

Appendix E

Storey County Water District Source Water Protection Plan

*Contact the Storey County Planning Department, or
the Storey County Water District for review.*



Executive Summary

The Storey County Source Water Protection Plan outlines measures that the community has identified to safeguard public drinking water sources. Source water in Nevada is defined as untreated water from streams, rivers, lakes, springs, or underground aquifers that is used for public drinking water supplies. Source water protection is a community's first line of defense to ensure safe and sustainable drinking water supplies for all its residents and businesses.

The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water, administers the Integrated Source Water Protection Program (ISWPP). The ISWPP is a voluntary, non-regulatory program that assists communities in developing a local plan to prevent the contamination of public drinking water supplies. In 2023, the Storey County Board of Commissioners authorized participation in the program. Storey County's public water systems, local governments, and local stakeholders came together to complete the Community Source Water Protection Plan for the Public Water Systems in Storey County (County-Wide Plan). The planning team agreed that each public water system in Storey County would create a source water protection plan under the umbrella of the County-Wide Plan to address their specific source water protection needs and to outline their commitments to implementation.

Marlette Lake, located in the Carson Range to the west of Storey County, is the only source of water for Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Silver City. The raw water is piped to Storey County through an inverted siphon piping system that runs water into Five-Mile Reservoir, where it's gravity-fed to the water treatment plant in Virginia City.

An assessment of potential contaminant sources, activities that could pose a risk to water quality, was conducted and reviewed by the local planning team. The information was mapped and utilized to delineate Source Water Protection Areas (Appendix A of the County-Wide Plan). Subsequently, strategies to accomplish source water protection in the communities of Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Silver City were developed:

- Interagency Collaboration,
- Planning and Coordination,
- Spill Response and Cleanup,
- Physical Improvements,
- Education and Outreach, and
- Emerging Contaminants.

To guide implementation of these strategies, specific activities are outlined in the Action Plan (Attachment A of this Storey County Water District [SCWD] Plan, and Appendix B of the County-Wide Plan) and in a County-wide Education Plan (Appendix C of the County-Wide Plan). These voluntary actions can be implemented as technical and financial resources become available.

To ensure continued effectiveness, this SCWD Plan should be reviewed periodically to address changing conditions. This document serves the community as a tool to foster collaboration between water purveyors, local and regional partners, and community members to protect the quality of present and future drinking water sources in Storey County.

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Attachments

Attachment A Storey County Water District Action Plan

Acronyms

| Acronym | Definition |
|-----------|---|
| GIS | geographic information system |
| ISWPP | Integrated Source Water Protection Program |
| NDEP | Nevada Division of Environmental Protection |
| SCWD Plan | Storey County Water District Plan |
| SWPA | source water protection area |

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Source Water Protection

Source water protection in Nevada is a voluntary program aimed at building local partnerships to safeguard community drinking water sources. This Source Water Protection Plan for the Storey County Water District (SCWD Plan) serves as a planning tool to mitigate impacts to drinking water that may be imposed from potential sources of contamination. This SCWD Plan supports the County-wide source water protection planning effort in which Storey County's public water systems, the emergency manager, the planning manager, and various stakeholders have come together to ensure the sustainability of public drinking water supplies. This SCWD Plan was developed to assist the Storey County Water District as they work to implement one collective, County-wide vision:

Ensure safe and sustainable drinking water sources for all residents and businesses.

Source water protection is crucial to prevent potential contaminants from reaching drinking water sources. A source water protection area establishes a precautionary boundary around a drinking water source where a community aims to minimize the risk of potential contamination. The source water protection areas for the Storey County Water District were delineated by the local planning team to fulfill community-specific source water protection achievements. The source water protection area maps are included in Appendix A of the Community Source Water Protection Plan for Public Water Systems in Storey County (County-Wide Plan) and discussed in Section 2.4.

The Nevada Integrated Source Water Protection Program (ISWPP), established by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), provides the framework for local plan development and outlines criteria for state endorsement. By obtaining NDEP endorsement, the Storey County Water District may receive additional technical assistance to implement actions and County-wide education and outreach outlined in the Action Plan (Attachment A of this SCWD Plan). This Source Water Protection Plan for the Storey County Water District was developed to meet NDEP endorsement criteria.

1.2 Plan Goals

The County-Wide Plan fosters collaboration among the water purveyors, agencies, industries, community leaders, and citizens in Storey County and represents a coordinated effort to guard source water protection areas and key local watersheds from undue degradation. The Team has established four goals to guide the development and implementation of this community-specific Plan that aim to protect drinking water sources for the residents and businesses of Storey County. The goals are:

PROTECT THE QUALITY OF PRESENT AND FUTURE DRINKING WATER SOURCES.

PRESERVE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF WATER RESOURCES FOR EXISTING AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

CONSIDER RISKS TO DRINKING WATER SOURCES IN EMERGENCY PLANNING.

ENGAGE WATER USERS, STAKEHOLDERS, AND BUSINESSES ABOUT SOURCE WATER PROTECTION AND PARTICIPATION.

