



# NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

## Project Proposal Report

**Project Name:** South Schell Land Acquisition

**Project ID:** 921

**Lead Agency:** Nevada Department of Wildlife

**Project Manager:** Madi Stout Nevada Department of Wildlife

**Phone Number:** (775) 777-2392

**Email:** mstout@ndow.org

## Project Partners

Name	Agency	Role
Southern Nevada Water Authority	Southern Nevada Water Authority	Private Landowner
RMEF	RMEF- Aaron Swift	Non-Agency Cooperator
Bob McCready	NWF - National Wildlife Federation	Non-Agency Cooperator
Patrick Smorra	NDSL - Nevada Division of State Lands	Agency Cooperator

## Project Schedule

**Project Start Date:** 01/03/2022 (FY 2022)

**Projected Completion Date:** 12/31/2024 (FY 2025)

**Multi-year Project:** no

**Project Schedule:**

Yellow book appraisal completed September 2023.

Final review appraisal completed October 2023.

Projected Closing June of 2024.

## Project Location and Land Status

**Location Narrative:**

The Project is located approximately 23 miles southeast of Ely, Nevada, in the southern portion of the Schell Creek Mountain Range. The Project Area is located on private lands surrounded by USFS and BLM lands in the Ely Ranger District.

**NDOW Region:** Eastern

**NDOW Management Units:** 111

**Nevada Sage Grouse Population Management Unit:** Steptoe/Cave, Spring/Snake Valley

**County:** White Pine

## Land Status

Land Status	Acres	Percent of Project
Forest Service	267.6	15.6
Private	1449.2	84.4

**Bureau of Land Management Office:** Ely District - Bristlecone Field Office

**US Forest Service Ranger District:** Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest - Ely Ranger District

**Special Land Designations:** N/A

# Project Summary and Justification

**Project Activity and Sub-activity:** INFRASTRUCTURE and LAND: Land or water right acquisition

## Project Objectives:

- To measurably increase access for wildlife-dependent recreation.
- To measurably increase wildlife populations, wildlife use, or habitat for the benefit of public use and hunter success.
- To prevent conversion to agriculture and other anthropogenic development and fulfill conservation goals

## NDOW Initiative Addressed:

- Mule Deer Enhancement Program (NDOW)
- Wildlife Connectivity Plan (NDOW)

## Strategic Habitats and Threats Addressed:

- Aspen woodland: Anthropogenic development
- High-elevation sagebrush dominated shrubland: Anthropogenic development
- Linear riparian: perennial and ephemeral rivers and streams: Anthropogenic development
- Low-elevation sagebrush dominated shrubland: Anthropogenic development
- Pinyon-juniper woodland (not encroachment): Anthropogenic development
- Upper montane coniferous forest and woodland: Anthropogenic development

**Priority Resource Impacted:** Big Game, Upland Game

**Priority Species Impacted:** Greater sage-grouse, Mule deer

**Does this project benefit Greater Sage-grouse or Greater Sage-grouse habitat:** yes

**Project Clearance or Authorization Status:** Not Applicable

## Project Rationale:

The primary purpose of the South Schell Land Acquisition is to purchase approximately 1,720 acres of land from Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA). The properties are located in the Schell Creek Mountains, in White Pine County, Nevada. The property consists of inholdings with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management lands (BLM). The property is within Hunt Unit 111. The property consists mainly of high elevation mountain shrub habitat, several large mahogany stands, and numerous seeps and springs. The property serves as crucial summer and transition habitat for mule deer and elk, brood rearing habitat for sage-grouse, priority year-round habitat for blue grouse, and nesting habitat for a variety of migratory birds and raptors.

The Schell Creek Mountain Range is the core of the Area 11 mule deer population in White Pine County. NDOW consistently surveys over 1,000 mule deer on this portion of annual surveys. Overall, the mule deer in the Schell Creeks do not have a long migration route, but rather the mule deer transition up and down in elevation depending on time of year and weather. Elevations range from approximately 6,400 feet to over 11,800 feet. Over the past years, portions of private property throughout this range have been subdivided into small ranchette type properties, breaking up continuity of intact habitat and fragmenting an otherwise continuous block of premier habitat. Despite the lack of long migration routes, further development in this area could block transition range and routes, decreasing the overall population and productivity of this herd. The acquisition will secure these vital properties from development into the future.

