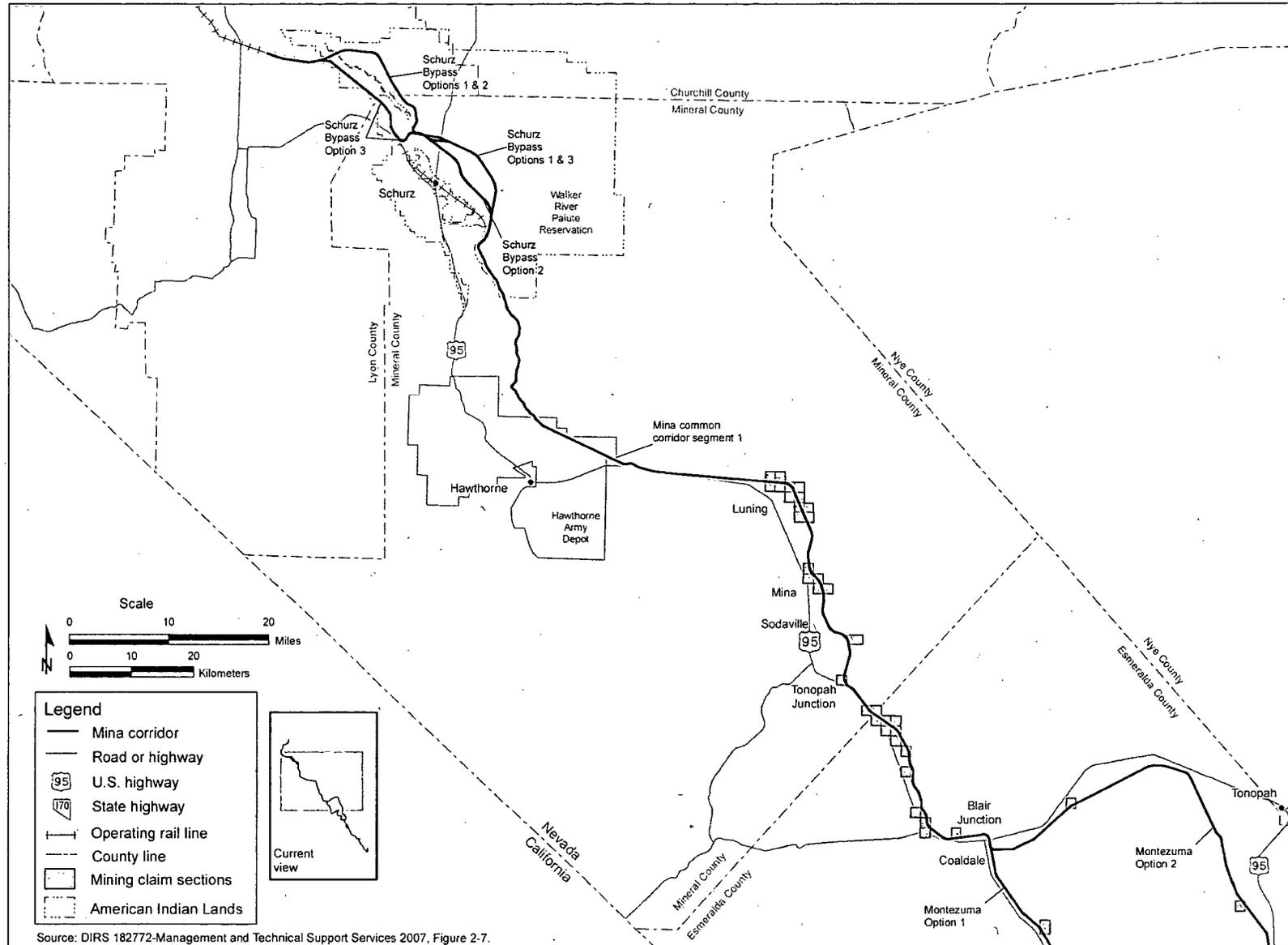


Figure 3-3. Sections containing unpatented mining claims within the Mina rail corridor (north).

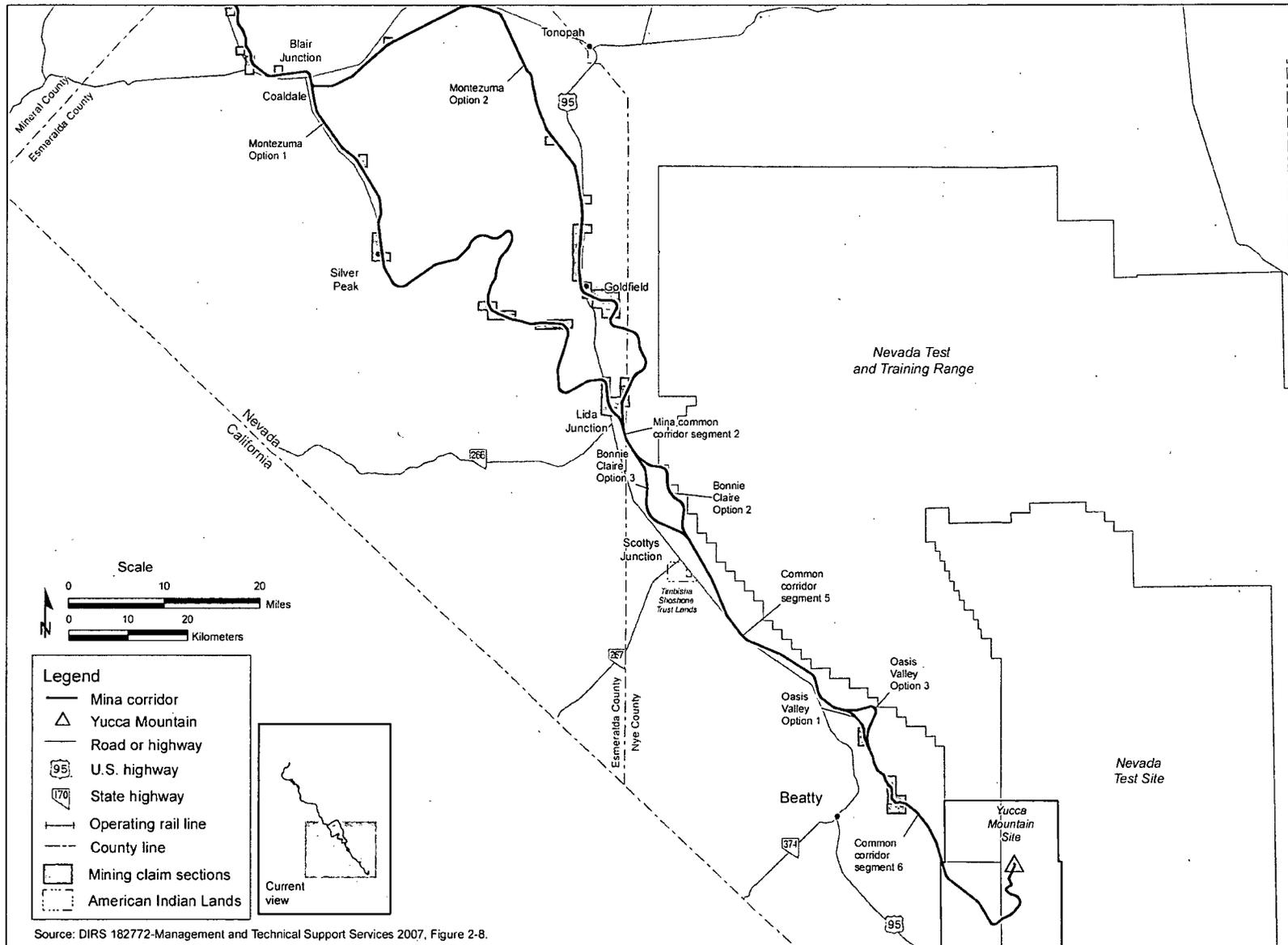


Figure 3-4. Sections containing unpatented mining claims within the Mina rail corridor (south).

The Mina rail corridor would not cross any privately held lands on the Reservation. Schurz option 3 would be within 91 meters (300 feet) of a private allotment. This and other privately held lands near Schurz option 3 are used for agriculture; there are no private residences on this land.

A portion of the Mina rail corridor, approximately 13 kilometers (8 miles) long, would cross through the Hawthorne Army Depot. To construct and operate a railroad through this area would require an agreement between DOE, the U.S. Department of Defense, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the use of the land and the existing rail line.

Approximately 27 kilometers (17 miles) of common corridor segment 6 would be within the boundaries of the Nevada Test Site, which DOE manages. Rail line construction with this area would require land use authorization from the DOE Nevada Site Office and the BLM.

BLM would require DOE to obtain a *right-of-way grant* to construct and operate a railroad on public land. DOE anticipates the right-of-way would have a nominal width of approximately 300 meters (1,000 feet) during construction, which is more than the 61-meter (200-foot)-wide corridor discussed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, and within the 400-meter (0.25 mile)-wide corridor analyzed in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS. The Department would adjust the width of the construction right-of-way where practicable to avoid or minimize land-use conflicts and restrictions. Construction and operation of the railroad in the Mina rail corridor through existing rights-of-way would require an evaluation of the impact to the road or utility or use of the right-of-way with both the right-of-way holder and the BLM. DOE would protect existing utility rights-of-way from damage so that disruption to utility service or damage to lines would be, at most, small and temporary. The land needed to operate the railroad would be generally less than the land needed during construction. Therefore, DOE would reclaim the land no longer needed in accordance with standards set forth by the BLM as a condition of the right-of-way grant.

There could be impacts to mining activities such as mine operations or exploration if access roads were temporarily blocked or altered, making development of a claim less profitable. The Mina rail corridor *region of influence* contains a variety of mineral resources, with mining claims filed in accordance with BLM requirements, and several operating mines. Establishment of mining claims on federal land does not necessarily ever lead to actual development of mining operations on those sites. The implementation of several mining engineering practices in these areas could allow access to mining claims without affecting the claimant or the rail line, depending on the exact locations of the claims and access needs.

BLM has designated public land for disposal to allow for community expansion. While this designation provides the opportunity for disposal, it does not require it. Because disposal is a discretionary action, the BLM could choose not to dispose of these parcels if other priorities arose.

Grazing operations are a major BLM land-management program in the Mina rail corridor region of influence. Rail line construction would result in loss of forage. Because the corridor intersects grazing allotments, a rail line could create a barrier to livestock movement. Livestock could have difficulty accessing water if there was a deep cut or a high fill associated with the rail line. Ranching operations and livestock rotations could be disrupted. Livestock could be lost due to collisions with vehicles along roads used during the construction and operations phases, and possibly by collisions with trains during the operations phase.

A rail line in the Mina rail corridor could impact access to land the public uses for recreation, requiring individuals to alter their access routes. Recreational events, such as off-highway vehicle racing, on courses that cross the area of the Mina rail corridor would need to be rerouted. Alterations in access to land used by hunters, hikers, and others could affect recreational experiences.

During the operations phase, train and track inspection and maintenance activities would be confined to areas disturbed during the construction phase. Therefore, there would be no additional disturbances to land use and ownership.

3.2.2 AIR QUALITY

This section provides information on the existing air quality status in areas through which the Mina rail corridor would pass: Lyon, Mineral, Esmeralda, and Nye Counties, a small portion of Churchill County, and the Walker River Paiute Reservation. It also provides background information on the general climate in the area.

The air quality region of influence includes the Environmental Protection Agency-designated air basins through which the corridor would pass.

The Mina rail corridor air quality evaluation used the same qualitative methods described in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, Appendix G). DOE evaluated the route for identified *nonattainment* or maintenance areas, and identified *criteria pollutants* potentially generated by construction or operations activities. Because the Department did not identify any nonattainment or maintenance areas, no detailed estimates of emission rates or comparisons to threshold levels for conformity were made.

3.2.2.1 Air Quality Affected Environment

The Mina rail corridor would pass through rural parts of Nevada that are either *in attainment* or unclassifiable under U.S. Environmental Protection Agency criteria pollutant standards. If there are not enough air quality data to determine the status of a remote or sparsely populated area, then the Environmental Protection Agency lists the area as unclassifiable. The agency considers unclassifiable areas as any area that cannot be classified on the basis of available information as meeting or not meeting the *national ambient air quality standard* for the pollutant. Unclassifiable areas are treated as attainment areas under the Clean Air Act and its implementing regulations. Most rural areas of the United States are either in attainment or unclassifiable for all pollutants. Table 3-2 lists federal standards for criteria pollutants.

Monthly climate summaries for Beatty and Goldfield (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 27) indicate that the southern portions of the Mina rail corridor have the highest annual precipitation, with annual averages of about 16 centimeters (6.5 inches). The northern portions of the corridor through Mina, Hawthorne, Schurz, and Wabuska have less precipitation, about 11 to 13 centimeters (4.5 to 5 inches) annually. Goldfield, at an elevation of about 1,700 meters (5,700 feet) has the highest average annual snowfall, 38 centimeters (15 inches). Average annual snowfall for most of the rest of the corridor is 10 to 13 centimeters (4 to 5 inches). The southernmost portions of the corridor have even less snowfall. Average annual temperatures vary mainly by elevation, highest at the lower elevations such as Beatty at 1,000 meters (3,300 feet) and lowest at higher elevations such as Tonopah and Goldfield at 1,600 and 1,700 meters (5,400 and 5,700 feet), respectively (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 27).

3.2.2.2 Potential Air Quality Impacts

Pollutants from construction equipment emissions would include *carbon monoxide*, *nitrogen dioxide*, *sulfur dioxide*, and *particulate matter* with aerodynamic diameters equal to or less than 10 micrometers (PM_{10}) and equal to or less than 2.5 micrometers ($PM_{2.5}$).

Table 3-2. Federal standards for criteria pollutants.

Pollutant	Averaging time	National Ambient Air Quality Standards ^a	
		Primary ^b	Secondary ^c
Ozone (O ₃) ^d	1-hour	0.12 parts per million (ppm) (235 micrograms per cubic meter [$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$])	Same as primary standard
	8-hour	0.08 ppm	
Carbon monoxide (CO)	8-hour	9.0 ppm (10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	None
	1-hour	35 ppm (40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	
Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	Annual average	0.053 ppm (100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	Same as primary standard
	1-hour	-	
Sulfur dioxide (SO ₂)	Annual average	80 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (0.03 ppm)	-
	24-hour	365 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (0.14 ppm)	-
	3-hour	-	1,300 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (0.5 ppm)
	1-hour	-	-
Suspended particulate matter (PM ₁₀)	24-hour	150 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	Same as primary standard
	Annual arithmetic mean	50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	
Fine particulate matter (PM _{2.5}) ^d	24-hour	35 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	Same as primary standard
	Annual arithmetic mean	15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	
Lead (Pb)	30-day average	-	-
	Calendar quarter	1.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	Same as primary standard

a. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (other than O₃, particulate matter, and those based on annual averages or annual arithmetic mean) are not to be exceeded more than once a year. The O₃ standard is attained when the fourth highest 8-hour concentration in a year, averaged over 3 years, is equal to or less than the standard. For PM₁₀, the 24-hour standard is attained when 99 percent of the daily concentrations, averaged over 3 years, are equal to or less than the standard. For PM_{2.5}, the 24-hour standard is attained when 98 percent of the daily concentrations, averaged over 3 years, are equal to or less than the standard. Contact the EPA for further clarification and current federal policies.

b. National Primary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary, with an adequate margin of safety, to protect the public health.

c. National Secondary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects of a pollutant.

d. The Environmental Protection Agency revised the level of the 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard to 35 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and retained the level of the annual PM_{2.5} standard at 15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (71 FR 61144, October 17, 2006).

Construction activities such as surface disturbance and use of haul trucks in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would emit PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} in the form of *fugitive dust*. Fugitive dust is a type of nonpoint source air pollution (small airborne particles that do not originate from a specific point). There could be short-term increases in concentrations of these air quality criteria pollutants as construction progressed along the corridor. The plumes associated with fugitive dust generation are often localized to the area being disturbed and are temporary. In *arid* areas such as the Mina corridor region of influence, generation and control of fugitive dust will always be a concern. DOE would implement mitigation measures to minimize emissions, reduce dust concentrations during construction activities, and meet current air quality standards for these pollutants. Thus, impacts would be small.

During railroad operations, potential impacts to air quality would result from diesel locomotives, which would emit carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}. Fugitive dust emissions would be greatly reduced during railroad operations as excavation would cease and equipment traffic would be limited to maintenance vehicles.

3.2.3 Hydrology

This section describes surface-water and groundwater resources, and impacts to those resources. The hydrology region of influence includes surface-water and groundwater resources within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor and within a 1-kilometer (0.6-mile) region of influence along each side of the corridor. The region of influence for surface water includes areas near construction activities, areas that would be affected by permanent changes in surface-water flow, and areas downstream of construction. The region of influence for groundwater includes hydrographic regions.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS analyzed surface water resources within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor and within 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) along each side of the corridor, and springs within 5 kilometers (3 miles) along each side of the corridor. The attributes used to assess surface water were the potential for introduction and movement of contaminants, potential for changes to runoff and infiltration rates, alterations in natural drainage, and potential for flooding or dredging and filling actions to aggravate or worsen any of these conditions.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS analysis also addressed the potential for a change in infiltration rates that could affect groundwater, the potential for introduction of contaminants, the availability of water for use for construction, the potential for changing flow patterns, and the potential that such use would affect other users.

DOE obtained information from (1) the National Hydrography Dataset Waterbody geospatial data that the U.S. Geological Survey developed in cooperation with Environmental Protection Agency; (2) the Geographic Names Information System Nevada geospatial database developed by the U.S. Geological Survey and the BLM; and (3) the National Wetlands Inventory database managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 30).

3.2.3.1 Hydrology Affected Environment

3.2.3.1.1 Surface Water

The analysis of surface-water resources discusses proximity of the Mina rail corridor to *playas*, seeps, springs, *floodplains*, *wetlands*, and *perennial* surface waters and is commensurate with the analyses in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The National Wetlands Inventory identifies surface-water resources such as wetlands or lakes along the Mina rail corridor and its options. For clarification, most lakes identified for the Mina rail corridor are actually playas and are referred to as such in this section. In general, a playa

forms in semiarid and *arid* environments when surface-water runoff temporarily fills a depression on the surface of the ground with water, creating a lake; playas are seasonal. Wetlands typically occur where surface water collects or groundwater discharges, which makes the area wet for extended periods.

The National Wetlands Inventory indicates that the only perennial surface water the Mina rail corridor and its options would cross is the Walker River. Schurz bypass options 1 or 2 would cross the Walker River just north of the Weber Reservoir, and Schurz bypass option 3 would cross it just south of the Weber Reservoir.

Table 3-3 summarizes surface-water resources within the region of influence and their proximity to the Mina rail corridor. This table also lists the location of a riparian area in relation to the corridor, further discussed in Section 3.2.4.

Table 3-3. Surface-water resources along the Mina rail corridor^a (page 1 of 3).

Mina rail corridor option/common corridor segment	Distance from corridor	Feature ^b
Schurz bypass 1	Would be within/cross	Perennial stream/riparian area; corridor would cross the Walker River north of the Weber Reservoir.
Schurz bypass 1	Would be within/cross	Wetlands; corridor would cross and be adjacent to freshwater emergent wetland areas, where it would cross the Walker River.
Schurz bypasses 1 and 2	0.5 kilometer to 1 kilometer	Perennial lake/pond; corridor would be adjacent to Weber Reservoir.
Schurz bypass 3	Would be within/cross	Perennial stream; corridor would cross Walker River just north of the town of Schurz.
Schurz bypass 3	4 kilometers	Spring; Paiute Spring, and one unnamed spring, 3 kilometers west of U.S. Highway 95, 10 kilometers from the town of Schurz.
Schurz bypasses 1 and 3	Would be within/cross	Playas; corridor would cross five unnamed playas and be adjacent to several other unnamed playas in an unnamed valley, just south of the Calico Hills, approximately 8 kilometers east of Schurz.
Schurz bypasses 1 and 2	Would be within/cross	Playas; corridor would cross two unnamed playas, approximately 4.5 kilometers east of Schurz.
Schurz bypasses 1 and 3	1.2 to 1.3 kilometers	Springs; Double Springs and an unnamed spring, 10 kilometers east of the town of Schurz on the Walker River Paiute Reservation.
Schurz bypass 1	0.1 to 1 kilometer	Playas; playas, freshwater emergent wetland areas, and freshwater forested/shrub wetland areas adjacent to the corridor as all options come together joining with the existing Union Pacific Railroad Hazen Branchline. These areas are north of Walker Lake, adjacent to U.S. Highway 95, 7 kilometers from the town of Schurz.
Schurz bypass 1	2.6 to 4.3 kilometers	Spring; three unnamed spring/seeps just north of Walker River, adjacent to U.S. Highway 95.

Table 3-3. Surface-water resources along the Mina rail corridor^a (page 2 of 3).

Mina rail corridor option/common corridor segment	Distance from corridor	Feature ^b
Common corridor segment 1	Would be within/cross	Playas; corridor would cross two unnamed playas about 14 kilometers east of the town of Hawthorne.
Common corridor segment 1	Would be within/cross	Playas; corridor would cross large playas at the foot of the Garfield Hills along U.S. Highway 95, 20 kilometers outside of Hawthorne.
Common corridor segment 1	0.5 kilometer	Playa; corridor would be adjacent to a playa in Soda Springs Valley, along U.S. Highway 95, about 23 kilometers outside of Hawthorne.
Common corridor segment 1	1 kilometer	Playa; corridor would be adjacent to a large playa in Alkali Flat, just south of the town of Luning.
Common corridor segment 1	Crosses/encroaches	Playa; corridor would encroach and cross a large playa in the town of Mina.
Common corridor segment 1	3.5 kilometers	Spring; Southern Pacific Spring, 5 kilometers east of the town of Mina.
Common corridor segment 1	2.1 to 2.3 kilometers	Springs; Soda Springs, including two unnamed springs, just north of the town of Sodaville, along U.S. Highway 95.
Common corridor segment 1	2.6 kilometers	Springs; Martin Spring and an unnamed spring, 6 kilometers east from the town of Sodaville.
Common corridor segment 1	4.4 to 4.6 kilometers	Springs; three unnamed springs at the base of the Pilot Mountains, east of Sodaville.
Common corridor segment 1	3.2 to 4.9 kilometers	Springs; three unnamed springs within the Rhodes Salt Marsh, approximately 3 kilometers along U.S. Highway 95.
Common corridor segment 1	0.2 kilometer	Spring; corridor would encroach an unnamed spring 2 kilometers north of Coaldale.
Montezuma 2	Would be within/cross	Playa; corridor would cross two large playas and one small playa approximately 13 kilometers east of Blair Junction along U.S. Highway 95.
Montezuma 2	Would be within/cross	Small playas; corridor would cross and be adjacent to several small playas, approximately 18 to 20 kilometers from Blair Junction.
Montezuma 2	Would be within/cross	Playas; corridor would cross three small playas, totaling 0.0041 square kilometer, 10 kilometers southwest of Tonopah.

Table 3-3. Surface-water resources along the Mina rail corridor^a (page 3 of 3).

Mina rail corridor option/common corridor segment	Distance from corridor	Feature ^b
Montezuma 2	1 kilometer	Playa; Millers Pond, a small playa, is adjacent to the corridor along U.S. Highway 95, approximately 5 kilometers from Millers.
Montezuma 2	1.9 to 2 kilometers	Springs; West Spring and three unnamed springs, 3 kilometers northwest of the town of Goldfield.
Montezuma 2	3.8 kilometers	Springs; Sulphur Spring and two unnamed springs, 4 kilometers west of Goldfield.
Montezuma 2	0.9 kilometer	Spring; Slaughterhouse Spring, 1.5 kilometers west of the town of Goldfield.
Montezuma 2	Would be within/cross	Spring; Rabbit Spring and one unnamed spring, within the outskirts of the town of Goldfield.
Montezuma 2	0.4 kilometer	Playa; large playa adjacent to corridor in Stonewall Flat, 3 kilometers northeast of Lida Junction.
Montezuma 1	0.5 kilometer	Spring; Hot Springs adjacent to the corridor in the town of Silver Peak.
Montezuma 1	0.9 kilometer	Spring; Silver Peak Spring adjacent to the corridor in the town of Silver Peak.
Montezuma 1	0.2 to 10 kilometers	Pond; evaporative pond east of the corridor just outside of Silver Peak, associated with local mining operations.
Montezuma 1	Would be within/cross	Pond; corridor would cross mine tailing pond in the town of Silver Peak.
Montezuma 1	4.6 to 4.7 kilometers	Spring; two springs (Twin Springs) 15 kilometers northeast of the town of Silver Peak.
Montezuma 1	3.1 to 3.6 kilometers	Spring; two unnamed springs near the top of Montezuma Peak, in the Montezuma Range.
Bonnie Claire 3	Would be within/cross	Playa; corridor would cross a large playa along U.S. Highway 95, 6 kilometers south of Lida Junction.
Oasis Valley 1	0.4 to 4.5 kilometers	Springs; More than 40 springs in the area of Oasis Valley between Springdale and Beatty along U.S. Highway 95.
Oasis Valley 3	0.2 kilometer	Pond; perennial pond, Colson Pond, is adjacent to the corridor in Oasis Valley, 7 kilometers from Springdale.
Oasis Valley 3	Would be within/cross	Spring; Warm Springs located adjacent to Colson Pond, within the corridor in Oasis Valley, 7 kilometers from Springdale.

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, pp. 31 and 32.

b. To convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.62137, to convert square kilometers to acres, multiply by 247.10.

In addition to the surface-water resources identified in Table 3-3, the following floodplains occur within the region of influence of the Mina rail corridor:

Montezuma option 1

- Floodplain from Jackson Wash and Jackson Wash tributaries
- Alkali Lake Playa floodplain (not mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency)

Montezuma option 2

- Floodplain between Stonewall Mountains and Cuprite Hills and is associated with Stonewall Flat

Bonnie Claire 3

- Floodplains extending up tributaries of the Lida Valley Alkali Flat Playa and up the Stonewall Pass wash from the Bonnie Claire Flat area of Sarcobatus Flat

Common corridor segment 5

- Floodplain of the Amargosa River within Thirsty Canyon

Oasis Valley option 1

- Floodplain of the Amargosa River within Thirsty Canyon

Oasis Valley option 3

- Beatty Wash floodplain extending from the Amargosa River floodplain

Common corridor segment 6

- Busted Butte Wash draining east side of Yucca Mountain to Fortymile Wash (rail line would cross wash and tributaries)
- Drill Hole Wash draining east side of Yucca Mountain to Fortymile Wash (wash and tributary crossed)
- Midway Valley Wash draining east side of Yucca Mountain to Drill Hole Wash, then to Fortymile Wash

3.2.3.1.2 Groundwater

The State of Nevada is divided into hydrographic regions (groundwater basins) and subbasins (hydrographic areas).

The Mina rail corridor and its options would cross three hydrographic regions: Death Valley Basin (Region 14), Central (Region 10), and Walker River (Region 9). Figure 3-5 shows these hydrographic regions and their hydrographic areas. *Water Resources Assessment—Mina Rail Corridor* (DIRS 180887-Converse Consultants 2007, all) contains a quantitative overview of existing groundwater appropriations for each basin in the corridor and includes details on the status, type of use, and approximate quantity of water currently used in each basin.

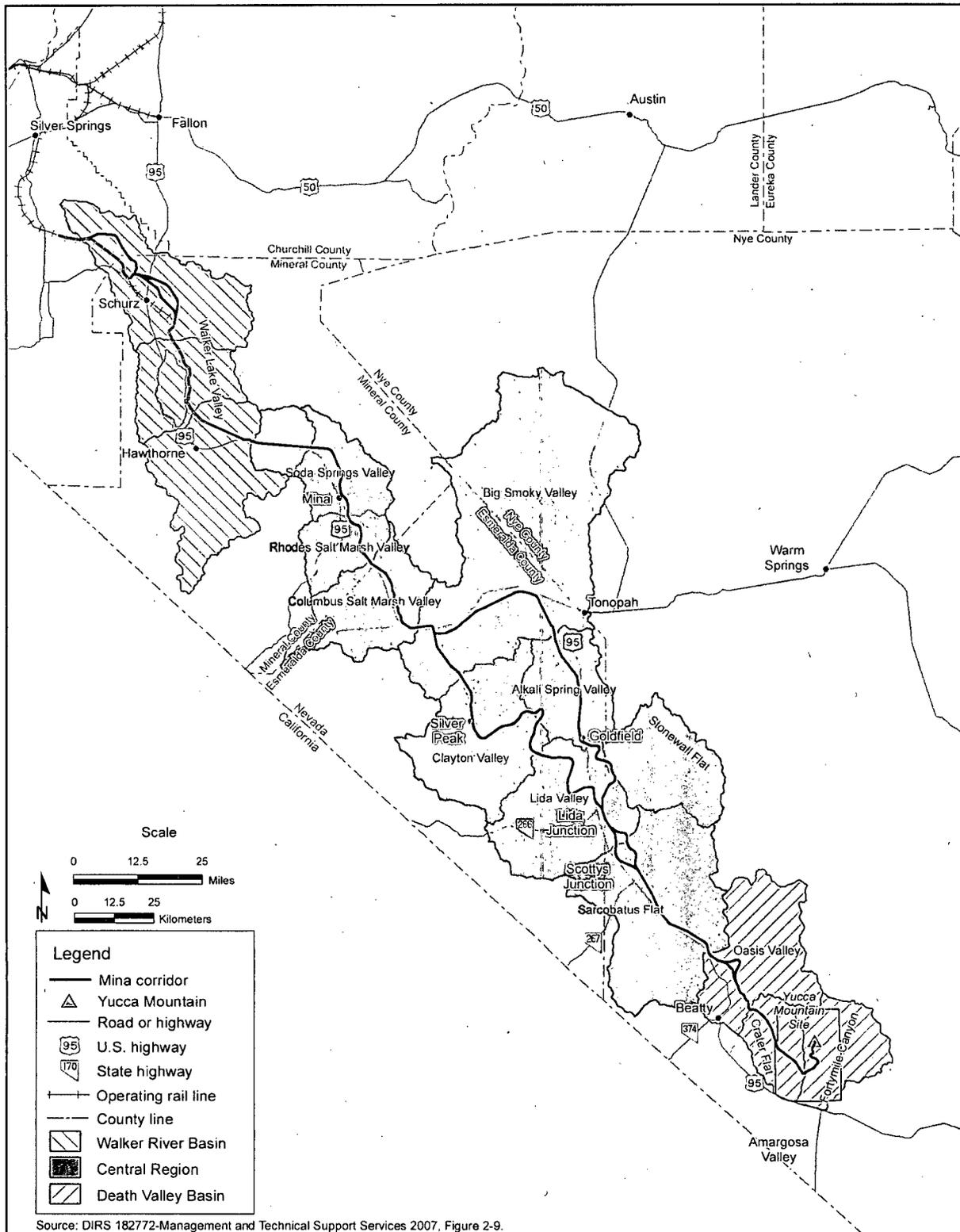


Figure 3-5. Hydrographic regions and areas associated with the Mina rail corridor.

3.2.3.2 Potential Impacts to Hydrology

3.2.3.2.1 Surface Water

Construction in previously undeveloped areas often results in changes to natural drainage. Construction could include regrading that would allow runoff from a number of minor drainage channels to collect in a single *culvert* or pass under a single bridge, which would result in water flowing from a single location on the downstream side rather than across a broader area. This would cause some localized changes in drainage patterns, but this probably would occur only in areas where natural drainage channels are small. Compaction of soil during construction could reduce water infiltration rates and change natural runoff and drainage patterns. However, some activities would disturb and loosen the ground for some time, which could cause higher infiltration rates. DOE would adhere to engineering design standards. Therefore, impacts associated with the alteration of drainage patterns or changes to erosion and sedimentation rates or locations would be small and localized.

Rail line construction could affect floodplains, either through direct alteration of the stream-channel cross section that would affect the flow pattern of the stream, or through indirect changes in the amount of impervious surfaces and additional water volume added to the floodplain.

Construction impacts associated with these floodplains would be similar to other identified drainage areas (the alteration of natural drainage patterns and possible changes in erosion and sedimentation rates or locations). Construction in washes or other flood-prone areas could reduce the area through which floodwaters would naturally flow, which could cause water levels to rise at the upstream side of crossings. Sedimentation would be likely to occur on the upstream side of crossings in areas where the flow of water was restricted enough to cause ponding. DOE would manage sedimentation of this type under a regular maintenance program (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, p. 6-79). Therefore, impacts to floodplains from construction of the rail line that result in restrictions in flow and sedimentation would be small.

The Mina rail corridor is in a region where flash flooding is a primary concern. Although such flooding can be violent and hazardous, it is generally limited in its extent and duration, limiting the potential for impacts associated with the corridor; that is, any damage would be expected to be confined to a small portion of the corridor.

Construction of a bridge over the Walker River could have a temporary impact on the quality and flow of the river. Bridge construction would occur during periods of low flow, and DOE would implement erosion-control measures to ensure that these temporary impacts would be small. Bridge construction also could cause the temporary disturbance of freshwater emergent wetlands adjacent to the Walker River.

Installation of culverts or bridges at crossings of ephemeral streams along the corridor could alter drainage patterns and change erosion and sedimentation rates. These impacts would be confined to the area immediately around the crossing and would be small because DOE would comply with appropriate standards to design stream crossings to allow for the flow of flood waters and would implement erosion-control measures during construction of those crossings. For the same reasons, alteration of drainages would be unlikely to increase future flood damage, increase the impacts of floods on human health and safety, or cause harm to the natural and beneficial values of floodplains.

Some streams, adjacent wetlands, and ephemeral washes within the interstate Walker River and Death Valley hydrographic regions (see Figure 3-5) could be regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Department would meet the requirements of the Act prior to constructing crossings of any regulated streams, wetlands, or washes, including conducting an evaluation of alternative crossing

locations and designs that would minimize impacts to wetlands and other waters. Impacts to regulated drainages would be the same as those described above.

The Mina corridor would cross three springs: Rabbit Springs and Warm Springs, and an unnamed spring. All three are in the Mina rail corridor. DOE would adjust the rail alignment in the corridor to avoid conducting surface-disturbing activities that may impact these springs.

Construction-related impacts could involve the possible release and spread of contaminants by precipitation or intermittent runoff events or, for options near surface water, possible release to the surface water, and the need for dredging or filling of ephemeral waters. Construction-related materials that could cause contamination would consist of petroleum products (fuels and lubricants) and coolants (antifreeze) necessary to support equipment operations.

Railroad operations in the Mina rail corridor would have little impact on surface waters beyond the alterations to drainage during rail line construction. Access roads and the rail roadbed would have runoff rates different from those of the natural terrain but, given the relatively small size of the potentially affected areas in a single drainage system, there would be little impact on overall runoff quantities.

Rail line maintenance would require periodic inspections of flood-prone areas (particularly after flood events) to verify the condition of the track and drainage structures. When necessary, sediment accumulating in these areas would be removed and disposed of appropriately. Similarly, eroded areas encroaching on the rail roadbed would be repaired.

3.2.3.2.2 Groundwater

Rail line construction would require water for soil compaction, dust control, and workforce use. The water DOE would use during the construction phase would come primarily from hydrographic basins. If the hydrographic basin is designated, this means that the permitted groundwater rights approach or exceed the estimated *perennial yield*, water resources are being depleted or require additional administration, and the State Engineer has declared preferred uses of the water. Table 3-4 lists the designation status of the hydrographic basins and the percentage of the Mina rail corridor that would be in the respective basin. Approximately 39 percent of the total Mina rail corridor would be in designated basins.

DOE evaluated the water demand for rail line construction on the basis of earthwork needs and water needed for compaction. Earthwork needs would include excavation of common soil (alluvial material), ripable rock, and drill and blast (solid bedrock). Based on these considerations, total water demand for the Mina rail corridor would be approximately 7.32 million cubic meters (5,950 acre-feet) (DIRS 180877-BSC 2007, p. 2-7).

DOE estimates that the number of wells required to support construction of a rail line in the Mina rail corridor ranges from 86 to 108 wells at 60 to 77 sites, depending on corridor option. Of these, some locations might have two wells where production is anticipated to be low. Consistent with the groundwater resources analysis in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE also assumed a 1-year period for construction activities in the vicinity of each well. The pumping of groundwater from multiple wells for rail line construction could cause a temporary decrease in groundwater resources resulting from the increased demand. Groundwater withdrawal could temporarily decrease the amount of water available for underflow to a downgradient basin or spring discharge. The Nevada State Engineer would need to approve water production from any well DOE proposed to install to support rail line construction. To grant approval, the State Engineer would have to determine that the short-term demand would not cause adverse impacts for other uses and users of the groundwater resource.

Table 3-4. Hydrographic basins the Mina rail corridor would cross.^{a,b,c}

Hydrographic basin (and subbasin where applicable)	Length (kilometers)	Percent of total	Designated
Alkali Spring Valley	8	1.9	No
Big Smoky Valley/Tonopah Flat	24	5.8	Yes
Clayton Valley	53	12.8	No
Columbia Salt Marsh Valley	30	7.2	No
Crater Flat	29	7.0	No
Fortymile Canyon/Jackass Flats	14	3.4	No
Lida Valley	51	12.4	No
Oasis Valley	23	5.7	Yes
Rhodes Salt Marsh Valley	17	4.2	No
Sarcobatus Flat	48	11.7	Yes
Soda Springs Valley/Eastern Part	29	7.2	Yes
Soda Springs Valley/Western Part	18	4.5	Yes
Walker Lake Valley/Schurz Subarea	51	12.5	No
Walker Lake Valley/Whiskey Flat-Hawthorne Subarea	15	3.7	Yes

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, pp. 34 and 35.

b. To calculate water demand for each basin, multiply 5,600 acre-feet by the percentage of total.

c. Mina rail corridor basis of analysis consists of Schurz bypass option 1, common corridor segment 1, Montezuma option 1, common corridor segment 2, Bonnie Claire option 3, common corridor segment 5, Oasis Valley option 1, and common corridor segment 6.

Potential impacts to groundwater during the construction phase could include changes to infiltration rates, and new sources of contamination that could migrate to groundwater. Potential impacts would be spread over a large geographic area, so they would be small and temporary for a resource in a single area. Section 3.2.3.2.1 discussion of impacts to surface water describes potential contaminants that rail line construction could release. These contaminants would be the same for groundwater.

Construction activities would disturb and loosen the ground, which could produce greater infiltration rates. However, this situation would be short-lived because the access road and rail roadbed materials would become compacted and less porous. In either case, localized changes in infiltration would cause no noticeable change in the amount of recharge in the area.

If DOE obtained water from a source other than a newly installed well, such as importing water from another source, water would be obtained only from appropriated sources. That is, the water would be from allocations that the Nevada State Engineer had previously determined did not adversely affect groundwater resources.

Railroad operations would have little effect on groundwater resources. Water needs along the corridor would be greatly reduced and limited to water needed for maintenance and to support a greatly reduced work force. Possible changes to recharge, if any, would be the same as those at the completion of construction of the construction phase.

3.2.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND SOILS

This section describes biological resources along the Mina rail corridor. Consistent with the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE considered the potential for impacts to vegetation communities; special status species (plants and animals), including their habitat; springs, wetlands, and riparian areas; big game

habitat; and wild horse and burro *herd management areas* that could occur within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. The analysis considered special status species and big game habitat within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the corridor that could be affected by rail line construction. DOE also analyzed springs and riparian areas that could be affected by permanent changes in surface-water flows (see Table 3-3). Finally, DOE characterized soils, including soils that could support prime farmland, within the 400-meter-wide corridor (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 37).

DOE obtained location records for special status species from a statewide database managed by the Natural Heritage Program (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 37) that contains records of incidental observations of rare or protected plants, fish, and wildlife species. Other information sources included (1) the *Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan* (DIRS 179560-BLM 2001, all); (2) the *Tonopah Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision* (DIRS 173224-BLM 1997, all); (3) the *Biological Field Findings Report for Potential Rail Alignments along the Mina Route* (DIRS 182760-URS Corporation/Potomac-Hudson Engineering 2006, all); and (4) the *Mina Rail Route Feasibility Study* (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, all). Additionally, DOE obtained location information from the National Hydrography Dataset Waterbody geospatial data that the U.S. Geological Survey developed in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Geographic Names Information System Nevada geospatial database, and BLM Wild Horse and Burro Management Area Maps (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 37).

DOE obtained information from (1) the National Hydrography Dataset Waterbody geospatial data that the U.S. Geological Survey developed in cooperation with Environmental Protection Agency (2) the Geographic Names Information System Nevada geospatial database developed by the U.S. Geological Survey and the BLM and (3) the National Wetlands Inventory database managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 37).

DOE used soil survey databases from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (DIRS 176781-USDA 2006, all), to identify soil types and characteristics along the Mina rail corridor.

3.2.4.1 Biological Resources and Soils Affected Environment

3.2.4.1.1 Biological Resources

The following vegetation communities occur along the Mina rail corridor (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, p. 3-70; DIRS 182760-URS Corporation/Potomac-Hudson Engineering 2006, all):

- Stabilized dunes, vegetated dunes, and sandy soils occur in isolated areas, primarily along the northern portions of the corridor, and riparian vegetation occurs along the Walker River.
- Mixed salt desert scrub occurs at low elevations in flat valley bottoms or salt flats along the northern portions of the corridor to about the Montezuma Valley.
- The semi-desert shrub steppe community is found along portions of Montezuma option 2 west of Tonopah.
- Mojave mid-elevation mixed salt desert scrub occurs at the southern ends of Montezuma options 1 and 2 and inter-mountain sagebrush steppe occurs as Montezuma 1 crossed the Montezuma Mountain Range.
- Creosote-bursage, blackbrush, hopsage, and Mojave mixed scrub occur along the southern portions of the corridor from about common corridor segment 2 to Yucca Mountain.

The corridor and its options would cross habitat for two species classified as threatened under the Endangered Species Act: the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and Lahontan cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii henshawi*). The desert tortoise also is classified as threatened by Nevada (Nevada Administrative Code 503.080). About 50 kilometers (30 miles) of the southern portion of the corridor from Beatty Wash to Yucca Mountain is habitat for desert tortoises. However, the abundance of desert tortoises along this portion of the corridor is low to very low (DIRS 103281-Karl 1981, pp. 76 to 92; DIRS 101914-Rautenstrauch and O'Farrell 1998, pp. 407 to 411). The corridor would cross potential habitat for the Lahontan cutthroat trout at the Walker River north or south of Weber Reservoir. The Lahontan cutthroat trout occurs in Walker Lake and in the Walker River upstream to the Weber Reservoir during spawning. The upstream spawning migration of trout is blocked by the Weber Reservoir dam, although the Bureau of Indian Affairs might build a fish ladder around that dam that will enable Lahontan cutthroat trout to migrate upstream of the dam. There are no areas classified as critical habitat for these threatened species within or near the corridor.

The Railroad Valley springfish (*Crenychthis nevadae*), which is federally and state (Nevada Administrative Code 503.065) classified as threatened, and the Sodaville milkvetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus Douglas var. sesquimetalis*), a species classified as critically endangered by Nevada (Nevada Administrative Code 527.010), occur in or near Soda Spring at Sodaville. This spring is about 2.1 kilometers (1.3 miles) from the Mina rail corridor (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p. 22). The federally and state-listed (Nevada Administrative Code 503.050) endangered Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) has been observed about 4.3 kilometers (2.7 miles) from the corridor north of Beatty along U.S. Highway 95 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 38).

No plant species classified as sensitive by the BLM in Nevada have been found within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. However, the following four BLM sensitive plant species have been observed within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the corridor (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 38; DIRS 182760-URS Corporation/Potomac-Hudson Engineering 2006, all).

- *Oryctes* (*Oryctes nevadensis*) occurs about 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the southern portion of the Schurz bypass options, 2.6 kilometers (1.6 miles) from the start of common corridor segment 1, and about 0.64 kilometer (0.4 mile) from Mina common corridor segment 1 north of the town of Mina.
- Eastwood milkweed (*Asclepias eastwoodiana*) has been found about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) east of Montezuma option 1 north the town of Silver Peak and west of Weepah Hills.
- Nevada dune beardtongue (*Penstemon arenarius*) has been found about 0.64 kilometer (0.4 mile) west of common corridor segment 6 in Sarcobatus Flats.
- Two populations of the black woollypod (*Astragalus funereus*) have been documented 0.1 and 0.48 kilometer (0.06 and 0.3 mile) outside the corridor just south of Beatty Wash.

The Oasis Valley pyrg or springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis micrococcus*), a BLM-designated sensitive species, has been observed in springs from about 1.8 to more than 5 kilometers (1.1 to 3 miles) west of Oasis Valley option 1 and common corridor segment 6 north of Beatty (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 38).

The state-protected Amargosa toad (*Bufo nelsoni*) (Nevada Administrative Code 503.075) occurs in numerous springs in Oasis Valley from 1.1 to more than 5 kilometers (0.7 to 3 miles) west of Oasis Valley option 1. The Oasis Valley speckled dace (*Rhinichthys osculus* ssp.), which also is state protected (Nevada Administrative Code 503.065), occurs more than 2.6 kilometers (1.6 miles) from Oasis Valley option 1 in the same areas.

Portions of common corridor segment 6 cross habitat for the chuckwalla (*Sauromalus ater*), a lizard classified as sensitive by the BLM in Nevada.

The Mina rail corridor would cross habitat for numerous birds classified as sensitive by the BLM in Nevada, including the western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), sage thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*), and Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*). Golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) are found throughout the corridor and bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) winter along portions of the Walker River on the Walker River Paiute Reservation. These two species are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. In addition, all migratory birds found along the corridor are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

A documented occurrence of the fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*), a BLM-designated sensitive species and state-protected bat (Nevada Administrative Code 503.030), took place on the west edge of Jackass Flats about 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the corridor (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 38). Other BLM-designated sensitive bats that may occur along the Mina rail corridor include the Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*); the spotted bat (*Euderma maculatum*), a Nevada threatened species; the California myotis (*Myotis californicus*); the western small-footed bat (*Myotis ciliolabrum*); the western pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus hesperus*); and the state-protected pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 39). The corridor may cross habitat for other mammals classified as sensitive by the BLM in Nevada, including the pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*), and the dark kangaroo mouse (*Microdipidops megacephalus albiventer*).

From Hawthorne to Redlich Pass, common corridor segment 1 would pass near areas designated by the BLM as desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis Canadensis nelsoni*) yearlong habitat, and common corridor segment 2 would pass near yearlong bighorn sheep habitat north of Lone Mountain. Mina common corridor segment 6 would cross a bighorn sheep movement corridor in the Beatty Wash area. Portions of Mina common corridor segment 1 from Thorne to Blair Junction would be within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of BLM-designated yearlong habitat for pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). Montezuma option 2 would cross yearlong pronghorn antelope habitat in Montezuma Valley. Montezuma option 1 would cross yearlong mule deer habitat near the town of Silver Peak and in the Montezuma Range, and Oasis Valley option 3 would cross seasonal mule deer habitat. Mountain lions (*Felis concolor*), which are also classified as a game species in Nevada, are found throughout southern and central Nevada (DIRS 176043-BLM 1998, all, DIRS 173224-BLM 1997, all, DIRS 179560-BLM 2001, all).

The Mina rail corridor would cross four wild horse and burro management areas: Montezuma Peak, Goldfield, Stonewall, and Bullfrog. The corridor would pass within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the Garfield Flat, Silver Peak, and Pilot Mountain (or Dunlap) Herd Management Areas (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 39).

The only riparian area the Mina rail corridor would cross would be along the Walker River (see Table 3-3). There are freshwater emergent wetlands and riparian habitat at both locations being considered for crossing that river. Section 3.2.3.1.1 describes playas and associated potential wetlands within and near the corridor.

Springs within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor are Rabbit Spring and one unnamed spring, which are on the upstream edge of Montezuma corridor option 2 near the town of Goldfield. Table 3-3 lists surface-water resources in the Mina rail corridor. Additional warm springs located adjacent to Colson Pond in the Oasis Valley would be within the 400-meter-wide corridor.

3.2.4.1.2 Soils

The Farmland Protection Policy Act requires Federal agencies to take into account the adverse effects of their programs on the preservation of farmlands, including the conversion of *prime farmland*. DOE used

the soil survey databases (DIRS 176781-USDA 2006, all) to locate soils along the corridor that are classified as supporting prime farmland. Less than 1 percent of the Mina rail corridor contains soils classified as prime farmland. Those soils are on the Walker River Paiute Reservation.

A number of soil types occur throughout the Mina rail corridor. The soil types in the vicinity of the corridor can be classified in more general terms as sandy soils or dune areas, which are characteristically alkaline, salty, and basic, containing calcium carbonate, and light-colored soils. These soils also include rocky outcrops; talus slopes; and granitic and gravelly areas (DIRS 182760-URS Corporation/Potomac-Hudson Engineering 2006, p. 31, Table 1). The Schurz bypass options would pass through areas of primarily sandy soils and between Hawthorne and Blair Junction, the corridor would contain mostly areas of alluvial soils. Montezuma option 1 would pass through areas of fine-grained soils at the playa in Clayton Valley, and Montezuma option 2 would pass through areas consisting of primarily sandy soils. The remainder of the corridor, south of Lida Junction, would pass through areas of alluvial and rocky soils (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p. 27, Table 3.2-1).