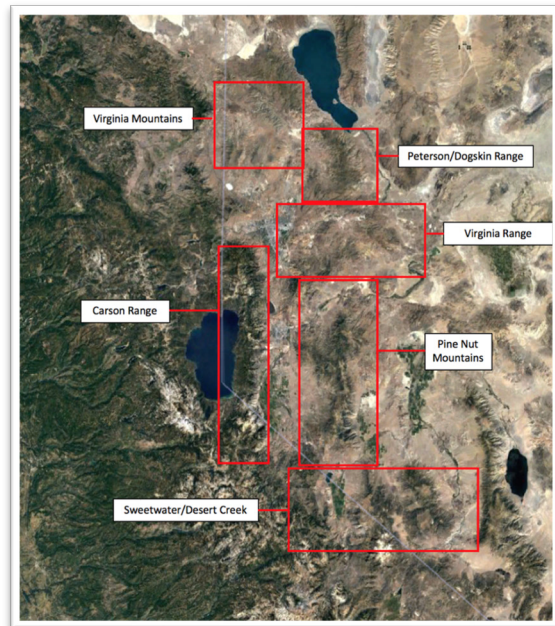
1.3 Description of Planning Area

Virginia City is located at an elevation of approximately 6,200 feet amsl, on the eastern side of the Virginia Range. The Virginia Range is a mountain range nearly entirely in Storey County, Nevada, tucked between the Truckee River (north) and the Carson River (south). Truckee Meadows and the Washoe Valley are to the west and the Lahontan Valley is to the east. The Carson Range sits on the shoulder of the Sierra Nevada Range to the east and is important to Virginia City as their source of drinking water.

In 1850, gold was discovered in Western Nevada, and in early 1859, James Finney and a small group of prospectors discovered silver ore in what is present-day Virginia City. Henry Comstock claimed the ledge of a major gold lode, and the strike became known as the Comstock Lode (Straka, 2007). At its peak, Virginia City was a thriving, vibrant metropolis of 25,000 residents.

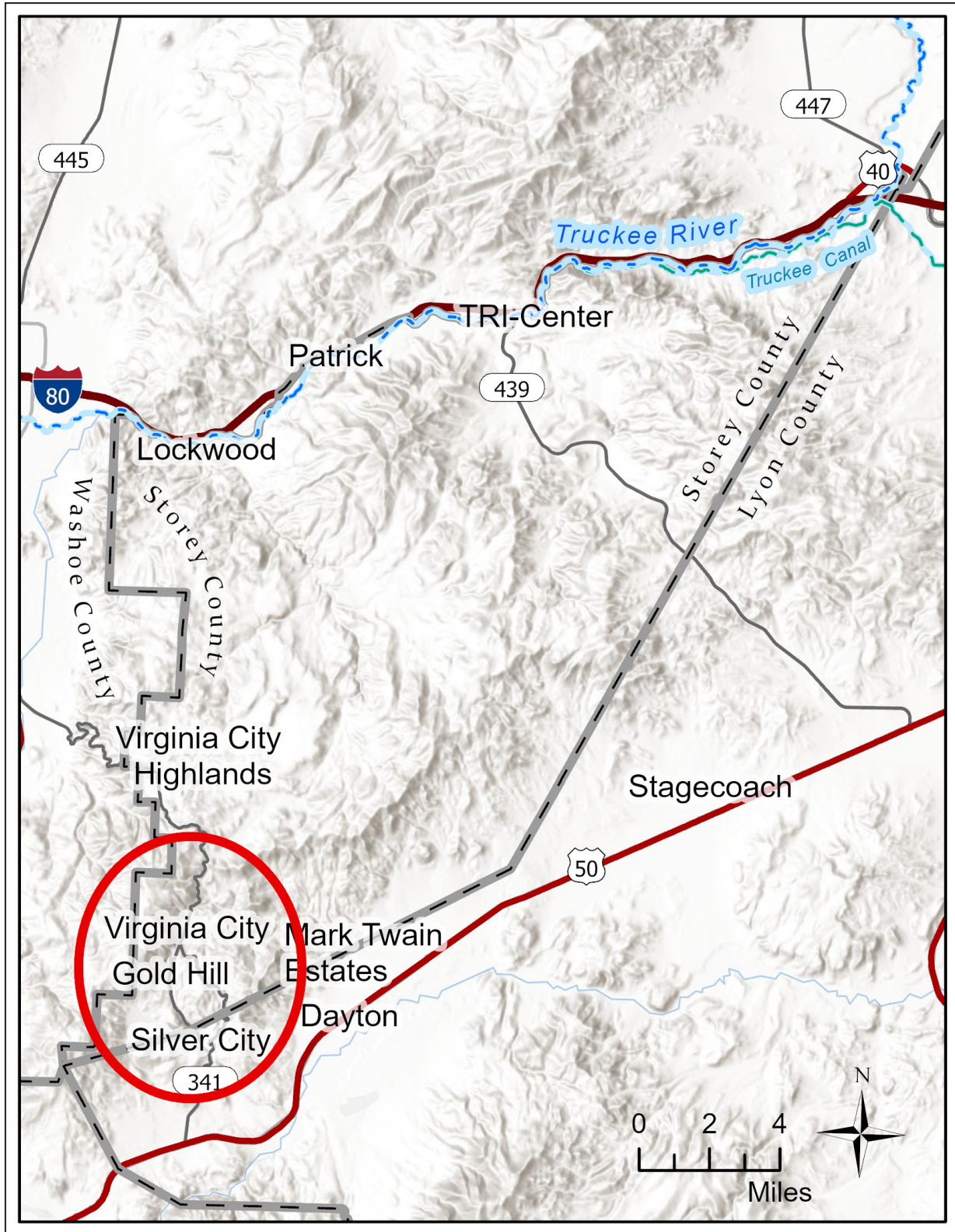
Men and women traveled from around the world to live and work, and miners pulled millions of dollars' worth of silver and gold from shafts and tunnels 3,000 feet beneath the town (Storey County, 2023).

