Hualapai Flat

Groundwater Basin #024, Source Water Profile

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Introduction

The Hualapai Flat source water profile is a component of the 2020 Integrated Source Water and 319(h) Watershed Protection Plan for Public Water Systems and the Truckee River in the Truckee Meadows (Plan). This document is a part of the on-line source water mapping tool.

This Source Water Protection Area (SWPA) description is intended to be a guide and resource for organizations working within the basin, and an educational tool for those interested in learning more about the drinking water source in the area where they live. This Plan can be used to support funding for water quality projects in the basin.

Summary

This profile focuses on protecting water quality for the sources of drinking water serving the Black Rock Station. There are no surface waters used directly by water systems in this basin. This profile includes potential and existing water quality concerns, types of land uses, management strategies and projects, and the involved stakeholders and their corresponding plans with water quality components.

The Hualapai Flat basin is a north-south oriented hydrographic area of 315 square miles in northwestern Washoe County. It is bounded on the west and east by the northward convergence of the Granite Range and Calico Hills and on the southeast by the Black Rock Desert. Younger and older alluvium underlie the lowlands of Hualapai Flat and the adjacent mountains are composed of granitic and volcanic rocks (Harrill, 1969, plate 1). The Black Rock Station well, located in the Wagon Tire Creek HUC-12, is the only source of public water supply in the basin.

Land at the Black Rock Station well is owned by four private entities including the Jackson Family Trust, Granite Investment Group LLC, Black Rock City Properties LLC, and the Burning Man Project. SWPAs were developed county-wide by stakeholders to help protect drinking water sources.

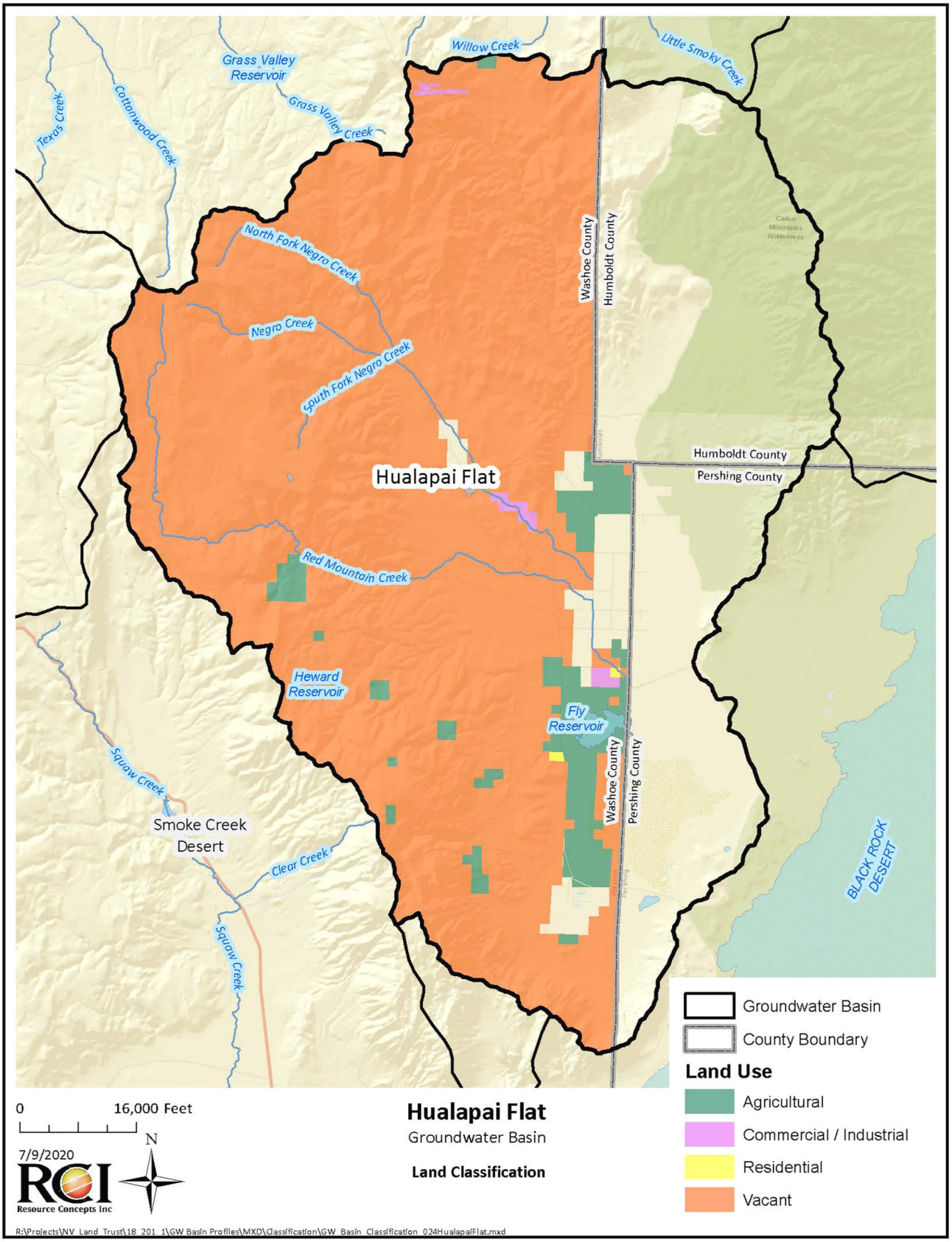
The following table summarizes key water quality aspects of this basin.