Other soil characteristics that are particularly relevant to the proposed rail corridor are *erodes easily* and *blowing soil*. Soil with either of these characteristics can be quite susceptible to erosion. The erodes easily characteristic is a measure of the susceptibility of bare soil to be detached and moved by water. These soils, which tend to contain relatively high amounts of silts and *loams*, tend to erode easily when disturbed. Approximately 19 percent of the Mina rail corridor has soils with this characteristic (DIRS 176781-USDA 2006, all). The blowing soil characteristic is based on the soil survey classification of susceptibility of a given soil to wind erosion. The blowing soil characteristic identifies areas where fine-textured, sandy materials predominate and where uncontrolled soil disturbance could result in increased wind erosion. Depending on options, between 23 and 26 percent of the Mina rail corridor would have soils with the blowing soil characteristic (DIRS 176781-USDA 2006, all).

3.2.4.2 Potential Impacts to Biological Resources and Soils

Rail line construction in the Mina rail corridor would involve clearing of vegetation, excavation, and filling for subgrade within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. Maximum land disturbance within this area is approximately 37 to 41 square kilometers (9,000 to 10,000 acres).

With the exception of riparian areas, none of the vegetation communities in the Mina corridor (described in Section 3.2.4.1) are unique or rare in the region. A bridge over the riparian area along the Walker River would minimize disturbance to that vegetation community. The total land area disturbed within all community types would be small compared to the existing area of Nevada that supports those communities.

Clearing vegetation and disturbing the soil could create habitat for colonization by *noxious weeds* and *invasive species* in the Mina corridor. This could result in an increase in the abundance of such plants in the corridor, which in turn could lead to suppression of native species and increased fuel loads for wildfires. Reclamation of disturbed areas would enhance the recovery of native vegetation and reduce colonization by noxious weeds and invasive species.

There is desert tortoise habitat for about 50 kilometers (30 miles) along the southern end of the Mina rail corridor. Rail line construction would result in the permanent loss of desert tortoise habitat within the corridor. In addition, these construction activities could cause mortality of individual desert tortoises; however, desert tortoises are not abundant in this area and the likelihood of encountering tortoises would be low. Therefore, losses would be few. Relocating tortoises encountered along the route prior to construction would minimize losses of individuals. The presence of the rail line could interfere with the normal movements of individual tortoises. DOE would consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

(under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act) regarding this species and would comply with all terms and conditions imposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Lahontan cutthroat trout, a federally listed species, occurs in the Walker River downstream of the Weber Dam during spawning and could occur upstream of that dam in the future if a fish ladder is constructed. Construction of a bridge across the Walker River could increase turbidity and sedimentation, which would temporarily degrade the quality of water. However, the bridge would be constructed during periods of low flow, when the species would be rare or absent from the river, so impacts would be small. The bridge would not affect the ability of trout to migrate up the river.

The only other federally listed species near the corridor are the southwestern willow flycatcher and the Railroad Valley springfish. There is no habitat for these species in the corridor and they would not be affected.

One population of the Sodaville milkvetch, a state-protected plant species, occurs near springs that are about 2.1 kilometers (1.3 miles) from the corridor and would not be affected. There are no known populations of BLM-designated sensitive plant species within the 400-meter (0.25-mile) corridor that could be directly or indirectly affected by land-clearing activities and rail line construction. There are populations of four BLM-designated sensitive plant species that have been documented within 5 kilometers (3 miles). DOE anticipates that corridor activities would not extend to these areas and that construction activities would not affect these populations.

Two state-protected species, the Amargosa toad and the Oasis Valley speckled dace, and one BLM-protected species, the Oasis Valley pyrg or spring snail, occur in springs outside the corridor, but within 5 kilometers (3 miles) in and near Oasis Valley. DOE anticipates that corridor activities would not extend to these areas and that construction activities would not affect these populations.

Rail line construction could impact BLM-designated sensitive birds and other migratory birds through loss of suitable nesting and foraging habitat, and birds avoiding areas where there were construction activities. Rail line construction could also impact BLM-designated sensitive bat and other mammal species through loss of suitable habitat, and avoidance of areas where there were construction activities. The area of permanent loss of habitat would be small compared to available habitat in the region.

The Mina rail corridor would cross habitat for bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, mule deer, and mountain lions. It also would cross wild horse and burro herd management areas. Construction activities would reduce some habitat in these areas and have the potential to disrupt movement patterns of wild horses, burros, and game species. These animals would probably avoid contact with humans at construction locations and would temporarily move to other areas during the construction phase.

Construction of the Schurz bypass options would cause impacts to wetlands and riparian habitat during construction of a bridge over the Walker River. The affected wetland and riparian areas would be small compared to the total area of these community types in the corridor. Construction of the bridge could also cause temporary increases in sedimentation, but would not alter the natural flow or stream channel of the Walker River. Prior to initiating construction activities, DOE would consult with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine if a Section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act would be required.

The Mina rail corridor would cross three springs (see Table 3-3): Rabbit Springs and Warm Springs, and an unnamed spring. All three are in the Mina corridor. DOE would adjust the rail alignment to avoid conducting surface-disturbing activities that could affect these springs.

Impacts to soils during the construction phase would be primarily due to land disturbance. Less than 1 percent of soils in the Mina rail corridor are classified as prime farmland. These are located along the

Schurz bypass options on the Walker River Paiute Reservation. Soils throughout the corridor probably would be subject to an increase in erosion potential during the construction phase. DOE would implement dust-suppression and other measures to reduce this potential. As construction proceeded, the rail roadbed would be covered with ballast rock, which would virtually halt erosion from that area. As construction ended, disturbed areas (other than the rail roadbed and access roads) would slowly recover. Other permanent erosion-control systems would be installed as appropriate. Introduction of contaminants into the soil would also be a potential concern. Proper control of hazardous materials during construction and prompt response to spills or releases would, however, reduce this concern. Impacts to soils would be limited to disturbed areas and would be temporary and small.

Railroad operations would not lead to additional habitat losses, although maintenance activities would prevent habitat recovery in the narrow band occupied by the rail line and access roads. There could be loss of habitat due to inadvertent fires along the right-of-way from rolling-equipment operations and maintenance activities. Although passing trains probably would cause mortality of individuals of some species, losses would be unlikely to affect regional populations because all species are widespread geographically.

Passing trains could disrupt wildlife, including game animals, horses, and burros, but such effects would be transitory. Noise from a train probably would disturb animals close to the track throughout the operations phase, but this disturbance would diminish with distance from the track and over time as animals acclimated to daily disturbances from passing trains. The frequency of trains using the corridor (an average of 17 one-way trains per week) indicates that disturbance of animals near the rail line would probably be minimal. Noise from the trains could cause animals to move away from the tracks and, possibly, cause changes in migratory patterns.

Impacts to soils during the operations phase would be small because train movement would not disturb soils, and maintenance of the railbed and rails would involve minimal disturbance beyond that which had occurred during the construction phase.

3.2.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources include any historic and archaeological sites, buildings, structures, landscapes, or objects resulting from or modified by human activity and can include mining, ranching, and linear features such as roads and trails. Cultural resources designated as historic properties warrant consideration with regard to potential adverse impacts resulting from proposed federal actions.

The region of influence for cultural resources is the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. This area includes the area of potential disturbances that could have indirect impacts on cultural resources. DOE conducted an archeological site file search using records from the Desert Research Institute, the Nevada Cultural Resources Information System, and archeological information repositories at the Harry Reid Center at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and the Nevada State Museum in Carson City.

3.2.5.1 Cultural Resources Affected Environment

In 2007, DOE conducted a records search for the Mina rail corridor for a width of 400 meters (0.25 mile) and identified several cultural resources sites along the Schurz bypass options, some of which are eligible or potentially eligible for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places*. These include the historic Rawhide Western Railroad grade and Reese River Road stage route, and several prehistoric sites.

The Mina rail corridor would follow various lengths of some historic railroads between Hawthorne and Tonopah Junction, south toward the town of Silver Peak, and intersect or follow many segments of the

former Las Vegas and Tonopah line along common corridor segment 2, south of the town of Goldfield. In these locations, DOE would refurbish the historic rail beds for use with the proposed rail line. Eligible or unevaluated resources associated with the railroads include the Sodaville to Tonopah freight road, railroad stations, abandoned grades, construction-related features, workers' encampments, and resources associated with Luning, Mina, Coaldale, and other towns established along the rail lines.

A portion of the Mina rail corridor would run just south of Miller's Townsite, a station on the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad and a mill site for silver ore. The corridor would pass near known historic graves and the historic cemetery at Miller's Townsite. In addition, the corridor would run adjacent to Cuprite, an unrecorded railroad station along the abandoned rail line of the former Bullfrog Goldfield Railroad near Ralston. The station had a post office and served the mining camps of Lida, Hornsilver, Bonnie Claire, and Tule Canyon in the early twentieth century. Also, a number of prehistoric sites, some of which are eligible or potentially eligible for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places*, are located nearby.

A portion of the Mina rail corridor would run just west of the current boundary of the Goldfield Historic District, but early photographs of Goldfield reflect that the town extended west to the base of Malpais Mesa. To the north, a portion of the corridor would be just east of the Goldfield Cemetery, but there is historic confusion over some burial-plot locations, so the actual boundary location is in question. The corridor would also run through the extensive historic Goldfield dump, which is eligible for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places*. In addition, there is the potential for buried prehistoric sites at nearby springs, as evidenced by prehistoric rock art (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 42).

Other areas of the Mina rail corridor would be within 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) of several cultural resource sites, including a Western Shoshone village, petroglyphs near Beatty and Schurz, and Black Cone in Crater Flats, which ethnographers and American Indians have identified as places of religious significance or power (DIRS 102043-AIWS 1998, all).

The site-file search for the Mina rail corridor identified 132 previously recorded archaeological sites (see Table 3-5). The prehistoric and historic sites identified range in size from isolated artifacts and scatters of artifacts to town sites and transportation networks (such as stage roads and railroad grades). About 21 percent are considered to be eligible for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places*. There are 35 sites that have not been evaluated for eligibility. Based on the results of site-file searches for the Mina rail corridor, it appears that less than 5 percent of the corridor has been surveyed (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 43).

3.2.5.2 Potential Impacts to Cultural Resources

Prior to construction of a rail line, field surveys to identify cultural resources and potentially, measures to mitigate impacts to those resources, would be required. If cultural resources were encountered, a qualified archaeologist coordinating with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer and DOE would participate in directing activities to ensure that the resources were properly protected or the impact mitigated. DOE would implement procedures to avoid or reduce direct impacts to cultural resources in construction areas of surface-disturbing activities. Nevertheless, there could be direct impacts to cultural resources (such as disturbing the sites or crushing artifacts) during construction activities.

There could be indirect impacts to cultural resources during the construction phase as a result of increased access and increased numbers of workers near cultural resource sites. These factors would increase the probability for either intentional or inadvertent indirect impacts to cultural resources. However, overall impacts would be small.

No additional direct or indirect impacts to cultural resources would be expected during the operations phase.

Table 3-5. Number of previously recorded cultural resource sites within the 400-meter (0.25-mile) area of the Mina rail corridor.^a

<i>National Register of Historic Places</i> status	Prehistoric	Historic	Prehistoric and historic	Unknown	Totals
Eligible	2	22	4	0	28
Not eligible	41	17	11	0	69
Unknown	15	15	2	3	35
Totals	58	54	17	3	132

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 43.

3.2.6 OCCUPATIONAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

The analysis for occupational and public health and safety focuses on traffic, worker industrial safety, incident-free radiological and nonradiological impacts, and radiological impacts related to accidents. To estimate transportation impacts, DOE defines the region of influence for the Mina rail corridor as beginning at the Hazen siding in Churchill County, Nevada, and ending at Yucca Mountain. The impacts do not include those from transportation from the Nevada border to the Hazen siding. The region of influence for each includes:

- Traffic impacts: The 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide rail corridor and public highways that would be used by workers and for shipments of materials and supplies during the construction and operations phases
- Worker industrial safety impacts: The 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide rail corridor
- Incident-free radiological and nonradiological impacts: The 800-meter (0.5-mile)-wide area on either side of the centerline of the rail corridor
- Radiological impacts related to accidents: An area within an 80-kilometer (50-mile) radius from a potential occurrence location in the rail corridor

DOE obtained information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for 2005. The Department also used the RADTRAN 5 computer program (DIRS 150898-Neuhauser and Kanipe 2000, all; DIRS 155430-Neuhauser, Kanipe, and Weiner 2000, all) and the RISKIND computer program (DIRS 101483-Yuan et al. 1995, all) where applicable.

3.2.6.1 Occupational and Public Health and Safety Affected Environment

During the construction and operations phases, common industrial hazards could cause health and safety impacts to workers. The categories of worker impacts include total recordable cases per 100 full-time-equivalent workers, lost-workday cases per 100 full-time-equivalent workers, and fatalities per 100 full-time-equivalent workers. Total recordable cases are occupational injuries or occupation-related illness that result in (1) a fatality, regardless of the time between the injury or the onset of the illness and death, (2) lost workday cases (nonfatal), and (3) incidents that result in the transfer of a worker to another job, termination of employment, medical treatment, loss of consciousness, or restriction of motion during work activities.

Table 3-6 lists Bureau of Labor Statistics incident-rate statistics for 2005 used to estimate total recordable cases, lost workday cases, and fatalities for involved and noninvolved workers during the construction and operations phases. For this analysis, involved workers are personnel who would be involved in construction or operations activities. Noninvolved workers are personnel who would be involved in

Table 3-6. Incident-rate statistics for estimation of industrial safety impacts from railroad construction and operations in the Mina rail corridor.^a

Activity	Total recordable cases per 100 FTEs ^b		Lost workday cases per 100 FTEs		Fatalities per 100 FTEs	
	Involved	Noninvolved	Involved	Noninvolved	Involved	Noninvolved
Construction	5.6	2.4	3.1	1.3	0.011	0.0035
Operations	2.5	2.4	1.9	1.3	0.018	0.0035

a. Sources: DIRS 179129-BLS 2007, all; DIRS 179131-BLS 2006, all.

b. FTE = full-time equivalent; one full-time equivalent is 2,000 labor hours.

management, administration, and security. The Bureau of Labor Statistics compiled the health and safety statistics by employment sectors; the sectors used for this analysis include Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction; Management of Companies and Enterprises; Transportation and Warehousing: Rail Transportation; and Support Activities for Transportation. Sectors analyzed for fatality incident statistics included Construction, Professional and Business Services, and Transportation and Warehousing.

3.2.6.2 Potential Impacts to Occupational and Public Health and Safety

The occupational and public health and safety impact analysis focused on transportation impacts, worker industrial safety impacts, incident-free radiological and nonradiological impacts, and radiological and nonradiological impacts in relation to accidents.

3.2.6.2.1 Industrial Safety

The analysis based the estimates of industrial safety impacts from railroad construction on full-time-equivalent workers per year; with the assumption that there are 2,000 hours per worker-year this would be about 6,500 full-time-equivalent worker-years (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 44). The analysis based the estimates of industrial safety impacts from railroad operations in the Mina rail corridor on about 60 full-time-equivalent workers each year, about 2,000 worker-years. Table 3-7 lists estimated industrial safety impacts to workers during construction and the estimated industrial safety impacts of railroad operations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Mina rail corridor for up to 50 years.

Table 3-7. Impacts to workers from industrial hazards during the construction and operations phases.^a

Group and industrial hazard category	Construction	Operations ^b	Total
<i>Involved worker</i>			
Total recordable cases ^c	300	37	337
Lost workday cases	170	28	198
Fatalities	0.6	0.26	0.86
<i>Noninvolved worker</i>			
Total recordable cases	30	12	42
Lost workday cases	16	6.4	22.4
Fatalities	0.04	0.02	0.06
Totals^d			
Total recordable cases	330	49	379
Lost workday cases	180	35	215
Fatalities	0.6	0.3	0.92

a. Estimates of worker-years multiplied by accident rate (DIRS 179129-BLS 2007, all; DIRS 179131-BLS 2006, all).

b. Totals for railroad operations occurring up to a 50-year operations period.

c. Total recordable cases include injuries and illness.

d. Totals might differ from sums of values due to rounding.

3.2.6.2.2 Transportation

This analysis includes estimated impacts from the transportation of construction material to the construction sites and impacts from commuting workers. There could be traffic fatalities and vehicle emission impacts during the movement of equipment and delivery of materials for construction, worker commutes to and from construction sites, and transport of water to construction sites. Table 3-8 lists the impacts of transportation during the construction phase. As shown, four of the fatalities could be from traffic accidents during the construction phase. An additional 0.54 fatality could be from cancer related to vehicle emissions during the construction phase.

Table 3-8. Transportation impacts during railroad construction in the Mina corridor.^a

Transportation impact category	Traffic fatalities	Latent cancer fatalities	Total
<i>Vehicle emission impacts (cancer fatality)</i>			
Material delivery vehicles	–	0.04	
Worker commuting	–	0.5	
Subtotal		0.54	
<i>Transportation accidents (fatalities)</i>			
Material delivery vehicles	0.3	–	
Worker commuting	3.7	–	
Subtotal	4.0		
Totals^b	4.0	0.54	4.6

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 45.

b. Numbers are presented using two significant figures. Totals might differ from sums of values due to rounding.

The transportation of *spent nuclear fuel* and *high-level radioactive* waste in the Mina rail corridor could result in radiological and nonradiological impacts to workers and the public. Radiological impacts could result from *radiation* the rail *cask* contents would emit during incident-free transportation, from *radionuclides* released from the cask during transportation accidents, or from radiation the cask contents emitted because of a loss of shielding during a transportation accident. Nonradiological impacts (vehicle emission-related fatalities) could result from diesel locomotives and fugitive dust, and from nonradiological transportation accidents that involved workers and members of the public.

To estimate transportation impacts, DOE defined the region of influence beginning at the Hazen siding in Churchill County, Nevada, and ending at Yucca Mountain. For incident-free transportation, the potential human health impacts for transportation workers and populations along the corridor were estimated. Transportation workers would include train crews, security escorts, workers at the staging yard, and workers who could be exposed to radiation at sidings when a train carrying loaded casks passed. Members of the public would include people living within 0.8 kilometers (0.5 mile) of the Mina rail corridor and around the staging yard. The analysis used the RADTRAN 5 computer program (DIRS 150898-Neuhauser and Kanipe 2000; DIRS 155430-Neuhauser, Kanipe, and Weiner 2000) and the RISKIND computer program (DIRS 101483-Yuan et al. 1995) to estimate these impacts.

For transportation accidents, DOE estimated radiological impacts for accidents that involved releases of radioactive material from the shipping casks, accidents that involved a reduction in the shielding of the shipping casks, and accidents in which no release of radioactive material and no deformation of shielding occurred. For these accidents, the analysis used the RADTRAN 5 program to estimate radiological accident risks (probability of occurrence times consequences) for a complete spectrum of accidents. In addition, DOE estimated the number of traffic fatalities that would result from nonradiological transportation accidents.

Chapter 6 and Appendix J of the Yucca Mountain FEIS describe the methods and data DOE used to estimate the radiation doses for workers and members of the public. Since DOE completed the Yucca

Mountain FEIS, the repository design and operational plans have evolved. There have also been changes to some of the data DOE used to estimate radiation doses and radiological impacts. These changes include the use of updated latent cancer fatality conversion factors, radiation dosimetry, additional escorts, dedicated trains, 2000 Census data, shipment estimates, radionuclide inventories, exposure times and staffing estimates, and sabotage release fractions (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 46).

3.2.6.2.2.1 Workers along the Mina Rail Corridor. During the shipment of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste from the Hazen siding to the repository, workers on the trains and those working along the rail line could be exposed to direct radiation from approximately 9,500 shipping casks. Table 3-9 lists the estimated radiation doses and impacts for involved workers. The estimated collective radiation dose for the operations phase would be 310 person-rem. The estimated number of latent cancer fatalities would be 0.18 (about 1 chance in 6 that there would be one cancer fatality in the exposed worker population) for a radiation-related latent cancer fatality in this group.

3.2.6.2.2.2 Workers at the Staging Yard. When shipping casks arrived at the staging yard, personnel would remove the railcars that carried the casks from the train, inspect them, and transfer them to another train for transport to Yucca Mountain. The escorts who had accompanied the shipping casks from their origin would be present during the inspection. For purposes of this analysis, DOE assumed these workers, inspectors, and escorts would be exposed to direct radiation from approximately 9,500 shipping casks. In addition, the analysis assumed that noninvolved workers would be exposed to direct radiation during these activities.

The estimated collective radiation dose for involved and noninvolved workers at the staging yard would be 250 person-rem. The estimated number of latent cancer fatalities for these workers would be 0.15. Staging yard and other facilities workers would participate in a radiation protection program and would not be exposed to radiation greater than the administrative control level for repository facilities of 0.5 rem per year. This requirement could limit the number of hours a worker would be able to work at the staging yard to fewer than 2,000 per year.

3.2.6.2.2.3 Maximally Exposed Workers. The maximally exposed worker could be an escort. This person could receive an estimated radiation dose of about 17 rem, based on a 0.5-rem-per-year radiation dose administrative control level (DIRS 174942-BSC 2005, Section 4.9.3.3). The estimated probability of a latent cancer fatality for a maximally exposed worker would be 0.01. Escorts and other railroad workers would participate in a radiation protection program and would not be exposed to radiation greater than the radiation dose administrative control level for repository facilities of 0.5 rem per year (DIRS 174942-BSC 2005, Section 4.9.3.3). In some cases, this requirement could limit escorts to work fewer than 2,000 hours per year on the railroad.

3.2.6.2.2.4 Members of the Public along the Mina Rail Corridor. During the shipment of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste from the Hazen siding to Yucca Mountain, people along the rail line could be exposed to direct radiation from approximately 9,500 shipping casks.

Table 3-9 lists the radiation impacts for members of the public along the Mina rail corridor. The estimated collective radiation dose over the operations phase for members of the public would be 1.4 person-rem. The estimated number of latent cancer fatalities would be 0.00082 (about 1 chance in 1,200 that there would be one cancer fatality in the group of exposed members of the public).

The *maximally exposed individual* could be a person who lived beside the rail line operations right-of-way. The estimated radiation dose for this individual would be 0.0078 rem over the operations phase. The estimated probability of a latent cancer fatality for this individual would be 0.0000047.

Table 3-9. Operations impacts of transportation for the Mina rail corridor.^a

Transportation impact category	Traffic fatalities	Radiation dose (rem or person-rem)	Probability of LCFs ^b	Number of LCFs	Total
Maximally exposed individual		0.0078	0.0000047	–	
Workers		550		0.33	
Along corridor	–	310	–	0.18	
At staging yard		250		0.15	
Maximally exposed worker	–	17	0.01	–	
<i>Incident-free radiological impacts (LCFs)</i>					
Public	–	1.4	–	0.00082	
<i>Radiological accident (LCFs)</i>		0.012	–	0.0000074	
<i>Vehicle emission impacts (cancer fatalities)</i>					
Waste transportation	–	–	–	0.0034	
Worker commuting	–	–	–	0.4	
<i>Transportation accidents (fatalities)</i>					
Waste transportation	0.31	–	–	–	
Worker commuting	3.3	–	–	–	
Totals	3.6	–	–	0.7	4.3

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 46.

b. LCF = latent cancer fatality.

People along the Mina rail corridor could be exposed to diesel exhaust and fugitive dust from railroad operations and maintenance. Table 3-8 lists these nonradiological vehicle emission impacts. There could be 0.0034 fatality from waste transportation and 0.4 fatality from workers commuting.

3.2.6.2.3 Accidents

The potential risks of transportation could be associated with three types of accidents: (1) an accident that released radioactive material from the shipping cask, (2) an accident in which no release of radioactive material occurred but there was a deformation of shielding because of lead shield displacement, and (3) an accident in which no release of radioactive material and no deformation of shielding occurred. The impacts from these types of accidents are known as the radiological accident dose risk, and are quantified in terms of latent cancer fatalities. The impacts of traffic fatalities involving the casks were also estimated.

Table 3-9 lists impacts from these types of accidents. Over the operations phase, the estimated dose risk from a radiological accident would be 0.0000074 latent cancer fatality. Over this same time period, the estimated risk of a nonradiological transportation accident fatality would be 0.31.

In summary, Table 3-9 lists the estimated radiological and nonradiological impacts for workers and members of the public from the transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in the Mina rail corridor. The estimated total number of fatalities for rail corridor operations would be 4.3. Approximately three of these fatalities would be from traffic accidents that involved commuting workers; other estimated impacts would be about 1 fatality. Estimated radiological exposures to workers would account for about 8 percent of the estimated fatalities, while radiological exposure of members of the

public, and radiological accident risks, would account for less than 0.1 percent of the total fatalities. Estimated fatalities from vehicle emissions would account for about 9 percent of the total fatalities.

3.2.7 SOCIOECONOMICS

The Mina rail corridor would cross portions of Lyon, Mineral, Esmeralda, and Nye Counties and the Walker River Paiute Reservation. Most of the residential areas on the Reservation are within the boundaries of Mineral County, with a portion in Lyon County.

DOE evaluated potential impacts to five socioeconomic variables (employment, population, economic measures, housing, and public services) and developed a profile of the existing socioeconomic conditions in the region of influence. The breadth and depth of the evaluation mirrors that of the original corridor-level analysis provided in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The analysis includes the present and anticipated impacts to those variables. The region of influence for the socioeconomics analysis is defined as those Nevada counties the Mina rail corridor would cross, and the two areas where most workers would be expected to reside (the Carson City/Washoe County area and Clark County). DOE also developed a general profile of the Walker River Paiute Reservation. The analysis estimated potential changes that could result from the railroad construction and operations.

To evaluate this resource area, DOE obtained data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Nevada State Demographer, and other local and state sources. In addition, the Department utilized estimates and projections from the socio-demographic forecasting software program REMI, version 9, to develop baselines. The use of these sources is consistent with the Yucca Mountain FEIS in that the REMI projections include the same variables as those included in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

3.2.7.1 Socioeconomics Affected Environment

3.2.7.1.1 Employment and Population

Table 3-10 lists population estimates and projections anticipated for the 50-year railroad operations phase through 2067, for the four counties the Mina rail corridor would cross. The table also lists population projections for Clark County and the Carson City/Washoe County area, because those jurisdictions, which represent the largest population centers in the southern and northern portions of the corridor, respectively, would potentially provide most of the rail line construction workers (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 48).

Table 3-10. Population baselines and projections for select Nevada counties and Nevada, 2005 to 2067.^a

Jurisdiction/ year	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2067
Carson City/Washoe County	450,000	510,000	570,000	620,000	660,000	700,000	740,000	1,100,000
Lyon County	49,000	61,000	72,000	81,000	89,000	96,000	100,000	170,000
Mineral County	4,600	4,700	4,800	4,600	4,400	4,300	4,200	3,700
Esmeralda County	1,300	1,100	1,100	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,100
Nye County	41,000	52,000	61,000	68,000	73,000	78,000	84,000	131,000
Clark County	1,820,000	2,260,000	2,650,000	2,950,000	3,170,000	3,360,000	3,540,000	5,000,000
Nevada	2,540,000	3,060,000	3,540,000	3,900,000	4,190,000	4,430,000	4,680,000	6,650,000

a. Source: DIRS 178610-Bland 2007, all

Unless otherwise noted, all general demographic, social, economic, and housing information was estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau during the 2000 decennial national census and was reported in the Census American FactFinder.

Carson City has a land area of about 360 square kilometers (140 square miles). The person-per-square-mile density is approximately 370, which is considerably more than the average population density in Nevada of 18.2. Carson City had about 21,000 housing units in 2000 and a population of 52,500 that year. Carson City is the metropolitan center nearest the Mina rail corridor starting point. Per capita income in Carson City, \$20,943, was near the state’s average in the last decennial census. Carson City’s unemployment rate of 4.6 was lower than Nevada’s unemployment rate of 6.2 percent in 2000.

Washoe County has a land area of about 16,000 square kilometers (6,300 square miles) and a population density of approximately 54 per square mile, about three times the population density of the state. Washoe County had about 140,000 housing units in 2000 and a population of about 340,000. Washoe County has recently experienced strong growth; the 1990s saw an aggregate growth of nearly 33 percent and 2000-2005 saw an additional 16-percent growth in population. Per capita income in Washoe County was \$24,277, about 10 percent higher than Nevada’s per capita income that year. The Washoe County unemployment rate in 2000 was 5 percent; lower than the state’s unemployment rate of 6.2 percent.

The Carson City/Washoe County area had a population of about 450,000 in 2005. The area’s economy is dominated by the Services industry, in particular the Accommodations and Food Services sector. Services accounted for almost 42 percent of the area’s employment in 2005. Table 3-11 displays information about the demographic, social, housing, and economic characteristics of the Carson City/Washoe County area in 2000.

Table 3-11. Demographic, social, housing, and economic characteristics for select Nevada counties, the Walker River Paiute Reservation, and Nevada.^a

	Washoe County	Clark County	Esmeralda County	Lyon County	Mineral ^b County	Nye County	Walker River Paiute Reservation	Nevada
2000 Population	340,000	1,380,000	970	35,000	5,100	32,000	850	2,000,000
Minority Population ^c	92,000	547,000	190	5,700	1,500	5,000	740	695,000
Percent Minority	27	40	20	17	30	15	87	35
Individuals in poverty, 2000	33,000	146,000	150	3,500	760	3,500	270	206,000
Percent in Poverty	10	11	15	10	15	11	32	11
Per Capita Income, 1999 ^d	\$24,277	\$21,785	\$18,971	\$18,543	\$16,952	\$17,962	\$10,092	\$21,989
Housing Units	140,000	560,000	830	14,000	2,900	16,000	350	827,000
Housing Units Occupied	130,000	512,000	460	1,300	2,200	13,000	300	751,000
Percent Occupied	92	92	55	91	77	84	87	91
Individuals in civilian labor force	180,000	682,000	460	17,000	2,400	13,000	340	995,000
Employed individuals	170,000	637,000	440	15,000	2,100	12,000	260	933,000
Unemployed individuals	9,000	45,000	15	1,100	310	940	77	62,000
Individuals enrolled in school: K through 12	62,000	250,000	190	7,300	970	5,700	260	367,000

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, pp. 49 and 50.

b. Mineral County numbers include the Walker River Reservation.

c. Minority population is all individuals other than those who classify themselves as “white alone.”

d. Values, except per capita income, have been rounded to two or three significant places.

Mineral County has a land area of about 9,800 square kilometers (3,800 square miles) and a population density of 1.4 per square mile. The county experienced population declines in the 1990s. Mineral County continues to experience modest declines in population; its estimated 2005 population was 4,600. It was about 5,100 in 2000. Hawthorne, in Mineral County, had a 2000 estimated population of 3,100 and a

2005 estimated population of 3,000. In the Mina rail corridor, the U.S. Census Bureau identifies only the Hawthorne community as being urban. All other communities are classified as rural. Luning had an estimated 2000 population of 86 people and an estimated 2005 population of 87. Mina had a 2000 estimated population of 310 residents and an estimated 2005 population of 280 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 49). There are three major industries in Mineral County: Public Administration, Natural Resources/Mining/Utilities/and Construction and Services. Per capita income was estimated to be \$16,952 in the last U.S. Census, about 77 percent of Nevada's per capita income. Unemployment in the county, 12.9 percent, was twice Nevada's unemployment in 2000. The county had about 2,900 housing units and a 23 percent vacancy rate in that year. Table 3-11 lists information about the demographic, social, housing, and economic characteristics of Mineral County in 2000.

Due to the nature of the census data, Mineral County's estimated and projected population figures include residents of the Walker River Paiute Reservation. The Reservation had an estimated population of 810 in 1990 and an estimated population of 850 in 2000 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 50). There were about 350 housing units in 2000. Residents of the Reservation work primarily in retail trade, construction, and manufacturing. The 2000 unemployment rate was 22.6 percent, more than 3.5 times the Nevada unemployment rate in the same year. At the time of the last national census, per capita income on the Walker River Paiute Reservation, \$10,092, was less than 50 percent of the Nevada per capita income in that year and about 60 percent of Mineral County per capita income. Table 3-11 lists information about the demographic, social, housing, and economic characteristics of the Walker River Paiute Reservation in 2000.

Lyon County has a land area of almost 5,200 square kilometers (2,000 square miles). The county has a population density of about 17.3 per square mile, reflecting the state's average population density per square mile. There were about 14,300 housing units in 2000 while the population was about 34,500. Lyon County grew almost as rapidly as Clark, Nye, and Washoe Counties. It had 49,000 residents in 2005, up from 21,000 in 1990 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 50). Services provided about 30 percent of the county's jobs, Retail and Wholesale Trade about 20 percent, and Public Administration about 15 percent. Per capita income, \$18,543, was about 14 percent lower than the state average in 2000. Unemployment was 6.9 percent, slightly higher than the state average. Table 3-11 lists information about the demographic, social, housing, and economic characteristics of Lyon County in 2000.

Esmeralda County experienced declines in population in the 1990s, but has reversed that trend in the 21st century, growing by approximately 20 percent from 2000 to 2005. An estimated 1,300 persons lived in Esmeralda County in 2005. In 2000, Goldfield, in Esmeralda County had an estimated population of 420; in 2005, the estimated population was 440. Silver Peak had a 2000 estimated population of 160 and a 2005 estimated population of 130 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 50). The approximately 9,300-square-kilometer (3,600-square-mile) county has a population density of just 0.3 a square mile. The county had 833 housing units in 2000, but a 45 percent vacancy rate. The population in 2000 was about 970. Most jobs in Esmeralda County are in the Services industry or in the Public Administration industry, which includes the state and local government sector. Esmeralda County's per capital income was \$18,971 in 2000. Unemployment, 3.3 percent, was about 50 percent of Nevada's unemployment rate in 2000. Table 3-11 lists information about the demographic, social, housing, and economic characteristics of Esmeralda County in 2000.

Nye County's land area is more than twice that of Clark County, about 47,000 square kilometers (18,000 square miles). The population per square mile is 1.8, about a tenth of the state's average. Nye County had about 16,000 housing units and a population about 32,000 in 2000. Nye County joined the rapid population escalation by growing approximately 81 percent in the 1990s and another 25 percent from 2000 to 2005. The county's estimated population in 2005 was 41,000. Nye County is dominated by one of the Nation's fastest growing unincorporated communities, Pahrump. Growing in popularity as a

residential destination, Pahrump had an estimated population of 33,000 people in 2005 (an increase of 37 percent in 5 years), which represents more than 80 percent of the Nye County’s total population that year. The Mina rail corridor would also pass near Beatty and Tonopah in Nye County. The estimated 2005 populations of Beatty and Tonopah were 1,000 and 2,600, respectively (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 51). Nye County’s economy is driven by the Services industry which accounts for 44 percent of the jobs in the county. Other major industries include Retail and Wholesale trade and the Transportation/Information/Finance/Accounting industry. The estimated per capita income in Nye County at the last national census, \$17,962, was about 82 of the per capita income in Nevada. Unemployment was 7.1 percent, higher than the state’s 6.2 percent. Table 3-11 lists information about the demographic, social, housing, and economic characteristics of the Nye County in 2000.

Clark County has a land area of almost 21,000 square kilometers (8,000 square miles) and a population density of about 173.9 per square mile. Clark County had about 560,000 housing units in 2000 and a population of about 1.38 million that year. Clark County’s population grew even faster than that of Washoe County – a total of 81 percent in the 1990s and approximately 29 percent, to 1.8 million persons, by 2005. Clark County is the metropolitan center nearest the Mina rail corridor ending point. Per capita income in Clark County was \$21,785, about the average of Nevada’s that year. Unemployment in Clark County, 6.6 percent was slightly above the state’s unemployment rate of 6.2 percent. The economy in Clark County is dominated by the Services industry, particularly the Accommodations and Food Services sector which accounts for almost 50 percent of employment in the county. The Transportation/Information/ Finance/Accounting industry and the Trade industry, which is composed of retail and wholesale trade, are also major components of the economy. Table 3-11 lists information about the demographic, social, housing, and economic characteristics of the Clark County in 2000.

Table 3-11 lists characteristics of the four counties along the Mina rail corridor, the Walker River Paiute Reservation, Clark County, Washoe County, and the State of Nevada. The information in the table is the baseline for determining potential impacts to employment, population, existing housing stock, and demands on educational facilities and other public services. Table 3-12 lists information about the employment baselines in the counties that the Mina rail corridor would cross and information about Clark County and the Carson City/Washoe County area because most rail line construction workers are expected to come from those areas. Information about the State of Nevada is provided for comparison purposes.

Table 3-12. Employment baseline projections in Nevada counties in the Mina rail corridor, 2005 to 2067^a (page 1 of 2).

Jurisdiction	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2035	2067
Carson City/Washoe County employment baseline	310,000	330,000	360,000	370,000	380,000	410,000	580,000
Lyon County employment baseline	14,000	17,000	18,000	19,000	20,000	23,000	37,000
Mineral County employment baseline	2,500	2,400	2,500	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,100
Esmeralda County employment baseline	470	470	450	440	440	430	460
Nye County employment baseline	17,000	19,000	21,000	22,000	23,000	25,000	37,000

Table 3-12. Employment baseline projections in Nevada counties in the Mina rail corridor, 2005 to 2067^a (page 2 of 2).

Jurisdiction	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2035	2067
Clark County employment baseline	1,070,000	1,240,000	1,330,000	1,390,000	1,450,000	1,600,000	2,230,000
Nevada employment baseline	1,520,000	1,720,000	1,830,000	1,920,000	2,000,000	2,180,000	3,031,000

a. Source: DIRS 178610-Bland 2007, all.

3.2.7.1.2 Economic Measures

Baseline economic measures are provided for the four counties that the Mina rail corridor would cross, for Clark County and the combined Carson City/Washoe County area, and for the State of Nevada. Clark County dominates all economic measures in the state and is located near the southern end of the Mina corridor. The metropolitan Carson City/Washoe County area economy, near the northern end of the Mina corridor, is also much larger than the economies in the rural counties. Table 3-13 lists information on three economic measures: state/local government spending, real disposable income, and gross regional product.

Table 3-13. Economic measures: baselines and projections for select Nevada counties and Nevada, 2005 to 2067^{a,b} (page 1 of 2).

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2067
Carson City/Washoe County								
State/local government spending	1.90	2.17	2.56	2.89	3.18	3.47	3.77	5.85
Real disposable income	15.73	18.54	21.30	23.65	26.21	28.86	31.72	52.32
Gross regional product	23.00	27.72	33.96	39.31	44.85	51.00	57.82	103.07
Lyon County								
State/local government spending	0.19	0.24	0.30	0.35	0.40	0.44	0.49	0.85
Real disposable income	0.94	1.17	1.37	1.55	1.74	1.94	2.18	4.19
Gross regional product	0.75	0.96	1.17	1.36	1.56	1.78	2.03	4.04
Mineral County								
State/local government spending	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
Real disposable income	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.13
Gross regional product	0.16	0.14	0.16	0.16	0.18	0.19	0.21	0.25
Esmeralda County								
State/local government spending	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Real disposable income	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.06
Gross regional product	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.06
Nye County								
State/local government spending	0.16	0.20	0.25	0.29	0.32	0.36	0.39	0.64
Real disposable income	1.00	1.25	1.44	1.61	1.78	1.97	2.20	3.97
Gross regional product	1.06	1.30	1.55	1.80	2.05	2.34	2.67	4.95

Table 3-13. Economic measures: baselines and projections for select Nevada counties and Nevada, 2005 to 2067^{a,b} (page 2 of 2).

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2067
Clark County								
State/local government spending	6.55	8.47	10.55	12.15	13.44	14.63	15.79	23.31
Real disposable income	54.70	69.02	79.89	89.56	99.85	111.59	124.94	207.81
Gross regional product	86.68	109.56	131.60	151.93	173.08	197.33	224.63	393.79
Nevada								
State/local government spending	9.71	12.09	14.77	16.85	18.55	20.17	21.78	32.33
Real disposable income	77.40	95.70	110.27	123.18	136.95	152.28	169.52	279.58
Gross regional product	118.32	147.38	177.24	204.50	232.79	264.98	301.08	526.81

a. Source: DIRS 178610-Bland 2007, all.

b. All values are in 2006 dollars, in billions.

3.2.7.1.3 Public Services

3.2.7.1.3.1 Health Care. Lyon, Mineral, Nye, and Esmeralda Counties have some health care facilities, although all four counties are federally designated as health professional shortage areas for primary, dental, and mental health care (DIRS 180466-State of Nevada 2005, all; DIRS 180467-State of Nevada 2005, all; DIRS 173559-State of Nevada [n.d.], all; and DIRS 173560-State of Nevada [n.d.], all). Health care services are concentrated in Clark County, particularly in the Las Vegas area.

There is a public health clinic on the Walker River Paiute Reservation in Schurz. This clinic is staffed full time with a doctor and a nurse. This facility also has emergency medical services and emergency medical technicians (DIRS 180118-Gormsen and Merritt 2007, all).

3.2.7.1.3.2 Education. Lyon, Mineral, and Nye counties have elementary, middle, and high schools. In Nye County, the Community College of Southern Nevada has a campus in Pahrump that provides postsecondary school education. There are elementary and middle schools in Esmeralda County; high-school students from Esmeralda County attend school in Tonopah, Nye County (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, p. 3-156).

3.2.7.1.3.3 Fire Protection. Lyon, Mineral, Nye, and Esmeralda counties have professional or volunteer fire departments. At present, the Nevada Test Site provides fire protection services to the Yucca Mountain Site.

3.2.7.1.3.4 Law Enforcement. Lyon, Mineral, Nye, and Esmeralda counties have sheriff's offices, with a ratio of 1.6, 3.9, 2.2, and 5 officers to 1,000 residents, respectively. The Walker River Paiute Reservation has a police department with four law enforcement officers, which yields a ratio of 3.4 officers per 1,000 residents (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 53).

3.2.7.1.3.5 Public Roadways. Because the Mina rail corridor is primarily in remote and rural areas, the rail line would cross paved highways and roads with low traffic, and low-usage unpaved roads, including county roads, private roads, and off-road vehicle trails. While many of the unpaved roads are important to the daily activities of landowners and ranchers in the area, these roads are not heavily traveled. The exception is the existing Union Pacific Railroad Branchline between Hazen and Wabuska, which crosses public roads with moderate traffic.

3.2.7.2 Potential Socioeconomics Impacts

3.2.7.2.1 Construction Phase

Sections 3.2.7.2.1.1 through 3.2.7.2.1.3 describe potential impacts to socioeconomics associated with construction and operation of a railroad in the Mina rail corridor.

3.2.7.2.1.1 Employment and Population. The incremental changes above the employment and population baselines in Mineral County would be the result of indirect jobs created to meet the consumption needs of workers.

Mineral County had an estimated population of about 4,630 and an employment baseline of 2,550 jobs in 2005. Mineral County could gain an estimated 45 residents as a result of the construction of a rail line in the Mina rail corridor, an increase of less than 1 percent over the population baseline. Mineral County could gain an estimated 90 jobs in 2010, 70 jobs in 2011 and 2012, and 45 jobs over the baseline from 2013 to 2067. The 1-year spike in 2010 would be an increase of about 3.8 percent above the 2010 employment baseline. The average change of 45 jobs is an increase of about 1.8 percent above the employment baseline in 2013.

Generally, potential impacts in Mineral County are expected to be small and transitory in nature.

The estimated number of workers needed to construct a railroad in the corridor would be approximately 6,500 worker-years over a minimum 5-year construction period. The average construction workforce would be 1,900 workers through each of the first 3 years of construction, with a peak of about 2,100 workers. The workforce would fall to 520 and 340 in years 4 and 5, respectively.

The construction labor pool in Clark County, the Carson City/Washoe County area and, to a lesser extent, Nye and Lyon Counties is large and would be able to provide most of the necessary construction workers. DOE estimates that about 50 percent of the workers would come from Clark County and about 50 percent would come from the Carson City/Washoe County area. Therefore, there would be limited in-migration during the construction phase in these or other counties. The baseline projected population growth and development in Clark and Nye Counties (the escalating in-migration of retirees and other individuals) would lead to greater socioeconomic impacts on services, including schools. This projected population growth (unrelated to railroad construction activities) would mask potential impacts from construction activities associated with the rail line.

Estimates for railroad construction workers and expected residential distribution patterns compared to applicable baselines lead to the conclusion that impacts to Esmeralda County would be small. Because of the very large base of available construction workers in the Carson City/Washoe County area and in Clark County and the large labor pool in Lyon and Nye Counties, DOE anticipates that very few workers would be likely to relocate to these communities; therefore, impacts to population and employment baselines would be small.

Population increases associated with a railroad construction workforce in the Mina rail corridor is estimated to be small in relation to the baseline population in Clark County and in Lyon, Nye, and Washoe Counties. Incremental population increases are expected to be minimal because worker in-migration is expected to be minimal. Mineral County's incremental population increase of about 45 people would be less than 1 percent of the population baseline.

Because of the temporary nature of a linear construction project, workers would not be likely to relocate their families to communities along the corridor. Based on these assumptions, DOE estimates that impacts to population, and therefore to housing and schools, in the counties along the corridor would be

small. It is likely that workers would spend a portion of their wages on food, gasoline, and other incidentals, but would spend most earnings in the counties where they live. Therefore, estimated impacts from construction activities on local populations would be small.

The analysis of Mineral County includes potential impacts to the population and employment baseline of the Walker River Paiute Reservation. Impacts to population and employment on the Reservation, if any, when considered individually rather than as part of the impacts to Mineral County, would be small because there would be no change to the employment base from in-migrating workers and no change to population because there would be no change to the employment baseline. The nature of the construction activities is sufficiently short in duration and transitory in nature that migration to Reservation land is considered unlikely.

Of the areas considered, the two most likely to experience changes in population from construction of a railroad in the Mina rail corridor are Clark County and the Carson City/Washoe County area, which are assumed to provide most of the construction workers. Estimates regarding the number of construction workers could affect employment, which in turn could result in changes to population baselines. Because the employment baselines in these areas are large, the expected employment increase of much less than 1 percent in Clark County and the Carson City/Washoe County area, respectively, are small in relation to those baselines. Similarly, the population changes in relation to the baselines are expected to be small and would likely be temporary.

Permanent residential patterns would not be likely to change, so impacts to county housing stocks and public education would be small. Workers and their families would continue to maintain a permanent residence in the counties where they live, with the workers commuting to construction camps for workweek assignments and returning to their permanent residences at the week's end. When considered individually, impacts to population and employment baselines in Esmeralda and Mineral Counties would be larger than that of the other counties considered in this analysis, but less than 1 percent. Esmeralda County would experience a peak population increase of about 20 in 2014, but those new residents would leave the county when after the end of the construction phase. The county could gain as many as 20 jobs at the beginning of the construction phase, but the railroad project would not contribute additional jobs after 2015. Impacts to schools and housing would be unlikely because the number of new residents in the counties as a result of rail line construction activities would be so small.

3.2.7.2.1.2 Economic Measures. The expected changes to economic measures attributable to the construction of a railroad in the Mina rail corridor would peak about 3 years after construction activities began. Changes to gross regional product, real disposable personal income, and spending by state and local governments would be less than 2 percent above the baselines. Because Clark County and the Carson City/Washoe County area would supply most of the workers and be the permanent residences of most of the workers, Nye and Mineral Counties would be unlikely to experience noticeable changes in economic measures. Esmeralda County could experience a short-term spike in real disposable personal income and in gross regional product of 16.5 percent and 14.5 percent, respectively. Almost all of the incremental change would occur in the Accommodations and Food service industries. Spending by state and local governments could also have a short-term, but moderate increase of 4.2 percent, as local governments increased oversight personnel. The changes above the baselines would have no long-term effects on the economy.

Socioeconomic impacts attributable to the construction phase would be small in the four counties the rail line would cross. The impacts would also be small in Clark County and in the Carson City/Washoe County area, the population centers where most workers would live. The impacts would be positive; jobs would be created, real disposable personal income would increase, gross regional product would increase more quickly, and local and state governments would receive more revenue to provide public services.

3.2.7.2.1.3 Public Services. Construction impacts to public services at the county level would likely be small because the population projections with the project show very limited increases in overall counts. An additional demand on local health care capacity would be the primary impact on public services. The area that is likely to experience the greatest impact is southern Nye County.

3.2.7.2.2 Operations Phase

Sections 3.2.7.2.2.1 and 3.2.7.2.2.3 describe potential socioeconomic impacts during the railroad operations phase.

3.2.7.2.2.1 Employment and Population. Changes from baseline employment and population for some counties during railroad operations could induce socioeconomic impacts. There would be workers boarding the train as it enters the region and there would be escorts who would arrive with the cask trains. Regional workers would be needed for each train crew. There would be an estimated 42 workers for railroad operations. Because these operations workers would live in the railhead county, the most discernable impacts to population and employment from railroad operations would likely occur in Mineral County. Mineral County could gain about 45 residents as a result of railroad operations in the Mina rail corridor, an increase of less than 1 percent over the population baseline. Mineral County could gain about 45 jobs over the baseline railroad operations. This would be about a 1.8 percent increase over the employment baseline in 2015. Because the estimated operations workforce is small, increases in baseline population projections in the counties would not be likely to change. No impacts to housing would be likely from train crews. Changes to the employment and population baselines in Clark, Lyon, Nye, and Washoe Counties would be nearly imperceptible because of the large labor forces and population bases in these counties; current population growth in these counties would mask additional requirements for housing and public education. No impacts would be expected in Esmeralda County.