Today, Virginia City is the County seat with a population of 1,000 (U.S. Census, 2022) residents and is one of two economic centers in Storey County. The Storey County Water District supplies potable water and wastewater treatment services to Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Silver City (Figure 1).



Mountain Ranges in and around Storey County

Figure 1. Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Silver City, Storey County, Nevada



1.4 Storey County Water District Local Contacts

The Storey County Water District local contacts were part of the broader Storey County Planning Team: a dedicated assembly of local voices who came together with unwavering commitment to craft a County-Wide Plan that works to protect the quality of present and future drinking water sources in Storey County.

Contact the Storey County Water District or the Storey County Planning Department (Table 1) for information about the Source Water Protection Plan for the Storey County Water District.

Table 1. Storey County Water District Source Water Protection Contact

| Team Member | Jurisdiction/Title | Contact Information |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Kathy Canfield | Planning Manager, Storey County | kcanfield@storeycounty.org |
| Jason Wierzbicki | Public Works Director, Storey County | jwierzbicki@storeycounty.org |
| Adam Wilson | Emergency Management Director | awilson@storeycounty.org |

2.0 Source Water Protection Area Delineation

Source water protection involves managing human activities to prevent contaminants from entering drinking water sources. Source water protection areas are designated boundaries established by communities to safeguard the quality of their drinking water sources. Within source water protection areas, education, monitoring, and physical improvements play vital roles in protecting water quality for the residents and businesses in Storey County.

The delineation of source water protection areas in this SCWD Plan was informed by watershed boundaries and input from the Storey County Water District. These areas serve as a planning tool to protect and preserve the quality of drinking water sources managed by the Storey County Water District. The final source water protection area maps are provided in Appendix A of the County-Wide Plan. A comprehensive description of delineation methods is detailed in Section 2.3 of this SCWD Plan.

2.1 Source Water Description

In Nevada, source water is defined as untreated water originating from rivers, lakes, streams, springs, or underground aquifers, serving both public drinking water systems and private wells.

The Storey County Water District utilizes surface water from the Marlette Lake Water System to provide potable water to Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Silver City. The Marlette Lake Water System was constructed in 1873 when a small earthen dam was erected at the outlet of a broad glaciated basin that drained into Lake Tahoe (NDOW, 2023). The intended purpose of the Marlette Lake Water System was to provide domestic and mining water (State of Nevada, 2021). Originally, water was

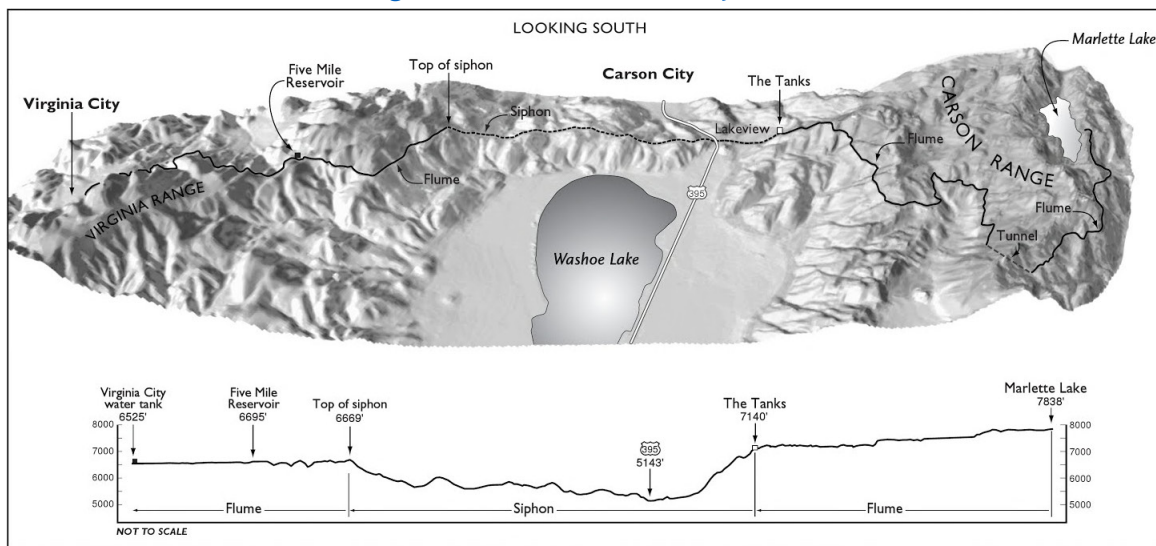
conveyed via a wooden flume from Marlette Lake into Hobart Reservoir, and the first major water supply project was the development of a transmission line, constructed in 1873, delivering water from Hobart Reservoir to Virginia City.