## Project Treatments and Actions

<p><b>Treatment Name:</b> South Schell</p> <p><b>Acres:</b> 1,716.8</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Land acquisition</p> <p><b>Approach Narrative:</b></p> <p>Target acquisition date is June 30, 2024 but could take as long as 12/31/2024.</p> <p><b>Planned Start:</b> 07/2024</p>
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## Project Monitoring

### Monitoring Plan:

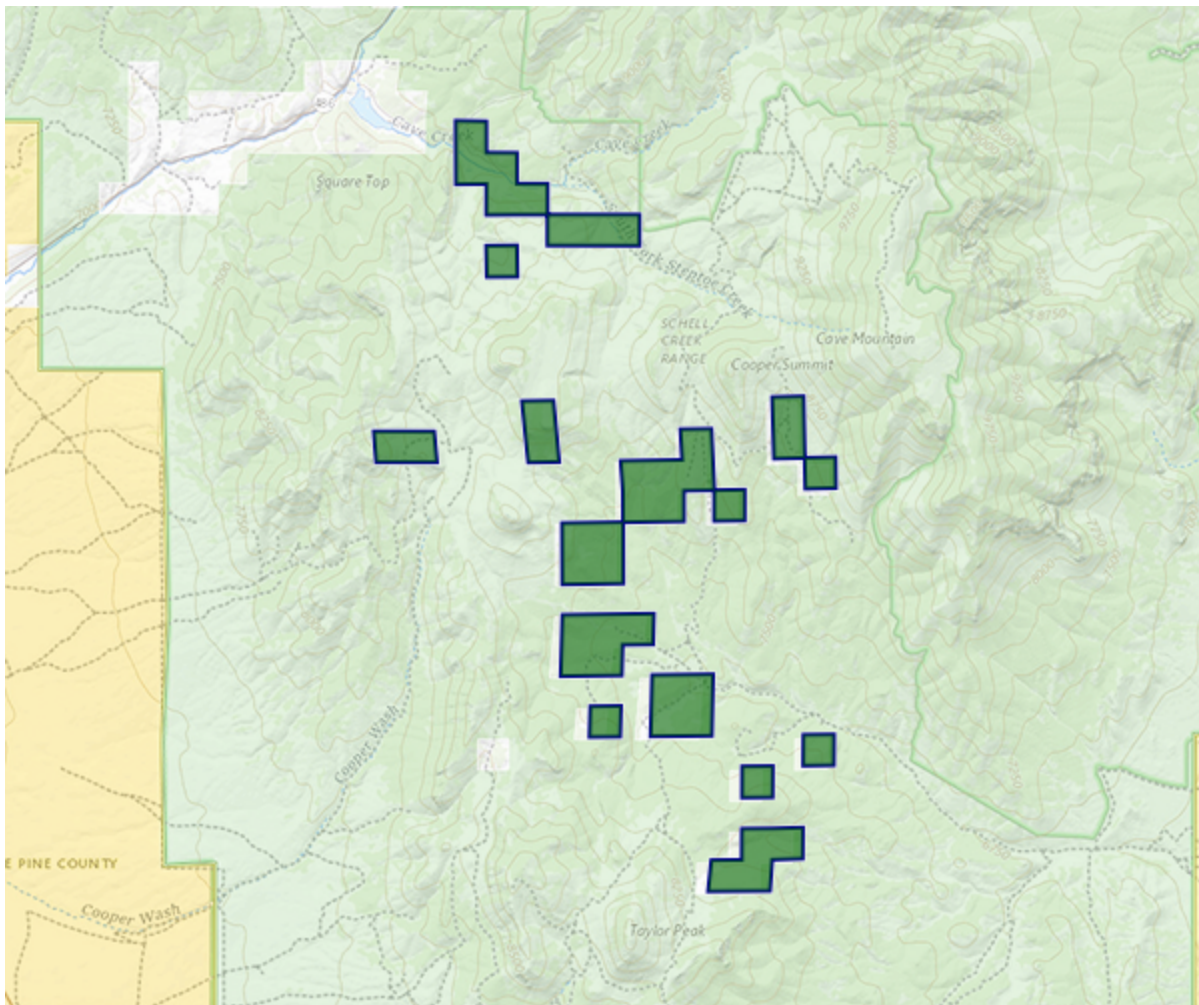
A monitoring plan is not applicable to this project.

## Project Funding and Budget

Budget Item	NDOW Heritage Trust Account 2023	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation 2023	Nevada Bighorns Unlimited Reno 2024	Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources 2024	Nevada Dream Tag 2024	US Fish and Wildlife Service 2024	Subtotal
<b>Land Acquisitions/Easements</b>							
	\$750,000	\$50,000	\$70,000	\$250,000	\$100,000	\$500,000	\$1,720,000
<b>Total Costs:</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$1,720,000</b>

### Budget Narrative:

RMEF committed \$50,000, with all other funding sources pending approval. If all funds are received we estimate that less Heritage dollars maybe needed than the requested amount. All funds will be used for the purchase of the South Schell Land Acquisition.



**Boundaries**

- County Boundary
- USFS Office Boundaries
- BLM Office Boundaries
- NDOW Region Boundary

**Land Status**

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Department of Defense
- Department of Energy
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Nevada State Lands
- Nevada Park Service
- Private
- Other

**Project Geometry**

- Project Boundary
- Treatment Area: South Schell