3.2.7.2.2.2 Economic Measures. Changes to economic measures would be expected to end in the final year of the construction phase. The impacts to baseline gross regional product, real disposable personal income, and spending by state and local governments would be less than 1 percent in Clark and Nye County and the Carson City/Washoe County area. In Mineral County, the impact of changes to economic baselines would be less than 2 percent. In Esmeralda County, the changes from the baseline would be very small when construction activities are completed and measures return to the projected baselines.

Socioeconomic impacts attributable to the operations phase would be small in the four counties the rail line would cross. The impacts would be small in Nye County and in Mineral County where most operations workers would live. The impacts would be positive; jobs would be created, real disposable personal income would increase, gross regional product would increase more quickly, and local and state governments would receive more revenue to provide public services.

3.2.7.2.2.3 Public Services. Railroad operations in the Mina rail corridor would result in small impacts to health care capacity in Lyon, Mineral, Nye, and Esmeralda Counties and on education infrastructure in southern Nye County (Pahrump). The exact extent of impacts to other public services would depend on the total number of workers and their residential locations, and operations activities in relation to existing system capacity. However, workers could create small to moderate impacts in the form of additional demand for fire-protection services in Lyon, Mineral, Nye, and Esmeralda Counties.

3.2.8 NOISE AND VIBRATION

The Yucca Mountain FEIS analysis for noise considered typical day-night sound levels and the distance of the rail line from communities, and estimated the impacts to communities from railroad construction and operations. The Yucca Mountain FEIS analysis for vibration considered the typical background level of ground vibration, the number of trains, and the distance of the rail line from historic structures or sites of cultural significance, and estimated the impacts from railroad operations.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS noise analysis used daytime and nighttime noise standards adopted by the State of Washington (Washington Administrative Code 173-58-040 to 173-60-040) for residential and commercial areas as benchmarks and for establishing the region of influence for potential impacts. To evaluate the impacts of noise from construction and operations activities for receptors in the region of influence near transportation facilities and corridors, DOE used benchmarks of:

- 60 *A-weighted decibels* (dBA) for residential use (nighttime reduction to 50 dBA)
- 65 dBA for light commercial
- 70 dBA for industrial zones

The analysis in the Yucca Mountain FEIS assumed that a limitation of 10 dBA above the benchmark is allowable if the duration is less than 5 minutes in an hour.

DOE has updated the criteria to determine the level of potential impacts from noise and vibration along the Mina rail corridor. For noise impacts from construction activities, DOE used U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, methods (DIRS 177297-Hanson, Towers, and Meister 2006, all) and construction noise guidelines listed in Table 3-14.

Table 3-14. Federal Transit Administration construction noise guidelines.^{a,b}

Land use	8-hour L_{eq} (dBA)		30-day average DNL (dBA)
	Day	Night	
Residential	80	70	75 ^c
Commercial	85	85	80 ^d
Industrial	90	90	85 ^d

a. Source: DIRS 177297-Hanson, Towers, and Meister 2006, p. 12-8.

b. dBA=A-weighted decibels; DNL = day-night average noise level; L_{eq} = equivalent sound level.

c. In urban areas with very high ambient noise levels (DNL greater than 65 dBA), DNL from construction projects should not exceed existing ambient +10 dBA.

d. Twenty-four hour L_{eq} , not DNL.

For operation of trains during the construction and operations phases, DOE analyzed noise impacts under established Surface Transportation Board (STB) criteria. The STB has environmental review regulations for noise analysis (49 CFR 1105.7e (6)), with the following criteria:

- An increase in noise exposure as measured by DNL of 3 dBA or more
- An increase to a noise level of 65 DNL or greater

Day-night average noise level (DNL):

The energy average of A-weighted decibels (dBA) sound level over 24 hours; includes an adjustment factor for noise between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. to account for the greater sensitivity of most people to noise during the night. The effect of nighttime adjustment is that one nighttime event, such as a train passing by between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., is equivalent to 10 similar events during the day.

A-weighted decibels (dBA): A measure of noise level used to compare noise from various sources. A-weighting approximates the frequency response of the human ear.

If the estimated noise-level increase at a location would exceed either criterion, the STB then estimates the number of affected receptors (such as schools, libraries, residences, retirement communities, and nursing homes). The two components (3 dBA increase, 65 DNL) of the STB criteria are implemented separately to determine an upper bound of the area of potential noise impact. However, current noise research indicates that both criteria must be met to cause an adverse noise impact (DIRS 173225-STB 2003, p. 4-82). That is, sound levels would have to be greater than or equal to 65 DNL and increase by 3 dBA or more for an adverse noise impact to occur.

Consistent with the analysis conducted in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE based the estimates of potential operations impacts from noise on the passage of a two-locomotive, 10-railcar train traveling at 80 kilometers (50 miles) per hour. Current estimates of train size are similar, with two to three locomotives and four to nine cask, buffer, and escort cars, with six railcars being typical (DIRS 175036-BSC 2005). DOE considered the proximity of the Mina rail corridor to centers of population and frequency of shipments. Table 3-15 lists communities within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the Mina rail corridor.

Table 3-15. Communities within 5 kilometers of the Mina rail corridor.

Community name	Approximate distance (kilometers) ^a
Goldfield	0.1
Silver Peak	0.3
Hawthorne	0.7
Mina	1.5
Schurz	1.8
Luning	2.7
Sodaville	2.7

a. To convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.62137.

There are three potential ground-borne vibration (vibration propagating through the ground) impacts of general concern: annoyance to humans, damage to buildings, and interference with vibration-sensitive activities. The approach for analyzing potential vibration impacts is based on estimates of project-generated vibration and measurements of current ambient vibration conditions. To evaluate potential vibration impacts from construction and operation activities, DOE used Federal Transit Administration building vibration damage and human annoyance criteria. Under these criteria, if vibration levels exceeded 80 VdB (human annoyance criterion for infrequent events) or if the vibration levels (measured as peak particle velocity) exceeded 0.20 inches per second for fragile buildings or 0.12 inches per second for extremely fragile historic buildings, then there could be a vibration impact (DIRS 177297-Hanson, Towers, and Meister 2006, all).

The region of influence for noise and vibration for construction and operation of a railroad along the Mina rail corridor includes the construction right-of-way out to variable distances, depending on several analytical factors (*ambient noise* level, train speed, number of trains per day, and number of railcars).

3.2.8.1 Noise and Vibration Affected Environment

Most of the Mina rail corridor would pass through unpopulated BLM-administered public lands, primarily in a quiet *desert* environment where natural phenomena such as wind, rain, and wildlife account for most of the ambient sound. The sound level at a specific location depends on nearby and distant sources of sound. Sound levels in populated areas tend to be higher than in unpopulated areas because of human activity and higher levels of transportation noise. Manmade noise in some areas of the region of influence is caused by vehicles traveling along public highways and high-altitude commercial jets. Baseline sound conditions vary somewhat in the Mina rail corridor and are site-specific. Most of the region of influence for the Mina rail corridor is typical of other desert environments in which the DNL values range from 14 dBA on calm days up to 38 dBA on windy days (DIRS 102224-Brattstrom and Bondello 1983, p. 170). In 2005, DOE conducted noise measurements in Goldfield. Ambient noise levels ranged from 30 to 44 dBA with a day-night sound level of 47 dBA (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p.

57). In March 2007, DOE conducted noise measurements near Silver Peak, Mina, and Schurz (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 57). The noise associated with railroad operations is part of the existing environment in the Schurz area where the presence of the railroad is very evident. The sounds associated with the existing branchline include wayside noise (noise generated by the cars and locomotives), and horn sounding. The Federal Railroad Administration requires train engineers to sound horns when approaching most grade crossings. Horn sounding is generally not required at private crossings. Wayside noise and horn sounding are common in Schurz and along other portions of the existing Department of Defense branchline. The day-night sound levels ranged from 34 to 48 dBA, consistent with expectations for rural towns. The other rural communities along the Mina rail corridor would likely have similar background noise levels (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 57).

Ambient vibration levels were so low that they were essentially immeasurable for Schurz, Mina, and Silver Peak. The measured ambient vibration level in Goldfield was 25 VdB.

3.2.8.2 Potential Noise and Vibration Impacts

The conclusion of this analysis using the updated impact criteria from the Federal Transit Administration and STB are broadly consistent with the conclusion that would be obtained using the methodology presented in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

3.2.8.2.1 Noise

3.2.8.2.1.1 Construction. For the most part, the Mina rail corridor would pass through areas that are remote from human habitation. Thus, the potential for noise impacts during the construction phase would be limited. Nevertheless, some people could be affected, including persons living near the corridor, using nearby recreational areas, or living in nearby rural communities. The distances from construction activities to the nearest receptors would be great; therefore, construction noise levels would be below the Federal Transit Administration noise guidelines listed in Table 3-14.

3.2.8.2.1.2 Construction Train Noise. As the rail roadbed, track, and bridges were completed, construction trains would be employed to move railroad ties, ballast, and other rail-construction equipment to other construction areas. Up to 16 one-way trains per day could pass by certain receptor locations construction phase. As with operations trains, locomotive horn sounding at grade crossings would be the dominant noise source.

DOE estimates that construction-train noise would be audible to receptors in Silver Peak and Goldfield. There would be no adverse noise impacts associated with these receptors because they would not experience a 3 dBA increase and 65 DNL or greater noise levels. The purpose of the 3 dBA increase component of STB noise guidelines is to identify potential impact areas and areas where train noise would be particularly audible. However, because transportation noise sources are audible throughout the United States, the audibility of train noise itself does not constitute an adverse noise impact.

3.2.8.2.1.3 Operations. DOE based the estimates of potential operations impacts from noise on the passage of a two- to three-locomotive, four- to eight-railcar train (one to five cask cars, two buffer cars, and one escort car). Because train speed has a direct correlation to noise generated, DOE used the top train speed to conservatively estimate potential noise levels. At present, there is no train activity in Mina, Silver Peak, or Goldfield.

DOE estimates that operations train noise would be audible to receptors in Silver Peak and Goldfield. There would be no adverse noise impacts associated with these receptors because they would not experience a 3 dBA increase and 65 DNL or greater noise levels. The purpose of the 3 dBA increase

component of STB noise guidelines is to identify potential impact areas and areas where train noise would be particularly audible. However, because transportation noise sources are audible throughout the United States, the audibility of train noise itself does not constitute an adverse noise impact.

3.2.8.2.2 Vibration Impact

3.2.8.2.2.1 Construction. Based on the proposed construction equipment and Federal Transit Administration vibration data, DOE estimated potential ground-borne vibration levels due to construction activity. The vibration levels would be below Federal Transit Administration building vibration damage criteria (0.20 inch per second for fragile buildings, and 0.12 inch per second for extremely fragile historic buildings). Therefore, DOE would expect no damage to buildings due to vibration during construction. In addition, because of relatively low vibration levels and the temporary nature of construction, human annoyance due to construction vibration would be low.

3.2.8.2.2.2 Construction and Operations Train Vibration. DOE evaluated the potential impacts from vibration for construction and operations trains by using train-induced vibration levels as a function of distance from a rail line, along with vibration levels likely to result in building damage or annoyance, in combination with information on the location of residences or other buildings in relation to the rail line.

Construction trains would travel at lower speeds than operations trains. Because vibration is a function of train speed, construction-train vibration would be lower than operations-train vibration. Freight trains operating at 80 kilometers (50 miles) per hour would produce an annoyance-based vibration contour extending approximately 24 meters (80 feet) from the tracks (DIRS 177297-Hanson, Towers, and Meister 2006, p. 10-3). There are no buildings within approximately 24 meters of the Mina rail corridor, so operations trains would produce no adverse vibration impacts; neither would there be adverse vibration impacts from construction trains.

Unlike noise, vibration impacts are evaluated on the basis of maximum level. A freight train traveling at 80 kilometers (50 miles) per hour will generate a vibration velocity level of 95 decibels with respect to 1 micro-inch per second (VdB), measured 3 meters (10 feet) from the tracks (DIRS 177297-Hanson, Towers, and Meister 2006, p. 10-3). This level of vibration is substantially lower than levels that can cause cosmetic building damage (0.20 inch per second), nominally a vibration velocity of 106 VdB, or 100 VdB, assuming a crest factor of 2 (DIRS 176857-Martin 1980, all). This level of vibration is even lower than that which can cause structural damage (126 VdB) (DIRS 175495-Nicholls, Johnson, and Duvall 1971, all). There are no buildings within 3 meters of the Mina rail corridor; therefore, there would be no adverse vibration impacts to buildings.

3.2.9 AESTHETICS

The region of influence for aesthetics is the *viewshed* surrounding the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor and all support facilities.

Most of the land in the Mina rail corridor is BLM-administered land, with additional areas under the jurisdiction of the Walker River Paiute Tribe, the U.S. Army, or private land owners. Because the Mina rail corridor would primarily cross BLM-administered land, DOE used the BLM methodologies for classifying visual resource quality and determining impacts to visual resources (DIRS 173053-BLM 1986, all; DIRS 173052-BLM 1984, all).

The BLM classifies lands under its jurisdiction using the visual resource management classification system. Classifications are based on a particular area's *scenic quality*, visual sensitivity (*sensitivity levels*), and distance from travel or observation points (DIRS 101505-BLM 1986, all). The BLM uses a combination of the ratings of these three factors to assign a visual resource inventory class to a piece of

land, ranging from Class I to Class IV, with Class I representing the highest visual values. Each visual resource class is subsequently associated with a management objective, defining the way the land may be developed or used. Each BLM district assigns visual resource management classes to its lands during the resource management planning process.

BLM management objectives associated with the four Visual Resource Management classes are:

- Class I: To preserve the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.
- Class II: To retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low.
- Class III: To partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate.
- Class IV: To provide for management activities that require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high.

The BLM uses visual resource contrast ratings to assess the visual impacts of proposed projects and activities on the existing landscape (DIRS 173053-BLM 1986, all). The BLM looks at basic elements of design to determine levels of contrast created between a proposed project and the existing viewshed. Contrast ratings are determined from locations called “key observation points,” which are usually along commonly traveled routes such as highways or frequently used county roads or in communities. Depending on the visual resource management objective for a particular location, varying levels of contrast are acceptable. BLM Handbook H-8431-1, *Visual Resource Contrast Rating* (DIRS 173053-BLM 1986, all) describes this process.

BLM Visual Resource Management classifications for lands along the Mina rail corridor were primarily taken from the *Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan* (DIRS 179560-BLM 2001, all), the *Tonopah Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision* (DIRS 173224-BLM 1997, all), and the *Record of Decision for the Approved Las Vegas Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement* (DIRS 176043-BLM 1998, all). Visual Resource Management classifications for lands not administered by the BLM were assigned using BLM methodologies (DIRS 173053-BLM 1986, all; DIRS 173052-BLM 1984, all) and considering scenic quality ratings reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS where applicable (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, pp. 3-158 and 3-159).

3.2.9.1 Aesthetics Affected Environment

Applicable BLM resource management plans (DIRS 173224- BLM 1997, all; DIRS 103079-BLM 1998, all; DIRS 179560-BLM 2001, all) show that most of the Mina rail corridor would be in Visual Resource Management Class III or IV lands, with the exception of a small section of existing rail line east of Walker Lake that crosses a Class II area. Other than east of Walker Lake, the Mina rail corridor in Churchill and Mineral Counties and on the Walker River Paiute Reservation would cross exclusively through areas considered Class III by default classification of the Carson City BLM office (DIRS 179571-Knight 2007, all). Montezuma option 1 would cross a Class III area centered on State Route 265 from Blair Junction to Silver Peak, and would be within about 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) of Class II areas in the Montezuma Range and Clayton Ridge areas. Approximately 10 kilometers (6 miles) of common corridor segment 6 would also be in Class III lands before it crossed the Yucca Mountain Site boundary.

3.2.9.2 Potential Aesthetics Impacts

The greatest impact on visual resources during the construction phase would be the presence of workers, camps, vehicles, large earth-moving equipment, laydown yards, borrow areas, and dust generation. These activities, however, would have a short duration. The Mina rail corridor and its options have all been affected to some extent by human activity. Only a limited portion of the overall construction time would be spent in one place; the exception to this would be places where major structures such as bridges would be built.

During the operations phase, visual impacts would be due to the existence of the rail line. The passage of 17 trains per week would have a small impact.

Construction and operation of a railroad through the primarily Class III and IV areas along the Mina rail corridor would generally be consistent with the BLM visual resource management objectives for these areas. Therefore, DOE expects the potential impacts to aesthetic resources would be small.

3.2.10 Utilities, Energy, and Materials

3.2.10.1 Utilities, Energy, and Materials Affected Environment

The Mina rail corridor would be in remote Nevada countryside, but is within the southern Nevada supply chain for the commodities required during the construction and operations phases.

3.2.10.2 Potential Utilities, Energy, and Materials Impacts

This section describes potential impacts to utilities, energy, and materials as a result of constructing and operating a railroad in the Mina rail corridor. Consumption of motor fuel, steel, and concrete during the construction and operations phases could impact the availability of these materials in the region of influence.

Electric power for construction would be initially supplied by portable generators. New power lines would be installed to provide power for construction services and would be extended, via underground distribution, along the rail roadbed to meet all other construction and operational needs.

The major providers of electricity in the region of influence, including the Nevada Power Company, Sierra Pacific Power Company, Valley Electric Association, Inc., and Lincoln County Power District No. 1 would have adequate generating capacity or power-purchase capabilities to supply the project during peak demand without disrupting service to the providers' respective coverage areas. Demand is expected to remain relatively stable in the serviced areas, increasing at about 1 to 2 percent annually, and is not expected to impact the capacity of service providers. In cooperation with the affected utilities, DOE would perform electrical capacity analyses to ensure adequate capacity exists, including the evaluation of the conditions of existing electric facilities and determination of appropriate interface equipment to meet the needs of both parties, prior to any connection into a transmission or distribution line; therefore, impacts to electricity services would be small.

Construction equipment would consume motor fuel (diesel and gasoline), which would represent the largest energy resource usage during the construction phase. The total motor fuel use in Nevada in 2005 was about 5.8 billion liters (1.5 billion gallons) (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 61). Table 3-16 includes the estimated amounts of diesel fuel and gasoline expected to be consumed during the construction phase.

Table 3-16. Construction materials and fuel estimates for the Mina rail corridor.^a

Length (kilometers) ^{b,c}	Diesel fuel use (million liters) ^d	Gasoline use (million liters)	Steel (thousand metric tons) ^e	Concrete (thousand metric tons)
410	125	2.5	67	260

a. Sources: DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, Table 2-1; DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 61.

b. Corridor length listed for comparative evaluation.

c. To convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.623.

d. To convert liters to gallons, multiply by 0.264.

e. To convert metric tons to tons, multiply by 1.102.

Approximately 27 percent of the total construction phase fuel consumption would occur in the peak construction year. This would represent only about 0.6 percent of the motor fuel consumed annually in Nevada. Unlike overall state use, construction activities would use primarily diesel fuel, and during the peak year would consume about 2.2 percent of all special fuel (mainly diesel) used annually in Nevada. Nevada motor fuel use will continue to increase in the future, so the actual project percent use would be lower than these values (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 61).

Steel for rails, concrete (principally for rail ties, bridges, and drainage structures), and rock for ballast would be the primary materials that the construction of a rail line would consume. Table 3-16 lists estimates of steel and concrete consumption. Nationally, steel rail production often exceeds the need and there would be sufficient production flexibility and capacity to meet rail line construction demands. Thus, the impact on steel availability would be small. Because DOE would purchase precast concrete components from national suppliers in staggered preordered phases, and because construction would involve a small amount of cast-in-place concrete via the use of onsite batch plants, the impact on availability of concrete would be small.

During the operations phase, the amount of motor fuel used by locomotives would be small compared to regional availability. The amount of materials needed for rail line maintenance activities would be negligible and would not impact the supply.

3.2.11 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The region of influence for waste management includes counties the Mina rail corridor would cross and that have existing municipal sanitary waste landfills and disposal facilities for other types of wastes.

3.2.11.1 Waste Management Affected Environment

The Mina rail corridor would run through the Walker River Paiute Reservation, and Lyon, Mineral, Esmeralda, and Nye Counties. Of these, Lyon County and the Walker River Paiute Reservation have no landfill. The Goldfield landfill, in Esmeralda County, which serves a population of fewer than 1,500 received about 3.6 metric tons (4 tons) of solid waste per day in 2003. Nye County disposed of about 250 metric tons (280 tons) of waste during 2003 at three different landfills, but the county plans to close two of these landfills by 2011, which would represent 96 percent of the county's current waste disposal capacity. The Hawthorne Landfill in Mineral County disposed of about 25 metric tons (28 tons) per day in 2003; it has an estimated closure date of 2041. In comparison, the Apex Landfill in Clark County, which serves the Las Vegas Valley and has an estimated closure data of 2047, received 8,000 metric tons (8,800 tons) daily during 2003 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, pp. 61 to 62).

3.2.11.2 Potential Waste Management Impacts

Construction activities would generate hazardous and nonhazardous solid wastes, and recyclable material. DOE would dispose of nonhazardous wastes in permitted landfills. Hazardous waste such as corrosives and solvents would be shipped to a permitted hazardous waste treatment and disposal facility. All waste would be handled in accordance with applicable environmental, occupational safety, and public health and safety requirements.

Railroad construction and operations would generate solid municipal waste, estimated to be approximately 750 metric tons (830 tons) during the peak year of construction (DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, Table 6-3). Approximately 25 percent of the generated waste would be recyclable, which would result in 550 metric tons (620 tons) of waste for disposal at municipal landfills (DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, Table 6-3). The estimated total mass of waste during the construction phase would be about 2,000 metric tons (2,200 tons). This mass of waste would occupy about 5,000 cubic meters (6,600 cubic yards) of landfill volume at a waste density of 420 kilograms per cubic meter (700 pounds per cubic yard), which is typical of smaller landfills. The estimated average daily disposal mass would be about 1.5 metric tons (1.7 tons) (derived from DIRS 180922-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, Table 6-3).

For the landfills in rural counties, this would represent an increase in waste disposal volume. As an example, disposal of solid waste during the construction phase could represent a nearly 50-percent increase in daily waste volume for the Goldfield landfill and could hasten its closure (now estimated to be in 2023 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 62). Waste generated during the construction phase could be trucked to larger landfills, where impacts on waste disposal capacity would be small.

Railroad operations would periodically generate waste during maintenance activities. Some locomotive and railcar maintenance could generate used oil and solvents that DOE would recycle or dispose of as hazardous waste.

3.2.12 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

3.2.12.1 Environmental Justice Affected Environment

The largest concentration of *low-income* or *minority* populations in the Mina rail corridor occurs in Mineral County and on the Walker River Paiute Reservation. The corridor would cross American Indian tribal lands, with the three Schurz bypass options almost entirely on the Walker River Paiute Reservation (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p. 16).

There are approximately 1.4 square kilometers (350 acres) of the Reservation lands in the corridor (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p. 15). The population of the Reservation, estimated to be 853 persons in 2000, is low-income and consists mainly of American Indians, a minority population.

The poverty rate in Mineral County is 15 percent, which exceeds the rate of poverty (11 percent) in the State of Nevada, while the poverty rate of Walker River Paiute Reservation residents is 32 percent. Nevada's per capita income is approximately the same as the national average of about \$22,000 but the per capita income on the Reservation is less than half that of residents in the state. Table 3-17 lists Walker River Paiute Reservation, Mineral County, and State of Nevada economic characteristics.

The Mineral County unemployment rate is approximately twice the rate of the state; with Nevada unemployment statistics mirroring the Nation's unemployment rate. The unemployment rate on the Walker River Paiute Reservation however, is more than three times that of the state. Table 3-18 lists labor and employment characteristics on the Walker River Paiute Reservation, in Mineral County, and in Nevada.

Table 3-17. Economic characteristics of the Walker River Paiute Reservation, Mineral County, and the State of Nevada, 2000.^a

Characteristic	Walker River Paiute Reservation	Mineral County	Nevada
Total population	853	5,100	2,000,000
Median household income (dollars)	\$24,000	\$33,000	\$45,000
Per capita income (dollars)	\$10,000	\$17,000	\$22,000
Individuals below poverty level	270	760	210,000
Percent individuals below poverty level	32	15	11

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 63.

3.2.12.2 Potential Environmental Justice Impacts

3.2.12.2.1 Socioeconomics

Because there would be small changes in long-term population attributable to activities in the Mina rail corridor, impacts or stresses to the housing stock, infrastructure systems, or social services would be unlikely. A portion of the Mina rail corridor would cross lands in Esmeralda County where most of the land is administered by the BLM or owned by the U.S. Department of Defense, resulting in a sparse population. As a consequence, there are no concentrations of low-income or minority populations in Esmeralda County that construction or operation of a railroad in the Mina rail corridor would be likely to affect. DOE further concluded that there were no special pathways (unique practices and activities creating opportunities for increased impacts) that could not be mitigated. Likewise, a railroad in the corridor would be unlikely to affect low-income or minority populations in Lyon County.

Table 3-18. Labor and employment characteristics of the Walker River Paiute Reservation, Mineral County, and the State of Nevada, 2000.^a

Characteristic	Walker River Paiute Reservation	Mineral County	Nevada
Total population	853	5,070	2,000,000
Population 16 years and older	570	4,000	1,540,000
In labor force, civilian	340	2,400	990,000
Employed	260	2,100	930,000
Unemployed	77	310	62,000
Percent unemployed	23	13	6.2
Labor participation rate	60	60	65
Individuals employed in construction industry	28	130	86,000

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 64.

Nye County has a minority population of approximately 13 percent, with approximately 11 percent of the total population considered low income.

Socioeconomic impacts from railroad construction and operation in the Mina rail corridor would be small overall and would be unlikely to adversely or disproportionately affect the low-income or minority populations along the corridor. Impacts to socioeconomic variables would be neither high nor adverse.

4. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS – MINA RAIL CORRIDOR

This chapter describes potential cumulative impacts in connection with constructing and operating a railroad in the Mina rail corridor. This analysis considers past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future and continuing actions. This chapter also addresses unavoidable adverse impacts, the relationship between short-term uses and long-term productivity, and potentially irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources for the Mina rail corridor.

Glossary terms are shown in ***bold italics***.

4.1 Introduction

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE or the Department) combined potential ***impacts*** reported in Chapter 3 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS with the potential impacts of other relevant past, present, and ***reasonably foreseeable future actions*** in the ***region of influence*** for the Mina rail corridor. These combined impacts are called ***cumulative impacts***. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500 to 1508) that implement the procedural requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 *et seq.*) (NEPA) require a cumulative impacts analysis as part of the environmental impact statement (EIS) process.

Cumulative Impact: The impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1508.7).

DOE structured the cumulative impact assessments in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, Section 8.4.2) (Yucca Mountain FEIS) by identifying actions that could have effects that coincided in time and space with the effects from the proposed repository and associated transportation activities. The analysis of cumulative transportation impacts reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated the environmental impacts of constructing and operating a branch rail line in Nevada combined with the impacts of other federal, non-federal, and private actions.

4.1.1 REGIONS OF INFLUENCE

The regions of influence for this cumulative impacts analysis encompass the potentially affected areas specific to the Mina rail corridor. For the cumulative impacts analysis, the resource-specific regions of influence would generally be the same as those for the resource areas described in Chapter 3 and used for impact analyses in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS. Table 3-1 lists the regions of influence for each environmental resource for the Mina rail corridor.

4.1.2 APPROACH AND ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

DOE used the following approach, analytical perspective, and considerations to perform this cumulative impacts analysis:

- Where the analysis indicated a potential for cumulative impacts, information is quantified to the extent practicable (for example, land disturbance and water demand); however, the cumulative impacts analysis is primarily ***qualitative***.

- The analysis considers federal, state and local government, and private activities.
- Projects included in the analysis have potential interaction in time (the foreseeable future) or space with the effects from implementation of the Proposed Action.
- Effects from past and existing projects and activities are primarily considered in the Chapter 3 discussions for each resource area (such as mining and grazing).
- DOE considers reasonably foreseeable actions as those future actions for which there is a reasonable expectation that the action could occur, such as a Proposed Action under analysis, a project that has already started, or a future action that has obligated funding.

DOE has assessed potential cumulative impacts under the Proposed Action qualitatively and quantitatively to the extent available information allows. Not all quantitative information is additive because of different methodologies or conflicting regions of influence.

DOE identified activities relevant to the cumulative impacts analysis from reviews of information available from government agencies, such as environmental impact statements, land-use and natural resource management plans, and from private organizations. DOE reviewed this information for relevance to this cumulative impacts analysis based on potential geographical and temporal relationships with construction and operation of the proposed rail line in the Mina rail corridor. Not all actions identified in this analysis would have cumulative impacts on all resource areas.

This section describes some future actions in general terms because the projects are in an early stage of planning or development, or they are broad concepts of activity (for example, Bureau of Land Management [BLM] resource management planning). This analysis focuses more on geographic interaction of projects than timing of interactions because the actual timeframes for many of the reasonably foreseeable future actions are uncertain.

The approach taken for this cumulative impact analysis is consistent with the intent of CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1502.22, *Incomplete or Unavailable Information*. This regulation directs agencies how to proceed when evaluating reasonably foreseeable significant adverse effects on the human environment in an environmental impact statement and there is incomplete or unavailable information. While information describing the characteristics and potential effects of other projects and activities within the regions of influence is primarily qualitative and, in some cases is incomplete or unavailable, there is enough information to complete cumulative impacts analysis for the Mina rail corridor regions of influence.

4.1.3 RELATIONSHIP OF THIS ANALYSIS TO THE YUCCA MOUNTAIN FEIS CUMULATIVE IMPACTS ANALYSIS

The Yucca Mountain FEIS provided an analysis of potential cumulative impacts associated with construction and operation of a repository at Yucca Mountain. The portions of that analysis relevant and still valid to the Mina rail corridor (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, Section 8.4.2) is incorporated in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS cumulative impacts analysis, as appropriate.

To evaluate potential environmental impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the revised repository design and operational plans, DOE has prepared *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (DOE/EIS-0250F-S1) (Repository SEIS), which includes an analysis of cumulative impacts as they relate to the Yucca Mountain Repository. Section 4.2.1.2.1 includes a description of the repository, as currently proposed, and additional context about the repository

as a reasonably foreseeable action. This Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS incorporates updated cumulative impacts analyses from the Repository SEIS, as appropriate.

4.1.4 RESPONSIBILITY FOR MITIGATION OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

DOE is responsible for impacts associated with activities for which it is the project proponent. DOE would plan and design a railroad within the Mina rail corridor to avoid sensitive and regionally important resources like Wilderness Areas and Wilderness Study Areas and to avoid or minimize impacts to sensitive environmental areas (such as wetlands) and private property. In addition, DOE would construct and operate the railroad in compliance with all applicable requirements. Actions undertaken by other proponents are subject to a variety of environmental requirements to avoid, minimize, or otherwise reduce adverse impacts on the environment.

To help comply with requirements and to eliminate or reduce potential environmental impacts, DOE would implement a variety of engineering site planning actions, and *best management practices*, all of which are parts of the Proposed Action. The DOE best management practices include the practices, techniques, methods, processes, and activities commonly accepted and used throughout the construction and railroad industries that facilitate compliance with applicable requirements and that provide an effective and practicable means of preventing or minimizing the environmental impacts of an action. Such practices would avoid, minimize, or otherwise reduce the direct and indirect environmental impacts of the DOE Proposed Action, thereby avoiding or minimizing the DOE contribution to direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts regions of influence.

To the extent the DOE Proposed Action would contribute cumulatively to impacts on regional resources, or to other activities such as BLM land management activities, DOE would take additional *mitigation* and monitoring actions to reduce identified impacts associated with its Proposed Action, as practicable. DOE continues to coordinate with public- and private-sector project proponents to foster adequate consideration of cumulative environmental issues.

4.1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE ANALYSIS

Section 4.2 summarizes potential cumulative impacts associated with implementing the Proposed Action in the Mina rail corridor.

4.2 Mina Rail Corridor

Section 4.2.1 summarizes the projects and activities considered in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS cumulative impacts analysis. Section 4.2.2 describes the potential cumulative impacts identified in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS. Figure 4-1 shows the locations of these major projects and activities, including:

1. Naval Air Station Fallon
2. Federal and nonfederal actions on the Walker River Paiute Reservation
3. Hawthorné Army Depot
4. Walker River Basin Restoration
5. Monte Cristo's Castle (proposed state park)
6. Timbisha Shoshone Trust Lands (federal land transfer)
7. Yucca Mountain Geologic Repository
8. Nevada Test Site
9. Nevada Test and Training Range

This section also considers other relevant projects and actions not shown on the map, such as:

- BLM planning and management actions – There are a variety of BLM past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions within the three BLM management areas (Carson City, Battle Mountain, and Las Vegas) relevant to the Mina rail corridor.
- Various rights-of-way – Many future utility or other rights-of-way corridors are not shown on Figure 4-1 because specific routes are not known. For example, DOE and the BLM are preparing a programmatic EIS for potential designation of energy corridors on federal land in western states (DOE and BLM Energy Corridor Programmatic EIS; 70 *FR* 56647, September 28, 2005).
- Energy and mineral development activities.
- Other regional economic development plans and activities within Lyon, Mineral, Esmeralda, and Nye Counties.

The Mina rail corridor ranges in length from about 410 to 450 kilometers (255 to 280 miles), depending on the option considered. As a linear project, land disturbance and other direct impacts are most likely to occur within the relatively narrow construction and operations rights-of-way. However, for some resources, there could be other direct and indirect impacts outside the rights-of-way.

To evaluate the potential for cumulative impacts, DOE identified and reviewed public and private actions in the Mina rail corridor region of influence to determine if the impacts associated with these actions could coincide in time or space with potential impacts from construction and operation of the proposed railroad in the Mina rail corridor. Only those projects and activities DOE believes would have the potential for cumulative impacts are identified herein. In some cases, similar actions have been grouped together and listed by category of action.

4.2.1 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE CUMULATIVE IMPACTS ANALYSIS

4.2.1.1 Past and Present Actions

The descriptions of existing (baseline) environmental conditions and impacts (see Chapter 3) associated with the various environmental resource regions of influence for the Mina rail corridor considered in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS include the relationships between proposed railroad construction, operation, and abandonment, and past and present actions such as:

- Operations at major federal facilities such as the proposed Yucca Mountain Repository, the Nevada Test and Training Range, the Nevada Test Site, the Hawthorne Army Depot, and Naval Air Station Fallon
- BLM resource management planning and land management uses
- Traditional land uses such as regional ranching, mining, and recreation
- Military operations
- Walker River Basin restoration activities
- Residential, commercial, and industrial development activities associated with growth in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence, including the Pahrump area and the Reno-Carson City area adjacent to the northern portion of the Mina rail corridor region of influence.

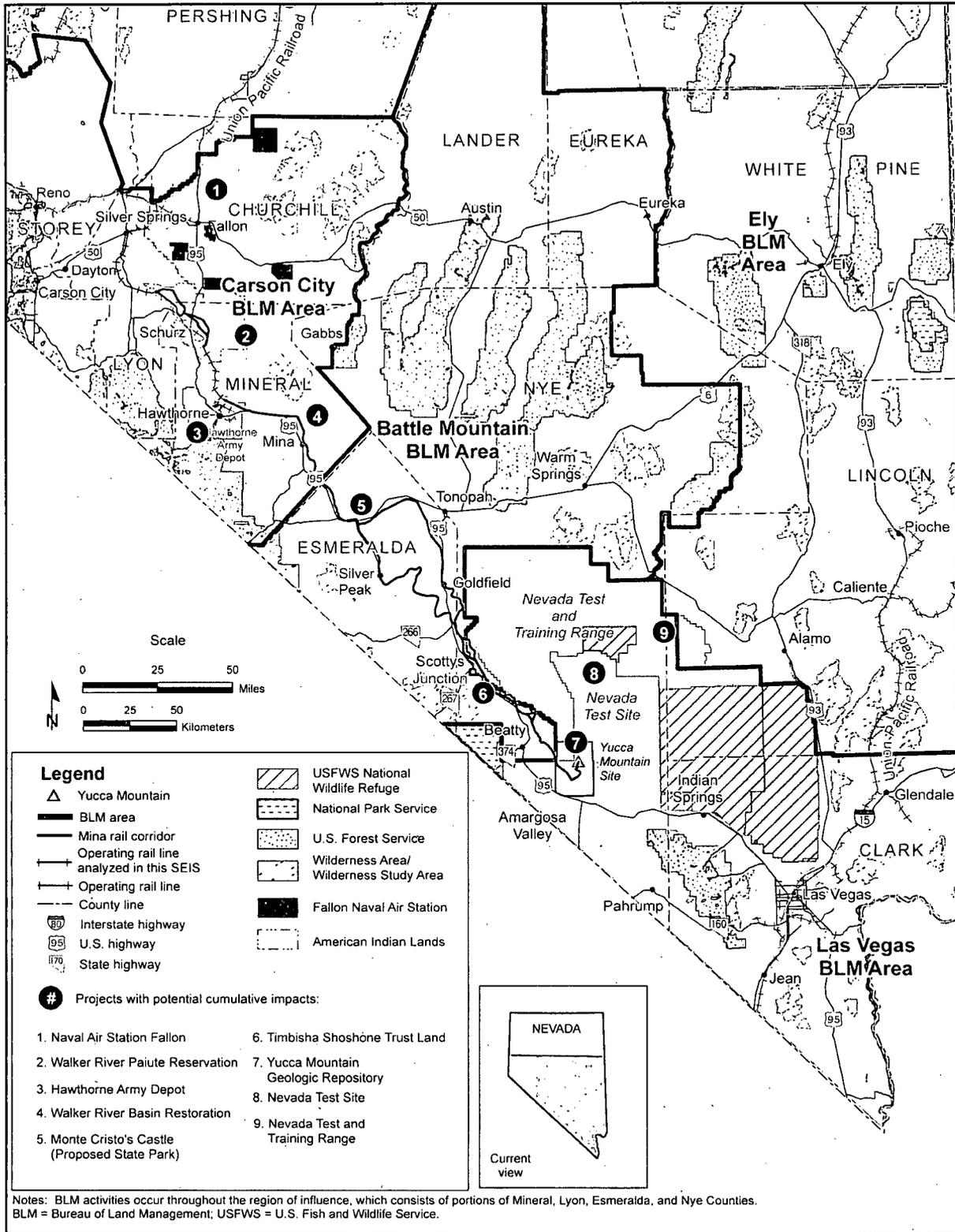


Figure 4-1. Major reasonably foreseeable future actions and continuing activities in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence.

DOE also considered reasonably foreseeable future actions and the continuation of existing actions in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence. Figure 4-1 shows the locations of individual projects and activities.

4.2.1.2 Reasonably Foreseeable Future and Continuing Federal Actions

Sections 4.2.1.2.1 through 4.2.1.2.8 describe reasonably foreseeable future and continuing federal agency actions that could result in cumulative impacts when combined with the incremental impacts of the Proposed Action.

4.2.1.2.1 Yucca Mountain Repository

The Proposed Action in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS is directly related to the proposed geologic repository at Yucca Mountain, which is a reasonably foreseeable project (see Figure 4-1, Project #7). In the Yucca Mountain FEIS (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, all) and the *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (Repository SEIS; DOE/EIS-0250F-S1) DOE proposes to construct, operate and monitor, and eventually close a geologic repository for the **disposal** of 70,000 metric tons (77,000 tons) of heavy metal of **spent nuclear fuel** and **high-level radioactive waste** in a **repository** at Yucca Mountain in Nye County, Nevada. The Department proposed to dispose of this material using the natural geologic features of Yucca Mountain, along with engineered barriers, as a total system to help ensure long-term **isolation** of the materials from the **accessible environment**. As analyzed in the Repository SEIS, the repository design and associated construction and operational plans require the following:

- DOE spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste would be placed in disposable **canisters** at the DOE sites, and as much as 90 percent of the **commercial spent nuclear** fuel would be placed in transportation, aging, and disposal (TAD) canisters at the commercial sites prior to shipment. The remaining commercial spent nuclear fuel (about 10 percent) would be transported to the repository in dual-purpose canisters (canisters suitable for storage and transportation), or would be uncanistered.
- Most spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste would be transported from 72 commercial and 4 DOE sites to the repository in Nuclear Regulatory Commission-certified transportation casks placed on trains dedicated only to these shipments.
- At the repository, DOE would conduct waste handling activities to manage thermal output of the commercial spent nuclear fuel and to package the spent nuclear fuel into TAD canisters. The disposable canisters and TAD canisters would be placed into **waste packages** for disposal in the repository. A waste package is a container that consists of the barrier materials and internal components in which DOE would place the canisters that contained spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.
- DOE would place approximately 11,000 waste packages, containing no more than a total of 70,000 metric tons (77,000 tons) of heavy metal, of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in the repository at Yucca Mountain.
- When authorized by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the repository would be closed permanently.
- The project would require surface and subsurface facilities and associated infrastructure, such as the onsite road and water distribution networks and emergency response facilities, a four-lane access road that would extend from U.S. Highway 95 to the existing access road at Gate 510.

- DOE assumes that the following facilities would be constructed outside the Yucca Mountain Site boundary: a training facility to support the Project Prototype Testing and the Operator Training and Qualification programs; temporary accommodations for construction workers; a Sample Management Facility to consolidate, upgrade, and improve storage and warehousing for scientific samples and materials; and a marshalling yard and warehouse for construction materials.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, through its licensing process, would regulate repository construction, operation and monitoring, and closure. Repository operations would only begin after the Commission granted DOE a license to receive and possess spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. DOE is currently preparing an application to the Commission for authorization to construct the repository.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS and this Repository SEIS evaluate the cumulative impacts of two additional inventories (referred to as Modules 1 and 2), which include spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in addition to that of the Proposed Action inventory, and other radioactive wastes generally considered unsuitable for near-surface disposal. Inventory Module 1 or 2 could have cumulative impacts on the operation of proposed railroad. Regarding potential cumulative impacts from Inventory Module 1 or 2, there would be no cumulative construction impacts because the need for a new railroad would not change; that is, any rail corridor DOE selected for construction of the proposed railroad to serve the Yucca Mountain FEIS Proposed Action would also serve Module 1 or 2. In addition, because the planned annual shipment rate of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to the Yucca Mountain Repository would be about the same for Module 1 or 2 and the Yucca Mountain FEIS Proposed Action, the only cumulative operations impacts would result because of the assumed increase in the number of casks required for Module 1 or 2. Because the Modules 1 and 2 inventories would exceed the NWSA disposal limit of 70,000 metric tons (77,000 tons) of heavy metal considered in the Yucca Mountain FEIS and Repository SEIS Proposed Actions, the emplacement of any such waste at Yucca Mountain would require legislative action by Congress unless a second licensed repository was in operation. The 70,000 metric tons of heavy metal limit is comprised of 63,000 metric tons (69,000 tons) of heavy metal from commercial utilities and 7,000 metric tons (7,000 tons) of heavy metal from DOE.

DOE is preparing the *Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership* (DOE/EIS-0396). Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) would encourage expansion of domestic and international nuclear energy production while reducing nuclear proliferation risks, and reduce the volume, thermal output, and *radiotoxicity* of spent nuclear fuel before disposal in a geologic repository. DOE anticipates that its Programmatic EIS will evaluate a range of alternatives, including a proposal to recycle spent nuclear fuel and separate many of the high-heat *fission products* and the uranium and *transuranic* components. The full implementation of GNEP would involve the construction and operation of advanced reactors, which would be designed to generate energy while destroying the transuranic elements. DOE also anticipates evaluating project-specific proposals to construct and operate an advanced fuel-cycle research facility at one or more locations in the United States.

The United States use a “once through” fuel cycle in which a nuclear power reactor uses nuclear fuel only once, and then the utility places the spent nuclear fuel in storage while awaiting disposal. GNEP would establish a fuel cycle in which the uranium and transuranic materials would be separated from the spent nuclear fuel and reused in thermal or advanced nuclear reactors.

DOE anticipates that by about 2020 the commercial utilities will have produced about 86,000 metric tons (95,000 tons) of heavy metal of spent nuclear fuel, which exceeds the DOE disposal limit of 63,000 metric tons (69,000 tons) of heavy metal of commercial spent nuclear fuel at the Yucca Mountain Repository. If DOE were to decide, in a GNEP *Record of Decision*, to proceed with its proposal to recycle spent nuclear fuel, the Department anticipates that the necessary facilities would not commence

operations until 2020 or later. Although the spent nuclear fuel-recycling concept has not yet been implemented and the capacity of a separations facility has not been determined, one or more separations facilities could be designed with a total capacity sufficient to recycle the spent nuclear fuel discharged by commercial utilities. GNEP facilities initially could be designed to have the capacity to recycle the amount of spent nuclear fuel being generated by commercial utilities. Consequently, the Department believes there would be no change in the spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste inventory, and therefore the number of casks of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste shipped to the Yucca Mountain repository analyzed under the Proposed Action in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS would remain unchanged (that is, the shipment of approximately 9,500 casks containing spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste that would be produced).

Overall, development of a GNEP fuel cycle has the potential to decrease the amount (number of assemblies) of spent nuclear fuel that would require geologic disposal, but would increase the number of casks of high-level radioactive waste requiring disposal in a geologic repository in the long term. Consequently, A GNEP fuel cycle could affect the nature of the inventory that represents the balance of Inventory Module 1 (that is, commercial spent nuclear fuel in amounts greater than 63,000 metric tons [69,000 tons] of heavy metal). Nevertheless, given the uncertainties inherent at this time in estimating the amount of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste that would result from full or partial implementation of GNEP, this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS analyzes rail transportation of approximately 9,500 casks of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.

The Department is currently preparing the *Disposal of Greater-Than-Class-C Low-Level Radioactive Waste Environmental Impact Statement* (DOE/EIS-0375). This EIS addresses the disposal of wastes with concentrations greater than Class C (GTCC), as defined in Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulations at 10 CFR Part 61, and DOE Low-Level Radioactive Waste and transuranic waste having characteristics similar to Greater-Than-Class-C waste and which otherwise do not have a path to disposal. DOE proposes to evaluate alternatives for GTCC low-level waste disposal in a geologic repository; in intermediate depth boreholes; and in enhanced near surface facilities. Candidate locations for these disposal facilities would be the Idaho National Laboratory in Idaho; the Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico; the Nevada Test Site and the proposed Yucca Mountain Repository in Nevada; the Savannah River Site in South Carolina; the Oak Ridge Reservation in Tennessee; and the Hanford Site in Washington. DOE will also evaluate disposal at generic commercial facilities in arid and humid locations. The Repository SEIS evaluates the potential cumulative impacts of disposal of these wastes at Yucca Mountain as a reasonably foreseeable action, which are included in Inventory Module 2.

4.2.1.2.2 Nevada Test Site (Continuation of Activities)

The Nevada Test Site, adjacent to the Nevada Test and Training Range, engages in a number of defense-related material and management activities, waste management, environmental restoration, and non-defense research and development (see Figure 4-1, Project #8). The Nevada Test Site was established in 1951 as the Nation's proving ground for developing and testing nuclear weapons. The site is on land administratively held by the BLM, but the Nevada Test Site land was withdrawn for use by the Atomic Energy Commission and its successors (including DOE). At present, the DOE National Nuclear Security Administration manages the site. It consists of about 3,200 square kilometers (800,000 acres) of land.

The *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Nevada Test Site and Off-Site Locations in the State of Nevada* (DIRS 101811-DOE 1996, all) described existing and projected future actions at the Nevada Test Site. That EIS was followed by a *Supplement Analysis for the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Nevada Test Site and Off-Site Locations in the State of Nevada* (DIRS 162638-DOE 2002, all). DOE activities at the Nevada Test Site include stockpile stewardship and management (helping ensure the U.S.

nuclear weapon stockpile is safe, secure, and reliable), materials disposition (removal of nuclear materials in a safe and timely manner), and nuclear emergency response. Activities at the Nevada Test Site since the 1996 EIS and 2002 supplement analysis have continued to support these missions in accordance with federal law, DOE policies and missions, and NEPA requirements. There are a number of other programmatic DOE waste management initiatives that can affect current and potential future operations at the Nevada Test Site, many of which require NEPA analyses. The Nevada Test Site also produces annual environmental reports that describe program activities and related environmental issues and activities.

DOE is currently preparing the *Supplement to the Stockpile Stewardship and Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement–Complex 2030* (Complex Transformation Supplemental PEIS [formerly known as the Complex 2030 SEIS]; DOE/EIS-0236-S4). That SEIS will analyze the environmental impacts of the continued transformation of the United States nuclear weapons complex by implementing the National Nuclear Security Administration’s vision of the complex as it would exist in 2030, and alternatives to that action. Part of the proposed action in that SEIS is to identify one or more sites for conducting National Nuclear Security Administration flight test operations. Existing Department of Defense and DOE test ranges (for example, the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico and the Nevada Test Site in Nevada) would be considered as alternatives to the continued operation of the Tonopah Test Range in Nevada.

Another part of the proposed action in the Complex Transformation Supplemental PEIS is to accelerate dismantlement activities. The DOE sites that will be considered as potential locations for the consolidated plutonium centers and consolidation of Category I (high strategic significance) and II (moderate strategic significance) special nuclear materials include Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Nevada Test Site, the Pantex Plant, the Y-12 National Security Complex, and the Savannah River Site.