Today, Marlette Lake is the only source of raw water for Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Silver City. The raw water is piped to Storey County through an inverted siphon piping system that runs down from the storage tanks on the East Slope of the Sierra Nevada, under the 395/I-580 freeway, up the east side of Washoe Valley to Five-Mile Reservoir, where it's gravity-fed to the water treatment plant in Virginia City (Figure 2). The Marlette Lake Water Systems also provides raw water to Carson City.



The system for the Storey County Water District consists of Five-Mile Reservoir (5-million gallons), five treated water tanks throughout Virginia City and Gold Hill, and two raw water tanks. Storey County Water District also manages two wastewater treatment plants: Gold Hill and Six Mile. At the time of this SCWD Plan Development, there were no new anticipated water sources.

Figure 2. Marlette Lake Water System



[Geologic and Natural History Tours in the Reno Area](#),
 by Joseph V. Tingley, Nevada Bureau of Mines & Geology, 2005, Page 73

2.2 Potential Contaminant Source Inventory and Evaluation

Human activities that can lead to the contamination of drinking water sources generally originate from urban, industrial, and agricultural endeavors. Potential sources of contaminants encompass both current and prospective activities with the capacity to discharge pollutants into the

environment. Should these activities release contaminants that seep into ground or surface water, they could jeopardize a community's drinking water source.

Given that the Storey County Water District relies on two surface water source reservoirs and one water treatment plant, the potential contaminant source inventory relied upon discussions with the Storey County Water District Public Works Director. The high priority potential sources of drinking water pollution include:

- Vandalism at Five-Mile Reservoir, and
- Vandalism at the Water Treatment Plant ponds.

The Storey County Water District is interested in expanding their potential contaminant source inventory to include a geographic information system (GIS) database of the active and abandoned mines in and around the communities of Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Silver City. The Storey County Water District Action Plan (Attachment A) includes further details regarding the potential contaminant source inventory expansion.

2.3 Watershed and Fixed Radius Delineations

The Marlette Lake Reservoir directly supplies the Storey County Water District with raw surface water for Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Silver City. The protection of water quality in the Marlette Lake Reservoir was added to the 2023 (2014) Community Source Water Protection Plan for Public Water Systems in Carson City. The watersheds above Marlette Lake and the open ditch sections of the Marlette Lake Water System were added to the Carson City's Plan as management area, Watershed 2 (see Figure 3). A watershed delineation is the process of identifying the boundary of a watershed, sometimes referred to as a catchment, drainage basin, or river basin. The Storey County Planning Team chose to acknowledge and include Watershed 2 as part of their County-Wide source water protection effort and will continue to support both Carson City and the State of Nevada in implementing source water protection in the watersheds above Marlette Lake. The State of Nevada's Action Plan for the Marlette Lake Water System is provided in Appendix B of the County-Wide Plan.

The Arbitrary Fixed radius method sets a fixed radius from a well, spring, or reservoir, circumscribing a zone of equal distance around a water source. Fixed Radius delineations for Five-Mile Reservoir and the Virginia City Water Treatment Plant were based off NDEP's Vulnerability Assessment Reports and specific concerns regarding potential water quality threats (Section 2.2) to drinking water sources. Upon review of the 1,200-foot fixed radius, which represents a two-year time-of-travel around a wellhead, the Team delineated two source water protection areas:

- 1,100-foot boundary as the Five-Mile Reservoir Source Water Protection Area (Figure 4).
- 650-foot boundary as the Water Treatment Plant Source Water Protection Area (Figure 5).
 - The Team requested to clip the area, so land-use planned for Mixed-Use Commercial Residential or Single Family Residential were not included.

2.4 Source Water Protection Area Description

Protecting source water is about ensuring that drinking water remains clean and safe from harmful contaminants and involves managing human activities to prevent potential pollutants from entering drinking water sources. Community established source water protection areas assist in safeguarding the quality of a community's most vital resource: their drinking water. Within these areas, education, monitoring, and thoughtful land use planning take center stage.

The delineation of source water protection areas in this SCWD Plan was informed by watershed boundaries, the arbitrary fixed radius method, the potential contaminant source inventory, and Team input. Through mapping exercises and Team discussions, suitable source water protection areas were established to align with the goals described in Section 1.2. The source water protection areas support implementation of the Storey County Master Plan (Chapter 10, Goal 6, Objective 1), and the State of Nevada's 2023 Action Plan for the Marlette Lake Water System. In addition, increased County-wide source water protection education will ensure that clean and safe drinking water is available for the future of Storey County's economy, and its residents.

Storey County Water District's final source water protection areas are presented as Figure 4 and Figure 5, and associated characteristics and relative management needs are outlined in Table 2. The source water protection areas are included as maps in Appendix A of the County-Wide Plan.