Basin Summary	
Basins	• Groundwater Basins: Hualapai Flat #024 • HUC-12 Watershed: Wagon Tire Creek #160402030306
Source Water Protection Areas	• A SWPA provides a buffer around public water system wells, and it represents a precautionary indicator to safeguard the drinking water sources. • One well is managed by one public water system that provides drinking water to the Black Rock Station area. This water system serves 25 people. • 398 acres make up the SWPA in this Basin.
Special Considerations & Issues	• No surface waters are used for public water supply. • There are no surface waters with "designated" Beneficial Uses or water quality standards in the Wagon Tire Creek HUC-12 watershed.

SWPA Acreage	Type	Acres
Land Jurisdiction	Washoe County Non-Federal:	395
Land Use	Agriculture:	65
	Commercial/Industrial:	155
	Vacant:	54
	Not assigned:	124

Land uses and jurisdictions in the SWPAs are summarized in the adjacent table and illustrated by the Land Classification Figure.

The four entities that share ownership and management in these SWPAs are the Jackson Family Trust, Granite Investment Group LLC, Black Rock City Properties LLC, and the Burning Man Project.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Little Smoky Creek
Grass Valley Reservoir
Grass Valley Creek
Texas Creek
Cottonwood Creek
North Fork Negro Creek
Negro Creek
South Fork Negro Creek
Washoe County
Humboldt County
Humboldt County
Pershing County
Hualapai Flat
Red Mountain Creek
Heward Reservoir
Fly Reservoir
Washoe County
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Squaw Creek
Smoke Creek Desert
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BLACK ROCK DESERT
Groundwater Basin
County Boundary
Land Use
Agricultural
Commercial / Industrial
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Vacant
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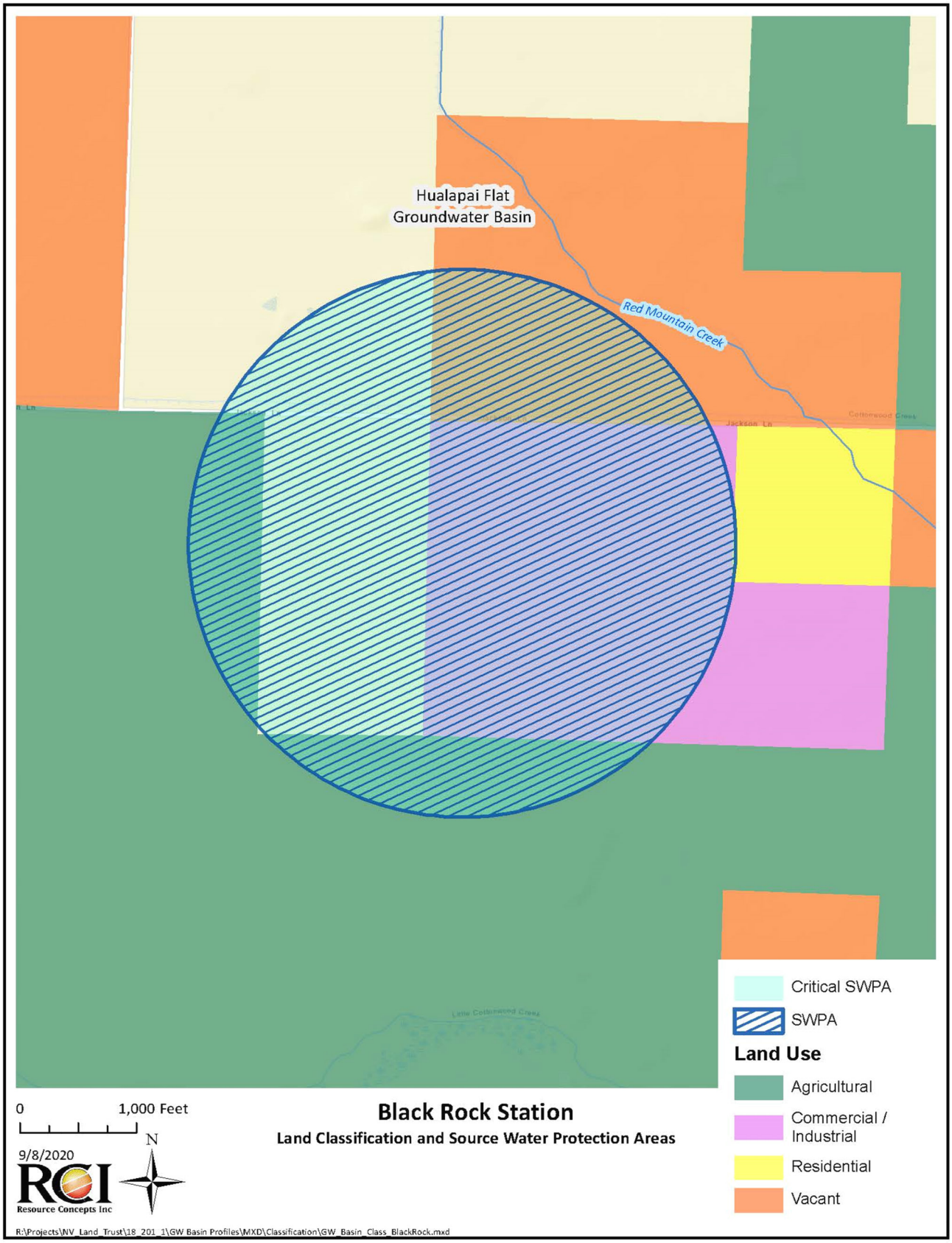
Hualapai Flat
Groundwater Basin
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Cottonwood Creek
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Critical SWPA
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Water Quality Standards and Beneficial Uses