DOE manages several types of radioactive and hazardous waste (*low-level radioactive waste, mixed low-level waste* [referred to as mixed waste], transuranic waste, high-level radioactive waste, and *hazardous waste*) generated by past and present nuclear defense research activities at many DOE sites across the United States, including the Nevada Test Site. The Department manages each of those waste types separately because they have different components, levels of radioactivity, and regulatory requirements. DOE needs facilities like the Nevada Test Site to manage its radioactive and hazardous wastes to maintain safe, efficient, and cost-effective control of these wastes; comply with applicable federal and state laws; and protect public health and safety and the environment. In *Final Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Managing Treatment, Storage, and Disposal of Radioactive and Hazardous Waste* (DIRS 101816-DOE 1997, all) DOE evaluated the environmental impacts of managing the five waste types. The Nevada Test Site will continue to be a major facility involved in DOE waste management programs, including serving as a disposal site for certain waste types generated off the site, and for on-site wastes primarily from environmental restoration and remediation activities.

The Nevada Test Site is a candidate disposal location for Greater-Than-Class-C Low-Level Radioactive Waste which is currently being examined in the *Disposal of Greater-Than-Class-C Low-Level Radioactive Waste Environmental Impact Statement* (DOE/EIS-0375). That DOE EIS will address the disposal of wastes with concentrations greater than Class C, as defined in Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulations at 10 CFR Part 61, and DOE low-level radioactive waste and transuranic waste having characteristics similar to Greater-Than-Class-C low-level waste and that might not have an identified path to disposal. DOE proposes to evaluate alternatives for Greater-Than-Class-C low level waste disposal in a geologic repository; in intermediate-depth boreholes; and in enhanced near-surface facilities.

4.2.1.2.3 BLM Resource Planning and Management

The presence of BLM-administered public land is a very important factor affecting how and where activities occur within the region of influence. Many private and federal projects in the region of influence, including the proposed *railroad*, would involve use of BLM-administered land. Therefore, these projects would require BLM-issued *right-of-way grants* before they could proceed. Right-of-way grants have two general forms: linear (applicable to such projects as transmission lines, railroads, and pipelines), and non-linear (applicable to projects at one specific location). Rights-of-way on BLM-administered land are extensive in the region. These rights-of-way vary greatly in size and scope of activity, ranging from small communication sites to large linear rights-of-way for highways or transmission lines.

The BLM administers most of the public lands along the proposed Mina rail corridor. The BLM manages these lands through a multiple-use concept (which means managing public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people) in accordance with the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1732 *et seq.*) and other federal legislation. The proposed Mina rail corridor would cross three BLM management areas (Carson City, Battle Mountain, and Las Vegas). The Carson City Field Office manages its federal lands through a Consolidated *Resource Management Plan* developed in 2001. The Carson City Field Office was previously divided into eight planning units, all of which were consolidated into the 2001 Carson City Resource Management Plan. The Battle Mountain and Las Vegas management areas are operating under resource management plans adopted in 1998 and 1997, respectively (DIRS 176043-BLM 1998, all; DIRS 173224-BLM 1997, all).

Grazing operations are a major BLM land-management program in the Mina rail corridor region of influence and result in both direct and indirect cumulative impacts to vegetation, habitats, and wildlife.

The Mining and Mineral Policy Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C 1601 *et seq.*) declares that it is the continuing policy of the federal government to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of a stable domestic minerals industry and orderly economic development of domestic mineral resources, including sand and gravel, geothermal, coal, and oil and gas. Sections 102(a)(7), (8), and (12) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, directs public lands be managed in a manner that recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals and other resources. The Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C 1001 *et seq.*), which was amended and supplemented by the Energy Policy Act of 1992 as amended (42 U.S.C 13201 *et seq.*) provides the framework for geothermal leasing by the BLM. The BLM Carson City Field Office may issue leases for geothermal resources located in multiple areas within the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence.

4.2.1.2.4 Walker River Paiute Reservation (Federal Actions)

The Walker River Paiute Reservation consists of more than 130 square kilometers (323,000 acres) of land between Yerington, Nevada, and Walker Lake (See Figure 4-1, Project #2). Although the Reservation is recognized as a sovereign entity under the non-federal actions discussion below, federal agencies could also be taking actions on the Reservation. The Bureau of Indian Affairs operates the Weber Dam and Weber Reservoir, which impounds water from the Walker River just north of the community of Schurz for use on the Reservation. Constructed in the 1930's, the dam needs several repairs and modifications to address a number of deficiencies identified as a result of inspections and a safety analysis conducted in the 1980s under the Bureau of Indian Affairs Dam Safety Maintenance and Repair Program, created as part of the Indian Dams Safety Act. Additionally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is involved in recovery efforts for the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki henshawi*). Lahontan cutthroat trout are stocked in Walker Lake and occur in the Walker River upstream to Weber Reservoir. Weber Dam currently blocks movement further upstream, and prevents spawning by cutthroat trout;

however, in the near future a fish ladder might be developed at that dam to allow fish movement. Reestablishment of a self-sustaining population of Lahontan cutthroat trout in the Walker River system is a prerequisite for recovery of this species.

4.2.1.2.5 Nevada Test and Training Range (Continuation of Activities)

The U.S. Air Force operates the Nevada Test and Training Range in south-central Nevada (see Figure 4-1, Project #9), a national test and training facility for military equipment and personnel consisting of approximately 12 million square kilometers (3 million acres). Military training maneuvers and jet aircraft are visible in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts study area. In 2005, the U.S. Air Force designated the Indian Springs Air Force Auxiliary Airfield to Creech Air Force Base and expanded its mission and infrastructure to play a major role in the war on terrorism. The base is home to two key military operations: the MQ-1 unmanned aerial vehicle and the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Battle laboratory.

The 1,600-square-kilometer (390,000-acre) BLM-administered National Wild Horse Management Area is within the boundary of the Nevada Test and Training Range. More than 3,200 square kilometers (800,000 acres) of the Nevada Test and Training Range comprise the Desert National Wildlife Range. The U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service jointly manage this area.

In *Renewal of the Nellis Air Force Range Land Withdrawal: Legislative Environmental Impact Statement* (DIRS 103472-USAF 1999, all) the U.S. Air Force addressed the potential environmental consequences of extending the land withdrawal to continue using the Nevada Test and Training Range lands for military use. Activities at the Nevada Test and Training Range change, as necessary, to meet military test and training needs.

In 2004, the BLM prepared a resource management plan for about 8,900 square kilometers (2.2 million acres) of withdrawn public lands within the Nevada Test and Training Range (DIRS 178102-BLM 2004, all). The plan guides the management of the affected Nevada Test and Training Range natural resources 20 years into the future (2024). The decisions, directions, allocations, and guidelines within the plan are based on the primary use of the withdrawn area for military training and testing purposes.

4.2.1.2.6 Hawthorne Army Depot

The Hawthorne Army Depot occupies more than 590 square kilometers (147,000 acres) in Mineral County, Nevada (see Figure 4-1, Project #3). Hawthorne Army Depot was commissioned in 1930 as a Naval ammunition depot, and was transferred to the Army in October 1977, and renamed Hawthorne Army Ammunition Plant. It was converted to a government-owned, contractor-operated installation in December 1980. In 1994 the name changed back to the Hawthorne Army Depot. Control of Hawthorne Army Depot is maintained by the U.S. Army, which is responsible for the plans, installation, operation, and equipment of the Depot. The mission of Hawthorne Army Depot is to support the Army, Air Force, and Navy. It also has the capabilities to receive, maintain, store, and issue ammunition and explosive ordnance items. The Hawthorne Army Depot also has the responsibility to renovate, recover, or dispose of unserviceable ammunition and explosives. These latter operations are referred to as demilitarization activities.

The primary ordnance areas at Hawthorne Army Depot extend over 400 square kilometers (100,000 acres) that cross U.S. Highway 95. This area is surrounded on its northeast, east, south, and west by fencing and on its north and northwest by a boundary line that includes a portion of Walker Lake. The southern one-third of Walker Lake is within the ordnance area. The Mount Grant watershed is in the northwest part of the installation. This watershed consists of about 180 square kilometers (45,000 acres), and is a resource that Hawthorne Army Depot maintains to supply its primary potable water needs.

Hawthorne Army Depot has 2,572 buildings and structures, which are comprised of offices, production buildings, ammunition storage magazines, and warehouses. The Depot is bordered by BLM-administered public grazing lands, and the installation completely surrounds the town of Hawthorne. Hawthorne Army Depot is planning to construct a rail siding, known as the Wabuska Spur, which would increase the Depot's outloading capacity.

4.2.1.2.7 Naval Air Station Fallon

Naval Air Station Fallon is in the Lahontan Valley of west-central Nevada, approximately 113 kilometers (70 miles) east of Reno and 10 kilometers (6 miles) southeast of the City of Fallon (See Figure 4-1, Project #1). NAS Fallon administers approximately 32 square kilometers (7,900 acres) of withdrawn and acquired land associated with the air station and 95 square kilometers (234,000 acres) of land associated with the Fallon Range Training Complex. The Fallon Range Training Complex airspace overlies portions of Washoe, Lyon, Churchill, Pershing, Mineral, Nye, Lander, and Eureka counties, most of which is BLM-administered public land.

In January of 2005, the Navy and the BLM issued the *Final Environmental Impact Statement: Proposed Fallon Range Training Complex Requirements Naval Air Station Fallon, Nevada*. The Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center at Naval Air Station Fallon proposes to implement changes at the Fallon Range Training Complex to meet Chief of Naval Operations-mandated training requirements resulting from the real world threat environment. The proposed changes would allow the Navy to update and consolidate Navy training on public and Navy-administered lands and to update existing airspace overlying these lands. The changes evaluated in that EIS include developing new fixed and mobile electronic warfare sites, developing new tracking instrumentation subsystem sites, developing additional targets at two of its training ranges, laying fiber-optic cable to two training ranges, utilizing Navy-administered lands in Dixie Valley for close-air-support training, performing Hellfire missile and high altitude weapons delivery training at two of its training ranges, and changes to special use airspace. That EIS provided a comprehensive evaluation of the environmental impacts, including cumulative impacts, associated with the Navy's proposed changes.

4.2.1.2.8 Timbisha Shoshone Trust Land (Federal Action)

The Secretary of the Interior issued a draft report to Congress (DIRS 103470-Timbisha Shoshone Tribe [n.d.], all) describing a plan to establish trust lands for people of the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe in portions of the Mojave Desert in eastern California and southwestern Nevada (See Figure 4-1, Project #6). On November 1, 2000, the President signed Bill S. 2102 (Public Law 106-423) to provide a permanent land base for the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe within its ancestral homeland in five separate parcels. Lands in the designated area for tribal purposes were then identified, including land parcels containing water rights. The parcel near Scottys Junction (about 11 square kilometers [2,800 acres]) is approximately 3.2 kilometers (2 miles) from the proposed Mina rail corridor. The Timbisha Shoshone Tribe is actively evaluating economic development opportunities on this Scottys Junction parcel. The locations and nature of these future development opportunities are not known and are not considered to be reasonably foreseeable for purposes of this cumulative impacts analysis.

4.2.1.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Non-Federal Actions

Non-federal and private actions in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence primarily involve mineral resource development projects, Walker River Paiute tribal activities, and some residential and general economic development initiatives and efforts. As previously noted, many of these privately sponsored projects would interact with the BLM land-management policies and procedures through the need to acquire right-of-way grants to initiate proposed activities on BLM-administered land.

4.2.1.3.1 Walker River Paiute Reservation

The Walker River Paiute Reservation consists of more than 130 square kilometers (323,000 acres) of land between Yerington, Nevada, and Walker Lake (see Figure 4-1, Project #2). The 2000 census reported a population of 853 on the Reservation. The rural community of Schurz is the only community within the boundaries of the Reservation. Land use on the Reservation consists primarily of open range used for cattle grazing or other agricultural activities. The Department of Defense Branchline from Wabuska extends south through the Reservation to its termination point at the Hawthorne Army Depot.

4.2.1.3.2 Power Plants, Transmission Lines, Pipelines, and Other Infrastructure

There are transmission lines, pipelines, and telecommunications infrastructure within the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence. The region of influence has the potential for wind, solar, and geothermal energy development, although the magnitude and specific locations of these energy development projects are not known. As indicated in Section 4.2.1.2.3, the BLM may issue geothermal leases within the Mina rail corridor region of influence. The approval of any leases and subsequent development of geothermal resources would be subject to environmental review and would be guided by BLM resource management plans.

The BLM has designated certain corridors in the area that should be used for most utility purposes; however, use of other BLM-administered land requiring new right-of-way grants has traditionally been considered on a case-by-case basis. As previously noted, the DOE and BLM Energy Corridor Programmatic EIS is an attempt to identify appropriate right-of-way corridors throughout the western United States, including Nevada. This effort could influence the location of rights-of-way in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence in future years.

4.2.1.3.3 Mining

The region of influence contains a variety of mineral resources, with *mining claims* filed in accordance with BLM requirements, and several operating mines. Establishment of mining claims on federal land do not necessarily ever lead to actual development of mining operations on those sites. Major cumulative impact issues involving mining projects include potential land-use conflicts and wastes from mining operations. Mineral resource locations of note within the region of influence include:

- Nevada Western Silica Corporation holds mining claims for a large, high-grade silica deposit near Lida Junction, south of Goldfield in Esmeralda County. There are at least 24 million cubic meters (32 million cubic yards) of silica on site. The Mina rail corridor passes within 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles) of the claims.
- Chemetall Foote Corporation runs an operation in Silver Peak, Nevada, that mines lithium carbonate. The company pumps lithium rich groundwater to the ground surface and then collects the lithium powder as the water evaporates. Chemetall Foote pumps the groundwater onto dry lake beds in the Clayton Valley to facilitate the evaporation process. Once removed from the water, the raw lithium material is processed in an on-site plant into market-ready, lithium-containing products.
- Metallic Ventures Gold holds mining claims near Goldfield in a historic high-grade gold-producing district. The project is currently in the pre-feasibility stage of development.

Mining activities are expected to continue within the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence. Mining activities are heavily regulated and must comply with all applicable environmental laws, rules, and regulations. The BLM has an extensive regulatory framework for mineral resource development on federal lands that strives to balance mining activities and mineral extraction with other resource management goals.

4.2.1.3.4 Walker River Basin Restoration

The decline in water quality throughout the Walker River Basin, particularly in Walker Lake, and concerns related to the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, have resulted in organized restoration efforts throughout the basin (See Figure 4-1, Project #4). The water level in Walker Lake has dropped substantially since the late 1800s, and levels of total suspended solids have increased. The increased levels of total dissolved solids, along with other physical, biological, and chemical conditions in the watershed and lake, have stressed fisheries and other aquatic life in the lake and changed the resident fish population. The Walker Lake Working Group is a nonprofit organization building public support for developing a long-term solution to protect the lake without jeopardizing the upstream community. The Group has developed a restoration strategy focused on three objectives: 1) reestablishment of spawning runs of the Lahontan cutthroat trout; 2) providing sufficient water so that total dissolved solids levels are low enough to support the Walker Lake ecosystem; and 3) acquiring and transferring water rights for environmental and recreational purposes.

4.2.1.3.5 Monte Cristo's Castle (Proposed State Park) (This has a federal component involving the BLM.)

In 2005, the State of Nevada proposed a new state park near Blair Junction (See Figure 4-1, Project #5). If approved, the park would be known as Monte Cristo's Castle and would highlight the unique geology of the area. As proposed, the park would include approximately 23 square kilometers (5,800 acres) of land just north of the intersection of U.S. Highway 95 and State Route 265 at Blair Junction. As currently envisioned, the proposed park would include hiking areas and interpretive trails with displays about the unique geologic formations in the area. In June 2007, the Nevada State Legislature provided for establishment of the State Park, which would be on land currently administered by the BLM. To transfer the land to the State of Nevada for establishment of the State Park, the BLM would perform an environmental assessment and other work required as part of the Recreation and Public Purpose Lease process.

4.2.1.3.6 Other Regional Economic Development

Cumulative impacts issues associated with regional economic development actions include socioeconomic effects and overall growth in the region of influence. There are several ongoing or planned regional economic development initiatives in the northern portion of the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence south and east of the Carson City/Reno area. For example, a county-owned airport near the community of Silver Springs, Nevada, plans to expand its operations, pave its runway, and promote the development of nearby industrial parks totaling approximately 3.8 square kilometers (950 acres). Western Nevada Rail Park is approximately 1 kilometer (35 miles) east of Reno along Alternate U.S. Highway 50. When complete, the rail park would include roughly 1 square kilometer (240 acres) of industrial park serviced by the Union Pacific Railroad mainline. A master-planned community is being developed near the community of Dayton, Nevada. The development contains approximately 12 square kilometers (2,900 acres) consisting of approximately 2,300 single family homes, 0.02 square kilometer (4 acres) of multi-family units, 0.11 square kilometer (27 acres) of commercial land, 1 square kilometer of industrial land, and 0.08 square kilometer (20 acres) for a resort/casino and an improved 1,600-meter (5,400-foot) airstrip. Support infrastructure, including new elementary, middle, and high schools, fire station, municipal water and wastewater utilities, community center, and a health and fitness center, are already in place to support the development. As the Reno and Carson City metropolitan areas continue to grow and expand, additional privately sponsored developments can be expected within the northern portion of the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence.

Additionally, major transportation corridors such as U.S. Highway 95 through the region of influence into both the Reno and Las Vegas areas will continue to grow and expand, and present additional regional economic development opportunities. A perceived need for support to the Nevada Test Site has led the Nye County Economic Development Board to designate the Nevada Science and Technology Corridor. The Science and Technology Corridor extends from Indian Springs in Clark County in the south to Tonopah in the north, passing through the Pahrump Valley, Mercury (entrance to the Nevada Test Site), Amargosa Valley, Beatty and Goldfield, with industrial park and technology initiatives associated with the Tonopah Aeronautics and Technology Park, the Nevada Science and Technology Park in Amargosa Valley, and the Pahrump Center for Technology Training and Development. The locations and nature of specific future development opportunities are not known and are not considered to be reasonably foreseeable for the purposes of this cumulative impacts analysis.

Nye County has completed a Yucca Mountain Project Gateway Area Concept Plan with proposed activities for the area around the entrance to the proposed repository site (DIRS 182345-Nye County 2007, all). This plan presents Nye County's conceptual, multi-phased land-use guidance for communities adjacent to and near the site entrance area. Nye County proposed this plan with the objective that land development would occur in an orderly and consistent manner and to increase opportunities for industrial and commercial development beneficial to the repository program. Nye County views this plan as a starting point for development of the infrastructure, institutional capacity, and facilities to support the proposed repository. The county developed the plan to use and manage existing initiatives while expanding and improving the area.

4.2.2 POTENTIAL CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Located primarily in portions of Esmeralda, Nye, Lyon, and Mineral Counties, the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence covers millions of acres of land. Most of this land is undeveloped federally managed public land, although much of it has been affected by such human activities as ranching and mining.

Potential cumulative impacts are often discussed herein within the context of the existing regulatory framework (primarily federal and state laws and regulations) and the BLM resource management planning goals and objectives. For example, the existing regulatory frameworks for water and air consider a regional and cumulative impacts perspective, because regulatory decisions consider the potential effects from other projects and a proposed action. As the primary regional land manager, BLM planning and management actions consider the cumulative effects for many resources through stated planning goals and objectives, which are often based on quantitative criteria.

The following analysis of potential cumulative impacts associated with the Mina rail corridor is organized by resource area, with Sections 4.2.2.1 through 4.2.2.12 summarizing potential cumulative impacts in the same order of resource discussions in Chapter 3.

4.2.2.1 Land Use and Ownership

4.2.2.1.1 Land-Use Changes

Many of the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Mina rail corridor region of influence result in land use changes. Land-use change can also alter land ownership and land-management responsibilities, and preclude future activities from these areas. Most of the land in the Mina rail corridor region of influence is BLM-administered land in Lyon, Mineral, Esmeralda, and Nye Counties. The BLM manages more than 45,000 square kilometers (11 million acres) in those four counties. One of the primary land uses in and around the proposed Mina rail corridor on those

BLM-administered lands is grazing. Regional grazing activities are often affected by BLM land-management plans and activities.

Other existing and reasonably foreseeable major land uses in the Mina rail corridor region of influence include:

- Reno and Carson City Expansion – A minimum of approximately 25 square kilometers (6,300 acres) of industrial, commercial, and residential developments associated with growth and expansion of the Reno and Carson City Metropolitan areas into the northern portion of the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence.
- Hazen industrial parks – Two industrial parks at Hazen are being developed. The Great Basin Industrial Park, a 9.3-square-kilometer (2,300-acre) industrial and residential project is being developed alongside the existing Union Pacific Railroad mainline. Churchill County has already approved this project. The Rail Park across the Union Pacific Railroad mainline from the Great Basin Industrial Park spans approximately 1.9 square kilometers (480 acres) and is currently in the planning stage.
- Naval Air Station Fallon and the Fallon Range Training Complex – Naval Air Station Fallon administers approximately 30 square kilometers (8,000 acres) of withdrawn and acquired land associated with the air station and 950 square kilometers (234,000) acres of land associated with the Fallon Range Training Complex.
- Walker River Paiute Reservation – Approximately 1,300 square kilometers (323,000 acres) of land managed by the Walker River Paiute Tribal Council.
- Hawthorne Army Depot – Approximately 600 square kilometers (147,000 acres) of land managed by the Army for purposes of receiving, issuing, storing, renovating, inspecting, demilitarizing, and disposing of conventional ammunition. An offer from a private firm of 40 square kilometers (10,000 acres) to expand the Depot’s military training and other missions is in the preliminary planning stages.
- Nevada Test and Training Range – About 12,000 square kilometers (3 million acres) of land the U.S. Air Force has withdrawn for special-purpose use, with about 530 square kilometers (130,000 acres) of that land disturbed by Air Force tactical target complexes and associated infrastructure.
- Nevada Test Site – About 3,200 square kilometers (800,000 acres) of land DOE has withdrawn for special-purpose use.
- Yucca Mountain Repository – About 6.3 square kilometers (1,600 acres) of land disturbance, most of which would be on the Nevada Test Site (already withdrawn for Nevada Test Site activities).
- Right-of-way corridors that might be established when the DOE and BLM Energy Corridor Programmatic EIS is completed.

The proposed Mina rail corridor would disturb up to 41 square kilometers (10,000 acres) of land, most of which would be within the nominal width of the rail line construction right-of-way. Therefore, the proposed Mina rail corridor would directly affect about 0.25 percent of the BLM-administered land in the four counties. The Mina rail corridor would cross up to 15 separate grazing allotments, which constitute about 11,700 square kilometers (2.9 million acres) of BLM-administered land. The approximate disturbance area associated with the proposed Mina rail corridor would constitute less than 1 percent of the land within those 15 grazing allotments. Within this regional perspective of nearby existing and reasonably foreseeable land uses and land ownership, the commitment of land for the proposed Mina rail corridor and associated facilities would constitute a small proportion of overall cumulative land

commitment. Use of private land for the proposed rail line would be small, and the rail line would not displace existing or planned land uses on private lands over a substantial area, nor would they substantially conflict with applicable land-use plans or goals.

Considering both the proposed railroad and existing and reasonably foreseeable land uses and land ownership in the Mina rail corridor region of influence, cumulative impacts from land-use changes would be small.

4.2.2.1.2 Existing or Potential Land-Use Conflicts

The Federal Government administers most of the land in the Mina rail corridor region of influence, with the BLM, DOE, and the Department of Defense (Air Force and Army) acting as the major federal land managers. The Mina rail corridor region of influence also includes Walker River Paiute Reservation lands. Private land holdings are small, and generally associated with Chemetall Foote Corporation's lithium mine near Silver Peak and other towns in the Mina rail corridor region of influence. Traditional land uses in most of the Mina rail corridor region of influence that would be directly and indirectly affected include grazing, mining, and wildlife management. Much of this land is not extensively disturbed, although it has been modified through activity such as grazing and mining.

Over time, human activity in the area, while relatively minor on a regional basis, has begun to change the natural and traditional conditions, and land-use conflicts occasionally result from this human activity. The Nevada Test Site and Nevada Test and Training Range lands have been withdrawn for special purpose and use. Both of these areas are inaccessible to the general public and land use is that of "dominant use," in which the specific DOE and U.S. Air Force missions, respectively, for these lands have ultimate priority over all other potential land uses. Hawthorne Army Depot and Naval Air Station Fallon lands were also withdrawn for special use, are inaccessible to the general public, and land use is that of dominant use in which the specific Army and Navy missions, respectively, for these lands have ultimate priority over all other potential land uses. Walker River Paiute Reservation lands are managed by a sovereign tribal government and used by Reservation inhabitants accordingly. Around these primary regional land uses are other uses, including mineral development, recreation, urban development, and rights-of-way for various infrastructure. All of these activities and land uses result from a much more intensive land usage involving human activity.

Construction and operation of a railroad in the proposed Mina rail corridor could have direct and indirect conflicts with grazing uses, access to grazing infrastructure, access to mineral resources, recreational resources, other linear rights-of-way (for example, utility corridors), and wildlife movement patterns in some locations.

Even with the existing and reasonably foreseeable land-use changes, the region as a whole would continue its traditional ways, with grazing and wildlife habitat as major land uses. Cumulative impacts related to land-use conflicts would be small.

4.2.2.1.3 Energy and Mineral Development

Existing and potential future energy and mineral development occurs in various locations throughout the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence. In addition to the traditional energy and mineral development (primarily hard-rock mining and industrial mineral development), more recently this development includes geothermal and wind resources. The BLM administers energy and mineral development, evaluates and approves various proposed mineral-development operations, and evaluates and approves geothermal energy development projects on federal lands proposed by private companies. The existing energy development environment includes a mix of old and new, involving both non-renewable and renewable energy resource development.

Because of the scope and extent of typical mining operations, mineral resources that become actual operating mines could result in environmental and land-use issues. Within the Mina rail corridor region of influence, most mining-and energy-development activities would occur on federal lands, and the BLM will have a major role in mitigating and monitoring potential effects through its mining and reclamation requirements, NEPA, and other elements of the regulatory framework. Mineral exploration will continue to occur in many parts of the Mina rail corridor region of influence, and some level of conflict from mining exploration and development with other land uses could be unavoidable.

Any potential conflict of the proposed railroad with energy and mineral development would be small in scope and occur in localized areas, and the effects of any such conflicts would be mitigated through the existing regulatory framework and BLM policies and plans. All existing and foreseeable projects would be subject to regulatory requirements and BLM policies and plans related to energy and mineral development. Therefore, cumulative impacts resulting in land-use conflicts related to energy and mineral development in the Mina rail corridor would be small.

4.2.2.1.4 BLM Land Sales and Other Disposals

While specific initiatives for land disposals in the Mina rail corridor region of influence have not yet been developed, the BLM has plans to designate for potential future disposal (sale) approximately 750 square kilometers (185,000 acres) of public lands in the area, including lands that are difficult and uneconomic to manage (for example, scattered parcels south of Hawthorne and in Smith and Mason Valleys, checkerboard lands near Fernley, Silver Springs, and the Carson sink); land that would support community expansion (such as land west of Yerington, land surrounding the towns of Luning, Mina, Sodaville, Fallon, Gabbs, Reno, Verdi, and lands east of Montgomery Pass, near Honey Lake Valley and Dixie Valley); lands with possible agricultural potential (for example, Smith Valley, Mason Valley, Honey Lake Valley, and Edwards Creek); and lands along the East Walker River identified for exchange to benefit BLM programs.

Approximately 91 square kilometers (22,600 acres) have been identified for potential disposal in the vicinity of the Goldfield, about 23 square kilometers (5,800 acres) have been identified for potential disposal near Scottys Junction, and 160 square kilometers (39,000 acres) have been identified for potential disposal near Beatty. Land disposal areas have also been identified near Coaldale Junction, Blair Junction, Silver Peak, and Millers.

While the proposed railroad would operate within the regional context of the BLM land-disposal efforts and any related implications and effects, the railroad would have no affect on, nor would it be affected by, the BLM land-disposal efforts.

4.2.2.1.5 Recreational Land Use

Public lands in the Mina rail corridor region of influence provide a number of diverse recreation opportunities, and the BLM has designated certain lands as recreation management areas. Demand for recreation is increasing as more people move to and recreate in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence. Dispersed recreation, the principal opportunities available within the Mina rail corridor region of influence, requires a variety of sites but needs no special facilities. These opportunities include caving, photography, automobile touring, backpacking, bird watching, fishing, hunting, primitive camping, hiking, rock climbing, and competitive and non-competitive off-highway vehicle events. An example of increasing interest in recreation areas is the proposal for the Monte Cristo's Castle as a state park near Blair Junction; this park would highlight the unique geology of the area and include hiking areas and interpretive trails with displays about the geologic formations in the area.

The BLM has a major role in recreation opportunities in the Mina rail corridor region of influence. BLM field offices regularly evaluate new opportunities for recreational resources that would provide both passively and actively managed recreation opportunities. There are many such areas that the BLM has designated for recreational use, such as a campground and other day-use facilities at Walker Lake, which attract about 35,000 visitors per year. Other forms of dispersed recreation in the region of influence include hunting, camping, and off-highway vehicle use. Increased demand for off-highway vehicle use from the increasing regional population, including the Las Vegas and Reno-Carson City areas, is expected to continue. Many areas of BLM-administered land in Clark County previously used for off-highway vehicle recreation have been closed, causing a shift in use into other BLM areas. As growth and development occur in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence, recreational resources will continue to be in demand, but the potential for conflict with recreational resources also will increase. Recreational resource locations, quality, and availability will evolve as the Mina rail corridor region of influence changes.

For a variety of reasons, the Pahrump area is growing very rapidly. Both developed and undeveloped recreational opportunities in the area are abundant, with very easy access to public lands for activities such as hiking, camping, sightseeing, and rockhounding. The town of Pahrump is planning for development of 6 square kilometers (1,500 acres), to be called the Last Chance Park, on lands currently administered by the BLM and already used for various types of recreation. The plans include construction of access roads, restrooms, parking areas, and turn-outs, and the placing of signs, bike racks, benches, a pole-and-cable fence, trash cans, and picnic tables. Much of the park would be dedicated to horseback riding, hiking, and biking paths, with the remainder allotted to all-terrain vehicle motorized use. Potential environmental impacts and issues will be identified and assessed through the NEPA process.

DOE has sited the proposed Mina rail corridor to avoid Wilderness Areas and other major recreational resources to the maximum extent practicable. Given the limited effects on regional population, vast regional recreational opportunities, and limited direct interaction of the proposed railroad with recreational resources, cumulative impacts to access to and use of recreational resources in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would be small.

4.2.2.1.6 BLM Rights-of-Way

As urbanization and other development occur in the Mina rail corridor region of influence, the need for utility and other rights-of-way will increase. The BLM has developed certain preferred corridors over federal lands that it uses to the maximum extent possible for linear rights-of-way, such as for utilities. This keeps many right-of-way purposes together in one location instead of spreading them out over more dispersed areas.

The land-use changes authorized by a BLM right-of-way grant would also have the potential to impact other resource areas as those land-use changes occur. Before approval of right-of-way applications, the BLM evaluates the impacts of the projects through appropriate NEPA evaluation. Use of land for right-of-way purposes is consistent with BLM regulations and planning processes, and any land-use changes or disturbances associated with those rights-of-way are mitigated to the extent practicable and according to BLM policies. As required for the issuance of rights-of-way, the project proponent prepares and submits to the BLM a Plan of Development for each proposed right-of-way. The Plan of Development describes the methods and procedures to be used to construct the proposed action on the right-of-way, including site-specific stipulations, terms, and conditions to satisfy all BLM requirements. Certain rights-of-way are long-term and result in unavoidable impacts through land disturbance and the exclusion of other present or future land uses.

Utility and other right-of-way crossings are common to linear projects such as roads, railroads, and pipelines. Land areas for the Mina rail corridor would cross or overlap existing or proposed utility rights-of-way in approximately 22 to 29 locations. This situation would be typical of other linear rights-of-way. The crossings would be accomplished with small impact using standard engineering procedures and appropriate design details.

Cumulative impacts to BLM rights-of-way and right-of-way holders would be small.

4.2.2.1.7 Other BLM Land-Management Actions

The Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-579) mandates that the BLM manage its public lands from a multiple-use perspective. The Federal Land Policy Management Act specifically mentions balancing renewable and nonrenewable resources, including but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife, fish, natural, scenic, scientific, and historic values. Therefore, the BLM mission to manage the lands to meet multiple-use objectives is challenging, because many of the resources and associated values often overlap.

Within the context of the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence, the BLM planning process and management goals and objectives within BLM plans are key determinants of the compatibility of the proposed Mina rail corridor with other projects in region of influence. As noted in Section 4.2.1 there are many continuing and reasonably foreseeable activities that involve the BLM. Because the BLM is and will remain the major land manager in and around the Mina rail corridor region of influence, BLM land-management goals, objectives, and subsequent land-management actions will largely determine if and how new projects and activities occur.

BLM resource management objectives and goals can serve to encourage or restrict activities in certain locations. Areas needing special management attention (such as *Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*) are also identified in the planning process to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historical, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and ensure safety from natural hazards. Multiple-use management goals and objectives become more challenging as cumulative development and land-use changes encroach on open land in the Mina rail corridor region of influence.

The proposed Mina rail corridor would cross three BLM management areas including Las Vegas, Battle Mountain, and Carson City. Each BLM Field Office manages lands within its administrative boundaries according to one or more Management Framework Plan or Resource Management Plan. The Las Vegas, Tonopah, and Carson City plans would apply to the Mina rail corridor. These programs and resource management plans require a number of public and private partnerships and a collaborative approach to land management and planning.

Grazing operations are a major BLM land-management program in the Mina rail corridor region of influence. Grazing results in both direct and indirect cumulative impacts to vegetation, habitats, and wildlife in the Mina rail corridor region of influence. The environmental impacts associated with grazing operations are a function of the location, timing, intensity, duration, and frequency of grazing. Grazing animals directly affect plant communities through trampling and nutrient redistribution. The most noticeable impacts occur around waters, salt blocks, fencelines, and other areas where animals concentrate. With proper grazing management, these concentration areas are limited in extent and mitigated regularly through management procedures such as moving salt blocks and hauling water to the grazing animals. While grazing can stimulate growth of some plants and provide other benefits, it can also reduce plant abundance, density, and vigor, especially in sandy soils.

Ultimately, the BLM land-management efforts and content of the resource management plans will play a major role in the magnitude, location, and extent of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts in the Mina rail corridor region of influence, and in the relative balance among multiple uses and resource values chosen for the public lands. DOE recognizes the importance of these land-management actions and encourages readers to review specific resource management plans for more detailed information. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, the proposed railroad would be subject to BLM decisions and approval, and the BLM would consider effects of the railroad on BLM resource management planning, land-management activities, and BLM-administered natural resources. The proposed railroad's contribution to cumulative impacts to BLM land-management planning and actions in the Mina corridor alignment region of influence would be small.

4.2.2.1.8 Urbanization and Economic Development Initiatives

In response to increased economic development goals, the urbanized areas in the Mina rail corridor region of influence have generally planned for and solicited ways to grow and develop. Concepts such as industrial-park development, airport expansion, increased retail opportunities, and housing are prominent goals of the public and private sectors in the Mina rail corridor region of influence. Several regional economic development initiatives are under way or planned in the northern portion of the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence. This trend is likely to continue, with land-use and ownership changes and potential land-use conflicts becoming an increasing issue and challenge for the future. However, it is likely that the rural nature of the overall Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence will remain largely in tact. With or without the proposed railroad, urbanization and economic development activities, while increasing, would not generally change the overall undeveloped character of the Mina rail corridor region of influence.

With or without the proposed railroad, urbanization and economic development activities, while increasing, would not generally change the overall undeveloped character of the Mina rail corridor region of influence.

4.2.2.2 Air Quality and Climate

Emissions of concern in the Mina rail corridor region of influence include *fugitive dust* and emissions resulting from the operation of machinery and equipment. Construction activities such as surface disturbance and use of haul trucks in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would cause the generation of fugitive dust. Fugitive dust is a type of non-point source pollution – small airborne particles that do not originate from a specific point. These *particulate matter* emissions are regulated according to their size (less than or equal to 2.5 micrometers [$PM_{2.5}$] and less than or equal to 10 micrometers [PM_{10}]). Control of fugitive dust is generally provided by water suppression, or in some cases, application of a chemical compound designed to minimize dust emissions. Most of the projects and activities identified in this analysis would generate some level of fugitive dust. The plumes associated with the generation of fugitive dust are often localized to the area being disturbed and are temporary. In *arid* areas such as the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence, generation and control of fugitive dust will always be a concern. Emissions resulting from the operation of machinery and equipment include *sulfur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, volatile organic compounds, and carbon monoxide*.

There is a comprehensive air quality permitting system in Nevada to evaluate and approve only those projects that are allowable within quantitative *air quality* thresholds. The Nevada Division of Environmental Control, Bureau of Air Pollution Control, has established and implemented air pollution control requirements in Nevada Revised Statutes 445B.100 through 445B.825, inclusive, and Nevada Revised Statutes 486A.010 through 486A.180, inclusive. The Bureau of Air Pollution Control has jurisdiction over air quality programs in all counties in the state except Washoe and Clark. The Bureau of

Air Pollution Control also has jurisdiction over all fossil fuel-fired units in the state that generate steam for electrical production. The DOE Proposed Action in the Mina rail corridor would be subject to the permitting requirements noted above, and would occur in air basins that are classified as *in attainment* with air quality standards or are unclassifiable. The State of Nevada will not grant permits for activities that cannot show compliance with the applicable federal and state regulations.

Cumulative impacts to air quality would be small.

4.2.2.3 Hydrology

4.2.2.3.1 Surface-Water Resources

4.2.2.3.1.1 Changes in Drainage, Infiltration Rates, and Flood Control. Construction of major projects in previously undeveloped areas often results in changes to natural drainage. Construction could include regrading that would allow runoff from a number of minor drainage channels to collect in a single *culvert* or pass under a single bridge, which would result in water flowing from a single location on the downstream side rather than across a broader area. This could cause some localized changes in drainage patterns, but this probably would occur only in areas where natural drainage channels are small. Compaction of soil during construction could reduce water infiltration rates and change natural runoff and drainage patterns. However, some activities would disturb and loosen the ground for some time, which could cause higher infiltration rates.

Construction in *washes* or other flood-prone areas could reduce the area through which floodwaters naturally flow. This could result in water building up, or ponding, on the upstream side of crossings during flood events, and then slowly draining through the culverts or bridges. These alterations to natural drainage, sedimentation, and erosion would be unlikely to increase future flood damage, increase the impact of floods on human health and safety, or cause significant harm to the natural and beneficial values of *floodplains*.

Insufficient inflow from the Walker River into Walker Lake would continue to jeopardize the future of Walker Lake as a viable fishery, with or without the proposed railroad. If developed, the proposed railroad would not result in further inflow reductions into Walker Lake. Mitigation measures that could be implemented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or other entities could improve the chances for a viable fishery in the lake in future years.

As a linear project up to 450 kilometers (280 miles) long, the proposed Mina rail corridor would pose new surface drainage challenges because of the existing characteristics of terrain, topography, soils, and physical features. Construction activities that could temporarily block surface drainage channels include moving large amounts of soil and rock to develop the rail roadbed (subgrade) and constructing temporary access roads to reach construction initiation points and major structures, such as bridges, and to allow movement of equipment to construction initiation points. However, project planning and best management practices would help avoid or reduce the scope of these changes, and impacts would be very localized.

Project planning and best management practices would help avoid or reduce potential impacts from the proposed railroad or other ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future actions. Potential cumulative impacts due to changes in drainage, infiltration rates, and flood control would be very small and localized.

4.2.2.3.1.2 Spill and Contamination Potential. Major construction activities and other projects in the region of influence would use materials including petroleum products (fuels and lubricants) and coolants (antifreeze) necessary to operate construction equipment, and could include solvents used in cleaning or degreasing actions. A release or spill of contaminants to a stream or river would have the

greatest potential for adverse environmental impacts; a release of contaminants to dry impermeable soil would have the least potential for adverse impacts. Other projects would face similar situations. Spill-control and -management plans (and standard operating procedures for the construction industry) would reduce the likelihood of spills. Construction and operation of a railroad in the proposed Mina rail corridor would be typical of major activities that use materials that could cause contamination through spills. While the risk of a spill and associated water contamination cannot be totally eliminated, risks can be managed so that the risk would be small.

While the risk of a spill and associated water contamination cannot be totally eliminated, risks can be managed through regulatory controls so that the resulting cumulative impacts would be small.

4.2.2.3.2 Groundwater Resources

Existing and proposed future development within the Mina corridor region of influence presents the challenge of matching water supply with water demand. Because water availability is a potential resource constraint in the region of influence over time, water demand can be both competitive among potential users and controversial among users and the general public. To allocate water uses, the State of Nevada uses a water permit application process coordinated by the State Engineer. Once granted, water rights in Nevada have the standing of both real and personal property. It is possible to buy or sell water rights and change the water's point of diversion, manner of use, and place of use by filing the appropriate application with the State Engineer. Overall, because the water permitting and allocation process considers the broad range of factors noted above, the process serves as a way to manage potential cumulative impacts of water demand and use within each basin.

Representative existing and reasonably foreseeable water users in the Mina rail corridor region of influence include:

- Public-supply/municipal, agricultural (stock watering), and mining uses collectively comprise approximately 87 percent of groundwater use within the Mina rail corridor region of influence.
- The Nevada Test Site uses approximately 830,000 cubic meters (673 acre-feet) of water per year.
- Yucca Mountain Repository demands would range from about 218,000 to 527,000 cubic meters (176 to 427 acre-feet) of water per year between calendar years 2010 and 2013, which represents the period of the highest water demand for the Mina rail corridor project. The Repository would use approximately 76,700 to 397,000 cubic meters (62 to 322 acre-feet) of water per year in calendar year 2014 through completion of operation.

It is estimated that a railroad in the proposed Mina rail corridor would use up to about 7.32 million cubic meters (5,950 acre-feet) of water during the construction phase, with about 80 percent of that water use occurring in the first 2 years of construction. About 23,000 cubic meters (17 acre-feet) of water would be needed annually during the operations phase. DOE would obtain water for railroad construction and operations from proposed new wells installed in various water basins along the rail corridor. Committed groundwater resources in the Mina rail corridor region of influence already exceed annual perennial yield values (a measure of available groundwater supply replenished each year through recharge) within some of the groundwater basins (hydrographic areas) that would be affected by the proposed railroad. While designated groundwater basins are not considered closed to additional appropriations, the State Engineer could impose additional restrictions and preferred uses of the water in these designated basins.

Overall, the needs of the proposed railroad would represent a small portion of current cumulative water usage within the Mina rail corridor region of influence, which in some locations would continue to exceed perennial yield values.

4.2.2.4 Biological Resources and Soils

4.2.2.4.1 Habitat Loss and Fragmentation

Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence would result in substantial cumulative land disturbance. Existing activities such as the Nevada Test and Training Range, the Nevada Test Site, Naval Air Station Fallon and the Hawthorne Army Depot have already resulted in land disturbance and substantial changes to existing biological resources, and projects such as the various proposed industrial parks and master-planned communities in the northern portion of the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence would continue this trend. Such land disturbances result in altered natural biological and ecological conditions, and directly serve to reduce the amount of natural land available as habitat and open space.

The primary adverse construction-related impacts on vegetation communities from ground disturbance would be the physical destruction or removal of vegetation, and the permanent or temporary removal or compaction of topsoil or other growing medium for the plants. These effects would occur with any major activity resulting in ground disturbance, including the proposed railroad. As more activity occurs, the cumulative loss of vegetative communities and associated habitats would increase. Management of these effects would typically be considered in project planning and mitigation, including projects on BLM-administered land. Much of the emphasis in land management in the Mina rail corridor region of influence concerns the maintenance or reconstruction of healthy habitats.

Habitat destruction would lead to direct impacts such as wildlife injury and mortality, alteration of behavior and movement patterns, and the indirect impacts of reduced vegetative health, reduced biological diversity, and locally degraded ecological function. When there is extensive habitat fragmentation, the individuals or populations of particular species might have difficulty surviving. Habitat destruction arises from a number of sources, including projects that involve land disturbance, and land-management actions, including wild horse and burro management. Though any project that causes disturbance of vegetation contributes to habitat fragmentation, linear projects that impose any degree of impediment to movements, like the proposed railroad, amplify the potential effects.

Measures to avoid, minimize or otherwise reduce impacts are typically implemented by project proponents and encouraged by government agencies and generally include actions to reduce or avoid habitat fragmentation and loss. Such actions would include minimizing land disturbance, using existing roads, interim reclamation, combined roads/utility rights-of-way for pipelines and cables, noise reduction, centralization of facilities, and employee training and education.

An Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan was prepared for the Hawthorne Army Depot in 2004 (DIRS 182761-Bishop 2007, all). The plan is being used to ensure that natural resource conservation and Army mission activities are integrated and are consistent with federal stewardship requirements on mission lands. The plan describes an ecosystem management approach that provides guidance to avoid the impacts of habitat loss and fragmentation, conserve biodiversity, and improve and enhance natural resource integrity while supporting sustainable economies and communities.

In areas proposed for railroad operational purposes, the impacts to vegetation would typically be moderate in scope, and cumulatively add to habitat loss and fragmentation. However, in areas slated for short-term use during construction, revegetation and reclamation efforts would result in replacement of topsoil, reseeding of native species, monitoring for success, and eventual return of a native vegetation community somewhat comparable to pre-disturbance conditions.

Cumulative impacts due to habitat loss and fragmentation would be small to moderate through the construction and operations phases throughout the Mina rail corridor region of influence.

4.2.2.4.2 Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds

Invasive species and noxious weeds naturally move into new areas over time, but this occurrence has been accelerated in many areas through human activity, either intentionally or by accident. In many cases these plants have been moved into North America from another continent. They have been accidentally introduced through contaminated grain or hay, or sometimes intentionally introduced for erosion control or as ornamentals. In addition, livestock and vehicles can cause invasive species and noxious weeds to spread, birds could carry seed, or the species can be brought in with contaminated fill dirt. Regardless of how they were introduced, invasive species and noxious weeds possess characteristics that allow them to compete aggressively with native vegetation. Invasive species and noxious weeds impact native plants, animals, and natural ecosystems by:

- Reducing biodiversity
- Altering hydrologic conditions
- Altering soil characteristics
- Altering fire intensity and frequency
- Interfering with natural succession
- Competing for pollinators
- Displacing rare plant species
- Replacing complex communities with single-species monocultures

From a cumulative impacts perspective, any time land is disturbed and native vegetation is lost there is an opportunity for noxious weeds to replace the native vegetation. While the BLM and other land owners/managers in the area have implemented programs to minimize this potential, invasion of noxious weeds cannot always be prevented. Therefore, coordinated multi-agency management actions and efforts are needed to mitigate the effects from cumulative land disturbance. Management of noxious and invasive weeds is essential for restoration of native plant community health and resiliency. If noxious and invasive weeds were not managed, they would continue to gradually replace more desirable native species throughout the Mina rail corridor region of influence.

Linear disturbances such as pipelines, roads, utility corridors, or rail lines that cross relatively undisturbed land have the potential to exacerbate the spread of invasive species and noxious weeds into areas not previously affected. As the invasive or noxious weeds become established along the linear features they spread to adjacent areas, affecting the plant and animal communities beyond the actual disturbance, and are able to out-compete native species by responding more rapidly to the infrequent availability of water.

These impacts could occur as a result of constructing and operating the proposed railroad in Mina rail corridor, but strict adherence to best management practices should reduce the potential for impacts. Cumulative impacts due to the introduction and spread of invasive species and noxious weeds would be small.

4.2.2.4.3 Special-Status Species

Habitat for several special status species would be disturbed and individuals of several species could be lost as a result of constructing and operating the proposed railroad in the Mina rail corridor. Through the NEPA and permitting processes, each proposed project and land-management planning effort in the Mina rail corridor region of influence will face challenges for the protection of various special status species. There are a number of special status species that could be affected by cumulative impacts in the Mina rail corridor region of influence. Recent attention has focused on several specific species, including the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and Lahontan cutthroat trout, as discussed below.

The Mojave population of the desert tortoise is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 to 1544). It is found within the proposed Mina rail corridor region of influence in the southwestern-most 48 kilometers (30 miles), from the Beatty Wash area to Yucca Mountain (DIRS 101830-Bury et al. 1994, pp. 55 to 72). The desert tortoise is found in southern California, parts of southern Utah, and in the southern portions of Nevada, with the tortoises potentially affected by the proposed Mina rail corridor at the extreme northern extent of their range. While relative abundance of the tortoise is low in much of the Mina rail corridor region of influence, every action that could disturb soil or vegetation within the tortoise's range has potential cumulative impacts of loss or fragmentation of the species' habitat or the direct mortality of individual desert tortoises, which in turn would affect the health and extent of the collective population of the species. In the area near the Yucca Mountain Site, construction activities would have similar impacts on the desert tortoise.

The threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout is stocked in Walker Lake and occurs upstream to Weber Reservoir. Weber Dam currently blocks movement further upstream, and prevents spawning by cutthroat trout; however, in the near future a fish ladder might be developed at that dam to allow fish movement. Reestablishment of a self-sustaining population of Lahontan cutthroat trout in the Walker River system is a prerequisite for recovery of this species. With mitigation, the Mina rail corridor activities would have minimal effects on the trout, but the existing problem with Weber Dam blocking movement of the trout further upstream would remain.