Figure 3. Watershed 2

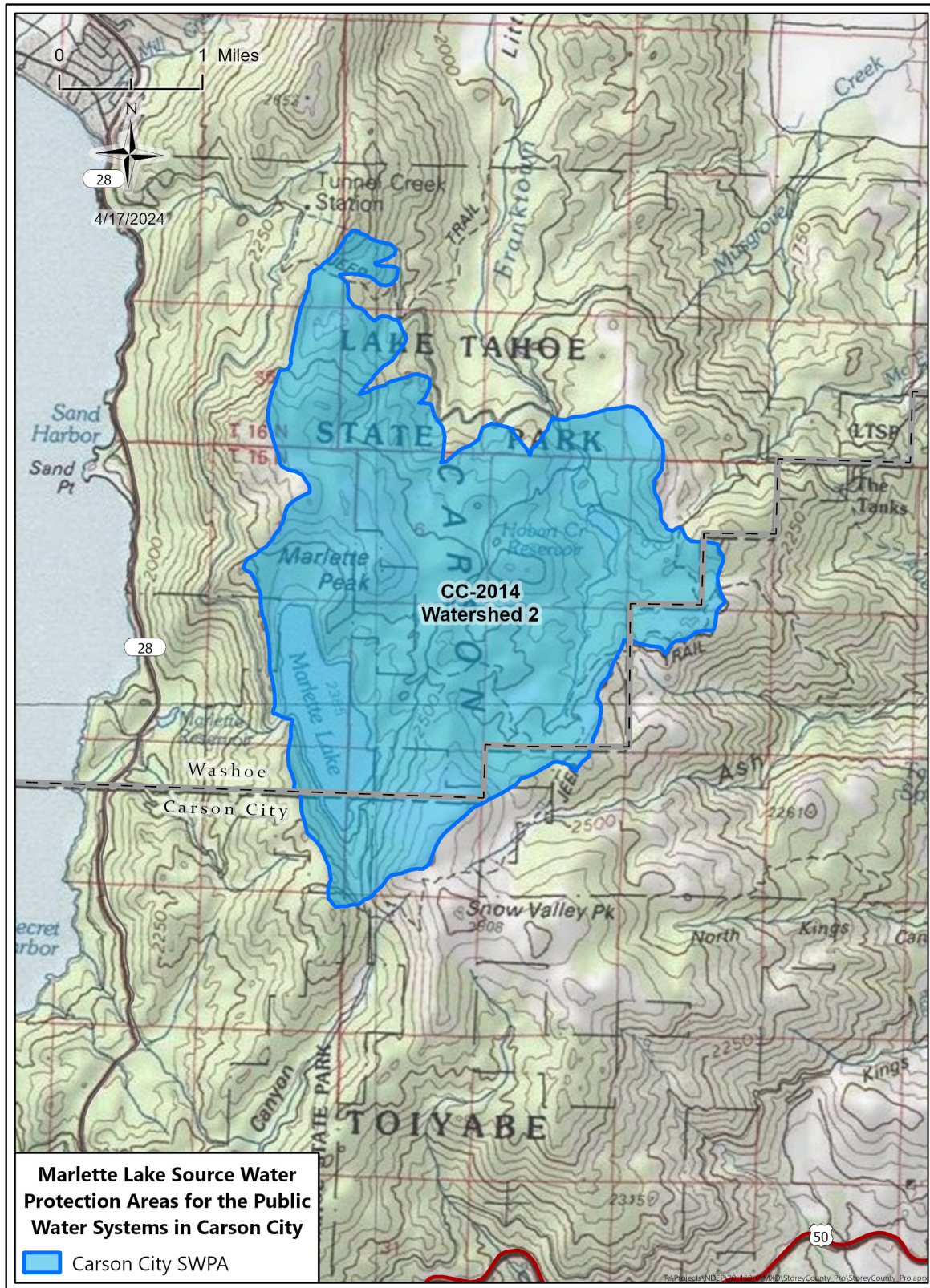


Figure 4. Five-Mile Reservoir SWPA

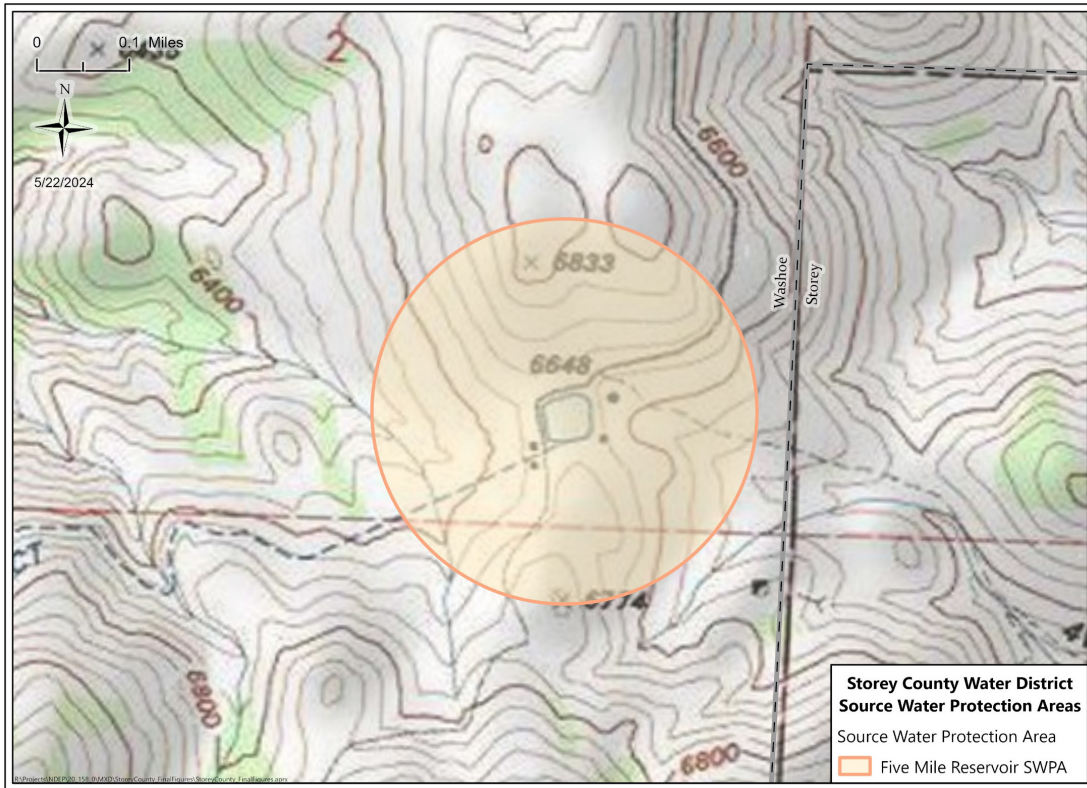


Figure 5. Water Treatment Plant SWPA

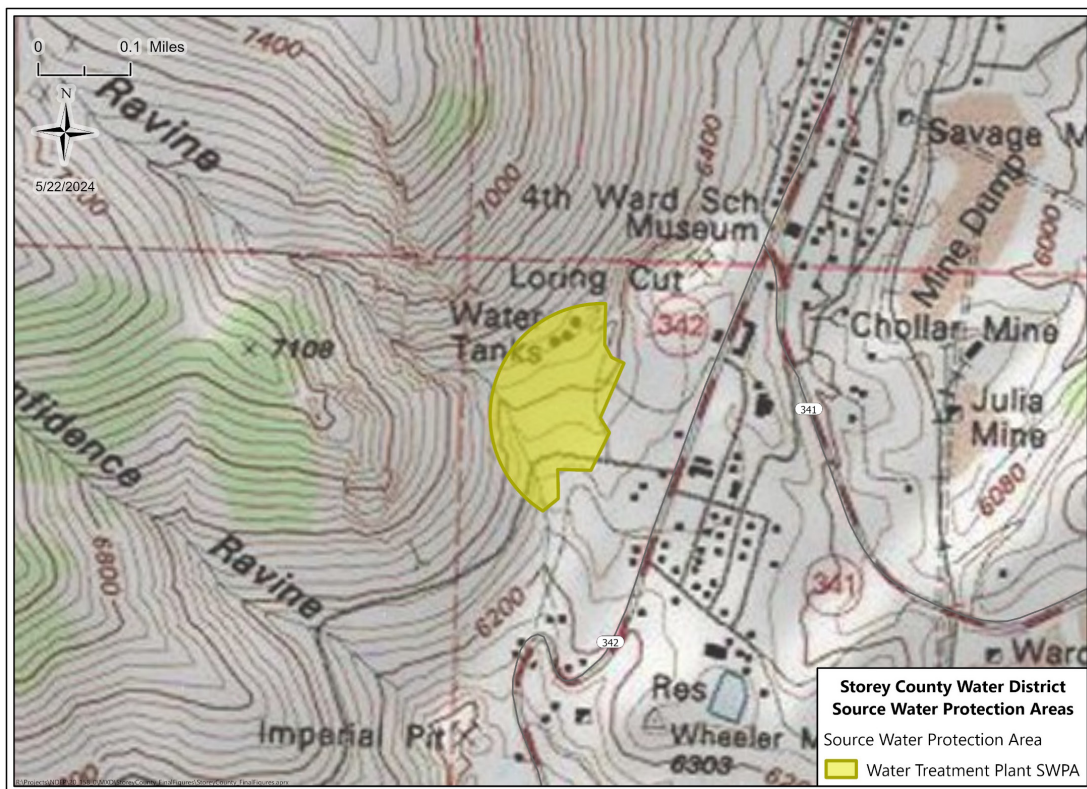


Table 2. Storey County Water District Source Water Protection Area Descriptions

| Source Water Protection Area Name | Description |
|--|---|
| CC-2014 Watershed 2 | Interviews with Hobart Marlette System operators, Carson City Public Works, and Carson City Parks, Recreation, and Open Space staff, regarding existing and planned activities in watersheds along the Sierra Front that supply drinking water from surface water. Objectives include: coordinate water quality objectives within Carson City Departments, with State and Federal land managers, and with Marlette-Hobart System operators. ^{1/} |
| Five Mile Reservoir SWPA Water Treatment Plant SWPA | Activities in the Five-Mile Reservoir and Water Treatment Plant Source Water Protection Areas (SWPAs) represent the need for regional and community-wide education and outreach and physical improvements, such as increased security. Increased security and additional education will assist the County as they manage potential vandalism in and around their sole drinking water sources. |

^{1/} 2023 Community Source Water Protection Plan for Public Water Systems in Carson City, Appendix D

2.4.1 Potential Contaminant Sources within Source Water Protection Areas

The following section includes the potential contaminant source inventory within the Storey County Water District’s source water protection areas, displayed on Figure 6 and Figure 7. The points reflect the high priority concerns outlined by the Public Works Director, as discussed in Section 2.2.