BLM resource management plans sometimes place restrictions on other activities (for example, grazing, wild horse and burro abundance, off-road vehicle use, mineral activities) so that desert tortoise or other special status species habitat can be protected. However, off-road vehicle use, shooting, and collecting of individuals continue to impact tortoise populations. Habitat protection efforts for the desert tortoise are coordinated among a number of federal, state, and local governmental agencies, with the cumulative impact perspective a major factor in determining allowable impacts to the tortoise. Restoration plans and habitat conservation plans also affect the required mitigation measures, best management practices, and standard operating procedures for the protection of the desert tortoise or other special status species.

Private landowners, corporations, state or local governments, or other non-federal landowners who wish to conduct activities on their land that might incidentally harm (or "take") wildlife listed as endangered or threatened must first obtain an incidental take permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To obtain a permit, the applicant must develop a Habitat Conservation Plan, designed to offset any harmful effects the proposed activity might have on the species. There is a single species (desert tortoise) Habitat Conservation Plan being developed in the Pahrump area of Nye County. Habitat Conservation Plans would support development of private lands while accounting for the potentially affected species.

No major effects on special status species are projected to result from construction and operation of the proposed railroad in the Mina rail corridor. DOE would conduct any required consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. There is a substantial regulatory framework, to which all projects are subject, that serves to evaluate and protect special status species. Therefore, cumulative impacts to special status species would be small.

4.2.2.4.4 Known or Potentially Contaminated Soils

The major sources of existing soil contamination problems in the Mina rail corridor region of influence are mining, the Nevada Test Site, and the Hawthorne Army Depot. There have been mining activities in the region for many years, and mining wastes from older operations (before the regulatory framework required waste management and clean-up) still remain.

The problems associated with the Nevada Test Site have been described in recent NEPA documentation (DIRS 101811-DOE 1996, all; DIRS 162638-DOE 2002, all). Historic contamination of soils resources

on the Nevada Test Site is primarily from radioactive-waste management sites and past nuclear testing activities. Environmental restoration and remediation is occurring at contaminated Nevada Test Site locations in accordance with the facility's Environmental Restoration Program, but much of the contamination is long-term and the land and soil are not restorable to useful condition. For most of the contaminated soils within the Nevada Test Site boundary, DOE is planning only a characterization and long-term monitoring program. Contaminated areas on the Nevada Test Site are generally defined and access is restricted for reasons of safety and security.

The Hawthorne Army Depot has an Installation Restoration Program that outlines proposed future investigations and remedial actions at each Solid Waste Management Unit and other areas of concern at the installation. There are soil and groundwater contamination issues, with the primary contaminants of concern being compounds associated with explosives and heavy metals. Environmental restoration and remediation is ongoing at a number of sites. Other sites have achieved the status of no further remedial action planned. Contaminated areas on the Hawthorne Army Depot are generally defined and access is restricted for reasons of safety and security.

Contaminated soils or spills can impact other resources such as water resources, biological resources, and land use. Spills of hazardous materials are possible with regional activities, but the current regulatory framework to manage and control hazardous materials and wastes ensures that actions are in place to minimize impacts. While potential impacts associated with hazardous materials and wastes from current and future mining operations in the region are controlled through the existing regulatory framework, mining wastes from old mining extraction and processing activities, especially in the Goldfield-area, remain a concern related to soil contamination.

The proposed railroad could result in very localized contamination of soils through occasional spills (such as fuel, oil, and solvents). However, such incidents would be minor in scope and quickly mitigated in accordance with plans and regulations. All existing and foreseeable projects would be subject to the same regulations. Cumulative impacts related to contamination of soils would likely be small.

4.2.2.5 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources include historic and archaeological sites, buildings, structures, landscapes, and objects. Most reasonably foreseeable projects in the Mina rail corridor region of influence will involve at least some ground disturbance. With that ground disturbance, cultural resources could be destroyed, damaged, or discovered for recovery or mitigation. As part of the evaluation of proposed projects on federal land, the existing regulatory framework requires that cultural resources be identified and protected. With information on the location of a proposed project and the estimated extent of ground disturbance, cultural resource specialists can be called on to perform appropriate surveys and inventories of cultural resources in the potentially disturbed area.

Because cultural resources are typically on or below the ground, they can be damaged by other activities, such as off-highway vehicle use. As the major land manager in the Mina rail corridor region of influence, the BLM has an extensive cultural resource management program and manages federal land with protection of cultural resources as a key management objective. Once ground is disturbed and facilities are constructed on the land, the opportunity for identification of cultural resources is usually lost. Therefore, the BLM and other land managers in the area (for example, DOE on the Nevada Test Site and the Air Force on the Nevada Test and Training Range) employ cultural resource specialists and involve tribal representatives, as appropriate. Mission activities on the Nevada Test Site, on the Nevada Test and Training Range, and at the Yucca Mountain Repository also could cause unintended adverse impacts to cultural resources. DOE, the BLM, and other federal agencies in the Mina rail corridor region of

influence are committed to public education and employee training regarding the protection of cultural resources.

Based on the extent of cultural resource site finds within BLM-administered land and on the Nevada Test Site, and data collected to date on the proposed Mina corridor, other cultural resources in the Mina rail corridor region of influence are likely to be discovered as projects proceed. Also, it is likely that only a portion of currently undiscovered sites would ultimately be found eligible for the *National Register of Historic Places*.

Impacts to cultural resources in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would be small because the Department would conduct intensive field surveys and implement mitigation measures, including avoidance. Other project proponents would be subject to the same regulatory framework and BLM policies and procedures. Cumulative impacts to cultural resources in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would be small.

4.2.2.6 Occupational and Public Health and Safety

4.2.2.6.1 Nonradiological Health and Safety

Throughout the Mina rail corridor region of influence, continuing and reasonably foreseeable activities have the potential to result in occupational injuries or fatalities including, but not necessarily limited to sources such as tripping, being cut on equipment or material, dropping heavy objects, catching clothing in moving machine parts, and other types of accidents. Other occupational risks include biological hazards, dust and soils hazards, air quality hazards, transportation accidents, and noise hazards. Biological hazards include potential human health effects from rodent-borne diseases, soil-borne diseases, insect-borne diseases, and venomous animals. Dust and soils hazards include potential human health effects from exposure to inhalable soils and dusts containing hazardous constituents, and potential occupational encounters with unexploded ordnance.

While occupational injuries or fatalities are unavoidable with human activity, public and private facilities within the Mina rail corridor cumulative activity area are highly regulated. There is a substantial regulatory framework for occupational health and safety, with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration programs and regulations forming the basis for protection of workers. Through DOE Order 440.1A, *Worker Protection Management for DOE Federal and Contractor Employees*, the Department has prescribed the Occupational Safety and Health Act Standards that contractors are to meet in their work at government-owned, contractor-operated facilities. The Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, measures occupational incident rates, including total recordable cases, lost workday cases, and fatalities, associated with the work environment.

There are no data on injury/illness incident rates for the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence. Injury/illness incidence rates in Nevada generally run higher than those in the United States as a whole. The economic segments with the highest injury/illness incidence rates in Nevada are construction and goods-producing industries.

Additional traffic is especially a concern with the construction phases of reasonably foreseeable projects. The construction phase of a project not only brings construction workers to the work sites, but also means an increase in slow-moving and bulky traffic involving the transportation of construction equipment. Use of trucks for hauling hazardous or other dangerous materials is also an increasing concern as traffic increases on the road network. To minimize traffic impacts at the entrance to the Yucca Mountain Site, a new interchange at the Site entrance with U.S. Highway 95 has been proposed for both traffic flow and safety reasons. Increased traffic would not necessarily mean an increase in the rate of traffic accidents, but the number of accidents would increase if the rate of traffic accidents stayed the same and traffic

increased. Therefore, transportation safety concerns would increase and there could be an increased workload for traffic-accident responders in the Mina rail corridor region of influence with the cumulative growth in traffic.

From a transportation safety standpoint, rail cars loaded with live munitions currently travel between Wabuska, Nevada, and the Hawthorne Army Depot. Under the Proposed Action, health and safety risks associated with accidents involving these rail cars would be reduced as the trains would be routed away from the populated community of Schurz on the Walker River Paiute Reservation.

Nonradiological transportation impacts specifically associated with the proposed railroad would include vehicular fatalities and nonradiological rail accidents and fatalities associated with railroad operations. Vehicular fatalities would be the result of commute trips from workers responsible for railroad operations. The number of incidents would be proportional to the number of trains and casks moved by rail.

Other regional activities would also cumulatively add to the totals beyond the railroad-related impacts, but cumulative nonradiological health and safety in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would be small within the context of the overall region of influence.

4.2.2.6.2 Radiological Health and Safety

Existing and reasonably foreseeable future activity (such as the Nevada Test Site and Yucca Mountain Repository activity managed by DOE) in the Mina rail corridor region of influence involves the storage, handling, transportation, use, and disposal of radioactive materials and wastes. Staff at the Nevada Test Site and the Yucca Mountain Repository would be separate, and it is not anticipated that there would be any cumulative exposures to workers from both operations. The modes of transportation of radioactive wastes for the Nevada Test Site (shipment by truck) and the Yucca Mountain Repository (shipment by rail) would differ. Radiological impacts associated with railroad operations would be higher under Yucca Mountain Inventory Module 1 or 2 operations compared to the level of transportation under this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS Proposed Action.

There is an extensive regulatory framework associated with transportation safety, and the proposed railroad would operate in compliance with these laws and regulations. The regulatory framework and implementation of appropriate standard operating procedures would reduce the potential for accidents. Coordination of plans for proposed railroad construction and operation with local emergency response providers would be important to limit the potential for accidents, and for an effective response to an accident should one occur.

Operation of the proposed railroad in the Mina rail corridor under the Proposed Action would result in a small contribution to cumulative radiological health and safety impacts. Cumulative radiological impacts in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would be small.

4.2.2.7 Socioeconomics

The economic roots of the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence have traditionally been based on mineral development, military operations and support, and livestock grazing. These activities will continue to be the primary economic drivers in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence. Additionally, the expansion of the Reno and Carson City metropolitan areas in the northern reaches of the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence will continue to occur, providing additional economic inputs. While the proposed railroad would be a major development in the Mina rail corridor region of influence, its long-term economic development potential would be limited and would primarily be related to construction activities.

Population growth in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence has generally been stagnant in much of the area. However, many in the region desire growth and development. It is uncertain if there is sufficient economic development growth potential in these areas to support the desired growth. It is possible that some areas would grow at the expense of other areas, or that recently developed plans for growth turn out to be unrealistic. Provision of housing to meet market demand is a private-sector activity, with the private-housing sector assumed to build to the needed level to meet housing demand at the appropriate locations. One of the factors that will affect how and where growth occurs is the availability of infrastructure to support the growth. Beyond the traditional infrastructure needs like roads, sewer, water, and public buildings, modern infrastructure such as the availability of fiber-optic lines might also affect growth patterns. For example, the availability of fiber-optic lines or other high-technology infrastructure is likely to be a substantial growth discriminator for both businesses and individuals. The locations of and extent to which factors such as fiber-optic lines would ultimately affect growth cannot be projected at this time.

The potential future land disposals identified in Section 4.2.2.1.4, if implemented by the BLM, could have the potential to provide land for private-sector projects such as housing, industrial or commercial facilities, or other developments.

The State of Nevada has developed population projections for the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence (DIRS 178807-Hardcastle 2006, all) as follows:

- Esmeralda County is projected to experience a small decrease in population from 2005 to 2026.
- Nye County is projected to add more than 32,000 people from 2005 to 2026.
- Lyon County is projected to add more than 41,000 people from 2005 to 2026.
- Mineral County is projected to experience a small decrease in population from 2005 to 2026.

Population projections are always subject to change with new information, and the Nevada State Demographer incorporates foreseeable economic development into the population projections.

Nye County's projected growth continues a recent trend, with growth in Pahrump very evident over the past several years. Growth in Pahrump is being driven by low-cost land, proximity to the Las Vegas metropolitan area, and relocation of retirees to the area. Growth in Nye County is also directly linked to existing and future Yucca Mountain Site operations. Growth in Lyon County is due largely to its proximity to Carson City and Reno.

As discussed in Section 3.2.7, Socioeconomics, DOE used an economic model to estimate the potential socioeconomic impacts of the proposed railroad (DIRS 182251-REMI 2007, all). The model includes consideration of construction and operations employment and wages, project-related spending, and other parameters that could affect the socioeconomic environment. The model included a future baseline of socioeconomic parameters that would represent a cumulative impacts baseline without a railroad in the proposed Mina rail corridor.

Consistent with the methodology established in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, p. 4-43), most of the construction workers for the proposed Mina rail corridor are assumed to be residents of Clark County. This assumption is made because the construction sectors in Nye, Esmeralda, Lyon and Mineral Counties are not large enough to provide enough workers for construction activities. Under this scenario, Clark County is projected to attain the largest levels of construction-related employment, income, and spending effects from the proposed project, followed by Mineral, Nye, Esmeralda, and Lyon Counties. Mineral County would experience the largest employment percentage increase during the construction phase, with an estimated increase of about 6 percent above baseline conditions. The socioeconomic analysis also considers a second scenario, which assumes that half of the construction

workers for the Mina rail corridor reside in the combined Washoe County-Carson City area, and the other half reside in Clark County. This second scenario is considered because Washoe County and Carson City may be more likely than Clark County to supply construction workers for the northern portions of the Mina rail corridor. Under this second scenario, the beneficial economic effects on Clark County would be reduced, while the Washoe County-Carson City area would gain some of these beneficial aspects of the proposed railroad. In any case, the overall effects of the proposed Mina rail corridor project on the Clark County or Washoe County economies would still be relatively small.

Employee locations for the operations phase would follow the same general pattern and relative magnitude of the construction phase, but there would be fewer operations jobs than construction jobs. Gains in employment during the operations phase would be felt most strongly in Esmeralda County, where the peak percentage change in average annual employment is projected to be 6.3 percent above baseline conditions during full operations. Mineral County is the only other county in the region of influence projected to experience more than a 1-percent change in average annual employment at any point during the operations phase (2.6 percent).

Population changes that would result from construction and operation of the proposed railroad in the Mina rail corridor are also projected to generally follow this pattern. During the construction phase, the upper bound of increase to population would be about 3 percent or less of the future cumulative population baseline in all four counties. The operations-phase population change would have the largest percentage increase compared to the cumulative baseline in Esmeralda County (about 7 percent average annual increase over the baseline). There are no projected impacts to population on the Walker River Paiute Reservation.

Strains on housing infrastructure during the construction phase would not be anticipated because most construction workers could be housed in construction camps at strategic locations along the Mina rail corridor, rather than in nearby communities. Contractors might elect to use commercially available facilities to house construction personnel at locations such as Hawthorne, Tonopah, Goldfield, Beatty, and Pahrump.

Some infrastructure impacts would be expected where construction activities or operating facilities were near communities. For example, construction workers, including those from the proposed railroad, could strain the existing health care service capacity in the Mina rail corridor region of influence, particularly in Hawthorne, Goldfield, and Tonopah. Operations-related population gains could also result in identifiable effects on health and education-related services.

The road network in the Mina rail corridor region of influence consists generally of two-lane highways and unpaved roads. U.S. Highway 95 is the major north-south highway in the region of influence. In rural, less populated parts of the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence, roads are adequate to handle existing and projected future traffic flow. However, the array of new and proposed activities throughout the Mina rail corridor region of influence would have the potential to strain parts of the existing roadway infrastructure. There could be some traffic delays at existing rail-highway grade crossings, and grade separation might be necessary at some crossings in Churchill, Lyon, and Mineral Counties. However, cumulative traffic levels in the region would likely continue to increase as overall regional growth and development occurs.

Any road improvement and maintenance responsibilities in the region of influence are handled by the Nevada Department of Transportation through a Statewide Transportation Plan and a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program includes a 3-year list of federally funded and regionally important non-federally funded transportation projects and programs consistent with the goals and strategies of the Statewide Transportation Plan. Routine highway improvements and maintenance projects for the period 2006 through 2015 have been identified for Nye,

Esmeralda, Lyon, and Mineral Counties as part of the Nevada Department of Transportation planning processes. The level of cumulative traffic changes would generally not be sufficient for major upgrades of regional roads.

Overall, the proposed railroad project would have a small impact on economic development and growth, housing and community infrastructure, and traffic in the Mina rail corridor region of influence. While there is some limited potential for induced growth impacts, the specific locations and scope of these actions is unknown at this time, and any such actions are projected to be small. Cumulative impacts to socioeconomics in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would be small.

4.2.2.8 Noise and Vibration

4.2.2.8.1 Railroad Noise

In the Mina rail corridor cumulative impact region of influence, there is an existing branchline extending from Hazen, Nevada, to the Hawthorne Army Depot. The noise associated with railroad operations is part of the existing environment, specifically in the Schurz area where the railroad's presence is very evident. The sounds associated with the existing branchline include wayside noise (noise generated by the cars and locomotives), and horn sounding. The individual operating rules of each railroad require train engineers to sound horns when approaching most grade crossings. Horn sounding is generally not required at private crossings. Wayside noise and horn sounding are common in Schurz and along other portions of the existing branchline.

Hawthorne Army Depot is planning to construct a rail siding, known as the Wabuska Spur, which would increase the Depot's rail capacity. Increased rail capacity could cause increases in overall rail traffic on the existing branchline and could result in more wayside noise and horn sounding near Hawthorne.

Transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste casks would result in as many as eight one-way trips per week along the Mina rail corridor. Train activity associated with supply and maintenance of the Yucca Mountain Repository is also proposed along the completed rail line (as many as seven one-way trips per week), as is Mina rail corridor maintenance activity (about two one-way trips per week), for a total of about 17 one-way trips per week. During the construction phase, completed portions of the rail line could also be used to deliver ballast to construction areas.

Potential noise impacts from the proposed railroad in the Mina rail corridor would be expected to be small. However, the railroad would introduce or expand noise sources into areas of the Mina rail corridor region of influence that previously had very limited railroad noise. This could result in incremental annoyance effects for some persons.

While adverse noise effects could increase for some in the Mina rail corridor region of influence, selection of the Mina rail corridor would substantially reduce noise impacts in Schurz, because the existing rail line through Schurz would be eliminated and replaced by one of Schurz alternative corridor segments. This would provide a substantial reduction in annoyance effects for people in Schurz.

4.2.2.8.2 Urban Noise

Urban noise includes automobiles, construction activities, barking dogs, and other human activities generally within an identifiable community. At present, urban noise in the Mina rail corridor region of influence is limited because there are only a few cities and communities. However, with economic development and growth goals throughout the Mina rail corridor region of influence, the number and scope of urbanized areas is expected to increase. Urban noise is generally localized and is differentiated

from aircraft and railroad noise sources, which move with the source from one location to another, while urban noise is within identifiable geographic borders associated with the locations of populations.

The proposed railroad would have a very small effect on urbanization in the area, and its effect on urban noise in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would be small. Cumulative impacts related to urban noise would be small.

4.2.2.8.3 Aircraft Noise

Aircraft-related noise from engines and sonic booms is common throughout the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence, and can cause “startle” and annoyance effects. The noise associated with military aircraft is consistent with the “dominant use” of the area for military and defense-related activities on the Nevada Test and Training Range and at Naval Air Station Fallon. Noise effects associated with Nevada Test and Training Range or Naval Air Station Fallon missions would be considered necessary and unavoidable. Commercial air traffic also contributes to noise impacts in the region of influence.

The proposed railroad would not contribute to cumulative aircraft noise.

4.2.2.8.4 Vibration

Vibration can be perceived on land surfaces and within buildings with certain types of activities. Construction activity is one of the more common sources of vibration, but railroad construction vibration would be very localized and typically minor in scope and duration. In the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence, other possible sources of vibration include occasional testing activities at the Nevada Test and Training Range and sonic booms from aircraft-related military activities in the airspace above the region of influence. These events would also tend to be short-term and localized.

Cumulative impacts from vibration would be small.

4.2.2.9 Aesthetic Resources

Cumulative impacts to aesthetic resources from the proposed railroad in the Mina rail corridor and other regional activities would primarily result from modifications to natural *viewsheds*. The natural setting of the Mina rail corridor region of influence includes vast and expansive viewsheds typical of much of the western United States. The open spaces and wide vistas offer interesting cloud, weather, and landscape interactions. Human activity disturbs the natural viewsheds with views of land disturbances such as buildings, roads, removal of vegetation, power lines, equipment, and vehicles. Activity that disturbs substantial areas of land can result in impacts to visual resources from fugitive dust and ground scars that create a contrast with the surrounding environment and draw the viewer’s attention. Additionally, most man-made structures are designed and built for their functionality and safety, not for their visual appeal or compatibility with the visual character of the landscape. For example, projects with construction-related equipment, facilities, and activities can include the presence of workers, camps, vehicles, and machinery, laydown yards, and dust. The likely addition of explosive bunkers at the Hawthorne Army Depot and projected wind-energy development are examples of other long-term changes in the visual setting that are reasonably foreseeable. Each type of project has its unique visual features but generally, new projects would not be consolidated into any specific location within the region of influence.

While the area has a history of railroad use, the presence of a railroad and associated train traffic in the Mina rail corridor would be an identifiable change to the regional viewsheds from some observation points and provide a noticeable contrast with natural visual attributes. The passage of a train would attract the attention of an observer, both because of the noise associated with the train and the contrast

with the landscape, especially if the train were to fall in the foreground or middle ground *distance zones* of the viewshed. Visual impacts of passing trains would be temporary, but visual impacts of the track would be long term.

Visual resources within the Mina rail corridor region of influence have been considered through application of the BLM Visual Resource Management System. The BLM uses this system to identify and classify the BLM-administered lands within established visual resource objectives, and evaluates proposed activities within the Visual Resource Management System framework to consider consistency with the visual resource objectives. Ground disturbances in the regional environment will last for long periods without restoration and reclamation efforts. The magnitude and extent of potential impacts to visual resources vary based on the number of viewers affected, distance and atmospheric conditions of viewing, degree of visual contrast compared to existing visual attributes, viewer sensitivity to the visual changes, and compatibility with existing land uses. The BLM generally requires ground disturbances to be restored and reclaimed as part of project approval.

There would be no known interactions of the proposed railroad with other reasonably foreseeable activities that would affect a Class I or Class II area in the Mina rail corridor region of influence.

4.2.2.10 Utilities, Energy, and Materials

4.2.2.10.1 Utilities

From a cumulative impacts perspective within the Mina rail corridor region of influence, utility crossings are and will continue to be commonplace with little impact other than minor ground disturbance. Utility and other right-of-way crossings are common to linear projects such as roads, railroads, and pipelines. The rail line would cross or encroach upon existing or proposed utility rights-of-way in a variety of locations. This situation would be typical for other rights-of-way in the region. The crossings would be accomplished with small impact using standard engineering procedures and appropriate design details.

Many regional activities, including the proposed railroad, would increase demands on public water systems, wastewater systems, telecommunications systems, electric power systems, and other utilities. However, regional service providers are projected to be able to adjust to increasing demand, and overall cumulative impacts to utilities would be small.

4.2.2.10.2 Energy and Materials Usage

Large projects such as pipelines, transmission lines, and power plants that could occur in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence require materials and energy to construct and operate. Energy and materials resources necessary for construction or operation of these projects are often obtained within regional or, in some cases, national markets.

Energy and materials (for example, steel and concrete) that would be needed for construction and operation of the proposed railroad in the Mina rail corridor are not constrained in regional markets, and proposed railroad needs would represent a small percentage of the cumulative annual materials use within the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence. While the regional markets for various construction-related materials and energy sources will continue to grow as the region develops, there is no evidence of potential limits to growth from constrained material or energy supplies. Cumulative impacts from energy and materials usage in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would be small.

4.2.2.11 Waste Management

4.2.2.11.1 DOE Waste-Management Activities

DOE has had waste-management programs at the Nevada Test Site for several decades. While the Nevada Test Site missions have changed over time (with an emerging focus on national security, energy, and environmental issues), waste management and disposal at the Nevada Test Site has been one of the primary long-term land uses. There are two active waste management and disposal sites on the Nevada Test Site:

- Area 5 occupies 2.9 square kilometers (720 acres) and is in Frenchman Flat north of Mercury, Nevada.
- Area 3 occupies 0.52 square kilometer (130 acres) north of Mercury in Yucca Flat.

Environmental restoration efforts are underway at various locations throughout the Nevada Test Site. The Nevada Test Site waste-management program currently includes management and disposal operations for hazardous waste, mixed waste, and low-level radioactive waste. Transportation of the waste is accomplished by truck from both on-site and off-site sources. There are no plans for Nevada Test Site activities to include use of the proposed railroad for shipment of wastes.

The proposed railroad would not contribute to cumulative impacts associated with DOE waste-management activities on the Nevada Test Site.

At present, Yucca Mountain Repository-development efforts are focused on preparing an application to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission for authorization to construct the repository for spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. The Yucca Mountain FEIS (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, all) and the Repository SEIS (DOE/EIS-0250F-S1) describe operations at the Yucca Mountain Site in detail.

4.2.2.11.2 Sanitary and Construction Wastes

As the populated areas in the Mina rail corridor cumulative impacts region of influence expand and grow, the volume of *sanitary waste* generated will also expand. Project proponents are legally required to dispose of nonhazardous and nonradiological construction and other solid waste in appropriately permitted solid waste landfills. Nevada has 24 operating municipal landfills with a combined capacity to accept more than 11,000 metric tons (12,000 tons) of waste per day. However, the number of operating landfills has decreased substantially over the past 15 years, and while there is sufficient capacity to accept waste for the State of Nevada as a whole, there are some areas, such as Pahrump, that have limited capacity for future years.

Railroad construction- and operations-related waste would add only a fraction of a percent to the total waste stream in the state. If there were a constraint to landfill capacity at some future time, additional land would be needed to expand or open a new landfill. Because of the relative scarcity of private land in the Mina rail corridor region of influence, land used for this purpose might need to come from BLM-administered federal land. As an alternative to local government landfill provision, private companies can also be expected to seek business opportunities to provide solid- and hazardous-waste management, transportation, and disposal.

DOE would store and use hazardous materials (such as oil, gasoline and solvents) during the railroad construction phase, and would control and manage these materials in accordance with the extensive federal and state regulatory framework. Other major projects would have similar waste streams, and project plans and requirements would call for disposal of such wastes in permitted facilities and materials management according to accepted industry practices.

The proposed railroad's contribution to impacts from the generation and management of sanitary and construction wastes would be small. Cumulative impacts to waste disposal facilities in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would be small.

4.2.2.12 Environmental Justice

4.2.2.12.1 Potential Effects to Low-Income and/or Minority Populations

Environmental justice impacts result when high and adverse human health or environmental impacts fall disproportionately on low-income and minority populations. If high and adverse impacts are found to have disproportionate impacts on environmental justice populations as compared to the general population of the area, the impacts would be mitigated to the extent practical by the federal agencies involved in the proposed action.

Based on individual and group values, beliefs, and goals, there is a difference in perspective as to the potential effects of activities in the Mina rail corridor region of influence on low-income and/or minority populations among the different stakeholders and other interested parties. *American Indian Perspectives on the Proposed Rail Alignment Environmental Impact Statement for the U.S. Department of Energy's Yucca Mountain Project* (DIRS 174205-Kane et al. 2005), prepared by the American Indian Writers Subgroup of the Consolidated Group of Tribes and Organizations, discusses cultural resources, American Indian values and their relationship to environmental justice, and broader American Indian values. DOE considers the American Indian Writers Subgroup conclusions to be responsible opposing viewpoints for purposes of its environmental justice responsibilities. DOE has concluded that there are no identifiable environmental or human health impacts associated with the proposed railroad in the Mina rail corridor that would disproportionately affect low-income or minority populations. Additionally, there are no identified effects to subsistence hunting and gathering traditions in the Mina rail corridor region of influence. Therefore, the DOE incremental contribution to cumulative environmental justice impacts to low-income and/or minority populations under the Proposed Action in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would be small.

The largest concentration of low-income or minority populations along the Mina rail corridor occurs in Mineral County and on the Walker River Paiute Reservation. The corridor would cross American Indian tribal lands, with the three Schurz bypass options almost entirely on the Walker River Paiute Reservation (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, pp. 15 and 16). There are approximately 1.4 square kilometers (350 acres) of Reservation lands in the corridor (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, p. 15). The population of the Reservation, estimated to be 853 persons in 2000, is low-income and consists mainly of American Indians, a minority population. The poverty rate in Mineral County is 15 percent, which exceeds the rate of poverty (11 percent) in the State of Nevada, while the poverty rate of Walker River Paiute Reservation residents is 32 percent, nearly three times the rate of poverty in the state. The only moderate or large impacts that were identified relate to noise impacts from construction. These impacts would not occur on the Walker River Paiute Reservation; therefore, there would be no large and adverse effects that would disproportionately affect a low income or minority community and there are no special pathways that would result in disproportionately large and adverse effects to low-income or minority communities.

Cumulative impacts to low-income or minority populations along the Mina rail corridor would be small, if any.

4.2.2.12.2 Economic Opportunity

Existing and reasonably foreseeable projects and activities in the Mina rail corridor region of influence would present economic opportunities for some people in the area. Economic opportunities include employment, wages, revenue from business operation, and other economic stimuli associated with growth and development. DOE and other project proponents in the Mina rail corridor region of influence have a legally mandated equal opportunity approach to these economic opportunities. Potential for economic

gain would be distributed equally to persons or businesses in the area that seek employment or business opportunity. While not all people would gain economically from the cumulative group of projects and activities, the opportunity for gain does not favor one population group or another based on minority or income status.

Because there would be small changes in long-term population attributable to activities in the Mina rail corridor, impacts or stresses to the housing stock, infrastructure systems, or social services would be unlikely. Socioeconomic impacts from railroad construction and operation in the Mina rail corridor would be small overall and would be unlikely to adversely or disproportionately affect the low-income or minority populations in the corridor.

4.3 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts/Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

This section addresses unavoidable adverse impacts that could remain after the application of *mitigation* measures, the relationship between short-term uses of the human environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and potentially irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources for the Mina rail corridor.

4.3.1 UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

This section summarizes potential impacts associated with construction and operation of a railroad in the Mina rail corridor that could be unavoidable and adverse and that could remain after DOE implemented mitigation measures.

4.3.1.1 Land Use and Ownership

Railroad construction and operation in the Mina rail corridor could result in altered access to some private land holdings, land associated with the Walker River Paiute Reservation, the Hawthorne Army Depot, *unpatented mining claims*, rights-of-way, and grazing allotments (through loss of forage and grazing footprint).

4.3.1.2 Air Quality

Railroad construction in the Mina rail corridor would result in temporary increases in *criteria air pollutants*, mainly fugitive dust. Railroad operations would result in small increases in criteria air pollutants.

4.3.1.3 Hydrology

Railroad construction in the Mina rail corridor could alter natural surface-water drainage patterns. Impacts associated with the alteration of drainage patterns or changes to erosion and sedimentation rates or locations would be small and localized. In addition, construction could require the withdrawal and use of groundwater. In many areas the rail line could cross, other uses or commitments of groundwater resources would approach or exceed the perennial yields of the underlying groundwater basins. This would potentially be a small and adverse, although not permanent, impact.

4.3.1.4 Biological Resources and Soils

Railroad construction in the Mina rail corridor could cause habitat loss and the loss of small numbers of individual plants and animals. Disturbed soils could result in increased erosion during the construction phase, even with the implementation of best management practices.

4.3.1.5 Cultural Resources

Although DOE would implement best management practices and mitigation measures related to cultural resources, grading and other construction activities could degrade, cause the removal of, or alter the setting of archaeological sites or other cultural resources and cause the loss of archaeological information in the Mina rail corridor.

4.3.1.6 Socioeconomics

Population growth associated with railroad construction and operations in the Mina rail corridor could result in additional infrastructure and public services needs. This probably would occur in the communities with the largest labor pools and where the workers resided permanently – the Reno and Las Vegas areas.

4.3.1.7 Noise and Vibration

During the construction phase, noise levels at locations such as Goldfield would be noticeable, and could approach or potentially exceed Federal Transit Administration or Federal Housing Authority construction noise guidelines during events such as rock blasting. This unavoidable impact would be temporary. Railroad operations along the Mina rail corridor could lead to an unavoidable, but small increase in ambient noise from passing trains in residential areas near Silver Peak, Mina, and Goldfield. No unavoidable adverse impacts associated with vibration are expected for either the construction or operations phases.

4.3.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Railroad construction could lead to a long-term loss of productivity in disturbed areas along the Mina rail corridor. In the context of transportation, long-term refers to the period of environmental recovery after the end of the construction phase or the active use of a transportation route for purposes supporting the Yucca Mountain Repository.

The land-cover types along the Mina rail corridor are widely distributed in the region. A loss of vegetation and grazing forage from a disturbed area in the corridor would have little effect on the regional productivity of plants and animals.

Productivity loss for soils would be limited to areas affected by land clearing and construction. These areas would not be available for revegetation and habitat for some time. Disturbed areas would recover, however, and eventually would return to pre-disturbance conditions, although the process of recovery would be slow in the arid environment.

4.3.3 IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Railroad construction would result in some irretrievable or irreversible commitments of resources. Many resources could be retrievable at a later date through such actions as removing roadbeds, revegetating

land, and recycling materials. Land uses could change in the rail corridor until railroad operations were complete, thereby limiting or eliminating other land uses for that period. However, at the end of the operations phase land along the corridor could revert to public or private ownership.

The loss of cultural resources would result in an irretrievable commitment of resources. Mitigation approaches involving the recovery of archaeological resources before construction activities degraded the sites would reduce the finite number of such resources in the Yucca Mountain region. However, the context of the sites would be destroyed.

DOE would use about 125 million liters (33 million gallons) of diesel fuel and 2.5 million liters (0.66 million gallons) of gasoline in Nevada during the construction phase (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-7). This would be about 0.6 percent of the annual motor fuel consumption in the state. Construction use of diesel fuel would be about 2.2 percent of annual consumption. Operational use of motor fuel by locomotives would be a very small fraction of Nevada motor fuel use.

5. NEW INFORMATION REGARDING OTHER RAIL CORRIDORS

This chapter summarizes environmental information from the Yucca Mountain FEIS regarding the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors, provides updated information on these corridors as appropriate, and considers the effect of any changes on the potential environmental impacts of the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors. This chapter also describes present and reasonably foreseeable actions that would affect direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts in the regions of influence for these rail corridors.

Glossary terms are shown in ***bold italics***.

5.1 Introduction

In the Amended Notice of Intent dated October 13, 2006, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE or the Department) announced that it would update as appropriate the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (Yucca Mountain FEIS; DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, all) information and analyses for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified ***rail corridors*** to determine if there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns (71 FR 60484). The Department has eliminated the Caliente-Chalk Mountain rail corridor, which would intersect the Nevada Test and Training Range, from further review because of U.S. Air Force concerns that a rail line on the Range would interfere with the Air Force mission and objectives (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 9). For clarity, any options in the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors that would cross onto the Nevada Test and Training Range are depicted in figures with dashed lines. Additionally, DOE has informed the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe that any corridor options that would cross Timbisha Shoshone Trust Lands have been eliminated from consideration (DIRS 174558-Sweeney 2004, all).

5.1.1 GENERAL METHODOLOGY

DOE reviewed and updated the ***affected environment*** information in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, as appropriate, using the same data sources to the extent possible. However, since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, many data management systems, such as geographic information systems, and data sources, such as the BLM LR2000, have advanced and currently provide more data and specificity than was previously available.

Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the design and plans for the construction of a rail line within the Caliente rail corridor have advanced (see Section 2.2.3). The advanced Caliente rail design and plans provide a basis for updating information about and estimating environmental impacts for the other corridors analyzed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The approach DOE used to estimate changes in environmental impacts for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors is based on primary impact indicators. A primary impact indicator is the most important contributor or parameter used to determine the impacts of a particular environmental resource area. To update the information on the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors, parameters that describe corridor characteristics (such as length of corridor and earthwork quantities) derived from Caliente rail alignment analyses provided ratios to estimate the data at a corridor level.

In addition, DOE updated the baseline environmental conditions for each resource area through the collection of federal, state, and local data commensurate with the information in the Yucca Mountain FEIS for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors. Using updated affected environments as the new baselines, while considering the evolution of engineering and design changes, DOE evaluated how the magnitude and range of potential impacts might have changed from those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. DOE also considered present and reasonably foreseeable actions that would affect direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts within the regions of influence for these rail corridors.

Sections 5.1.1.1 through 5.1.1.12 describe the general approach DOE used to update the environmental conditions for each resource area for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors.

5.1.1.1 Land Use and Ownership

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE determined that an evaluation of impacts to land use and ownership should identify the current ownership of the land that its activities could disturb, and the present and anticipated future uses of the land. The Yucca Mountain FEIS defined the *region of influence* for impacts to land-use and ownership as land areas that would be disturbed or whose ownership or use would change as a result of constructing and operating a railroad. In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE evaluated land use and ownership within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. The update in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS used the same region of influence. Based on these criteria, DOE evaluated the potential impacts to land use and ownership from the construction and operation of the railroad. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages most of the public lands through which the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors would pass. Traditional land uses in most of the areas that would be directly and indirectly affected include grazing, mining, energy development, general recreation, utility rights-of-way, and wildlife management. Much of this land is not extensively disturbed, although it has been modified through activity such as grazing and mining.

Some BLM-administered lands have special designations that identify their uses or why they have been set aside. These include Wildlife Habitat Management Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wilderness Areas, and Wilderness Study Areas. Public lands in the Mina rail corridor region of influence provide a number of diverse recreation opportunities, and the BLM has designated certain lands as Special Recreation Management Areas.

Most of the land encompassing the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors is BLM-administered public land. Each BLM Field Office manages lands within its administrative boundaries according to one or more Management Framework Plan or Resource Management Plan. In addition to BLM-administered land, the range of potentially affected land ownership includes private land holdings (including land designated for commercial development), other federal lands (DOE lands, U.S. Department of Defense lands), and American Indian trust lands and reservations.

To evaluate land use and ownership in the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors, DOE obtained data from the latest editions of BLM Master Title Plats and online land record databases, such as BLM LR2000 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 66). The Department also evaluated county and state land records and information from other federal agencies, universities, or commercial developments.

5.1.1.2 Air Quality

The update to air quality information includes changes in attainment status for the counties through which the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors would pass. As in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE defined the regions of influence for air quality as the air basins through which the corridors would pass. To update this air quality information, DOE obtained data from the Nevada Bureau of Air Quality to

determine attainment status for counties that could be affected, and used the same qualitative methods as the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Areas in violation of one or more of the *criteria pollutant* standards are classified as *nonattainment areas*. If there are not enough air quality data to determine the status of a remote or sparsely populated area, then the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency lists the area as unclassifiable. Unclassifiable areas are considered to be in attainment.

The region of influence includes the air basins in the vicinity of sources of criteria pollutant emissions that could be affected during railroad construction and operations. In particular, the air basins of the Las Vegas Valley (for *particulate matter* with aerodynamic diameters equal to or less than 10 micrometers [PM_{10}] and *carbon monoxide*) and the Pahrump Valley (for PM_{10}) where criteria pollutant concentrations are already an issue. If nonattainment or maintenance areas are not identified, detailed estimates of emission rates or comparisons to threshold levels for conformity were not made.

5.1.1.3 Hydrology

The Yucca Mountain FEIS analyzed surface-water resources within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor and within 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) of each side of the corridor. For this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, the region of influence for surface water, including springs, is the same as the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Information for this update was obtained from (1) the National Hydrography Dataset Waterbody geospatial data that the U.S. Geological Survey developed in cooperation with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; (2) the Geographic Names Information System Nevada geospatial database developed by the U.S. Geological Survey and the BLM; and (3) the National Wetlands Inventory database managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (DIRS 182772-MMTS 2007, p. 66).

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Department used terrain types to estimate total water demand. Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Department has canvassed similar projects throughout Nevada and determined that the excavation type, not the terrain, would more accurately estimate total water demand associated with the rail line construction. DOE applied ratios based on earthwork to the corridors to estimate water demand in relation to the values for the Caliente rail alignment. DOE updated the water demand based on earthwork needs and reevaluated the water required for compaction. Earthwork needs would include excavation of common (alluvial) ripable rock, and drilling and blasting of solid bedrock.

5.1.1.4 Biological Resources and Soils

The update of information for biological resources and soils assessed changes in baseline biological resources and soils conditions for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors within the same region of influence as the Yucca Mountain FEIS. These changes in baseline conditions include vegetation cover, soil types, new or delisted special status species, critical habitat, and wildlife management areas. Consistent with the Yucca Mountain FEIS, this update considered the potential for impacts to vegetation communities; special status species (plants and animals), including their habitat; springs, wetlands, and riparian areas; big game habitat; and wild horse and burro herd management areas that in the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. This update also considered special status species and big game habitat within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of each side of the corridor that could be affected by rail line construction, and springs and riparian areas within this area that could be affected by permanent changes in surface-water flows.

DOE obtained location records for special status species from a statewide database managed by the Natural Heritage Program (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 67) that contains records of observations of rare or protected plants, fish, and wildlife species. Other information sources included (1) the *Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan* (DIRS 179560-BLM 2001, all); (2) the *Tonopah*

Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (DIRS 173224-BLM 1997, all); (3) the *Biological Field Findings Report for Potential Rail Alignments along the Mina Route* (DIRS 182760-URS Corporation/Potomac-Hudson Engineering 2006, all); and (4) the *Mina Rail Route Feasibility Study* (DIRS 180222-BSC 2006, all. Additional DOE obtained information from the National Hydrography Dataset Waterbody geospatial data that the U.S. Geological Survey developed in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Geographic Names Information System Nevada geospatial database and the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Management Area Maps (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 67).

5.1.1.5 Cultural Resources

The update to cultural resources information assesses changes in the baseline cultural resources conditions since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. These changes include a review of surveys completed since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS and the number of sites and their potential for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places*. The region of influence was a corridor width of 400 meters (0.25 miles), which was the same as the Yucca Mountain FEIS. This update used records from the Desert Research Institute, the Nevada Cultural Resources Information System, and archaeological information repositories at the Harry Reid Center at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and the Nevada State Museum in Carson City.

As part of this update, the Department completed cultural resources records searches for the Carlin, Jean and Valley Modified rail corridors. The records searches identified the presence of cultural resources, including historic and archaeological sites.

5.1.1.6 Occupational and Public Health and Safety

The update for occupational and public health and safety focuses on traffic, worker industrial safety, incident-free radiological and nonradiological impacts, and radiological impacts related to accidents. Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, there have been updates to the methods and data to estimate the radiation doses for workers and members of the public (DIRS 182757-MTS 2007, all). The impacts for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors reflect new information, as described in Section 3.2.6 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS.

Based on the conceptual design and plans for the construction of a rail line in the Caliente rail corridor, DOE has determined that the estimated workforce has increased the Department completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. To update occupational and public health and safety impacts, DOE used employment levels scaled from the Caliente rail corridor analysis.

The region of influence for each includes:

- Traffic impacts: The 400-meter (0.25-mile) width of the corridor and public highways used by workers and for shipments during construction and operations.
- Worker industrial safety impacts: The 400-meter-wide rail corridor.
- Incident-free radiological and nonradiological impacts: The 800-meter (0.5-mile) area on either side of the centerline of the rail corridor.
- Radiological impacts with respect to accidents: An area within an 80-kilometer (50-mile) radius from a potential occurrence location in the rail corridor.

DOE obtained information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for 2005, and used the RADTRAN 5 computer program (DIRS 150898-Neuhauser and Kanipe 2000, all; DIRS 155430-Neuhauser, Kanipe,

and Weiner 2000, all) and the RISKIND computer program (DIRS 101483-Yuan et al. 1995, all) where applicable.

5.1.1.7 Socioeconomics

The update to information on socioeconomics includes changes to the employment and population baselines for the three corridors. The region of influence for this update is the Nevada counties through which the corridors would pass, and the two areas where most workers would be expected to reside (the Carson City/Washoe County area and Clark County).

DOE obtained data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Nevada State Demographer, and other local and state sources. In addition, the Department utilized estimates and projections from the socio-demographic forecasting software program REMI, version 9, to develop baselines.

5.1.1.8 Noise and Vibration

To assess and update the baseline conditions for noise and vibration, DOE reviewed the input parameters used for the noise and vibration analysis in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. This included the population within the region of influence for noise and vibration, relevant noise standards, and the frequency and number of trains. DOE has updated the criteria to determine the level of potential impacts from noise and vibration. For noise impacts from construction activities, DOE used U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, methods (DIRS 177297-Hanson, Towers, and Meister 2006, all) and construction noise guidelines. For operation of trains during the construction and operations phases, DOE analyzed noise impacts under established Surface Transportation Board (STB) criteria (49 CFR 1105.7e(6)). To evaluate potential vibration impacts from construction and operations activities, DOE used Federal Transit Administration building vibration damage and human-annoyance criteria (DIRS 177297-Hanson, Towers, and Meister 2006, all). This update assessed the distance of the rail line from communities along the rail line and estimated the noise impacts from railroad construction and operation to these communities. For the update to impacts from vibration, DOE considered typical background levels of ground vibration, the number of trains, and the distance of the rail line from historic structures or sites of cultural significance. The updated criteria for noise and vibration do not affect the level of impacts presented in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.1.1.9 Aesthetics

Consistent with the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the region of influence for aesthetics in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS is based on a 400-meter (0.25 mile)-wide corridor and its *viewshed*. This update considered changes to the visual sensitivity ratings of viewsheds in Nevada and the BLM Visual Resource Management System objectives as described BLM Handbook H-8431-1, Visual Resource Contrast Rating (DIRS 173053-BLM 1986, all). DOE reviewed BLM plans, including the Elko Resource Management Plan, the Las Vegas Resource Management Plan, and the Tonopah/Battle Mountain Resource Management Plan. The analysis of potential impacts on aesthetic resources considered BLM ratings for both federal and non-federal land areas. Non-federal lands were granted the rating of surrounding BLM lands or else assigned the BLM rating of Class III. The regions of influence included the landscapes along the rail corridor with aesthetic quality that construction and operations of a railroad could affect.

5.1.1.10 Utilities, Energy, and Materials

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated utilities, energy, and materials impacts common to all corridors and noted that these impacts would include the use of motor fuel, steel, and concrete. Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, information on the baseline supply of utilities, energy, and construction

materials has been updated. For example, annual motor fuel use in Nevada was updated from the Federal Highway Administration database. DOE applied the engineering methods used during recent work on the Caliente rail alignment to estimate the amount of earthwork for the Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified rail corridors. The Department used the estimated amount of earthwork to determine fuel use because fuel use is proportional to the quantity of earthwork needed. In addition, applying the engineering methods used for the Caliente alignment, DOE developed material requirement estimates based on the length of rail line for steel (main track rail) and concrete (main track ties).

5.1.1.11 Waste Management

Waste management impacts are based on the estimated generation of solid municipal waste from rail line construction in each of the three corridors. The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated common waste management impacts for all corridors rather than for individual corridors. Information to allow differentiation between corridor waste management impacts is now much more readily available. Consistent with the Yucca Mountain FEIS, this update estimated the peak annual generation of sanitary solid waste. However, based on advanced databases, this update was then able to estimate the impact that the waste generated would have on the individual landfills serving the respective corridor, rather than on landfills on a state-wide basis as the Yucca Mountain FEIS did. DOE obtained information on landfills from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection database (DIRS 174041-NDEP 2007, all).

5.1.1.12 Environmental Justice

Consistent with the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE evaluated the potential impacts to two specific populations, those defined as low income and those defined as minority. For the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the region of influence for the environmental justice analysis was defined as the Nevada counties the corridors would cross. DOE identified low income and minority populations by examining 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census Bureau block group data in the region of influence.

Census data for the year 2000 concerning minority communities in Nevada was available at the block group level for the Yucca Mountain FEIS analysis; however, 2000 Census data on low-income communities were not. Therefore, the information on low-income communities was from the 1990 Census. As a consistent criterion for identifying minority and low-income blocks and block groups, DOE employed a 10-percent threshold, meaning that the environmental analysis focused on blocks and block groups in Nevada having a 10-percent or greater minority population or low-income population than the state averages. DOE adopted the 10-percent threshold for the Yucca Mountain FEIS from a 1995 Nuclear Regulatory Commission document, *Interim NRC Procedure for Environmental Justice Reviews* (DIRS 103426-NRC 1995, all). This threshold is consistent with the recent revision of Nuclear Regulatory Commission guidance on environmental justice (DIRS 157276-NRC 1999, all).

For determining minority populations for the update in this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE followed the Council on Environmental Quality guidance (DIRS 103162-CEQ 1997, all) and the approach used in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, Section 3.1.13). DOE considered that a minority population exists where either: (a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent; or (b) the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis. (DOE used both the United States and the State of Nevada minority populations.)

The Department used the Council on Environmental Quality definition of low-income and the annual statistical poverty thresholds from the U.S. Census Bureau. A low-income community exists when the low-income population percentage in the area of interest is meaningfully greater than the low-income population in the general population. For purposes of the analysis of low-income communities, DOE

applied the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission guidance of a 20-percent threshold above the state average of 11 percent (that is, 31 percent) for low-income populations (69 *FR* 52040, August 24, 2004).

For this update, DOE used 2000 Census Bureau information block group data to determine both low-income and minority populations for this update.

5.2 Carlin Rail Corridor

Table 5-1 summarizes the results of the update to the primary impact indicators for the Carlin rail corridor and compares them with the corridor information reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The information reflects the total for rail road construction and operations, unless otherwise noted.

The Carlin rail corridor would originate at the Union Pacific Railroad Mainline near Beowawe in north-central Nevada. The corridor would travel south through Crescent, Grass, and Big Smoky Valleys, passing west of Tonopah and east of Goldfield. It would then travel south following and periodically crossing the western boundary of the Nevada Test and Training Range, passing through Oasis Valley and across Beatty Wash. It would travel across Crater Flats and along Fortymile Wash to Yucca Mountain. Depending on the option, the Carlin rail corridor would be approximately 530 kilometers (330 miles) long from its link with the Union Pacific Railroad Mainline to Yucca Mountain.

Options to the Carlin rail corridor range from 510 kilometers to 540 kilometers (320 to 340 miles). The two main corridor options are the Big Smoky Valley option and the Monitor Valley option. The Yucca Mountain FEIS contains detailed descriptions of the Carlin rail corridor and its options, which are shown in Figure 5-1.

5.2.1 LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE determined that an evaluation of impacts to land use and ownership should identify the current ownership of the land that its activities could disturb, and the present and anticipated future uses of the land. In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE evaluated land use and ownership in the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. The region of influence for land-use and ownership impacts was defined as land areas that would be disturbed or whose ownership or use would change as a result of the construction and operation of a rail line within this corridor. The purpose of the 400-meter width was to provide sufficient space for final alignment to route the rail line around sensitive land features or engineering obstacles. The region of influence for this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS is the same as the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

Traditional land uses in most of the Carlin rail corridor region of influence that would be directly and indirectly affected include grazing, mining, energy development, general recreation, utility rights-of-way, and wildlife management. Much of this land is not extensively disturbed, although it has been modified through activity such as grazing and mining.

Some BLM-administered lands have special designations which denote their use or what they have been set aside for. These include Wildlife Habitat and Management Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wilderness Areas, and Wilderness Study Areas. Public lands in the Carlin rail corridor region of influence provide a number of diverse recreation opportunities, and the BLM has designated certain lands as Special Recreation Management Areas.

Table 5-1. Updated environmental information for the Carlin rail corridor (page 1 of 2).

Resource	Changes from Yucca Mountain FEIS to this analysis
<i>Corridor length</i>	No change
<i>Land ownership</i>	
BLM-administered land	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 44,000 to 49,000 acres (180 to 200 square kilometers) (approximately 86 percent) Updated analysis: 44,000 to 52,000 acres (180 to 210 square kilometers) (88 to 94 percent)
Private land	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 1,00 to 3,700 acres (7.3 to 15 square kilometers) (approximately 6.7 percent) Updated analysis: 1,600 to 2,300 acres (6.4 to 9.4 square kilometers) (3.27 to 4.02 percent)
Nevada Test and Training Range land	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0 to 2,700 acres (0 to 10.9 square kilometers) (approximately 5.2 percent) Updated analysis: 0 to 11.4 square kilometers (0 to 2,800 acres) (0 to 4.9 percent)
Nevada Test Site land	No change
American Indian trust lands and reservations	No change
<i>Air quality</i>	
National Ambient Air Quality Standards attainment status	No change
<i>Hydrology</i>	
Surface water	No change
Groundwater use (construction phase)	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 660 acre-feet (810,000 cubic meters) Updated analysis: 5,800 acre-feet (7.13 million cubic meters)
<i>Biological resources and soils</i>	Six additional sensitive species recorded
<i>Cultural resources (records search)</i>	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 110 recorded sites Updated analysis: 120 recorded sites
<i>Occupational and public health and safety</i>	
Industrial hazards (construction and operations)	
Total recordable cases	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 210 Updated analysis: 391
Lost workday cases	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 105 Updated analysis: 224
Fatalities	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.41 Updated analysis: 1
Transportation hazards (construction only)	
Traffic fatalities	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 1.1 Updated analysis: 4
Cancer fatalities	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.14 Updated analysis: 0.6

Table 5-1. Updated environmental information for the Carlin rail corridor (page 2 of 2).

Resource	Changes from Yucca Mountain FEIS to this analysis
<i>Occupational and public health and safety (continued)</i>	
Incident-free radiological impacts (latent cancer fatalities) (operations only)	
Public	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.0012 Updated analysis: 0.00008
Workers	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.31 Updated analysis: 0.33
Radiological transportation accident fatalities	
Radiological accident risk (latent cancer fatalities)	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.000000037 Updated analysis: 0.000001
Cancer fatalities from vehicle emissions	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.09 Updated analysis: 0.4
Nonradiological transportation accident fatalities	
Spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste transportation	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.54 Updated analysis: 0.31
Construction and operations workforce	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.7 Updated analysis: 3.3
<i>Socioeconomics</i>	
Estimated construction workforce	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 1,230 worker-years Updated analysis: 6,600 worker-years
Estimated operations workforce	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 47 workers per year Updated analysis: 42 workers per year
<i>Noise and vibration</i>	
No change	
<i>Aesthetics</i>	
No change	
<i>Utilities, energy, and materials (amount used)</i>	
Diesel	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 10.6 million gallons (40 million liters) Updated analysis: 29 million gallons (110 million liters)
Gasoline	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.22 million gallons (0.82 million liters) Updated analysis: 0.63 million gallons (2.4 million liters)
Steel	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 82,000 tons (76,000 metric tons) Updated analysis: 95,000 tons (86,000 metric tons)
Concrete	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 456,000 tons (414,000 metric tons) Updated analysis: 364,000 tons (330,000 metric tons)
<i>Waste management</i>	
Sanitary solid waste	Updated analysis: 1.7 tons (1.6 metric tons) per day
<i>Environmental justice (disproportionately high and adverse impacts)</i>	
No change, none identified	

To obtain current land use and ownership data, DOE consulted the latest edition of the BLM Master Title Plats and online land record databases, such as BLM LR2000. The Department also evaluated county and state land records, along with information managed by other federal agencies, universities, or commercial developments.

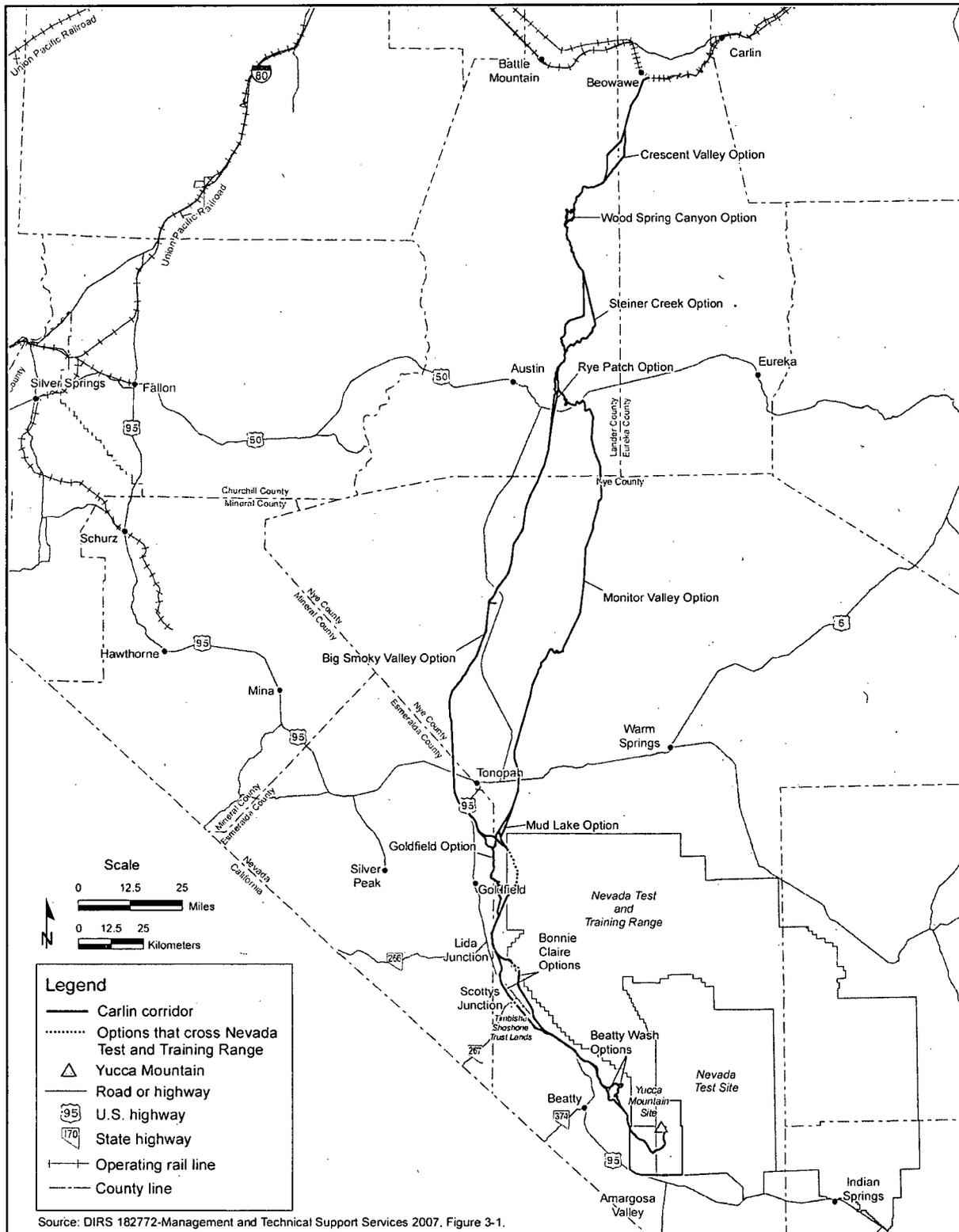


Figure 5-1. Carlin rail corridor and options (2002).

Potential impacts from construction and operation of a railroad in the Carlin rail corridor would be consistent with those that DOE reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, Section 6.3.2.1.1). The following paragraphs discuss information gathered in relation to land use in the Carlin rail corridor since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported that the BLM administered approximately 86 percent of the land in the corridor (180 to 200 square kilometers [44,000 to 49,000 acres]), the Department of Defense managed 5.2 percent (0 to 10.9 square kilometers), DOE managed 2.2 percent (4.6 square kilometers [1,100 acres]), and less than 1 percent (0 to 1.6 square kilometers) was held in trust by the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe. The Department of Defense lands were on the Nevada Test and Training Range.

Current land holdings for the Carlin rail corridor are as follows: BLM-administered land, approximately 88 to 94 percent (180 to 210 square kilometers [44,000 to 52,000 acres]); Department of Defense land, about 0 to 4.9 percent (0 to 11.4 square kilometers [2,800 acres]); DOE land, approximately 2 percent (unchanged); and Timbisha Shoshone trust lands less than 1 percent (unchanged) (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 73). The change in estimates of amount of BLM-administered land and private property within this corridor are, in part, the result of using databases whose land ownership data have been refined and enhanced since completion of the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported that about 6.7 percent (7.3 to 15 square kilometers [1,800 to 3,700 acres]) of the land within the Carlin rail corridor was private property. Currently, DOE estimates that private property occupies about 3.3 to 4 percent (6.4 to 9.4 square kilometers [1,600 to 2,300 acres]) of the land in the corridor (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 73). Similar to changes in BLM administered land, the change in the amount of private land reflects, in part, the use of more recent databases whose land ownership data have been enhanced since the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The highest density of private land occurs within the first 30 kilometers (19 miles) of the corridor (near Beowawe), although other concentrations of private property occur near Crescent Valley. In the Crescent Valley area, for instance, much of the private property lies in single sections (2.6 square kilometers [1 square mile]) of land that are separated by BLM-administered sections (as shown in Figure 5-3 for the area south of Crescent Valley). As a general criterion, DOE minimized crossing private property when it identified the Carlin rail corridor; however, as a result the corridor tends to cross private parcels of land owned by many individuals, which creates a correspondingly complex ownership pattern.

The Bonnie Claire option in the Carlin rail corridor would cross and divide an 11-square-kilometer (2,800-acre) portion of the Timbisha Shoshone trust lands near Scottys Junction, Nevada.

Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the BLM has found that a 0.43-square-kilometer (100-acre) parcel of public land near Hadley, Nevada, is suitable for direct (noncompetitive) sale to Round Mountain Gold Corporation for expansion of the existing Hadley Airport (*Notice of Realty Action: Direct (Non-Competitive) Sale of Public Lands, Nye County, NV; 72 FR 4290, January 30, 2007*); Figure 5-2 shows the location of the airport in relation to the Carlin rail corridor. This land, which is approximately 2.6 kilometers (1.6 miles) from the center of the Carlin rail corridor, was purchased by the Round Mountain Gold Corporation on May 11, 2007.

The Carlin rail corridor would pass near historic and currently established mining districts. At the time DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the number of unpatented claims staked in Nevada had been steadily dropping since the BLM instituted a requirement in 1991 for an annual fee for each claim. Since the DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the prices of gold and other metallic resources have been steadily rising, which has caused a resurgence in the number of mining claims. Unpatented mining claims have been, and continue to be, staked along the corridor, with sections containing the greatest number of claims located near the Crescent Valley and Goldfield areas (see Figure 5-3). According to a mineral assessment prepared for Lander County, exploration and development activity is increasing in and around

the Crescent Valley area for gold, silver, barite and geothermal resources (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 73).

The Cortez Gold Mines are near the northern end of the Carlin rail corridor, in the vicinity of Crescent Valley, and have been expanding their mining operations since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The Cortez Gold Mines, also called the Cortez Joint Venture, is the oldest continuously operating gold mining operation in Nevada; Figure 5-3 shows the location of the mine in relation to the Carlin rail corridor. The Cortez Gold Mines are among the largest annual producers of gold in the state of Nevada, and considered one of Nevada's major mines (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 74). Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Cortez Gold Mine has proposed an expansion of its Pipeline/South Pipeline Project, which is an open-pit gold mining and processing operation (*Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement To Analyze the Proposed Amendment to the Pipeline/South Pipeline Plan of Operations (NVN-067575) for the Cortez Hills Expansion Project*; 70 FR 72308, December 2, 2005). The BLM has granted authorization to Cortez Gold Mine to disturb approximately 37 square kilometers (9,000 acres) associated with the Pipeline/South Pipeline Project, which was under BLM consideration when DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The proposed expansion would include an additional 25 square kilometers (6,100 acres). The proposed expansion is less than 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) from the outer boundary of the Carlin rail corridor. The EIS for the proposed expansion project is in preparation, so it is unknown what impacts it could have; in addition, the project could undergo modifications and boundary adjustments.

DOE reviewed information in the Mineral Resources Data System and the Abandoned Mine database (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 74) to determine if additional mines, active or abandoned, have been located and documented since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Updates to these data systems revealed that the Carlin rail corridor would cross Mammoth, Diamondfield Property, Aloha, Tognoni Spring, Goldfield Bullion, Future Group, and Wright Prospect mines. The Monitor Valley option would cross Nevada State Pit, and there is an abandoned mine on the Steiner Creek option. Of these, Nevada State Pit, Tognoni Spring, and Diamondfield Property are "past producers," meaning that mining activities occurred in the past but no mining operations are currently underway.

The classification for Wright Prospect and Future Group is "occurrence," meaning that discovery of an outcrop has occurred and there could be some land disturbance, but there is currently no mining operation underway. Aloha, Goldfield Bullion, and Mammoth are "prospect sites," meaning there has been discovery of a mineral resource but no mining (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 74).

During the Goldfield mining history, several patents were issued for mining claims along the Carlin rail corridor, as reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. With a patented mining claim, the claimholder owns the land and the minerals. Effective October 1, 1994, Congress imposed a moratorium on spending appropriated funds for the acceptance or processing of mineral patent applications that had not yet received First Half Final Certificates (the required first step for patent issuance) or were not in Washington, D.C., for Secretary of Interior review of First Half Final Certificates on or before September 30, 1994. Until the moratorium is lifted, the BLM will not accept applications for mining claim patents. Therefore, the numbers and locations of patented mining claims remain unchanged from those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

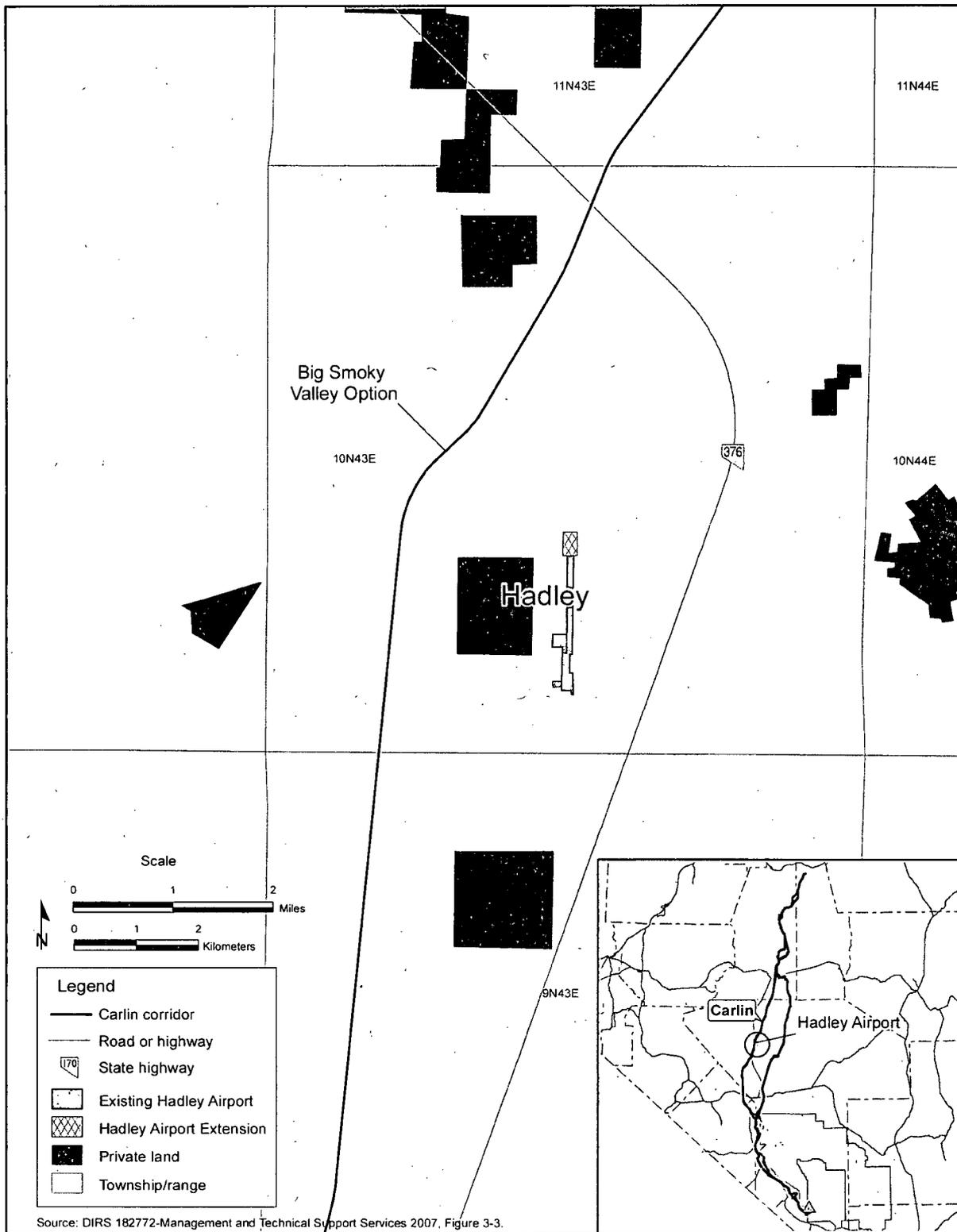


Figure 5-2. Hadley Airport location.

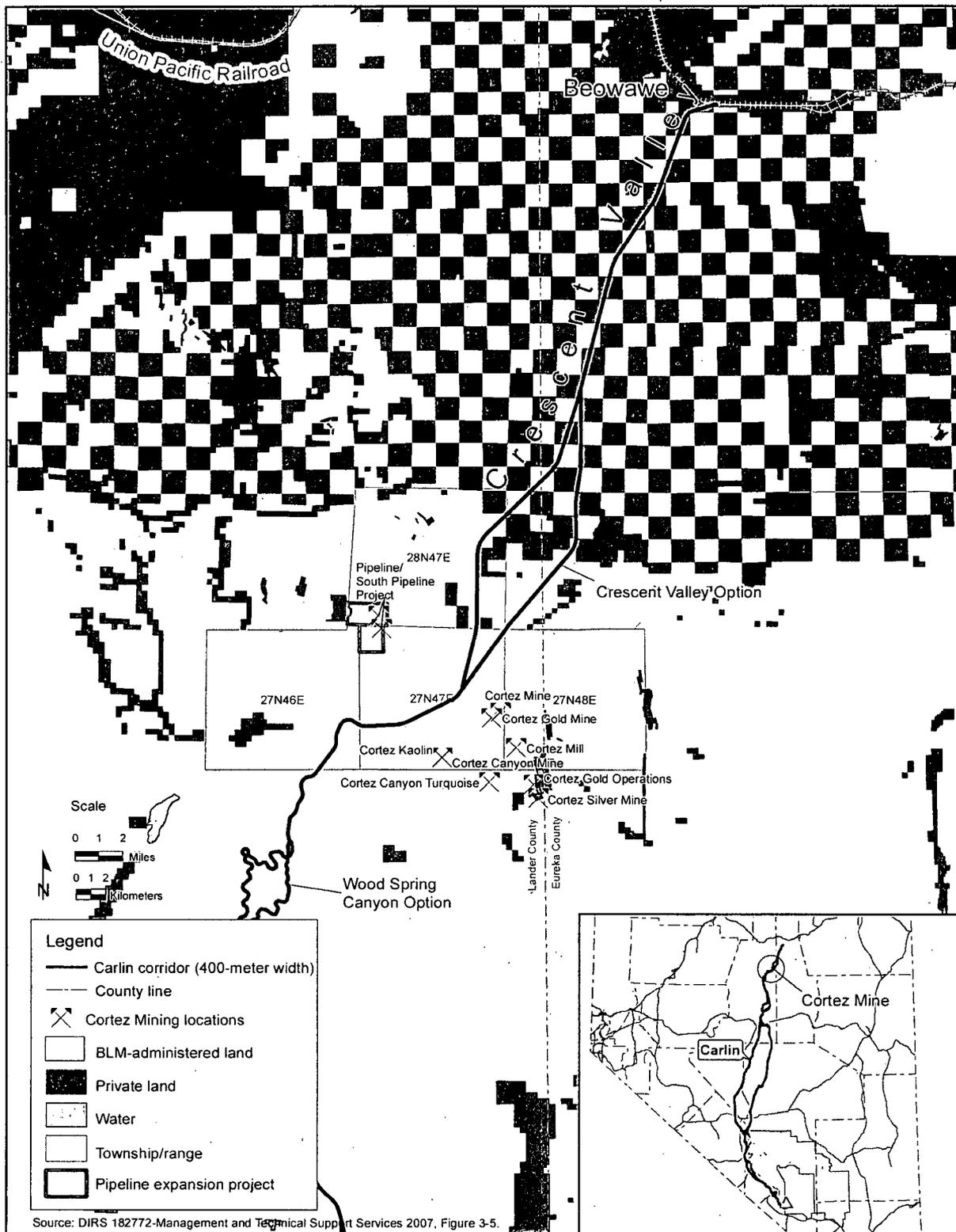


Figure 5-3. Cortez Mine location.

During an evaluation of Wilderness Areas and Wilderness Study Areas potentially affected by the Carlin rail corridor, the Yucca Mountain FEIS determined that only the Steiner Creek option would encroach on the Simpson Park Wilderness Study Area. The status of this Wilderness Study Area has not changed; therefore, this constitutes a land-use conflict. The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported that the Carlin rail corridor and its options would cross 12 BLM grazing allotments. The BLM has since updated their grazing allotment information, which indicates Carlin and its options would now cross the Geyser, South Buckhorn, Carico Lake, Grass Valley, Simpson Park, Potts, Monitor, Hunts Canyon, Kingston, Wildcat Canyon, Smoky, Francisco, San Antone, Montezuma and Razorback grazing allotments, along with an allotment the BLM has designated as being unused. According to this data source, the Carlin rail corridor also crosses the Ralston and Silver King grazing allotments; however, the BLM Battle Mountain District Office reports this same area as just the Ralston grazing allotment.

As reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the corridor would cross six wild horse and burro herd management areas, the Bates Mountain pronghorn antelope release area, three riparian habitats, and the Simpson Park habitat management area (see Section 5.2.4). According to the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Carlin rail corridor would cross a Desert Land Entry Withdrawal. Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the BLM has authorized or received proposals for additional Desert Land Entry Withdrawals within or adjacent to the Carlin rail corridor (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 74). For example, the Monitor Valley Option crosses or is adjacent to six Desert Land Entries. Of these, three have been issued patents, one has been authorized by BLM and is awaiting patent, and two others have applications in process with the BLM. The BLM grants Desert Land Entry Withdrawals to individuals to reclaim, irrigate, and cultivate arid and semiarid public lands of the western United States. The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported that the Carlin rail corridor would cross linear land features such as rights-of-way for utilities and roads. A review of BLM land records, including Master Title Plats, indicated the authorization of additional rights-of-way since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 75).

5.2.2 AIR QUALITY

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated air quality impacts common to all of the proposed corridors and noted that these impacts would include temporary increases in *criteria air pollutant* concentrations from construction of a rail line. The Yucca Mountain FEIS did not identify any air quality impacts unique to the Carlin rail corridor. The update did not find any indication that the air quality status of the counties and areas along the Carlin rail corridor has changed since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 82).

Areas in violation of one or more of the criteria pollutant standards are classified as nonattainment areas. If there is not enough air quality data to determine the status of a remote or sparsely populated area, then the Environmental Protection Agency lists the area as unclassifiable and the area is considered to be in attainment. The Carlin rail corridor would pass through rural parts of Nye, Esmeralda, Lander, and Eureka Counties in Nevada that are either in attainment or unclassifiable for criteria air pollutants under the Environmental Protection Agency (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 82). Since no nonattainment or maintenance areas were identified, no detailed estimates of emission rates or comparisons to threshold levels for conformity were made.

Fuel use by construction equipment would emit *carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide*, and particulate matter with diameters of 10 micrometers or less (PM_{10}) and 2.5 micrometers or less ($PM_{2.5}$). Construction activities would also emit PM_{10} in the form of *fugitive dust* from excavation, truck traffic, and operation of concrete batch plants (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-6). The emissions would be temporary and would cover a sizeable area as construction progressed along the length of the corridor.

Air quality impacts common to all corridors during railroad operations would result from diesel locomotives, which would emit carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. The number of locomotive engines in use and the associated operational characteristics would not differ appreciably from those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Therefore, there should be no measurable differences in potential impacts from those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.2.3 HYDROLOGY

This section describes surface-water and groundwater resources and impacts to those resources. The Yucca Mountain FEIS analyzed surface water and groundwater resources within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor and within 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) of each side of the corridor. For this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, the region of influence for hydrology, was the same as for the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.2.3.1 Surface Water

The Yucca Mountain FEIS identified potential surface-water resources, which include springs, streams, *riparian areas*, and reservoirs within the region of influence along the corridor (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, Table 6-37). As noted in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the spread of construction-related materials by precipitation or intermittent runoff events, releases to surface waters, and the alteration of natural drainage patterns or runoff rates that could affect downgradient resources would be unlikely. Based on the information collected for this update, impacts to surface-water resources from construction of a rail line in the Carlin rail corridor would be the same as those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The Carlin rail corridor, including all of its options, would cross 11 different mapped *100-year flood* zones or flood zone groups (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 82). These remain unchanged since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Although unlikely, the spread of construction-related materials by precipitation or intermittent runoff events could occur during the construction of a rail line. Impacts associated with changes in drainage patterns or to erosion and sedimentation rates or locations would be small and localized.

5.2.3.2 Groundwater

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Department used terrain types to estimate total water demand. Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE has canvassed similar projects throughout Nevada and determined that the amount and type of earthwork, not the terrain, would more accurately estimate total water demand associated with the construction of a rail line. Therefore, DOE updated the water demand based on earthwork needs. This resulted in an estimated water demand for the Carlin rail corridor of approximately 7.1 million cubic meters (5,800 acre feet) (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-7) compared to the estimate based on terrain types reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS of 810,000 cubic meters (660 acre-feet). To accommodate this increase in estimated water demand, DOE would need to draw more water than originally estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS from the underlying hydrographic basins and pump from additional wells. Groundwater withdrawal could temporarily affect discharge from nearby wells or springs. DOE would conduct detailed analyses if new wells required for construction of the rail line were to be located near other water sources.

Construction of a rail line would require water for soil compaction, dust control, and workforce use. Water use during construction would come primarily from groundwater resources, specifically hydrographic basins. If the hydrographic basin is designated, permitted groundwater rights approach or exceed the estimated perennial yield, water resources are being depleted or require additional administration, and the Nevada State Engineer has declared preferred uses of water. Table 5-2 updates the designation status of the hydrographic basins and the percentage of the Carlin rail corridor that would

Table 5-2. Hydrographic basins associated with the Carlin rail corridor.^{a,b}

Hydrographic basin (and subbasin where applicable)	Length (kilometers) ^c	Percentage of total ^d	Designated
Alkali Spring Valley	21	4	No
Big Smoky Valley/Northern Part	110	21	Yes
Big Smoky Valley/Tonopah Flat	76	14	Yes
Carico Lake Valley	4.4	0.82	No
Crater Flat	29	5.5	No
Crescent Valley	80	15	Yes
Fortymile Canyon/Jackass Flats	13	2.4	No
Grass Valley	55	10	No
Lida Valley	24	4.4	No
Oasis Valley	23	4.4	Yes
Ralston Valley	27	5.1	Yes
Sarcobatus Flat	48	9	Yes
Stonewall Flat	21	3.9	No

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 83.

b. To calculate water demand for each basin, multiply the total water demand for a given corridor by the percentage of total.

c. To convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.62137.

d. Based on primary option in Yucca Mountain FEIS.

be in the respective basin. The total percentage of the Carlin rail corridor that would be in designated basins is about 68 percent. The Yucca Mountain FEIS estimated that about 70 percent of the Carlin rail corridor would be in designated basins.

Railroad operations in the Carlin rail corridor would have little impact on groundwater resources. Possible changes in recharge, if any, would be the same as those at the completion of construction.

5.2.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND SOILS

Potential impacts to biological resources and soils from the construction and operation of a railroad in the Carlin rail corridor would be consistent with those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Maximum land disturbance for the construction of a rail line in the Carlin rail corridor would not differ from the estimates in the Yucca Mountain FEIS; therefore, the potential impacts would not change.

Consistent with the Yucca Mountain FEIS, this update considered the potential for impacts to vegetation communities; special status species (plants and animals), including their habitat; springs, wetlands, and riparian areas; big game habitat; and wild horse and burro herd management areas that may occur within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. The analysis considered special status species and big game habitat within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the corridor that may be affected by construction of the rail line. DOE also analyzed springs and riparian areas that could be affected by permanent changes in surface-water flows.

5.2.4.1 Biological Resources

The Carlin rail corridor would start in the Great Basin. The predominant land-cover types in this area are salt desert scrub and sagebrush. There are areas of pinon-juniper forests near the corridor. The corridor would pass through the Mojave Desert, which has predominant land-cover types of creosote-bursage, Mojave mixed scrub, and salt desert scrub.

Table 5-3 lists the special status species, big game habitat, and herd management areas identified in the Yucca Mountain FEIS and identifies additional information resulting from this update. The updated version of the Nevada Natural Heritage Program database examined for Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS included observations of six additional sensitive species not included in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. They are:

- Lahontan cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii henshawi*)
- Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*)
- Crescent Dunes serican scarab (*Serica ammomenisco*)
- Eastwood milkweed (*Asclepias eastwoodiana*)
- Ripley's springparsley/Sanicle biscuitroot (*Cymopterus ripleyi var. saniculoides*)
- Toquima milkvetch (*Astragalus toquimanus*)

There are no other known changes to game habitat, sensitive species, or springs and riparian areas within the corridor or within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the corridor than reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.2.4.2 Soils

The Yucca Mountain FEIS classified soils in the rail corridor with four attributes: shrink swell, erodes easily, unstable fill, and blowing soil. As noted in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the shrink swell and erodes easily attributes are common in the Carlin rail corridor. The Yucca Mountain FEIS also reported that there were no soils classified as prime farmlands within the Carlin rail corridor. For the update, no new information was identified on the attributes of the soils surveyed in the corridor (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 86).

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported construction activities would temporarily disturb soils in and adjacent to about 19 square kilometers (4,700 acres) of land. Disturbance of erodible soils could lead to increased silt loads in water courses or increased soil transport by wind. Erosion control during construction, and revegetation or other means of soil stabilization after construction, would minimize these concerns.

Table 5-3. Special status species, big game habitat, and herd management areas associated with the Carlin rail corridor^a (page 1 of 3).

Resource	Type	Yucca Mountain FEIS		Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS	
		In corridor	Within 5 kilometers	In corridor	Within 5 kilometers
<i>Threatened or endangered species (categorized by type)</i>					
Southwestern willow flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>)	B				•
Desert tortoise (<i>Gopherus agaszii</i>)	A/R	•		•	
Lahontan cutthroat trout ^b (<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii henshawi</i>)	F			•	

Table 5-3. Special status species, big game habitat, and herd management areas associated with the Carlin rail corridor^a (page 2 of 3).

Resource	Type	Yucca Mountain FEIS		Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS	
		In corridor	Within 5 kilometers	Resource	Type
<i>Sensitive species</i>					
Pygmy rabbit (<i>Brachylagus idahoensis</i>)	M		•		•
Fringed myotis (<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>)	M		•		•
San Antonio pocket gopher (<i>Thomomys bottae curtatus</i>)	M	•		•	
Ferruginous hawk (nesting area) (<i>Buteo regalis</i>)	B	•	•	•	•
Amargosa toad (<i>Bufo nelsoni</i>)	A/R		•		•
Oasis Valley speckled dace (<i>Rhinichthys osculus</i>)	F		•		•
Big Smoky Valley speckled dace (<i>Rhinichthys osculus lariversi</i>)	F		•		•
Oasis Valley springsnail (<i>Pyrgulopsis micrococcus</i>)	MO		•		•
Crescent Dune aegialian scarab (<i>Aegialia crescenta</i>)	I		•		
Crescent Dunes serican scarab (<i>Serica ammomenisco</i>)	I				•
Eastwood milkweed (<i>Asclepias eastwoodiana</i>)	P				•
Funeral Mountain milkvetch (<i>Astragalus funereus</i>)	P		•		•
Nevada Sanddune beardtongue (<i>Penstemon arenarius</i>)	P	•	•	•	•
Ripley's springparsley/Sanicle biscuitroot (<i>Cymopterus ripleyi var. saniculoides</i>)	P				•
Toquima milkvetch (<i>Astragalus toquimanus</i>)	P				•
<i>Game Habitat</i>					
Elk (<i>Cervus canadensis</i>)	M	•		•	
Mule deer (<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>)	M	•		•	
Pronghorn antelope (<i>Antilocapra americana</i>)	M	•		•	
Sage grouse (<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>) ^c	B	•		• ^c	

Table 5-3. Special status species, big game habitat, and herd management areas associated with the Carlin rail corridor^a (page 3 of 3).

Resource	Type	Yucca Mountain FEIS		Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS	
		In corridor	Within 5 kilometers	Resource	Type
<i>Wild horse and burro herd management areas</i>					
Bald Mountain		•		•	
Callaghan		•		•	
Hickison		•		•	
Saulsbury		•		•	
Goldfield		•		•	
Gold Mountain					•
Nevada Wild Horse Range				•	
Stonewall		•		•	
Bullfrog		•		•	
<i>Species Type Key:</i>		<i>M = Mammal</i>		<i>MO = Mollusk</i>	
		<i>B = Bird</i>		<i>I = Insect</i>	
		<i>A/R = Amphibian or Reptile</i>		<i>P = Plant</i>	
		<i>F = Fish</i>			

- a. Sources: Data collected from DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, pp. 105 to 106; DIRS 182760-URS Corporation/Potomac-Hudson Engineering 2006, all).
- b. Habitat for the Lahontan cutthroat trout, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, crosses the Big Smoky Valley and Monitor Valley options of the Carlin rail corridor north and northeast of Round Mountain in Nye County.
- c. Portions of the Carlin rail corridor pass through winter habitat, brood rearing habitat, and nesting habitat of the sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). Conservation of the greater sage grouse has become an important concern due to a decline in population and habitat. Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the State of Nevada has developed a Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan. This plan involves a number of state and federal agencies, including the Nevada Department of Wildlife, the California Department of Fish and Game, the Nevada and California BLM State Offices, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, among others. The Plan's highest priorities focus on maintaining sage-grouse habitats that are currently intact and highly productive. In addition, it emphasizes the enhancement of degraded seasonal habitats that have the greatest potential for recovery (DIRS 182772-Management and Technical Support Services 2007, all).

According to the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the impacts to soils would be transitory and small. The soils within the Carlin rail corridor and the potential impacts to these soils remain unchanged since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.2.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The effects of rail line construction in the Carlin rail corridor on cultural resources would be essentially the same as those DOE reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Impacts to cultural resources from railroad operations in the Carlin rail corridor would be unlikely.

Cultural resources include any prehistoric or historic archaeological sites, buildings, structures, landscapes, or objects resulting from or modified by human activity and can include mining, ranching, and linear features such as roads and trails. Cultural resources designated as historic properties warrant consideration with regard to potential adverse impacts resulting from proposed federal actions.

For this update, DOE conducted an archaeological site file search using records from the Desert Research Institute, the Nevada Cultural Resources Information System, and archaeological information repositories at the Harry Reid Center at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and the Nevada State Museum in Carson City.

The records search revealed the presence of 120 known archaeological sites within the 400 meters (0.25 mile) width of the Carlin rail corridor. The difference between the 110 sites reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS and the 120 identified in the new survey reflects the addition of sites recorded in the past decade, particularly in the vicinity of Yucca Mountain, where cultural resources inventories have been ongoing. Of the 120 known sites, 11 are eligible or potentially eligible for inclusion on the *National Register of Historic Places* (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 87).

The types of sites found in the new survey records are the same as those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The total amount of archaeological inventories conducted is approximately 3 percent of the total area for the Carlin rail corridor. Prior to construction of a rail line, field surveys and potentially mitigation of cultural resources would be required.

5.2.6 OCCUPATIONAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.2.6.1 Industrial Safety

The categories of worker impacts include total recordable incidents, lost workdays, and fatalities. Recordable incidents or cases are occupational injuries or occupation-related illnesses that result in (1) a fatality, regardless of the time between the injury or the onset of the illness and death, (2) lost workday cases (nonfatal), and (3) incidents that result in the transfer of a worker to another job, termination of employment, medical treatment, loss of consciousness, or restriction of motion during work activities.

Revised estimates of the number of workers needed to construct the rail line resulted in 6,600 worker-years in comparison to the 1,230 worker-years estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (2,000 hours per worker-year). Estimates of industrial safety impacts incorporate Bureau of Labor Statistics data for 2005 (DIRS 179131-BLS 2006, all; DIRS 179129-BLS 2007, all). The Yucca Mountain FEIS used 1998 data from the same source. Industrial safety impacts from operations in the Carlin rail corridor would be lower than those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS because of differences in the labor statistics used. Operation of the railroad would require about 60 workers each year an increase from 47 workers estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Table 5-4 lists estimated industrial safety impacts reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS as well as the updated information.

5.2.6.2 Transportation

Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, there have been updates to the methods and data used to estimate the radiation doses for workers and members of the public. Section 2.2.3 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS describes updates to the methods and data used to estimate impacts for the rail corridors. The impacts for the Carlin rail corridor reflect new information resulting from these changes.

Updates for transportation estimated impacts during construction from the transportation of construction materials to the construction sites and impacts from commuting workers. Operation of the railroad could result in incident-free radiological impacts, risks from radiological accidents, impacts from vehicle emissions from waste transportation and commuting workers, and traffic fatalities associated with waste transport and commuting workers.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated traffic fatality and vehicle emission impacts from the movement of equipment and delivery of materials for construction, worker commutes to and from construction sites, and transport of water to construction sites. Table 5-5 lists the impacts of transportation during the construction period. Due to the increased number of construction workers from the estimate in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, estimated traffic fatalities could increase from 1.1 to 4, and fatalities from exposure to

Table 5-4. Impacts to workers from industrial hazards during railroad construction and operations in the Carlin rail corridor.^a

Group and industrial hazard category	Construction		Operations		Total	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS ^b	Update ^c	Yucca Mountain FEIS ^d	Update ^e	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update
<i>Involved worker</i>						
Total recordable cases ^f	99	300	95	50	194	350
Lost workday cases	49	170	52	38	101	208
Fatalities	0.14	0.59	0.26	0.35	0.4	0.94
<i>Noninvolved worker</i>						
Total recordable cases	5.9	30	5.4	12	11.3	42
Lost workday cases	2.2	16	2.0	6.4	4.2	22.4
Fatalities	0.006	0.04	0.006	0.02	.012	.06
Totals^g						
Total recordable cases	110	330	100	61	210	391
Lost workday cases	51	180	54	44	105	224
Fatalities	0.14	0.6	0.27	0.4	0.41	1.0

- a. Estimates of worker-years multiplied by accident rate (DIRS 179131-BLS 2006, all; DIRS 179129-BLS 2007, all).
- b. Estimated workforce to construct the rail line would be 1,230 worker-years.
- c. Estimated workforce to construct the rail line would be 6,600 worker-years.
- d. Totals for 24 years for operations.
- e. Totals for operations up to a 50-year period.
- f. Total recordable cases include injuries, illnesses, and fatalities.
- g. Totals might differ from sums of values due to rounding.

Table 5-5. Transportation impacts during railroad construction for the Carlin rail corridor.^a

Transportation impact category	Traffic fatalities		Number of cancers		Total	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update
<i>Vehicle emission impacts (cancer fatalities)</i>						
Material delivery vehicles	—	—	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
Worker commuting	—	—	0.10	0.5	0.10	0.5
<i>Transportation accidents (fatalities)</i>						
Material delivery vehicles	0.3	0.3	—	—	0.3	0.3
Worker commuting	0.8	3.7	—	—	0.8	3.7
Totals^b	1.1	4.0	0.14	0.6	1.54	4.6

- a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 88.
- b. Totals might differ from sums of values due to rounding.

vehicle emissions could increase from 0.14 to 0.6. Total transportation impacts from construction could be about 5 fatalities.

The transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in the Carlin rail corridor could result in radiological and nonradiological impacts to workers and the public. Radiological impacts could

result from radiation that the rail casks emitted during incident-free transportation, from radionuclides released from the rail cask during transportation accidents, or from radiation that the rail cask emitted because of a loss of shielding during a transportation accident. Nonradiological impacts (vehicle emission-related fatalities) would result from diesel locomotives and fugitive dust. Nonradiological impacts could also result from traffic accidents that involved workers and members of the public.

Table 5-6 lists the impacts of using the Carlin rail corridor to ship spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste calculated using updated methods and data. The impacts presented reflect those from the mainline to the repository. This is in contrast to the Yucca Mountain FEIS, where the Nevada impacts started where the mainline intersects the Nevada border.

Table 5-6: Operations impacts of transportation for the Carlin rail corridor.^a

Transportation impact category	Traffic fatalities		Number of cancers		Total	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update
<i>Incident-free radiological impacts (LCFs)^b</i>						
Public (LCFs)	—	—	0.0012	0.000088		
Workers (LCFs)	—	—	0.31	0.33		
<i>Radiological accident risks (LCFs)</i>			0.000000037	0.000001		
<i>Vehicle emission impacts (cancer fatalities)</i>						
Waste transportation	—	—	0.0008	0.00038		
Worker commuting	—	—	0.09	0.4		
<i>Transportation accidents (fatalities)</i>						
Waste transportation	0.054	0.31	—	—		
Worker commuting	0.7	3.3	—	—		
Totals^c	0.7	3.6	0.4	0.7	1.1	4.3

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 90.

b. LCF = latent cancer fatality.

c. Totals might differ from sums of values due to rounding.

For members of the public, estimated radiological impacts from incident-free (routine) transportation decreased from those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, from 0.0012 to 0.000088 latent cancer fatality. This would be due primarily to the change in analysis for the Nevada rail line to model dedicated trains for shipments to the repository (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 89), which would be partially offset by the increase in the latent cancer fatality conversion factor.

For workers, estimated radiological impacts from incident-free transportation would increase from 0.31 to 0.33 latent cancer fatality. The increase would be due primarily to the increase in the latent cancer fatality conversion factor, the use of additional escorts in all areas, and the estimation of impacts for uninvolved workers at the staging yard, which would be partially offset by the decrease in the exposure time at the staging yard.

Estimated radiological accident risks would increase from 0.000000037 to 0.000001 latent cancer fatality. This would be due primarily to the use of the combined Track Class 3 transportation accident rate (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 89) based on train kilometers and railcar kilometers and the increase in the latent cancer fatality conversion factor. Although this is an increase, radiological accident risk would still be a negligible contributor to the overall transportation risk.

Estimated impacts from waste transportation vehicle emissions would decrease from 0.0008 to 0.00038 fatality. This would be due primarily to decreases in populations along the Carlin rail corridor. Vehicle emission impacts from commuting workers could increase from those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS because of the longer operations phase.

Estimated impacts from nonradiological transportation accidents would increase from 0.054 to 0.31 fatality. This is the most notable change to accident risk and would be due primarily to the use of the updated rail fatality rate (DIRS 178016-DOT 2005, all) and from accounting for the presence of locomotives and buffer cars in the estimation of the number of nonradiological transportation accident fatalities. Due to the increase in the number of workers, traffic fatalities associated with commuting workers could also increase.

Overall, the estimated total number of transportation-related fatalities from operation of a railroad in the Carlin rail corridor has increased from 1.0 fatality reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS to 4.3 fatalities in the current assessment. This change is due primarily to the increase in the number of fatalities from traffic accidents.

5.2.7 SOCIOECONOMICS

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE used construction costs, workforce estimates, and state and regional economic data to identify potential direct and indirect changes in state and regional economic activity. The Department noted that construction activities would cause short-term, temporary increases in employment and population.

Revised estimates of the number of workers needed to construct the rail line in the Carlin rail corridor resulted in 6,600 worker-years in comparison to the 1,230 worker-years estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Operation of the railroad would require about 42 workers each year in comparison to the 47 workers estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS estimated population baselines for Clark, Nye, and Lincoln Counties and the Rest of Nevada on projections by state and local agencies including the Nevada State Demographer, Nye County, and Clark County, which was prepared by the University of Nevada Las Vegas. The rest of Nevada included Eureka, Lander, and Esmeralda Counties. The original baseline estimate was that the 2006 population in the region of influence would be approximately 1.73 million. The updated baseline, which incorporates the Nevada State Demographer's more current data, indicates that the estimated 2006 population in the region was approximately 1.94 million (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 90).

Clark County, which includes Las Vegas, dominates the region of influence with a 2006 estimated population of 1.89 million, which is approximately 7 percent more than the population that DOE reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Population growth in the unincorporated town of Pahrump dominates Nye County's growing popularity as a residential destination. Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, Pahrump, the largest population center in Nye County, has experienced double-digit growth. The estimated population of Pahrump increased from 23,000 in July 1999 to 33,000 by July 2005, an increase of about 45 percent. In the same period, the State Demographer estimates that Nye County as a whole grew from a population of about 31,000 to about 41,000. The Carlin rail corridor would pass near the towns of Beatty and Tonopah. The State Demographer estimated the 2005 population of Beatty to be slightly over 1,000 and the 2005 population of Tonopah to be about 2,600 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 91). The average annual impact from the construction and operation of a railroad to the baselines population in Clark, Nye, and Lincoln Counties and the rest of Nevada would be small.

Because the construction workforce is expected to come largely from Clark County and the Carson City/Washoe County area, any changes to the regional employment and population baselines would be

small. Changes in employment and population in Nye and Lincoln Counties, including the communities within those counties, is unlikely because workers would live near the rail line and would be unlikely to return to Nye or Lincoln Counties as permanent residents once construction ends. Current population growth in these counties would mask socioeconomic impacts due to the short-term growth in the workforce or the associated impact on population growth.