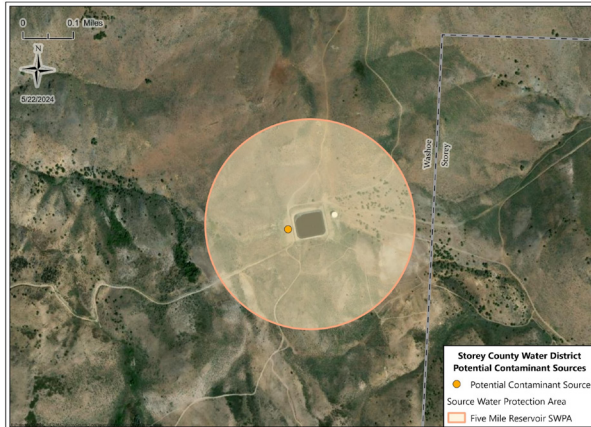


Figure 6. Five Mile PCSs



Figure 7. Water Treatment Plant PCSs

2.4.2 Contingency Measures

Contingency measures are crucial for preparing a public water system to manage potential long-term water contamination events or disruptions in supply. The main goal of contingency measures is to protect the public water supply system immediately and in the long term. This involves identifying critical personnel, equipment, procedures, and materials needed to address environmental emergencies swiftly. Plans typically include rapid response protocols, notification procedures, and containment strategies for incidents directly impacting the water source. Nevada's regulations require both short- and long-term contingency plans to effectively manage water quality and quantity

impacts. These plans provide interim relief for public water systems during emergencies until permanent solutions are implemented. Storey County Water District’s contingency plans are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Storey County Water District Contingency Plans

| Storey County Water District Contingency Plans | |
|---|--|
| Emergency Response Plan for Storey County Sewer System (January 2024) | Storey County Water Resource Plan (January 2023) |
| Storey County Water District Operations and Maintenance Manual | Storey County Water District NV 0000240 Water Conservation Plan (2021) |

2.4.2 Management Strategies

Source water protection management strategies encompass various measures aimed at supporting the goals outlined in Section 1.2. Source water protection goals can be considered what Storey County is striving to achieve, and the management strategies support and divide the goals into simple and manageable approaches that lead to implementation. The management strategies were developed and prioritized by the County-Wide Team to mitigate the risk of contamination to Storey County’s drinking water sources. Storey County Water District’s management strategies, outlined in Table 4 consider Storey County Water District’s source water protection area delineations and the potential contaminant source inventory and evaluation. Storey County’s management strategies will be enacted through Action Plan implementation (Section 3.1).

Table 4. Management Strategies for the Storey County Water District

Planning and Coordination

Supports consistency in County- and community-wide policies that consider future growth and potential new threats to source water.

Spill Response and Cleanup

Storey County Water District will continue to work with Storey County Emergency Management to ensure that County-wide emergency actions are well-coordinated and that resources are mobilized promptly to protect water quality and public health.

Education And Outreach

The Storey Count Water District understands that source water protection can only thrive when commnity members are on board, which starts with education. Empowerment through knowledge can give community members the tools they need to implement to support Storey County protect their most important resource, their drinking water.

Emerging Contaminants

Emerging contaminants represent a significant concern for source water due to the potential impacts on human health and the environment. Storey County Water District is working proactively to implement solutions that address emerging contaminant concerns to ensure safe and sustainable drinking water for generations to come.

3.0 Plan Implementation

3.1 Action Plan

The implementation of a source water protection plan is realized through the Action Plan (Attachment A), which outlines the actions set forth to achieve the goals. Storey County Water District's actions are categorized according to management strategy, and they were designed based on source water protection area delineations, the potential contaminant source inventory and evaluation, and the commitment to regional cooperation and community education. Each project is detailed with regard to its description, prioritization, designated lead, type of required support, and projected timeline for execution.

The implementation of each Action Plan is contingent upon the availability of resources, prioritization of projects, and access to necessary funding. Projects will progress as financial and temporal resources permit. To achieve these ends, the Storey County Water District anticipates leveraging technical support from the ISWPP and through diverse partnerships. County-wide action plan Information regarding potential funding avenues to support these initiatives is listed in Appendix B of the County-Wide Plan.

3.2 Public Education and Participation

Public education and participation for the Virginia City, Gold Hill, Silver City, and surrounding communities is an integral component of source water protection implementation. The ISWPP program emphasizes a voluntary, community-based approach that involves local stakeholders, community leaders, public water systems, residents, and businesses. By actively targeting specific source water protection education to Storey County Water District's customers, this SCWD Plan aims to promote community-driven best management practices to protect water quality in perpetuity.

The Education Plan, Appendix C of the County-Wide Plan, includes various messages that highlight the importance of source water protection, and the actions individuals can take to safeguard drinking water sources. These messages serve as key communication points to empower the public to contribute to source water protection efforts that engage water users, stakeholders, and businesses about source water protection and participation. The following key messages highlight the education focus for the Storey County Water District:



What contaminates the water we drink?

There are numerous pollutants that can contaminate both surface and groundwater. Some contaminants result from the improper disposal of common household products, such as cleaning products, waste oil, pet waste, fertilizers, and pesticides – when improperly used, stored, or disposed of, they can pose a risk to your drinking water. Emerging contaminants include a wide range of chemical compounds, industrial pollutants, and human by-products that have been making their way into our water ways for generations. Recent studies have shown that measurable quantities of these contaminants exist within our sources of drinking water, making local industries, businesses, and residents important participants in source water protection efforts.



What can I do to protect my drinking water?