5.2.8 NOISE AND VIBRATION

The Yucca Mountain FEIS analysis for noise considered typical day-night sound levels, the distance of the rail line from communities along the rail line, and estimated the impacts from the construction and operation of a railroad to these communities. The Yucca Mountain FEIS analysis for vibration considered typical background level of ground vibration, the number of trains, and the distance of the rail line to historic structures or sites of cultural significance, and estimated the impacts from the operation of a railroad. There are no significant new circumstances or information that would cause the affected environment or the estimated impacts from noise or vibration to change from what was reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.2.9 AESTHETICS

Based on a corridor-level analysis and an evaluation of current BLM resource management plans, there have been no changes to Visual Resource Management classifications for the Carlin rail corridor since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Under the current BLM plans, the Carlin rail corridor would pass through Visual Resource Management Class IV lands. Therefore, impacts would be the same as those discussed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.2.10 UTILITIES, ENERGY, AND MATERIALS

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated utilities, energy, and materials impacts common to all corridors and noted that these impacts would include the use of motor fuel, steel, and concrete. The estimated impacts from these resources associated with the construction and operation of a railroad in Nevada would be small, similar to those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The Carlin rail corridor would pass through rural parts of Nye, Esmeralda, Lander, and Eureka Counties in Nevada that have little access to support services. Electric power for construction would be initially supplied by portable generators. New power lines would be installed to provide power for construction services and would be extended, via underground distribution along the rail roadbed to meet all other construction and operational needs. Construction equipment would consume motor fuel (diesel and gasoline). The total motor fuel use in Nevada in 2005 was about 5.8 billion liters (1.5 billion gallons) (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 91). Highway motor fuel use in the state in 2005 increased 6.2 percent over that in 2004, the largest percentage increase for any state and attributable to Nevada's growing population. Table 5-7 lists the estimated amounts of diesel fuel and gasoline for construction for the Carlin rail corridor, which are higher than the estimates in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The annual average use of motor fuel would be about 0.52 percent of that consumed annually in Nevada. Unlike overall state use, construction activities would use primarily diesel fuel, which would be about 2.1 percent of all special fuel (mainly diesel) used annually in Nevada.

Steel for rails, concrete (principally for rail ties, bridges, and drainage structures), and rock for ballast would be the primary materials that the construction of a rail line would consume. Table 5-7 lists estimates of steel and concrete consumption, which have changed from those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

Table 5-7. Construction fuel and materials impacts for the Carlin rail corridor.^a

Length (kilometers) ^{b,c}	Diesel fuel use (million liters) ^d		Gasoline use (million liters)		Steel (thousand metric tons) ^e		Concrete (thousand metric tons)	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update
530	40	110	0.82	2.4	74	86	414	330

- a. Source of Update: DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-7, Table 2-1; DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 92.
- b. Corridor length used for comparative evaluation.
- c. To convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.623.
- d. To convert liters to gallons, multiply by 0.264.
- e. To convert metric tons to tons, multiply by 1.102.

The estimated impacts to utilities, energy, and materials from the operation of a railroad in Nevada would be small, similar to those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The use of motor fuel by locomotives would increase over that in the Yucca Mountain FEIS due to more weekly train trips.

5.2.11 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated common waste management impacts for all corridors rather than for individual corridors. Information to allow differentiation between corridor waste management impacts is now much more readily available. Therefore, DOE has included this information at a level of analysis that was similar to the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

Waste generation and management impacts common to all corridors would result from construction and operation a railroad in the Carlin rail corridor. There would be relatively minor quantities of industrial, hazardous, and sanitary waste.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS estimated the peak annual generation of sanitary solid waste would be 910 metric tons (1,000 tons). DOE now estimates that solid municipal waste from construction facilities would be 750 metric tons (830 tons) during the peak year of construction. An assumed 25 percent of the waste would be recyclable, which would result in 570 metric tons (620 tons) for disposal at municipal landfills. The estimated total mass of waste that would be generated during rail line construction is about 2,000 metric tons (2,200 tons). This mass of sanitary solid waste would occupy about 5,100 cubic meters (6,600 cubic yards) of landfill volume at a waste density of 410 kilograms per cubic meter (700 pounds per cubic yard) (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 92). The estimated average daily disposal mass would be about 1.6 metric tons (1.7 tons) per day.

For the landfills in rural counties, this would represent a potential increase in volume of waste requiring processing. The Goldfield landfill, which serves a population of fewer than 1,500 people in Esmeralda County, received about 3.6 metric tons (4 tons) of solid waste per day in 2003 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 92). Disposal of solid waste generated during the construction phase would represent nearly a 50-percent increase in daily waste volume for the Goldfield landfill and could hasten its estimated closure date of 2023. Nye County disposed of about 250 metric tons (280 tons) of waste during 2003 at three different landfills (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 92), but the county plans to close two of these landfills by 2011, which would represent 96 percent of the county's current waste disposal capacity. The Austin and Battle Mountain landfills in Lander County disposed of about 2.7 and 12 metric tons (3 and 13 tons) per day, respectively, in 2003; their estimated closure dates are 2041 and 2069. For comparison, the Apex Landfill in Clark County, which serves the Las Vegas Valley, receives 8,000 metric tons (8,800 tons) each day (DIRS 174041-State of Nevada 2004, pp. 6 and 7). Waste generated during construction could be trucked to larger landfills with small impact on waste disposal capacity.

Railroad operations would periodically generate waste during maintenance activities. Locomotive and railcar maintenance could generate used oil and solvents that DOE would recycle or dispose of as regulated waste.

5.2.12 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Yucca Mountain FEIS environmental justice analysis considered the potential for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on two segments of the overall population—minority communities and low-income communities. In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE employed a criterion for identifying minority and low-income communities by applying a 10-percent threshold, meaning that the environmental analyses for environmental justice purposes focused on Census blocks and Census block groups having minority or low-income populations at least 10 percent higher than state averages.

For Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE adopted new criteria based upon revised NRC guidance. The new criteria are Census blocks having a 50 percent or higher minority population (10 percent higher than the State average), and Census block groups having a 30.5 percent low-income population (20 percent higher than the State average).

Updates for the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau block group data used in the Yucca Mountain FEIS to examine the location and concentration of low income populations were not available at the time DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Instead, the Yucca Mountain FEIS used 1990 U.S. Census Bureau block group data to identify low income populations. For Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE used the more current 2000 U.S. Census Bureau block group data to identify both low income and minority populations. The next set of comprehensive Census Bureau data will not be released until the 2010 Census, thus, the 2000 data is still considered the most current data set. The region of influence identified in the Yucca Mountain FEIS for the Carlin rail corridor has remained the same. Furthermore, county level U.S. Census Bureau data estimates for 2006 suggest that while the population in southern Nevada is growing rapidly, the location of concentrations of minority and low income populations have remained relatively constant and static since 2000 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 93).

DOE concluded in the Yucca Mountain FEIS that there would not be any high and adverse impacts from transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in Nevada on any populations, and that disproportionately high and adverse effects would be unlikely for any specific segment of the population, including minorities and low-income communities. DOE further concluded that there were no special pathways (unique practices and activities creating opportunities for increased impacts) that could not be mitigated. Therefore, the Yucca Mountain FEIS concluded that there were no environmental justice impacts associated with any proposed rail corridor.

Since the DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE has not identified any new large and adverse impacts to any population. DOE has also not identified any new minority or low income populations in the Carlin rail corridor region of influence, and has not identified any special pathways that could increase impacts to these populations. Therefore, DOE maintains that there would be no environmental justice impacts associated with the Carlin rail corridor.

5.3 Jean Rail Corridor

Table 5-8 summarizes the results of the update to the primary impact indicators for the Jean rail corridor and compares them with the corridor information published in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The information reflects the total for the construction and operation of the rail corridor unless otherwise noted.

Table 5-8. Updated environmental information for the Jean rail corridor (page 1 of 2).

Resource	Changes from the Yucca Mountain FEIS to this analysis
<i>Corridor length</i>	No change
<i>Land ownership</i>	
BLM-administered land	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 15,000 to 17,000 acres (60 to 69 square kilometers (about 83 percent) Updated analysis: 15,000 to 18,000 acres (61 to 73 square kilometers) (85.5 to 87.2)
Private land	No change
Nevada Test Site land	No change
<i>Air quality</i>	
National Ambient Air Quality Standards attainment Status	The Pahrump area in Nye County is now subject to a Memorandum of Understanding with regulatory agencies to better control fugitive emissions of PM ₁₀ and thereby avoid being designated a nonattainment area.
<i>Hydrology</i>	
Surface water	No change
Groundwater use (construction)	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 405 acre-feet (500,000 cubic meters) Updated analysis: 3,380 acre-feet (4.17 million cubic meters)
<i>Biological resources and soils</i>	Two additional sensitive species recorded
<i>Cultural resources (records search)</i>	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 6 recorded sites Updated analysis: 45 recorded sites
<i>Occupational and public health and safety</i>	
Industrial hazards (construction and operations)	
Total recordable cases	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 148 Updated analysis: 246
Lost workday cases	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 76 Updated analysis: 143
Fatalities	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.3 Updated analysis: 0.9
Transportation hazards (construction only)	
Traffic fatalities	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.7 Updated analysis: 2.5
Cancer fatalities	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.09 Updated analysis: 0.3
Incident-free radiological impacts (latent cancer fatalities) (operations only)	
Public	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.00085 Updated analysis: 0.00019
Workers	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.22 Updated analysis: 0.21
Radiological transportation accident fatalities	
Radiological accident risk (latent cancer fatalities)	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.000000015 Updated analysis: 0.0000018
Cancer fatalities from vehicle emissions	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.07 Updated analysis: 0.3

Table 5-8. Updated environmental information for the Jean rail corridor (page 2 of 2).

Resource	Changes from the Yucca Mountain FEIS to this analysis
<i>Nonradiological transportation accident fatalities</i>	
Spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste transportation	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.019 Updated analysis: 0.11
Construction and operations workforce	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.5 Updated analysis: 2
<i>Socioeconomics</i>	
Estimated construction workforce	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 855 worker-years Updated analysis: 4,100 worker-years
Estimated operations workforce	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 36 workers per year Updated analysis: 32 workers per year
<i>Noise and vibration</i>	
No changes	
<i>Aesthetics</i>	
No changes	
<i>Utilities, energy, and materials (amount used)</i>	
Diesel	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 6.9 million gallons (26 million liters) Updated analysis: 22.7 million gallons (86 million liters)
Gasoline	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 1.3 million gallons (0.5 million liters) Updated analysis: 4.2 million gallons (1.6 million liters)
Steel	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 28,000 tons (26,000 metric tons) Updated analysis: 33,000 tons (30,000 metric tons)
Concrete	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 165,000 tons (150,000 metric tons) Updated analysis: 132,000 tons (120,000 metric tons)
<i>Waste management</i>	
Sanitary Solid Waste	Updated analysis: 1 ton (0.91 metric ton) per day
<i>Environmental justice (disproportionately high and adverse impacts)</i>	
No changes, none identified	

The Jean rail corridor would originate at the existing Union Pacific Railroad Mainline near Jean, Nevada. It would travel northwest near Pahrump, Town of Amargosa Valley, Jean, Goodsprings, Sand Spring, and Lathrop Wells before it reached Yucca Mountain. The State Line option would pass near Primm, Nevada.

Jean rail corridor options would range from 180 to 200 kilometers (110 to 130 miles) long. Figure 5-4 shows the corridor and its options. The Yucca Mountain FEIS contains detailed corridor and option descriptions.

5.3.1 LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

The following paragraphs discuss information gathered in relation to land use in the Jean rail corridor since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The change in the estimates of the amount of BLM-administered land and private property within this corridor are in part the result of using more accurate databases of land ownership for this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS. Land use and ownership conflicts with commercial growth have increased since those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported that the BLM administered approximately 83 percent of the land in the corridor (60 to 69 square kilometers [15,000 to 17,000 acres]), DOE managed 12 percent (8.5 square

kilometers [2,100 acres), and approximately 5 percent was private land (0.1 to 3.5 square kilometers [25 to 865 acres]).

Current land holdings for the Jean rail corridor are as follows: BLM-administered land, approximately 85 to 87 percent (61 to 73 square kilometers [15,000 to 18,000 acres]); DOE land, approximately 10 to 13 percent (8.8 square kilometers [2,200 acres]); and private land, about 0.19 to 4.2 percent (0.1 to 3.5 square kilometers [25 to 870 acres]). The Jean rail corridor has two options, Wilson Pass and Stateline Pass, off the Union Pacific Railroad mainline. The Wilson Pass option would cross private property at the Bluejay, Snowstorm, and Pilgrim mines and run south of the Toiyabe National Forest in the Spring Mountains (Figure 5-4). The western option of the Jean rail corridor in Pahrump Valley also would intersect private property. The eastern option in that area would avoid those private parcels.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported that the Wilson Pass option would cross the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road special recreation management area, and four areas that the BLM has designated as available for sale or transfer. The option would be within approximately 1.6 kilometer (1 mile) of the Toiyabe National Forest. There have been no changes to the status of these areas since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The Yucca Mountain FEIS also reported that the Jean rail corridor would cross two wild horse and burro herd management areas and a BLM Class II Visual Resource Area (see Sections 5.3.4 and 5.3.9, of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, respectively).

The Stateline Pass option would begin in Ivanpah Valley and cross through the proposed Ivanpah Valley Airport in the area between Interstate Highway 15 and the Union Pacific Railroad rail line. Clark County was considering the construction of the airport when DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. On October 27, 2000, President Clinton signed the Ivanpah Valley Airport Public Land Transfer Act, which permitted the Secretary of the Interior to convey public lands for sale to the Clark County Department of Aviation (Public Law 106-362, 114 Stat. 1404). Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Clark County Department of Aviation has purchased the property and is preparing an EIS (*Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Southern Nevada Supplemental Airport, Clark County, NV, and To Conduct Public Scoping Meetings*, 71 FR 52367, September 5, 2006). If constructed, the Ivanpah Valley Airport, which is now called the Southern Nevada Supplemental Airport, would be a major public air carrier serving the greater Las Vegas metropolitan area, second to McCarran International Airport; Figure 5-5 shows the location of the proposed airport in relation to the Jean rail corridor.

The Stateline Pass option would cross the California-Nevada boundary and would cross into the Stateline Wilderness Area established by the California Desert Conservation Act. This wilderness area designation remains unchanged since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

DOE evaluated information in the Mineral Resources Data System and the Abandoned Mine database (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 96) to determine if there are any newly located mines, active or abandoned, since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. In addition to the mines reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the primary alignment for Jean would cross an abandoned mine and Purple Sage Claims. The Wilson Pass option would cross the Red Cloud Mine. Of these, Purple Sage Claims is an occurrence mine site, which means there has been discovery of an outcrop and there might be some land disturbance, but there is no mining operation underway at present. Red Cloud Mine is a past producer, which means mining occurred in the past but no mining operation is underway at present (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 96).

According to the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Jean rail corridor would cross as many as eight BLM grazing allotments, depending on the option. The BLM has since updated their grazing allotment information. Updated information indicates that the Jean rail corridor and its options would cross up to 10 allotments: Mount Sterling, Wheeler Wash, Younts Spring, Stump Spring, Black Butte, Table Mountain, Spring

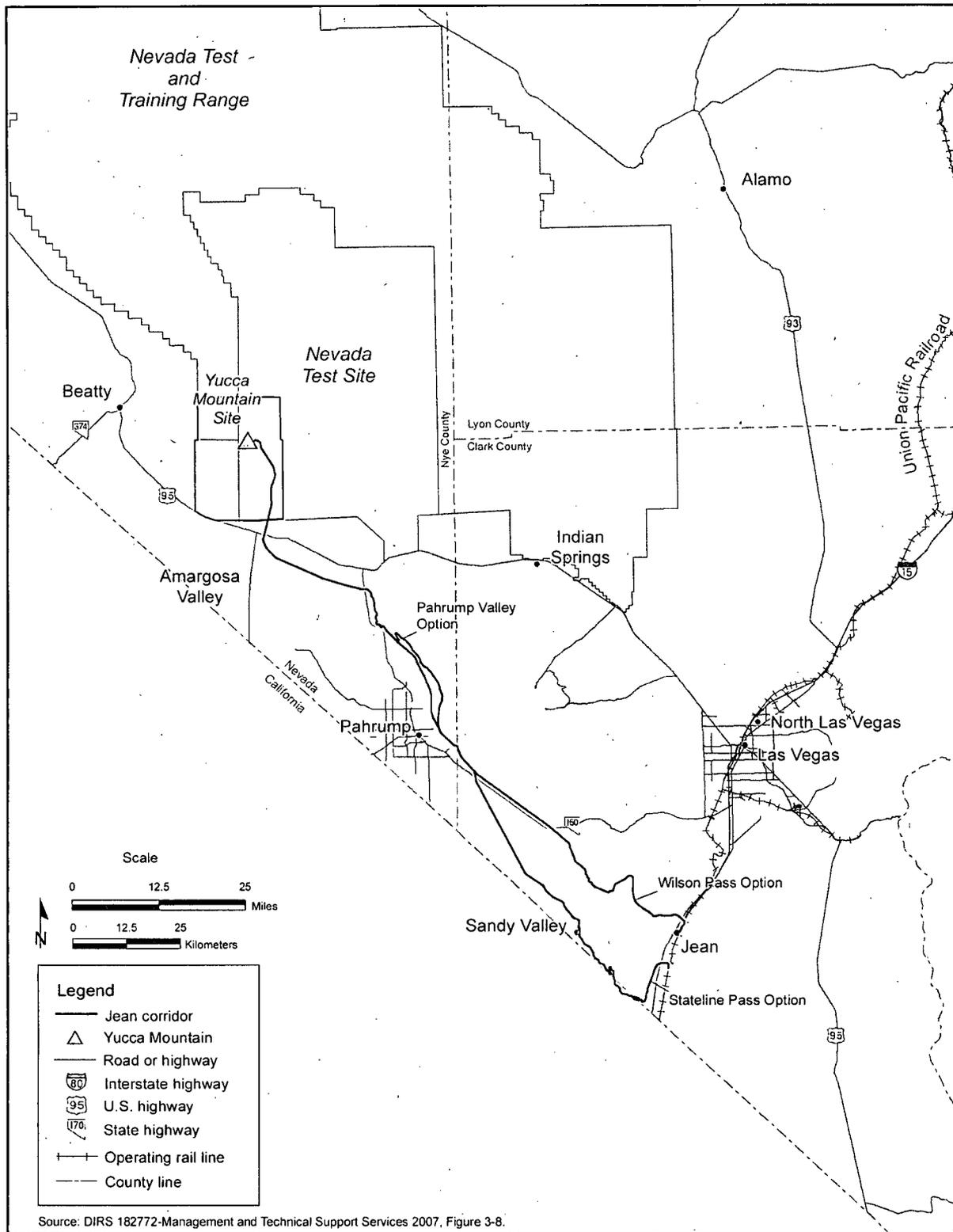


Figure 5-4. Jean rail corridor and options (2002).

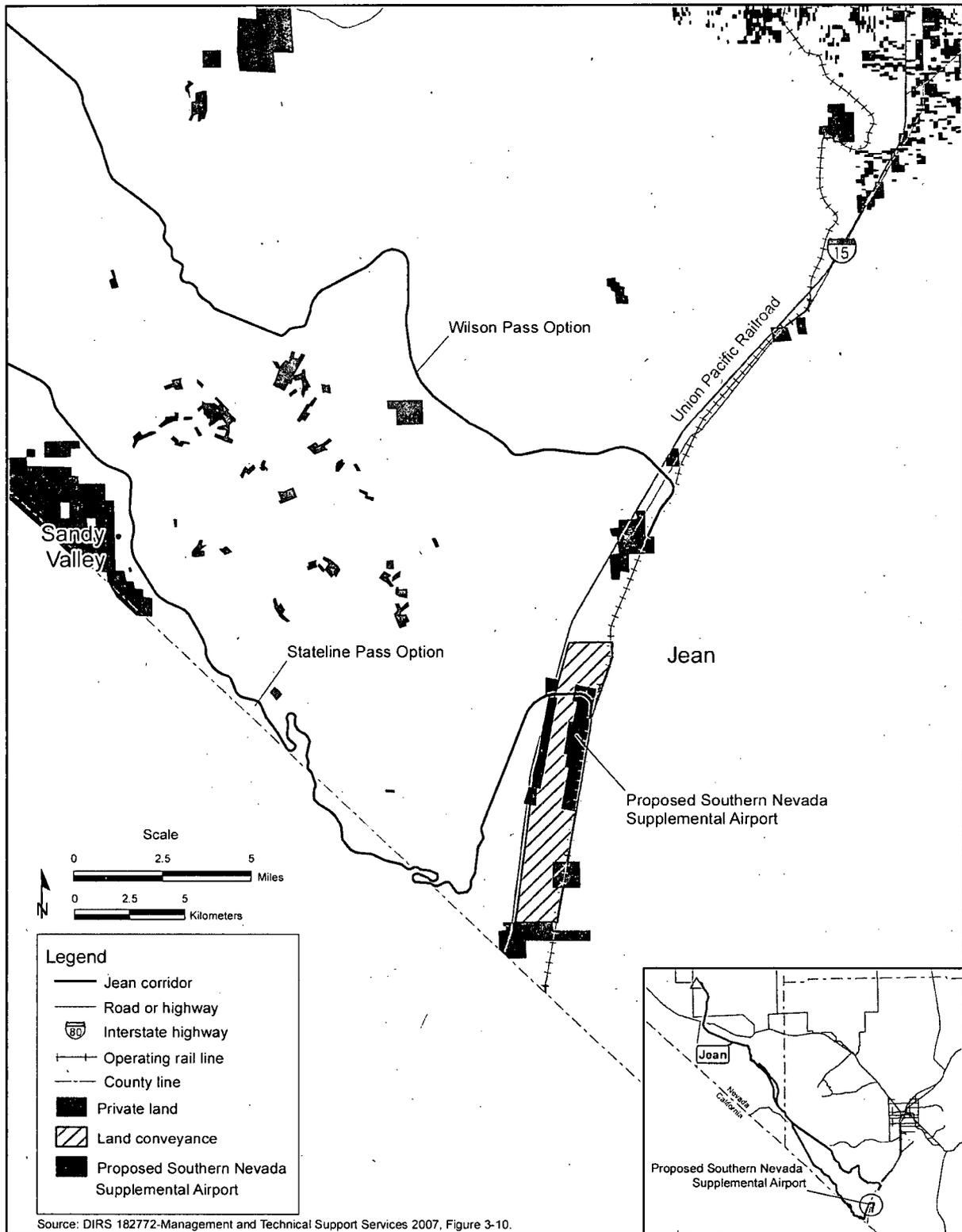


Figure 5-5. Location of proposed Southern Nevada Supplemental Airport.

Mountain, Roach Lake, two allotments BLM has designated as unused, and one designated as private (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 96).

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported the Jean rail corridor would cross linear land features such as rights-of-way for utilities and roads. A review of BLM land records, including Master Title Plats, indicated the authorization of additional rights-of-way since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 96).

5.3.2 AIR QUALITY

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated air quality impacts common to all proposed rail corridors and noted that the impacts would include temporary increases in criteria pollutant concentrations from construction of the rail line. Construction equipment would emit carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}. Construction activities would emit PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} in the form of fugitive dust from land clearing and filling, equipment traffic, activity of a quarry, and operation of concrete batch plants. The emissions would be temporary and would cover a large area as construction progressed along the length of the corridor.

Areas in violation of one or more of the criteria pollutant standards are classified as nonattainment areas. If there is not enough air quality data to determine the status of a remote or sparsely populated area, then the Environmental Protection Agency lists the area as unclassifiable and are considered to be in attainment. The Jean rail corridor would pass through rural parts of Clark and Nye Counties in Nevada and one option would pass through a portion of rural San Bernardino County in California. A portion of the corridor would be in the Pahrump Valley in Nye County. At the time DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, these rural areas were all either unclassifiable or in attainment for criteria pollutants.

Since that time, however, the town of Pahrump and the nearby surrounding area have experienced double-digit growth and resultant development (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 102). The development has led to areas of cleared land, which has increased fugitive dust emissions. The Nevada Bureau of Air Quality Planning began monitoring the ambient air quality in Pahrump in January 2001. During 2001, 2002, and 2003 the 24-hour ambient air standard for PM₁₀ was exceeded 27 times. Under the Clean Air Act, this means that Pahrump is no longer attaining the 24-hour standard of 150 micrograms per cubic meter (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 102). However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has revoked, effective December 17, 2006 (71 *FR* 61144), the annual standard for PM₁₀ from the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, citing a lack of evidence that links health problems to long-term exposure to coarse particle pollution.

In September 2003, the Environmental Protection Agency Region IX Administrator, the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection Administrator, the Nye County Board of Commissioners, and the Pahrump Town Board signed the Memorandum of Understanding and implement a Clean Air Action Plan for the Pahrump Valley and defines the limits of the plan as Nevada Hydrographic Area 162. It sets measurable and enforceable milestones for the development and implementation of a Clean Air Action Plan, which will serve as the area's official air quality improvement plan, with quantified emission reduction measures. If a Plan milestone is not achieved, the area will receive a traditional nonattainment area designation and be subject to federal requirements to meet air quality standards.

Under the conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding, Nye County will have until 2009 to bring the area into attainment. Control strategies were to have been in place by 2006 and are to remain in place to ensure that the Pahrump Valley continues to attain the air quality standards in the future.

During preparation of the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE conducted an air quality conformity review for the Jean rail corridor and determined that a conformity determination was not necessary because the entire corridor area was either in attainment or unclassifiable for criteria pollutants (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 102). Since the original air quality conformity review, the State of Nevada has monitored the town of Pahrump for ambient concentrations of PM₁₀ and has signed the Memorandum of Understanding to improve air quality in the vicinity of Pahrump.

Because of the effective change in PM₁₀ attainment status for the Pahrump Valley portion of the Jean rail corridor, this update used the air quality conformity review conducted for the Jean rail corridor in support of the Yucca Mountain FEIS to estimate potential PM₁₀ emissions for comparison to the air quality General Conformity threshold level. A portion of the Jean rail corridor would cross the Las Vegas Valley, which was and remains a nonattainment area for PM₁₀ and carbon monoxide (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 103).

The PM₁₀ emissions for Jean rail route construction activities could exceed the General Conformity threshold level of 63 metric tons (70 tons) per year. Reviews of updated and more detailed information and methods (DIRS 180921-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, all; DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, all) considered rail line construction and additional contributions from access roads, unpaved roads, storage piles, a batch plant, coarse stockpiles, and a quarry. The reviews indicated potential construction fugitive dust and PM₁₀ emissions would increase above those originally estimated for the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Before any construction activities in the Jean rail corridor and Pahrump Valley, DOE would need to perform more detailed air quality calculations to evaluate the impacts of construction activities.

The State of Nevada has prepared a 2001 base-year emissions inventory for the Pahrump Valley area of 110,000 metric tons (120,000 tons) per year (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 103). The estimated emissions for rail line construction in the Jean rail corridor would be about 0.78 percent of this base-year inventory. A comparison for future years is not possible until finalization of the Clean Air Action Plan or State Implementation Plan.

Potential air quality impacts during rail line operation would result from diesel locomotives, which would emit carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}. Because the earthwork is complete, the extent of these impacts would be smaller during operations than during construction activities but would last longer. The number of locomotive engines in use and the associated operational characteristics would not differ appreciably from those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Therefore, there should be no measurable differences in potential impacts from those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.3.3 HYDROLOGY

This section describes surface-water and groundwater resources and impacts to those resources. The Yucca Mountain FEIS analyzed surface-water resources within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor and within 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) of each side of the corridor. For this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, the region of influence for hydrology was the same as for the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.3.3.1 Surface Water

There are no lakes, streams, or other perennial surface-water features along the Jean rail corridor or its options. The corridor and its options would cross seven mapped 100-year flood zones or flood zone groups (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, Table 6-61). These remain unchanged since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

Impacts to surface-water resources from construction and operation of a railroad in the Jean rail corridor would be the same as those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS for all three options. Although unlikely, the spread of construction-related materials by precipitation or intermittent runoff events could occur during rail line construction. Impacts associated with changes in drainage patterns or to erosion and sedimentation rates or locations would be small and localized.

5.3.3.2 Groundwater

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Department used terrain types to estimate total water demand. Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE has canvassed similar projects throughout Nevada and determined that the amount and type of earthwork, not the terrain, would more accurately estimate total water demand associated with the construction of a rail line. Therefore, DOE updated the water demand based on earthwork needs. This resulted in an estimated water demand for the Jean rail corridor of approximately 4.17 million cubic meters (3,400 acre-feet) (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-7) compared to the estimate based on terrain types reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS of 500,000 cubic meters (410 acre-feet). To accommodate this increase in estimated water demand, DOE would need to draw more water than originally estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS from the underlying hydrographic basins and pump from additional wells. Groundwater withdrawal could temporarily affect discharge from nearby wells or springs. DOE would conduct detailed analyses if new wells required for construction of the rail line were to be located near other water sources.

Construction of a rail line would require water for soil compaction, dust control, and workforce use. Water use during construction would come primarily from groundwater resources, specifically from hydrographic basins. If the hydrographic basin is designated, permitted groundwater rights approach or exceed the estimated perennial yield, water resources are being depleted or require additional administration, and the Nevada State Engineer has declared preferred uses of the water. Table 5-9 updates the designation status of the hydrographic basins and the percentage of the Jean rail corridor that is in the respective basins. The total percentage of the Jean rail corridor in designated basins is about 87 percent. The Yucca Mountain FEIS estimated that about 90 percent of the length of the Jean rail corridor would be in designated basins.

Table 5-9. Hydrographic basins associated with the Jean rail corridor.^{a,b}

Hydrographic basin (and subbasin where applicable)	Length (kilometers) ^c	Percentage of total ^d	Designated
Amargosa Desert	42	23	Yes
Fortymile Canyon/Jackass Flats	21	12	No
Ivanpah Valley/Southern Part	31	17	Yes
Mesquite Valley	20	11	Yes
Pahrump Valley	64	35	Yes
Rock Valley	3.3	1.8	No

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 104.

b. To calculate water demand for each basin, multiply the total water demand for a given corridor by the percentage of total.

c. km = kilometer; to convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.62137.

d. Based on primary option in Yucca Mountain FEIS.

Operations along the completed rail line would have little impact on groundwater resources. Possible changes in recharge, if any, would be the same as those at the completion of construction.

5.3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND SOILS

Potential impacts to biological resources and soils from the construction and operation of a railroad in the Jean rail corridor would be consistent with those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Maximum land disturbance for the construction of a rail line in the Jean rail corridor would not differ from the estimates in the Yucca Mountain FEIS and therefore the potential impacts would not change.

Consistent with the Yucca Mountain FEIS, this update considered the potential for impacts to vegetation communities; special status species (plants and animals), including their habitat; springs, wetlands, and riparian areas; big game habitat; and wild horse and burro herd management areas that may occur within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. The analysis considered special status species and big game habitat within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the corridor that may be affected by construction of the rail line. DOE also analyzed springs and riparian areas that could be affected by permanent changes in surface-water flows.

5.3.4.1 Biological Resources

The area encompassing the Jean rail corridor is in the Mojave Desert; the predominant land-cover types are creosote-bursage, Mojave mixed scrub, and blackbrush.

Table 5-10 presents the special status species, big game habitat, and herd management areas identified in the Yucca Mountain FEIS and identifies additional information resulting from this update. The updated version of the NNHP database examined for Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS included observations of two additional sensitive species not included in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. They are the Half-ring milkvetch/Mojave milkvetch (*Astragalus mohavensis* var. *hemygurus*) and the Spring Mountains pyrg (*Pyrgulopsis deaconi*).

DOE evaluated surface-water resources, which include springs, streams, riparian areas, and reservoirs for all options. No springs, perennial streams, or riparian areas occur within the Jean rail corridor. These remain unchanged since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Eleven springs or groups of springs are outside the corridor, but are within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the corridor.

There are no other known changes to the existence of game habitat, sensitive species, or springs in or within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the Jean rail corridor in comparison to information in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge is 9 kilometers (about 6 miles) outside the Jean rail corridor.

5.3.4.2 Soils

The Yucca Mountain FEIS classified soils in the rail corridor locations with four attributes: shrink swell, erodes easily, unstable fill, and blowing soil. As noted in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the shrink swell and blowing soils attributes are common in the Jean rail corridor, although a portion of the corridor would pass through areas that consist of soils with erodes easily and unstable fill attributes. The Yucca Mountain FEIS also reported that there were no soils classified as prime farmlands within the Jean rail corridor. No significant new information was identified on the attributes of the soils surveyed in the Jean rail corridor.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported the construction of the Jean rail corridor would temporarily disturb soils in and adjacent to 9.3 square kilometers (2,300 acres) of land. Disturbance of erodible soils could lead to increased silt loads in water courses or increased soil transport by wind. Erosion control during construction, and revegetation or other means of soil stabilization after construction, would minimize

Table 5-10. Special status species, big game habitat, and herd management areas associated with the Jean rail corridor^a (page 1 of 2).

Resource	Type	Yucca Mountain FEIS		Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS	
		In corridor	Within 5 kilometers	In corridor	Within 5 kilometers
<i>Threatened or endangered species (separated by type)</i>					
Desert tortoise (<i>Gopherus agasizii</i>)	A/R	•		•	
Pahrump poolfish (<i>Empertrichthys latos</i>)	F				•
<i>Sensitive Species</i>					
Allen's big-eared bat (<i>Idionycteris phyllotis</i>)	M		•		•
Fringed myotis (<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>)	M		•		•
Long-legged myotis (<i>Myotis volans</i>)	M		•		•
Townsend's big-eared bat (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>)	M	•		•	
Yuma myotis (<i>Myotis yumanensis</i>)	M	•		•	
Gila monster (<i>Heloderma suspectum cinctum</i>)	A/R		•		•
Oasis Valley springsnail (<i>Pyrgulopsis micrococcus</i>)	MO		•		•
Spring Mountains pyrg (<i>Pyrgulopsis deaconi</i>)	MO				•
Redheaded sphecid wasp (<i>Eucerceris ruficeps</i>)	I		•		•
Death Valley beardtongue (<i>Penstemon fruticiformis ssp. amargosae</i>)	P		•		•
Desert bearpoppy (<i>Arctomecon merriamii</i>)	P		•		•
Half-ring milkvetch/ Mojave milkvetch (<i>Astragalus mohavensis</i> var. <i>hemygurus</i>)	P				•
Pinto beardtongue (<i>Penstemon bicolor</i> spp.)	P	•	•	•	•
Pahrump Valley buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum bifurcatum</i>)	P		•		•
Rusby's globemallow (<i>Sphaeralcea rusbyi</i>)	P		•		•
Sheep fleabane (<i>Erigeron ovinus</i>)	P		•		•
Spring Mountain milketch (<i>Astragalus remotus</i>)	P		•		•
White-Margined beardtongue (<i>Penstemon albomarginatus</i>)	P	•		•	
Wolly sage (<i>Salvia funerea</i>)	P	•		•	

Table 5-10. Special status species, big game habitat, and herd management areas associated with the Jean rail corridor^a (page 2 of 2).

Resource	Type	Yucca Mountain FEIS		Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS	
		In corridor	Within 5 kilometers	In corridor	Within 5 kilometers
<i>Game Habitat</i>					
Bighorn sheep (<i>Ovis canadensis</i>)	M	•		•	
Mule deer (<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>)	M	•		•	
Chukar (<i>Alectoris chukar</i>)	B	•		•	
Quail (<i>Callipepla gambelii</i>)	B	•		•	
<i>Wild horse and burro herd management areas</i>					
Ash Meadows					•
Johnnie		•		•	
Wheeler Pass		•		•	
Red Rock		•		•	
<i>Species Type Key:</i>		<i>M = Mammal</i>		<i>MO = Mollusk</i>	
		<i>B = Bird</i>		<i>I = Insect</i>	
		<i>A/R = Amphibian or Reptile</i>		<i>P = Plant</i>	
		<i>F = Fish</i>			

a. Sources: Data collected from DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, pp. 105 to 106; DIRS 182760-URS Corporation/Potomac-Hudson Engineering 2006, all).

these concerns. Impacts to soils in the corridor, including its options, would be small, but could occur throughout construction. The soils within the Jean rail corridor and the potential impacts to these soils remain unchanged DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The effects of rail line construction in the Jean rail corridor on cultural resources would be essentially the same as those DOE reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Impacts to cultural resources from operation of a rail line in the Jean rail corridor would be unlikely.

Cultural resources include any prehistoric or historic archaeological sites, buildings, structures, landscapes, or objects resulting from or modified by human activity and include mining, ranching, and linear features such as roads and trails. Cultural resources designated as historic properties warrant consideration with regard to potential adverse impacts resulting from proposed federal actions.

For this update, DOE conducted an archaeological site file search using records from the Desert Research Institute, the Nevada Cultural Resources Information System, and archaeological information repositories at the Harry Reid Center at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and the Nevada State Museum in Carson City.

The records search revealed the presence of 45 known archaeological sites within the 400 meters (0.25 mile) width of the Jean rail corridor. The difference between the six sites reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS and the 45 identified in the new survey reflects the addition of sites recorded in the past decade, particularly in the vicinity of Yucca Mountain, where cultural resources inventories have been ongoing. Of the 45 known sites, 11 are eligible or potentially eligible for inclusion on the *National Register of Historic Places* (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 107).

The types of sites found in the new survey records are the same as those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The total amount of archaeological inventories conducted is approximately less than 1 percent of the total area for the Jean rail corridor. Prior to construction of a rail line, field surveys and potentially mitigation of cultural resources would be required.

5.3.6 OCCUPATIONAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.3.6.1 Industrial Safety

The categories of worker impacts include total recordable incidents, lost workdays, and fatalities. Recordable incidents or cases are occupational injuries or occupation-related illnesses that result in (1) a fatality, regardless of the time between the injury or the onset of the illness and death, (2) lost workday cases (nonfatal), and (3) incidents that result in the transfer of a worker to another job, termination of employment, medical treatment, loss of consciousness, or restriction of motion during work activities.

Revised estimates of the number of workers needed to construct the rail line resulted in 4,100 worker-years in comparison to the 855 worker-years estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (2,000 hours per worker-year). Estimates of industrial safety impacts incorporate updated Bureau of Labor Statistics data for 2005 (DIRS 179131-BLS 2006, all; DIRS 179129-BLS 2007, all). The Yucca Mountain FEIS used 1998 data from the same source. Industrial safety impacts from operations in the Jean rail corridor would be lower than those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS because of differences in the labor statistics used. Operation of the railroad would require about 32 workers each year. Table 5-11 lists estimated industrial safety impacts reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS as well as the updated information.

Table 5-11. Impacts to workers from industrial hazards during railroad construction and operations for the Jean rail corridor.^a

Group and industrial hazard category	Construction		Operations		Total	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS ^b	Update ^c	Yucca Mountain FEIS ^d	Update ^e	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update
<i>Involved worker</i>						
Total recordable cases ^f	67	180	73	37	140	217
Lost workday cases	33	100	40	28	73	128
Fatalities	0.09	0.36	0.20	0.26	0.29	0.62
<i>Noninvolved worker</i>						
Total recordable cases	4.0	19	4.1	8.9	8.1	27.9
Lost workday cases	1.5	10	1.5	4.8	3.0	14.8
Fatalities	0.004	0.03	0.004	0.01	.008	.04
Totals^e						
Total recordable cases	71	200	77	46	148	246
Lost workday cases	35	110	41	33	76	143
Fatalities	0.10	0.6	0.20	0.3	0.3	0.9

a. Estimates of worker-years multiplied by accident rate (DIRS 179131-BLS 2006, all; DIRS 179129-BLS 2007, all).
 b. Estimated workforce to construct the railroad would be 855 worker-years.
 c. Estimated workforce to construct the railroad would be 4,100 worker-years.

d. Totals for 24 years for operations.
 e. Totals for 33 years of operations within a 50-year period.
 f. Total recordable cases include injuries, illnesses, and fatalities.

5.3.6.2 Transportation

Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, there have been updates to the methods and data to estimate the radiation doses for workers and members of the public. Section 3.2.6 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS describes updates to the methods and data used to estimate impacts for the rail corridors. The impacts for the Jean rail corridor reflects new information resulting from these changes.

Updates for transportation estimated impacts during construction from the transportation of construction materials to the construction sites and impacts from commuting workers. Operation of the railroad could result in incident-free radiological impacts, risks from radiological accidents, impacts from vehicle emissions from waste transportation and commuting workers, and traffic fatalities associated with waste transport and commuting workers.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated traffic fatality and vehicle emission impacts from the movement of equipment and delivery of materials for construction, worker commutes to and from construction sites, and transport of water to construction sites. Table 5-12 lists the impacts of transportation during the construction period. Due to the increased number of construction workers from the estimate in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, estimated traffic fatalities could increase from 0.7 to 2.5, and fatalities from exposure to vehicle emissions could increase from 0.09 to 0.3. Total transportation impacts from construction could be about 2.8 fatalities.

Table 5-12. Transportation impacts during railroad construction for the Jean rail corridor.^a

Transportation impact category	Traffic fatalities		Number of cancers		Total	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update
<i>Vehicle emission impacts (cancer fatalities)</i>						
Material delivery vehicles	–	–	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Worker commuting	–	–	0.07	0.3	0.07	0.3
<i>Transportation accidents (fatalities)</i>						
Material delivery vehicles	0.2	0.2	–	–	0.2	0.2
Worker commuting	0.5	2.3	–	–	0.5	2.3
Totals^b	0.7	2.5	0.09	0.3	0.79	2.8

a. Source: DIRS-182772-MTS 2007, p. 109.

b. Totals might differ from sums of values due to rounding.

The transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in the Jean rail corridor would result in radiological and nonradiological impacts to workers and the public. Radiological impacts would result from radiation that the rail casks emitted during incident-free transportation, from radionuclides released from the rail cask during transportation accidents, or from radiation that the rail cask emitted because of a loss of shielding during a transportation accident. Nonradiological impacts (vehicle emission-related fatalities) could result from diesel locomotives and fugitive dust. Nonradiological impacts could also result from traffic accidents that involved workers and members of the public.

Table 5-13 lists the impacts of using the Jean rail corridor to ship spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste calculated using updated methods and data. The impacts presented reflect those from the mainline to the repository. This is in contrast to the Yucca Mountain FEIS, where the Nevada impacts started where the mainline intersects the Nevada border.

For members of the public, estimated radiological impacts from incident-free (routine) transportation decreased from those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, from 0.00085 to 0.00019 latent cancer fatality. This would be due primarily to the change in analysis for the Nevada rail line to model dedicated trains for shipments to the repository (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 110), which would be partially offset by the increase in the latent cancer fatality conversion factor.

For workers, estimated radiological impacts from incident-free transportation would decrease from 0.22 to 0.21 latent cancer fatality. The decrease would be due primarily to the decrease in the exposure time at the staging yard, which would partially offset by the increase in the latent cancer fatality conversion factor, the use of escorts in all areas, and the estimation of impacts for non involved workers at the staging yard.

Estimated radiological accident risks increased from 0.000000015 to 0.0000018 latent cancer fatality. This would be due primarily to the use of the combined Track Class 3 transportation accident rate (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 110) based on train kilometers and railcar kilometers and the increase in the latent cancer fatality conversion factor, and the increase in the population along the Jean rail corridor. Although this is an increase, radiological accident risk would still be a negligible contributor to the overall transportation risk.

Table 5-13. Operations impacts of transportation for the Jean rail corridor.^a

Transportation impact category	Traffic fatalities		Number of cancers	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update
<i>Incident-free radiological impacts (LCFs)^b</i>				
Public (LCFs)	–	–	0.00085	0.00019
Workers (LCFs)	–	–	0.22	0.21
<i>Radiological accident risks (LCFs)</i>				
	–	–	0.000000015	0.0000018
<i>Vehicle emission impacts (cancer fatalities)</i>				
Waste transportation	–	–	0.00032	0.00083
Worker commuting	–	–	0.07	0.3
<i>Transportation accidents (fatalities)</i>				
Waste transportation	0.019	0.11	–	–
Worker commuting	0.5	2.0	–	–
Totals^c	0.52	2.1	0.3	0.5

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, pp. 109 to 110.

b. LCF = latent cancer fatality.

c. Totals might differ from sums of values due to rounding.

Estimated impacts from waste transportation vehicle emissions would increase from 0.00032 to 0.00083 fatality. This would be due primarily to the increase in populations along the Jean rail corridor. Vehicle emission impacts from commuting workers could increase from those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS because of the longer operations phase.

Estimated impacts from nonradiological transportation accidents would increase from 0.019 to 0.11 fatality. This is the most notable change to accident risk and would be due primarily to the use of the updated rail fatality rate (DIRS 178016-DOT 2005, all) and from accounting for the presence of locomotives and buffer cars in the estimation of the number of nonradiological transportation accident fatalities. Traffic fatalities associated with commuting workers could also increase due to the increase in the numbers or workers.

Overall, the estimated total number of transportation-related fatalities from operation of a rail line in the Jean rail corridor has increased from 0.82 fatality reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS to 2.6 fatalities in the current assessment. This change is due primarily to the increase in the number of fatalities from traffic accidents.

5.3.7 SOCIOECONOMICS

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE used construction costs, workforce estimates, and state and regional economic data to identify potential direct and indirect changes in state and regional economic activity. The Department noted that construction activities would cause short-term, temporary increases in employment and population.

Revised estimates of the number of workers needed to construct the rail line in the Jean rail corridor resulted in 4,100 worker-years in comparison to the 855 worker-years estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Operation of the railroad would require about 32 workers each year in comparison to the 36 workers estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

Clark County, which includes Las Vegas, dominates the region of influence with a 2006 estimated population of 1.89 million, which is approximately 7 percent more than the population that DOE reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Population growth in the unincorporated town of Pahrump dominates Nye County's growing popularity as a residential destination. Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, Pahrump, the largest population center in Nye County, has experienced double-digit growth. The estimated population of Pahrump increased from 23,000 in July 1999 to 33,000 by July 2005, an increase of about 45 percent (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 111). In the same period, the State Demographer estimates that Nye County as a whole grew from about 31,000 to about 41,000. The average annual impact from the construction and operation of a railroad to the baselines population in Clark and Nye Counties would be small.

Because the construction workforce is expected to come largely from Clark County and the Carson City area, any changes to the regional employment and population baselines would be small. Changes in employment and population in Nye County, including the communities within that county, is unlikely because workers would live near the rail line and would be unlikely to return to Nye County as permanent residents once construction ends. Current population growth in these counties would mask socioeconomic impacts due to the short-term growth in the workforce or the associated impact on population growth.

5.3.8 NOISE AND VIBRATION

The Yucca Mountain FEIS analysis for noise considered typical day-night sound levels, the distance of the rail line from communities along the rail line, and estimated the impacts from the construction and operation of a railroad to these communities. The Yucca Mountain FEIS analysis for vibration considered typical background level of ground vibration, the number of trains, and the distance of the rail line from to historic structures or sites of cultural significance, and estimated the impacts from the operation of a railroad. There are no significant new circumstances or information that would cause the affected environment or the estimated impacts from noise or vibration to change from what was reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.3.9 AESTHETICS

Based on a corridor-level analysis and an evaluation of current BLM resource management plans, there have been no changes to Visual Resource Management classifications for the Jean rail corridor since

DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. As discussed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Wilson Pass Option of the Jean rail corridor would pass through Visual Resource Management Class II areas. The BLM established objective for Class II areas, in order to retain the existing character of the landscape, is that the level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Therefore, impacts from the construction and operation of the railroad would continue to be a conflict with the visual resource classification.

5.3.10 UTILITIES, ENERGY, AND MATERIALS

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated utilities, energy, and materials impacts common to all corridors and noted that these impacts would include use of motor fuel, steel, and concrete. The estimated impacts from these resources associated with the construction and operation of a railroad in Nevada would be small, similar to those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The Jean rail corridor would pass through rural parts of Clark and Nye Counties in Nevada, and one of the options would cross a portion of rural San Bernardino County in California, that have little access to support services for much of the corridor. Electric power for construction would be initially supplied by portable generators. New power lines would be installed to provide power for construction services and would be extended, via underground distribution along the rail roadbed to meet all other construction and operational needs. Construction equipment would consume motor fuel (diesel and gasoline). The total motor fuel use in Nevada in 2005 was about 5.8 billion liters (1.5 billion gallons) (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 111). Highway motor fuel use in the State in 2005 increased 6.2 percent over that in 2004, the largest percentage increase for any state and attributable to Nevada's growing population. Table 5-14 lists the estimated amounts of diesel fuel and gasoline for rail line construction in the Jean rail corridor, which are higher than the estimates in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Based on a construction period of 43 months, the annual average use of motor fuel would be about 0.42 percent of that consumed annually in Nevada. Unlike overall state use, construction activities would use primarily diesel fuel, which would be about 1.6 percent of all special fuel (mainly diesel) used annually in Nevada.

Steel for rails, concrete (principally for rail ties, bridges, and drainage structures), and rock for ballast would be the primary materials that the construction of a rail line would consume. Table 5-14 lists estimates of steel and concrete consumption, which have increased over those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The estimated impacts to utilities, energy, and materials from the operation of a railroad in Nevada would be small and similar to those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The use of motor fuel by locomotives would increase over that in the Yucca Mountain FEIS due to more weekly train trips, but the overall use would still be small.

5.3.11 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated common waste management impacts for all corridors rather than for individual corridors. Information to allow differentiation between corridor waste management impacts is now much more readily available. Therefore, this information has been included at a level of analysis that was similar to the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

Table 5-14. Construction energy and materials impacts for the Jean rail corridor.^a

Length (kilometers) ^{b,c}	Diesel fuel use (million liters) ^d		Gasoline use (million liters)		Steel (thousand metric tons) ^e		Concrete (thousand metric tons)	
	Yucca Mountain		Yucca Mountain		Yucca Mountain		Yucca Mountain	
	FEIS	Update	FEIS	Update	FEIS	Update	FEIS	Update
180	26	86	0.5	1.6	26	30	150	120

a. Update source: DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-7, Table 2-1; DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 112.

b. Corridor length used for comparative evaluation.

c. To convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.623.

d. To convert liters to gallons, multiply by 0.264.

e. To convert metric tons to tons, multiply by 1.102.

Waste generation and management impacts common to all corridors would result from construction and operation a railroad in the Jean rail corridor. There would be relatively minor quantities of construction debris and sanitary waste.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS estimated the peak annual generation of sanitary solid waste would be 910 metric tons (1,000 tons). DOE now estimates that solid municipal waste from construction facilities would be 500 metric tons (550 tons) during the peak year of construction. An assumed 25 percent of the waste would be recyclable, which would result in about 380 metric tons (410 tons) of waste to be disposed of at municipal landfills. The estimated total mass of waste that would be generated during construction of the rail line is about 1,200 metric tons (1,300 tons). This mass of sanitary solid waste would occupy about 2,900 cubic meters (3,800 cubic yards) of landfill volume at a waste density of 410 kilograms per cubic meter (700 pounds per cubic yard) (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 112). Heavier equipment used at large facilities such as the Apex Landfill in Clark County would result in greater waste compaction and less waste volume. The estimated average daily disposal mass would be about 1 metric ton (1.1 tons) per day.

A rail line in the Jean rail corridor would represent an increase in waste volume requiring processing for rural counties. Nye County disposed of about 250 metric tons (280 tons) of waste during 2003 at three different landfills (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 112), but the county plans to close two of these landfills by 2011, which represent 96 percent of the county's current waste disposal capacity. The Apex Landfill in Clark County serves the Las Vegas Valley and receives 8,000 metric tons (8,800 tons) each day (DIRS 174041-State of Nevada 2004, pp. 6 and 7). The estimated closure for this landfill is in 2047. Waste generated during construction could be trucked to the larger landfill with negligible impact on waste disposal capacity.

Operations would generate waste during periodic maintenance activities. Locomotive and railcar maintenance could generate used oil and solvents that DOE would recycle or dispose of as regulated waste.

5.3.12 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Yucca Mountain FEIS environmental justice analysis considered the potential for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on two segments of the overall population – minority communities and low-income communities. In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE employed a criterion for identifying minority and low-income communities by applying a 10-percent threshold, meaning that the environmental analyses for environmental justice purposes focused on Census blocks and Census block groups having minority or low-income populations at least 10-percent higher than state averages.

For this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE adopted new criteria based upon revised U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission guidance. The new criteria are Census blocks having a 50 percent or higher minority population (for example, 10 percent higher than the state average), and Census block groups having a 30.5 percent low-income population (for example 20 percent higher than the state average).

Updates for the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau block group data used in the Yucca Mountain FEIS to examine the location and concentration of low income populations were not available at the time DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Instead, the Yucca Mountain FEIS used 1990 U.S. Census Bureau block group data to identify low income populations. For Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE used the more current 2000 U.S. Census Bureau block group data to identify both low income and minority populations. The next set of comprehensive Census Bureau data will not be released until the 2010 Census, thus, the 2000 data is still considered the most current data set. The region of influence identified in the Yucca Mountain FEIS for the Jean rail corridor has remained the same. Furthermore, county level U.S. Census Bureau data estimates for 2006 suggest that while the population in southern Nevada is growing rapidly, the location of concentrations of minority and low-income populations have remained relatively constant and static since 2000 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 113).

DOE concluded in the Yucca Mountain FEIS that there would not be any high and adverse impacts from transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in Nevada on any populations, and that disproportionately high and adverse effects would be unlikely for any specific segment of the population, including minorities and low-income communities. DOE further concluded that there were no special pathways (unique practices and activities creating opportunities for increased impacts) that could not be mitigated. Therefore, the Yucca Mountain FEIS concluded that there were no environmental justice impacts associated with any proposed rail corridor.

Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE has not identified any new large and adverse impacts to any population. DOE has also not identified any new minority or low income populations in the Jean rail corridor region of influence, and has not identified any special pathways that could increase impacts to these populations. Therefore, DOE maintains that there would be no environmental justice impacts associated with the Jean rail corridor.

5.4 Valley Modified Rail Corridor

Table 5-15 summarizes the results of the update to the primary impact indicators for the Valley Modified rail corridor and compares them with the corridor information published in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The information reflects the total for the construction and operation of the rail corridor unless otherwise noted.

The Valley Modified rail corridor would originate near the existing Apex rail siding off the Union Pacific Railroad Mainline. It would travel northwest and pass north of the City of North Las Vegas, and Las Vegas and near the Town of Indian Springs and parallel to U.S. Highway 95 before it entered the southwest corner of the Nevada Test Site and reached Yucca Mountain (see Figure 5-6).

Valley Modified rail corridor options would range from 157 to 163 kilometers (98 to 101 miles) long. Figure 5-6 shows the corridor and its options. The corridor has two possible starting locations and two possible options until they merge north of the City of Las Vegas in the Apex area. The Valley Modified rail corridor has three options – Valley Connection, Sheep Mountain, and Indian Hills. The Yucca Mountain FEIS contains detailed descriptions of the corridor and its options.

5.4.1 LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

Much has changed in relation to the land-use and ownership in the Valley Modified rail corridor since DOE issued the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The change in the estimates of the amount of BLM-administered land and private property within this corridor are in part the result of using more accurate databases of land ownership for Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS. Notable changes include potential land use conflicts with Creech Air Force Base and Apex Industrial Park. In addition, Congress has since released the Quail Springs and Nellis A, B, and C Wilderness Study Areas from Wilderness Study Area status, which expanded the land disposal boundary for the Las Vegas area.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported that the BLM administered approximately 53 percent (30 to 37 square kilometers [7,400 to 9,000 acres]) of the land in the corridor, the Department of Defense managed 11 percent (3.6 to 7.5 square kilometers [900 to 1,900 acres]), DOE managed 32 percent (20.6 square kilometers [5,100 acres]), the Fish and Wildlife Service controlled 3 percent (1.7 to 4.1 square kilometers [420 to 1,000 acres]), and less than 1 percent was private land (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 115).

Current land holdings for the Valley Modified rail corridor are as follows, the BLM administers about 51 to 54 percent (31 to 36 square kilometers [7,700 to 8,900 acres]), the Department of Defense manages 7.5 to 13 percent (4.3 to 9.4 square kilometers [1,100 to 2,300 acres]), DOE manages 32 percent (unchanged), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service controls about 3 percent (unchanged), and less than 1 percent is private land (unchanged) (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 115).

In 2005, the U.S. Air Force designated the Indian Springs Air Force Auxiliary Airfield to Creech Air Force Base and expanded its mission and infrastructure (GlobalSecurity.org 2005). The base is home to two key military operations: the MQ-1 Predator unmanned aerial vehicle and the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Battle laboratory. The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported the Valley Modified rail corridor would pass through this area, which at the time was predominantly vacant land under Air Force management. At present, the corridor would cross infrastructure the Air Force constructed to support the mission of Creech Air Force Base. The Indian Hills option would bypass this land-use conflict.

The Apex Industrial Park is an 85-square-kilometer (21,000-acre) area privately held by the VesCor real estate development company. It is approximately 21 kilometers (13 miles) northeast of downtown Las Vegas and about 6 kilometers (4 miles) from the Las Vegas metropolitan area. It is one of the few large contiguous industrial properties in Southern Nevada. Since DOE issued the Yucca Mountain FEIS, this industrial park has gone beyond a proposed activity to one in which 24 square kilometers (6,000 acres) is available for immediate sale and development, with nearly half already sold (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 116). The Valley Modified rail corridor would cross approximately 0.5 square kilometers (110 acres) of the Apex Industrial Park.

The BLM is currently preparing an EIS and initiating public scoping for UNEV, LLC, proposal to construct and operate a liquid petroleum products pipeline from Woods Cross, Utah, to the Apex Industrial Park in Nevada. This proposed activity is approximately 13 kilometers (8 miles) north of the Valley Modified rail corridor.

Table 5-15. Updated environmental information for the Valley Modified rail corridor (page 1 of 2).

Resource	Changes from the Yucca Mountain FEIS to this analysis
<i>Corridor length</i>	No change
<i>Land ownership</i>	
BLM-administered land	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 7,400 to 9,100 acres (29.9 to 36.7 square kilometers (approximately 53 percent) Updated analysis: 7,700 to 8,900 acres (31 to 36 square kilometers) (51 to 53.7 percent)
Private land	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 49 acres (0.18 square kilometer) (about 3 percent) Updated analysis: 49 to 99 acres (0.2 to 0.4 square kilometer) (about 0.3 to 0.6 percent)
Nevada Test and Training Range land	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 900 to 1,900 acres (3.6 to 7.5 square kilometers) (about 11 percent) Updated analysis: 900 to 1,900 acres (4.3 to 9.4 square kilometers) (about 7.5 to 13.3 percent)
Nevada Test Site land	No change
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	No change
<i>Air quality</i>	
National Ambient Air Quality Standards attainment status	No change (potential for construction air quality impacts from PM ₁₀ and carbon monoxide)
<i>Hydrology</i>	
Surface water	No change
Groundwater use (construction)	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 395 acre-feet (395,000 cubic meters) Updated analysis: 320 acre-feet (3.44 million cubic meters)
<i>Biological resources and soils</i>	
	Six additional sensitive species recorded
<i>Cultural resources (records search)</i>	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 19 recorded sites Updated analysis: 45 recorded sites
<i>Occupational and public health and safety</i>	
Industrial hazards (construction and operations)	
Total recordable cases	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 111 Updated analysis: 176
Lost workday cases	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 57 Updated analysis: 103
Fatalities	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.25 Updated analysis: 0.5
Transportation hazards (construction only)	
Traffic fatalities	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.4 Updated analysis: 1.5
Cancer fatalities	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.05 Updated analysis: 0.2

Table 5-15. Updated environmental information for the Valley Modified rail corridor (page 2 of 2).

Resource	Changes from the Yucca Mountain FEIS to this analysis
<i>Occupational and Public Health and Safety (continued)</i>	
Incident-free radiological impacts (latent cancer fatalities) (operations only)	
Public	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.00065 Updated analysis: 0.00014
Workers	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.22 Updated analysis: 0.21
Radiological transportation accident fatalities	
Radiological accident risk (latent cancer fatalities)	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.0000000029 Updated analysis: 0.0000013
Cancer fatalities from vehicle emissions	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.07 Updated analysis: 0.2
Nonradiological transportation accident fatalities	
Spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste transportation	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.016 Updated analysis: 0.095
Construction and operations workforce	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.5 Updated analysis: 1.3
<i>Socioeconomics</i>	
Estimated construction workforce	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 405 worker-years Updated analysis: 2,500 worker-years
Estimated operations workforce	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 36 workers per year Updated analysis: 32 workers per year
<i>Noise and vibration</i>	
No changes	
<i>Aesthetics</i>	
No changes	
<i>Utilities, energy, and materials (amount used)</i>	
Diesel	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 3.4 million gallons (13 million liters) Updated analysis: 13 million gallons (49 million liters)
Gasoline	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 0.07 million gallons (0.27 million liters) Updated analysis: 0.26 million gallons (1 million liters)
Steel	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 24,000 tons (22,000 metric tons) Updated analysis: 29,000 tons (26,000 metric tons)
Concrete	Yucca Mountain FEIS: 143,000 tons (130,000 metric tons) Updated analysis: 110,000 tons (100,000 metric tons)
<i>Waste management</i>	
Sanitary solid waste	Updated analysis: 0.7 tons (0.6 metric tons) per day
<i>Environmental justice (disproportionately high and adverse impacts)</i>	
No changes, none identified	

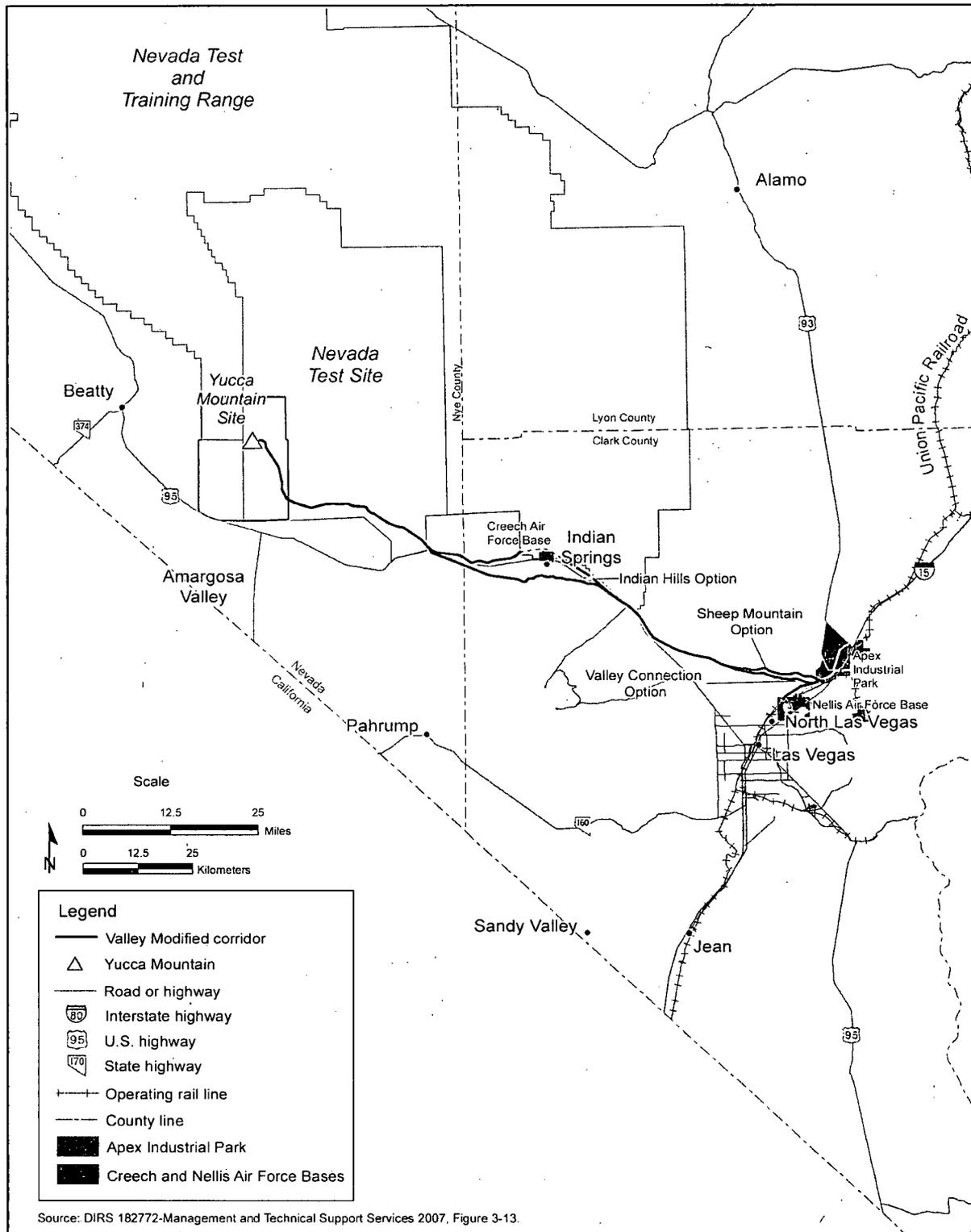


Figure 5-6. Valley Modified rail corridor and options.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported the corridor would cross the Quail Springs and Nellis A, B, and C Wilderness Study Areas, and one area designated as available for sale or transfer. In particular, the Indian Hills option would cross U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands, would pass almost entirely within a BLM utility corridor, and would cross a BLM Withdrawal Area for a power project. The Sheep Mountain option would pass through Quail Springs and Nellis A, B, and C Wilderness Study Areas, and the Nellis Small Arms Range. Of these land uses, the only changes have been to Quail Springs and Nellis A, B, and C. The Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act (Public Law 107-282, 116 Stat. 1994) released these areas from the designation of Wilderness Study Areas in 2002 thus expanding the land disposal boundary for the Las Vegas area. The land formerly containing the Quail Springs Wilderness Study Area was sold to Clark County in 2002. The land formerly containing Nellis A, B, and C's have not yet been sold. These areas are under consideration for conservation areas to protect rare plant species, and will undergo NEPA analysis before the BLM offers these for sale or transfer.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported the Sheep Mountain option would pass through the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. Upon further evaluation, the Sheep Mountain and Valley Connection Options, and a portion of the common corridor segment just north of these options would pass through the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. The Desert National Wildlife Refuge established in 1936 includes a 610-square-kilometer (1.5-million-acre) area to protect the desert bighorn sheep and its habitat. In 1979, approximately 580 square kilometers (1.4 million acres) of this land were found to be suitable for further consideration as wilderness and were proposed for designation as a unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System. This means the area remains in proposed wilderness status and is managed as wilderness in accordance with National Wildlife Refuge System policy; public use is limited to wildlife observation, primitive camping, and picnicking. This current land status would present a land conflict. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Comprehensive Conservation Plan Environmental Impact Statement process, currently underway, is evaluating the wilderness status of this area (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 116).

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported the corridor would cross three BLM grazing allotments (Wheeler Slope, Indian Springs, and Las Vegas Valley). The BLM has since updated their grazing allotment information. The Valley Modified rail corridor now crosses the Mount Sterling, Indian Springs, Wheeler Wash (formerly Wheeler Slope), Lucky Stripe, and the Las Vegas Valley grazing allotments, depending on the option.

DOE evaluated information in the Mineral Resources Data System and the Abandoned Mine database to determine if the addition of active or abandoned mines has occurred since DOE issued the Yucca Mountain FEIS. There are no known active or abandoned mines in the Valley Modified rail corridor or its options and, therefore, no change since the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS reported that the Valley Modified rail corridor would cross linear land features such as rights-of-way for utilities, and roads. A review of BLM records, including Master Title Plats, indicated the authorization of additional rights-of-way since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, pp. 116 to 117).

5.4.2 AIR QUALITY

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated air quality impacts common to all proposed corridors and noted these would include temporary increases in criteria pollutant concentrations from construction of the rail line. Construction equipment would emit carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. Construction activities would emit PM₁₀ in the form of fugitive dust from land clearing and

filling, equipment traffic, activity of a quarry, and operation of concrete batch plants. The emissions would be temporary and would cover a sizeable area as construction progressed along the corridor.

The Valley Modified rail corridor would pass north of the metropolitan Las Vegas area and on through rural parts of Clark and Nye Counties. A portion of the corridor would be in the Las Vegas Valley in Clark County. When DOE prepared the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Las Vegas Valley was in nonattainment for the criteria pollutants, carbon monoxide and PM₁₀. Areas in violation of one or more of the criteria pollutant standards are classified as nonattainment areas. The Las Vegas Valley remains officially in nonattainment for these two criteria pollutants (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 119), although progress has been made since 2000; the Valley is attaining the carbon monoxide National Ambient Air Quality Standard (70 FR 31353), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved implementation plans for PM₁₀ in 2004 (69 FR 32277).

During preparation of the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE conducted an air quality conformity review for areas of the Valley Modified rail corridor in the Las Vegas Valley (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 119). This review determined that construction activities in the Las Vegas Valley would be likely to exceed the General Conformity threshold level for PM₁₀. Reviews of updated and more detailed information and methods (DIRS 180921-Nevada Rail Partners 2006, all; DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, all) considered rail line construction and additional contributions from construction of access roads, unpaved roads, storage piles, batch plant, coarse stockpiles, and a quarry. The reviews indicated potential construction fugitive dust and PM₁₀ emissions would increase above those originally estimated for the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Before any construction activities in the Valley Modified rail corridor, DOE would need to perform more detailed air quality calculations to evaluate the impacts of construction activities.

Potential air quality impacts during railroad operations would result from diesel locomotives, which would emit carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}. Because the earthwork is complete, the extent of these impacts would be smaller during operations than during construction activities but would last longer. The number of locomotives in use and the associated operational characteristics would not differ appreciably from those described in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Therefore, measurable differences in potential impacts from those described in the Yucca Mountain FEIS are unlikely and remain small.

5.4.3 HYDROLOGY

This section describes surface-water and groundwater resources and impacts to those resources. The Yucca Mountain FEIS analyzed surface-water resources within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor and within 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) along each side of the corridor. For the Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, the region of influence for hydrology is the same as for the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.4.3.1 Surface Water

The corridor and its options would cross only two mapped, 100-year flood zones or flood zone groups (DIRS 155970-DOE 2002, Table 6-74). These remain unchanged since DOE published the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Impacts to surface-water resources from the rail line construction in the Valley Modified rail corridor would be the same as those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS for all three options. Although unlikely, the spread of construction-related materials by precipitation or intermittent runoff events could occur during the construction of the rail line. Impacts associated with altering drainage patterns or changing erosion and sedimentation rates or locations would be small and localized.

5.4.3.2 Groundwater

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Department used terrain types to estimate total water demand. Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Department has canvassed similar projects throughout Nevada and determined that the amount and type of earthwork, not the terrain, would more accurately estimate total water demand associated with the construction of a rail line. Therefore, DOE updated the water demand based on earthwork needs. This resulted in an estimated water demand for the Valley Modified rail corridor of approximately 3.44 million cubic meters (2,800 acre-feet) (DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-7) compared to the estimate based on terrain types reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS of 395,000 cubic meters (320 acre-feet). To accommodate this increase in estimated water demand, DOE would need to draw more water than originally estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS from the underlying hydrographic basins and pump from additional wells. Groundwater withdrawal could temporarily affect discharge from nearby wells or springs. DOE would conduct detailed analyses if new wells required for construction of the rail line were to be located near other water sources.

Water use during construction would come primarily from groundwater resources, specifically, hydrographic basins. If the hydrographic basin is designated, permitted groundwater rights approach or exceed the estimated perennial yield, water resources are being depleted or require additional administration, and the Nevada State Engineer has declared preferred uses of the water. Table 5-16 updates the designation status of the hydrographic basins and the percentage of the Valley Modified rail corridor that is in the respective basin. The total percentage of the Valley Modified rail corridor in designated basins is about 54 percent. The Yucca Mountain FEIS estimated that about 70 percent of the length of the Valley Modified rail corridor would be in designated basins.

Table 5-16. Hydrographic basins associated with the Valley Modified rail corridor.^{a,b}

Hydrographic basin (and subbasin where applicable)	Length (kilometers) ^c	Percentage of total ^d	Designated
Fortymile Canyon/Jackass Flats	17	11	No
Indian Springs Valley	29	18	Yes
Las Vegas Valley	56	36	Yes
Mercury Valley	19	12	No
Rock Valley	18	12	No
Three Lakes Valley	19	12	No

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 120.

b. To calculate water demand for each basin, multiply the total water demand for a given corridor by the percentage of total.

c. km = kilometer; to convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.62137.

d. Based on primary option in Yucca Mountain FEIS.

Operations along the completed rail line would have little impact on groundwater resources. Possible changes in recharge, if any, would be the same as those at the completion of construction.

5.4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND SOILS

Potential impacts to biological resources and soils from the construction and operation of a railroad in the Valley Modified rail corridor would be consistent with those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Maximum land disturbance for the construction of a rail line in the Valley Modified rail corridor would not differ from the estimates in the Yucca Mountain FEIS and therefore the potential impacts would not change.

Consistent with the Yucca Mountain FEIS, this update considered the potential for impacts to vegetation communities; special status species (plants and animals), including their habitat; springs, wetlands, and

riparian areas; big game habitat; and wild horse and burro herd management areas that may occur within the 400-meter (0.25-mile)-wide corridor. The analysis considered special status species and big game habitat within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the corridor that may be affected by construction of the rail line. DOE also analyzed springs and riparian areas that could be affected by permanent changes in surface-water flows.

5.4.4.1 Biological Resources

The Valley Modified rail corridor is in the Mojave Desert; the predominant land-cover types are creosote-bursage and Mojave mixed scrub.

Table 5-17 presents the special status species, big game habitat, and herd management areas identified in the Yucca Mountain FEIS and identifies additional information resulting from this update. The updated version of the NNHP database examined for Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS included observations of six additional sensitive species not included in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. They include the:

- Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*)
- Clarke phacelia (*Phacelia filiae*)
- Clokey buckwheat (*Eriogonum heermannii* var. *clokeyi*)
- Fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*)
- Las Vegas buckwheat (*Eriogonum corymbosum* var. *nilesii*)
- Planoconvex cordmoss (*Entosthodon planoconvexus*)

Table 5-17. Special status species, big game habitat, and herd management areas associated with the Valley Modified rail corridor^a (page 1 of 2).

Resource	Type	Yucca Mountain FEIS		Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS	
		In corridor	Within 5 kilometers	In corridor	Within 5 kilometers
<i>Threatened or endangered species (separated by type)</i>					
Southwestern willow flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>)	B				•
Desert tortoise (<i>Gopherus agasizii</i>)	A/R	•		•	
Pahrump poolfish (<i>Empetrichthys latos</i>) ^b	F		•		•
Razorback sucker (<i>Xyrauchen texanus</i>)	F		•		•
<i>Sensitive Species</i>					
Fringed myotis (<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>)	M				•
Townsend's big-eared bat (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>)	M	•		•	
Clarke phacelia (<i>Phacelia filiae</i>)	P			•	
Beatley's scorpionweed (<i>Phacelia beatleyae</i>)	P		•		•

Table 5-17. Special status species, big game habitat, and herd management areas associated with the Valley Modified rail corridor^a (page 2 of 2).

Resource	Type	Yucca Mountain FEIS		Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS	
		In corridor	Within 5 kilometers	In corridor	Within 5 kilometers
<i>Sensitive Species (continued)</i>					
California bearpoppy (<i>Arctomecon californica</i>)	P		•		•
Clokey buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum heermannii</i> var. <i>clokeyi</i>)	P				•
Death Valley beardtongue (<i>Penstemon fruticiformis</i> ssp. <i>amargosae</i>)	P		•		•
Desert/White/Merriam bearpoppy (<i>Arctomecon merriamii</i>)	P		•	•	•
Half-ring milkvetch/ Mojave milkvetch (<i>Astragalus mohavensis</i> var. <i>hemygurus</i>)	P	•		•	•
Largeflower suncup (<i>Camissonia megalantha</i>)	P		•		•
Las Vegas buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum corymbosum</i> var. <i>nilesii</i>)	P				•
Parish scorpionweed (<i>Phacelia parishii</i>)	P	•	•	•	•
Pinto beardtongue (<i>Penstemon bicolor</i> ssp.)	P		•	•	•
Planoconvex cordmoss (<i>Entosthodon planoconvexus</i>)	P				•
Ripley's springparsley/ Sanicle biscuitroot (<i>Cymopterus ripleyi</i> var. <i>saniculooides</i>)	P	•		•	
White-Margined beardtongue (<i>Penstemon albomarginatus</i>)	P	•		•	
<i>Game Habitat</i>					
Bighorn sheep (<i>Ovis Canadensis</i>)	M	•		•	
Mule deer (<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>)	M	•		•	
Quail (<i>Callipepla gambelii</i>)	B	•		•	
<i>Wild horse and burro herd management areas</i>					
Johnnie				•	
Wheeler Pass			•		•
<i>Species Type Key</i>		<i>M = Mammal</i>	<i>MO = Mollusk</i>		
		<i>B = Bird</i>	<i>I = Insect</i>		
		<i>A/R = Amphibian or Reptile</i>	<i>P = Plant</i>		
		<i>F = Fish</i>			

a. Source: Data collected from DIRS 182772 MTS 2007, pp. 121 and 122; DIRS 182760-URS Corporation/Potomac-Hudson Engineering 2006, all.

b. Pahrump pool fish have been introduced into ponds in Floyd Lamb State Park and into the outflow of Corn Creek Springs, both of which are outside the region of influence for surface waters.

DOE evaluated surface-water resources, which include springs, streams, riparian areas, and reservoirs for all options. No springs, perennial streams, or riparian areas occur in the Valley Modified rail corridor. These remain unchanged since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

There are no other known changes to the information in the Yucca Mountain FEIS on existence of game habitat, sensitive species, or springs within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the corridor.

5.4.4.2 Soils

The Yucca Mountain FEIS classified soils in the Valley Modified rail corridor with four attributes: shrink swell, erodes easily, unstable fill, and blowing soil. As noted in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the shrink swell and blowing soils attributes are common in the Valley Modified rail corridor. The Yucca Mountain FEIS also reported that there were no soils classified as prime farmlands within the Valley Modified rail corridor. No significant new information was readily available about the attributes of the soils surveyed in the corridor.

According to the Yucca Mountain FEIS, soils in and adjacent to the Valley Modified rail corridor would be disturbed on approximately 5 square kilometers (1,200 acres) of land during construction of the rail line. Impacts to soils in the corridor would be small, but could occur throughout construction. Shrink-swell soils occur along much of the corridor, as does the potential for blowing soils. Disturbance during construction would increase the amount of soil that could be transported by wind because the existing vegetation would be disturbed, at least temporarily. Vegetation or other means of soil stabilization after construction could minimize this. The soils within the Valley Modified rail corridor and the potential impacts to these soils remain unchanged since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.4.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The effects of rail line construction in Valley Modified rail corridor on cultural resources would be essentially the same as those DOE reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Impacts to cultural resources from operation of a railroad in the Valley Modified rail corridor would be unlikely.

Cultural resources include any prehistoric or historic archaeological sites, buildings, structures, landscapes, or object resulting from or modified by human activity and include mining, ranching, and linear features such as roads and trails. Cultural resources designated as historic properties warrant consideration with regard to potential adverse impacts resulting from proposed federal actions.

For this update, DOE conducted an archaeological site-file search using records from the Desert Research Institute, the Nevada Cultural Resources Information System, and archaeological information repositories at the Harry Reid Center at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and the Nevada State Museum in Carson City.

The records search revealed the presence of 45 known archaeological sites within the 400 meters (0.25 mile) width of the Valley Modified rail corridor. The difference between the 19 sites reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS and the 45 identified in the new survey reflects the addition of sites recorded in the past decade, particularly in the vicinity of Yucca Mountain, where cultural resources inventories and improvements in cultural resources records have been ongoing. Of the 45 known sites, 12 are eligible or potentially eligible for inclusion on the *National Register of Historic Places* (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 123).

The types of sites found in the new survey records are the same as those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The total amount of archaeological inventories conducted is approximately less than 1 percent of the total area for the Valley Modified rail corridor. Prior to construction of a rail line, field surveys and potentially mitigation of cultural resources would be required.

5.4.6 OCCUPATIONAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.4.6.1 Industrial Safety

The categories of worker impacts include total recordable incidents, lost workdays, and fatalities. Recordable incidents or cases are occupational injuries or occupation-related illnesses that result in (1) a fatality, regardless of the time between the injury or the onset of the illness and death, (2) lost workday cases (nonfatal), and (3) incidents that result in the transfer of a worker to another job, termination of employment, medical treatment, loss of consciousness, or restriction of motion during work activities.

Revised estimates of the number of workers needed to construct the rail line resulted in 2,500 worker-years in comparison to the 405 worker-years estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS (2,000 hours per worker-year). Estimates of industrial safety impacts incorporate updated Bureau of Labor Statistics data for 2005 (DIRS 179131-BLS 2006, all; DIRS 179129-BLS 2007, all). The Yucca Mountain FEIS used 1998 data from the same source. Industrial safety impacts from operations in the Valley Modified rail corridor would be lower than those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS because of differences in the labor statistics used. Operation of the railroad would require about 45 workers each year. Table 5-18 lists estimated industrial safety impacts reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS as well as the updated information.

5.4.6.2 Transportation

Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, there have been updates to the methods and data to estimate the radiation doses for workers and members of the public. Section 3.2.6 of this Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS describes updates to the methods and data used to estimate impacts for the rail corridors. The impacts for the Valley Modified rail corridor reflects new information resulting from these changes.

Updates for transportation estimated impacts during construction from the transportation of construction materials to the construction sites and impacts from commuting workers. Operation of the railroad could result in incident-free radiological impacts, risks from radiological accidents, impacts from vehicle emissions from waste transportation and commuting workers, and traffic fatalities associated with waste transport and commuting workers.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated traffic fatality and vehicle emission impacts from the movement of equipment and delivery of materials for construction, worker commutes to and from construction sites, and transport of water to construction sites. Table 5-19 lists the impacts of transportation during the construction phase. Due to the increased number of construction workers from the estimate in the Yucca

Mountain FEIS, estimated traffic fatalities could increase from 0.4 to 1.5, and fatalities from exposure to vehicle emissions could increase from 0.05 to 0.2. Total transportation impacts from construction could be about 1.7 fatalities.

Transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in the Valley Modified rail corridor could result in radiological and nonradiological impacts to workers and the public. Radiological impacts could result from radiation that the rail casks emitted during incident-free transportation, from radionuclides released from the rail cask during transportation accidents, or from radiation the rail cask emitted because of a loss of shielding during a transportation accident. Nonradiological impacts (vehicle emission-related fatalities) could result from diesel locomotives and fugitive dust. Nonradiological impacts could also result from traffic accidents that involved workers and members of the public.

Table 5-18 Impacts to workers from industrial hazards during railroad construction and operations for the Valley Modified rail corridor.^a

Group and industrial hazard category	Construction		Operations		Total	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS ^b	Update ^c	Yucca Mountain FEIS ^d	Update ^e	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update
<i>Involved worker</i>						
Total recordable cases ^d	32	110	73	37		
Lost workday cases	16	64	40	28		
Fatalities	0.04	0.23	0.20	0.26		
<i>Noninvolved worker</i>						
Total recordable cases	1.9	12	4.1	8.9		
Lost workday cases	0.7	6.3	1.5	4.8		
Fatalities	0.002	0.02	0.004	0.01		
Totals^f						
Total recordable cases	34	130	77	46	111	176
Lost workday cases	16	70	41	33	57	103
Fatalities	0.05	0.2	0.20	0.3	0.25	0.5

- a. Estimates of worker-years multiplied by accident rate (DIRS 179131-BLS 2006, all; DIRS 179129-BLS 2007, all).
- b. Estimated workforce to construct the railroad would be 405 worker-years.
- c. Estimated workforce to construct the railroad would be 2,500 worker-years.
- d. Totals for 24 years for operations.
- e. Totals for 33 years of operations within a 50-year period.
- f. Total recordable cases include injuries, illnesses, and fatalities.

Table 5-19. Transportation impacts during railroad construction for the Valley Modified rail corridor.^a

Transportation impact category	Traffic fatalities		Number of cancers		Total	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update
<i>Vehicle emission impacts (cancer fatalities)</i>						
Material delivery vehicles	–	–	0.02	0.02		
Worker commuting	–	–	0.03	0.2		
<i>Transportation accidents (fatalities)</i>						
Material delivery vehicles	0.1	0.1	–	–		
Worker commuting	0.2	1.4	–	–		
Totals^b	0.4	1.5	0.05	0.2	0.45	1.7

- a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 125.
- b. Totals might differ from sums of values due to rounding.

Table 5-20 lists the impacts of using the Valley Modified rail corridor to ship spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste calculated using updated methods and data. The impacts presented reflect those from the mainline to the repository. This is in contrast to the Yucca Mountain FEIS, where the Nevada impacts started where the mainline intersects the Nevada border.

For members of the public, estimated radiological impacts from incident-free (routine) transportation decreased from those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, from 0.00065 to 0.00014 latent cancer fatality. This

Table 5-20. Operations impacts of transportation for the Valley Modified rail corridor.^a

Transportation impact category	Traffic fatalities		Number of cancers	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update
<i>Incident-free radiological impacts (LCFs)^b</i>				
Public (LCFs)	Not applicable	–	0.00065	0.00014
Workers (LCFs)	–	–	0.27	0.21
<i>Radiological accident risks (LCFs)</i>	–	–	0.0000000029	0.0000013
<i>Vehicle emission impacts (cancer fatalities)</i>				
Waste transportation	–	–	0.000047	0.0006
Worker commuting	–	–	0.07	0.2
<i>Transportation accidents (fatalities)</i>				
Waste transportation	0.016	0.1	–	–
Worker commuting	0.5	1.3	–	–
Totals^c	0.5	1.4	0.3	0.4

a. Source: DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 126.

b. LCF = latent cancer fatality.

c. Totals might differ from sums of totals due to rounding.

would be due primarily to the change in analysis for the Nevada rail line to model dedicated trains for shipments to the repository (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 125), which would be partially offset by the increase in the latent cancer fatality conversion factor.

For workers, estimated radiological impacts from incident-free transportation would decrease from 0.27 to 0.21 latent cancer fatality. The decrease would be due primarily to the decrease in the exposure time at the staging yard, which would partially offset by the increase in the latent cancer fatality conversion factor, the use of escorts in all areas, and the estimation of impacts for non involved workers at the staging yard.

Estimated radiological accident risks increased from 0.0000000029 to 0.0000013 latent cancer fatality. This would be due primarily to the use of the combined Track Class 3 transportation accident rate (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 125) based on train kilometers and railcar kilometers and the increase in the latent cancer fatality conversion factor, and the increase in the population along the Valley Modified rail corridor. Although this is an increase, radiological accident risk would still be a negligible contributor to the overall transportation risk.

Estimated impacts from waste transportation vehicle emissions would increase from 0.000047 to 0.0006 fatality. This would be due primarily to the increase in populations along the Valley Modified rail corridor. Vehicle emission impacts from commuting workers could increase from those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS because of the longer operations phase.

Estimated impacts from nonradiological transportation accidents would increase from 0.016 to 0.095 fatality. This is the most notable change to accident risk and would be due primarily to the use of the updated rail fatality rate (DIRS 178016-DOT 2005, all) and from accounting for the presence of locomotives and buffer cars in the estimation of the number of nonradiological transportation accident fatalities. Traffic fatalities associated with commuting workers could also increase.

Overall, the estimated total number of transportation-related fatalities from operation of a railroad in the Valley Modified rail corridor has increased from 0.8 fatality reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS to 1.8 fatalities in the current assessment. This change is due primarily to the increase in the number of fatalities from traffic accidents.

5.4.7 SOCIOECONOMICS

In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE used construction costs, workforce estimates, and state and regional economic data to identify potential direct and indirect changes in state and regional economic activity. The Department noted that construction activities would cause short-term, temporary increases in employment and population.

Revised estimates of the number of workers needed to construct the rail line in the Valley Modified rail corridor resulted in 2,500 worker-years in comparison to the 405 worker-years estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

Operation of the railroad would require about 32 workers each year in comparison to the 36 workers estimated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Increased workforce estimates would not notably affect the regional economy. Given the relatively low number of employees necessary for the operation of the railroad, the potential for socioeconomic impacts in the corridor would be short-term and small.

Clark County, which includes Las Vegas, dominates the region of influence with a 2006 estimated population of 1.89 million, which is approximately 7 percent more than the population that DOE reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Population growth in the unincorporated town of Pahrump dominates Nye County's growing popularity as a residential destination. Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, Pahrump, the largest population center in Nye County, has experienced double-digit growth. The estimated population of Pahrump increased from 23,000 in July 1999 to 33,000 by July 2005, an increase of about 45 percent (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 127). In the same period, the State Demographer estimates that Nye County, as a whole, grew from about 31,000 to about 41,000. The average annual impact from the construction and operation of a railroad to the baselines population in Clark and Nye Counties would be small.

Because the construction workforce is expected to come largely from Clark County, any changes to the regional employment and population baselines would be nearly imperceptible. Meaningful changes in employment and population due to the construction and operation of the railroad is unlikely. Current population growth in these Clark and Nye counties would mask socioeconomic impacts due to the short-term growth in the workforce or the associated impact on population growth.

5.4.8 NOISE AND VIBRATION

The Yucca Mountain FEIS analysis for noise considered typical day-night sound levels, the distance of the rail line from communities along the rail line, and estimated the impacts from the construction and operation of a railroad to these communities. The Yucca Mountain FEIS analysis for vibration considered typical background level of ground vibration, the number of trains, and the distance of the rail line from to historic structures or sites of cultural significance, and estimated the impacts from the operation of a railroad. There are no significant new circumstances or information that would cause the affected environment or the estimated impacts from noise and vibration to change from what was reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

5.4.9 AESTHETICS

Based on a corridor-level analysis and an evaluation of current BLM resource management plans, there have been no changes to Visual Resource Management classifications for the Valley Modified rail corridor since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS and, therefore, impacts would be the same as those discussed in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. As stated in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, operation of a railroad in the Valley Modified rail corridor would cause small impacts to visual resources in the area because the entire corridor would fall within the BLM Class III designation.

5.4.10 UTILITIES, ENERGY, AND MATERIALS

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated utilities, energy, and materials impacts common to all corridors and noted that these impacts would include the use of motor fuel, steel, and concrete. The estimated impacts from these resources associated with the construction and operation of a railroad in Nevada would be small, similar to those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The Valley Modified rail corridor would pass north of the Las Vegas metropolitan area. Electric power for construction would be initially supplied by portable generators. New power lines would be installed to provide power for construction services and would be extended, via underground distribution along the rail roadbed to meet all other construction and operational needs. Construction equipment would also consume motor fuel (diesel and gasoline). The total motor fuel use in Nevada in 2005 was about 5.8 billion liters (1.5 billion gallons) in 2005 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 127). Highway motor fuel use in the state in 2005 increased 6.2 percent over that in 2004, the largest percentage increase for any state and attributable to Nevada's growing population. Table 5-21 lists the estimated amounts of diesel fuel and gasoline for construction for the Valley Modified rail corridor, which are higher than the estimates in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Based on a construction period of 40 months, the annual average use of motor fuel would be about 0.27 percent of that consumed annually in Nevada. Unlike overall state use, construction activities would use primarily diesel fuel, which would be about 1 percent of all special fuel (mainly diesel) used annually in Nevada.

Table 5-21. Construction energy and materials impacts for the Valley Modified rail corridor.^a

Length (kilometers) ^{b,c}	Diesel fuel use (million liters) ^d		Gasoline use (million liters)		Steel (thousand metric tons) ^e		Concrete (thousand metric tons)	
	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update	Yucca Mountain FEIS	Update
160	13	49	0.27	1.0	22	26	130	100

- a. Sources: DIRS 180877-Nevada Rail Partners 2007, p. 2-7, Table 2-1; DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 128.
- b. Rail corridor length used for comparative evaluation.
- c. To convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.623.
- d. To convert liters to gallons, multiply by 0.264.
- e. To convert metric tons to tons, multiply by 1.102.

Steel for rails, concrete (principally for rail ties, bridges, and drainage structures), and rock for ballast would be the primary materials that the construction of a rail line would consume. Table 5-21 lists estimates of steel consumption, which have increased over those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS, and concrete consumption, which have decreased from those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

The estimated impacts to utilities, energy, and materials from the operation of a railroad in Nevada would be small, similar to those in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. The estimated use of motor fuel by locomotives

would increase over that in the Yucca Mountain FEIS due to more weekly train trips, but the overall use would still be small.

5.4.11 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Yucca Mountain FEIS evaluated common waste management impacts for all corridors rather than for individual corridors. Information to allow differentiation between corridor waste management impacts is now much more readily available. Therefore, this readily available information has been included at a level of analysis that was similar to the Yucca Mountain FEIS.

Waste generation and management impacts common to all corridors would result from construction and operation a railroad in the Valley Modified rail corridor. There would be relatively low amounts of construction debris and sanitary waste generated.

The Yucca Mountain FEIS estimated that the peak annual generation would be 910 metric tons (1,000 tons) of sanitary solid waste. DOE now estimates solid municipal waste from construction facilities would be 380 metric tons (410 tons) during the peak year of construction. An assumed 25 percent of the waste generated would be recyclable, which would result in about 280 metric tons (310 tons) of waste for disposal at municipal landfills. The estimated total mass of waste generated during construction of the rail line would be about 760 metric tons (840 tons). This mass of sanitary solid waste would occupy about 1,800 cubic meters (2,400 cubic yards) of landfill volume at a waste density of 410 kilograms per cubic meter (700 pounds per cubic yard) (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 128). Heavier equipment used at large facilities such as the Apex Landfill in Clark County would result in greater waste compaction and less waste volume. The estimated average daily disposal mass would be about 0.6 metric ton (0.7 ton) per day.

Nye County disposed of about 250 metric tons (280 tons) of waste during 2003 at three different landfills (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 128), but the county plans to close two of these landfills by 2011, which would represent 96 percent of the county's current waste disposal capacity. The Apex Landfill in Clark County serves the Las Vegas Valley and receives 8,000 metric tons (8,800 tons) each day (DIRS 174041-State of Nevada 2004, pp. 6 and 7). The estimated closure is in 2047. Waste generated during construction could be trucked to larger landfills with small impact on waste disposal capacity.

Operations would generate waste during periodic maintenance activities. Locomotive and railcar maintenance could generate used oil and solvents that DOE would recycle or dispose of as hazardous chemicals.

5.4.12 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Yucca Mountain FEIS environmental justice analysis considered the potential for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on two segments of the overall population – minority communities and low-income communities. In the Yucca Mountain FEIS, DOE employed a criterion for identifying minority and low-income communities by applying a 10-percent threshold, meaning that the environmental analyses for environmental justice purposes focused on Census blocks and Census block groups having minority or low-income populations at least 10 percent higher than state averages.

For Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE adopted new criteria based upon revised NRC guidance. The new criteria are Census blocks having a 50 percent or higher minority population (for example, 10 percent higher than the State average), and Census block groups having a 30.5 percent low-income population (for example, 20 percent higher than the State average).

Updates for the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau block group data used in the Yucca Mountain FEIS to examine the location and concentration of low income populations were not available at the time DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Instead, the Yucca Mountain FEIS used 1990 U.S. Census Bureau block group data to identify low income populations. For Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, DOE used the more current 2000 U.S. Census Bureau block group data to identify both low income and minority populations. The next set of comprehensive Census Bureau data will not be released until the 2010 Census, thus, the 2000 data is still considered the most current data set. The region of influence identified in the Yucca Mountain FEIS for the Valley Modified rail corridor has remained the same. Furthermore, county level U.S. Census Bureau data estimates for 2006 suggest that while the population in southern Nevada is growing rapidly, the location of concentrations of minority and low income populations have remained relatively constant and static since 2000 (DIRS 182772-MTS 2007, p. 129).

DOE concluded in the Yucca Mountain FEIS that there would not be any high and adverse impacts from transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in Nevada on any populations, and that disproportionately high and adverse effects would be unlikely for any specific segment of the population, including minorities and low-income communities. DOE further concluded that there were no special pathways (unique practices and activities creating opportunities for increased impacts) that could not be mitigated. Therefore, the Yucca Mountain FEIS concluded that there were no environmental justice impacts associated with any proposed rail corridor.

Since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the Department has not identified any new large and adverse impacts to any population. DOE has also not identified any new minority or low income populations in the Valley Modified rail corridor region of influence, and has not identified any special pathways that could increase impacts to these populations. Therefore, DOE maintains that there would be no environmental justice impacts associated with the Valley Modified rail corridor.

6. CONCLUSION

DOE concludes that the Mina rail corridor warrants further study at the alignment level under the National Environmental Policy Act, although as a nonpreferred alternative. In addition, DOE concludes that, based on the analyses described herein, there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns that would warrant further consideration of the Carlin, Jean, or Valley Modified rail corridor at the alignment level.

Glossary terms shown in ***bold italics***.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE or the Department) concludes that the Mina ***rail corridor*** warrants further study to determine an alignment for the construction and operation of a ***railroad***. In reaching this conclusion, DOE considered the environmental conditions and associated potential environmental impacts of constructing and operating a railroad for each of 12 environmental resource areas and found overall that impacts would be small. The Mina rail corridor coincides in part with an abandoned rail line and follows relatively flat terrain over much of its length, which would minimize construction earthworks (***cuts*** and ***fills***); this would tend to reduce environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts to groundwater resources for construction and operation of a railroad in the Mina rail corridor ***region of influence***, however, would be small to moderate.

On April 17, 2007, the Walker River Paiute Tribal Council passed a resolution withdrawing the Tribe from participating in the Supplemental Yucca Mountain Nevada Rail Corridor EIS and Rail Alignment EIS preparation process. The Tribal Council's resolution also renewed the Tribe's past objection to the transportation of nuclear waste through their Reservation. Accordingly, DOE has identified the Mina Implementing Alternative as nonpreferred in this Supplemental Yucca Mountain Nevada Rail Corridor EIS and Rail Alignment EIS.

In addition, the Department has updated the environmental information in 12 resource areas for three of the other rail corridors (Carlin, Jean, and Valley Modified) evaluated in detail in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (Yucca Mountain FEIS). For the most part, the environmental conditions and associated potential environmental impacts for each rail corridor remain unchanged from, or are substantially similar to, those reported in the Yucca Mountain FEIS. Notably, however, land use and ownership conflicts in the Jean and Valley Modified corridors have increased, and, although the amount of private land within the Carlin rail corridor appears to have decreased (based on a more refined analysis using land ownership databases) since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, the complex land-ownership pattern resulting from the mix of private and public lands the corridor would cross remains unchanged. Such land use and ownership conflicts and complexity increase the potential to adversely affect construction of a railroad, and to increase the potential for delays that could affect the availability of a railroad in these corridors. Moreover, air quality management goals in the Jean corridor have changed since DOE completed the Yucca Mountain FEIS, and construction of a railroad could increase the potential for conflicts with these goals. For these reasons, the Department concludes there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns that would warrant further consideration of these three rail corridors at the alignment level.