Protecting your drinking water from contamination is a huge challenge, but one we can overcome if we band together as a community. Safeguarding your drinking water sources begins with awareness and education. We can take everything we've learned home with us, educate our friends and families, and change our behaviors to minimize our impact on our water resources. All the water in the world won't be enough if it's contaminated.

3.3 Source Water Protection Plan Updates

This SCWD Plan prioritizes flexibility and community involvement, and encourages not only jurisdictional, but regional- and county-wide efforts to protect water quality. It originates from a shared commitment to unite Storey County around the vision of *ensuring safe and sustainable drinking water for all residents and businesses*. With achievable goals and strategies, it seamlessly integrates source water protection into local and County-wide planning efforts. Regular updates to this Plan, scheduled annually or as new information arises, reflect Storey County Water District's dedication to a sustainable water future, to secure the economic growth of Storey County.

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Attachment A

Storey County Water District Action Plan

The Action Plan for this SCWD Plan was crafted to fulfill the goals outlined in the Community Source Water Protection Plan for Public Water Systems in Storey County (County-Wide Plan). The management strategies, detailed in Section 2.4.2 of this SCWD Plan, were formulated by the Team to align with the source water protection goals. The Action Plan, created to outline how the source water protection goals might be achieved, includes actionable and realistic measures organized by management strategy, such as education and outreach. The actions are designed for practical implementation to help ensure safe and sustainable drinking water for Storey County’s residents and businesses.

Storey County Water District’s Action Plan evolved throughout the development of the County-Wide Plan. Each action includes a description, priority, project lead, type of assistance needed, and expected implementation year. Implementation is dependent upon resource availability and the actions will be carried out as funding and time allows. Potential funding sources can be used to assist in Action Plan implementation, and a list of potential funding sources is outlined in Appendix B of the County-Wide Plan.

The Storey County Water District benefits from building relationships and leveraging resources with various entities, both regionally and throughout the County. Several actions in the County-Wide Action Plan enlist the Storey County Water District as a key collaborator to help ensure source water protection is implemented across all jurisdictions. Recognizing that clean drinking water is the foundation of any community, the Action Plans in Appendix E of the County-Wide Plan highlight all of Storey County’s public water system jurisdictions commitment to protecting and preserving drinking water quality.

| Community Source Water Protection – Storey County Water District Action Plan | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Action Item | Management Strategy | Action Description | Priority | Project Lead | Type of Assistance Needed | Expected Implementation Year |
| 1.1.SCWD | <i>Interagency Collaboration</i> | Continue to improve communication and collaboration with State Buildings and Grounds to protect and preserve the quality of water delivered from the Watershed 2 Carson City Source Water Protection Area. | High Staff Time | Storey County Water District | Technical Assistance | 2024-2026 |
| 2.1.SCWD | <i>Planning and Coordination</i> | Develop a GIS-based potential contaminant source inventory near Storey County Water District facilities and interests. | High Staff Time | Storey County Water District | Technical Assistance | 2024-2026 |
| 2.2.SCWD | <i>Planning and Coordination</i> | Continue participation in a source water protection team. | High Staff Time | Storey County Water District | Technical Assistance | |
| 3.1.SCWD | <i>Spill Response and Cleanup</i> | Continue to support Storey County Emergency Management by attending the Local Emergency Planning Committee meetings. Consider participating in source water protection education as a bi-annual topic and consider discussing emerging contaminants. | Medium Staff Time | Storey County Water District | Technical Assistance | 2024 and Ongoing |
| 4.1.SCWD | <i>Physical Improvements</i> | Explore funding for physical improvements related to source water security. For example, consider installing a camera system similar to the Water Treatment Plant cameras at Five Mile Reservoir and at water storage tanks to deter vandalism or terrorism. | High | Storey County Water District | Technical Assistance | 2023-2025 |
| 5.1.SCWD | <i>Education and Outreach</i> | Consider adding source water protection signage around Five Mile Reservoir and the Storey County Water Treatment Plant. For example, post Source Water Protection Area signage on all sides of the fences surrounding the water sources. | High | Storey County Water District | Technical Assistance | 2024-2026 |
| 5.2.SCWD | <i>Education and Outreach</i> | Consider adding source water protection signage on the fencing around the water storage tanks throughout Virginia City and the surrounding communities (Gold Hill and Silver City). | High | Storey County Water District | Technical Assistance | 2024-2026 |
| 6.1.SCWD | <i>Emerging Contaminants</i> | Coordinate with NDEP on the availability of, and eligibility for, funding to address emerging contaminants. | High Staff Time | Storey County Water District | Technical Assistance | Ongoing |
| 6.2.SCWD | <i>Emerging Contaminants</i> | Promote community-wide education about emerging contaminants. For example, develop pamphlets to insert in water bills and door hangers to distribute to residential communities. | Medium Staff Time | Storey County Water District | Technical Assistance | 2024-2026 |
| 6.3.SCWD | <i>Emerging Contaminants</i> | Consider attending a State-wide working group focused on emerging contaminant education for public water systems and their operators. | High Staff Time | Storey County Water District | Technical Assistance | 2024-2026 |
| 6.4.SCWD | <i>Emerging Contaminants</i> | Secure funding and distribute water quality testing kits for residents. | High Staff Time | Storey County Water District | Technical Assistance | 2024-2026 |