Water quality standards for surface water in the state of Nevada are established by Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) NAC 445A.11704 through NAC 445A.2234. Hualapai Flat Basin is located within the "Black Rock Desert Region". There are no designated beneficial uses (NAC 445A.1282) or water quality standards (NAC 445A.1284) for surface water bodies in the Wagon Tire Creek HUC-12. For groundwater, Nevada's policy is to protect all groundwater against deterioration in quality, in order to maintain supplies that are suitable for beneficial use.

Potential and Existing Water Quality Concerns

The well used by the Black Rock Station is highly valued because it is the only source of water for this area.

The Black Rock Station is a 200-acre staging and storage location for the Burning Man event located within the SWPA. Hazardous materials such as fueling, equipment, and vehicles are stored in the vicinity. Potential leaking of industrial chemicals at this location could be a concern for water quality.

A large agricultural operation is located on the northern boundary and just outside of the SWPA. Agricultural practices have the potential to contaminate groundwater through fertilizers, herbicides, and livestock waste.

Strategies to Protect and Improve Water Quality

The water quality concerns identified in this basin can be addressed through management strategies described in this section, the proposed projects detailed in the Project Profiles, as well as applicable on-going water quality projects and programs described under Stakeholders and Plans. These strategies pertain to the entire basin but may be prioritized in SWPAs.

Source Water Protection Area Identification and Management

A SWPA is a management area surrounding a surface water or groundwater resource that supplies water for public consumption. Activities in these buffer areas can affect the quality of water downstream or underground. These management strategies acknowledge the value of these SWPAs to prevent future contamination of sources of drinking water.

The SWPA buffers in this groundwater basin are based on a 20-year time of travel for groundwater. These areas are illustrated on the Jurisdiction and Source Water Protection Areas Figure. The following objectives are significant in both future and on-going SWPA management:

- Inform landowners in SWPAs about their proximity to a valuable drinking water source and how they can help protect their water quality.
- Encourage coordination between Public Water Systems, landowners, and City or County planners to consider the importance of SWPAs in project reviews.
- Explore collaborative funding for water quality improvements and support the resource investigations needed to develop viable projects.
- Prioritize physical improvements in SWPAs to protect and improve source water quality.

Education and Outreach

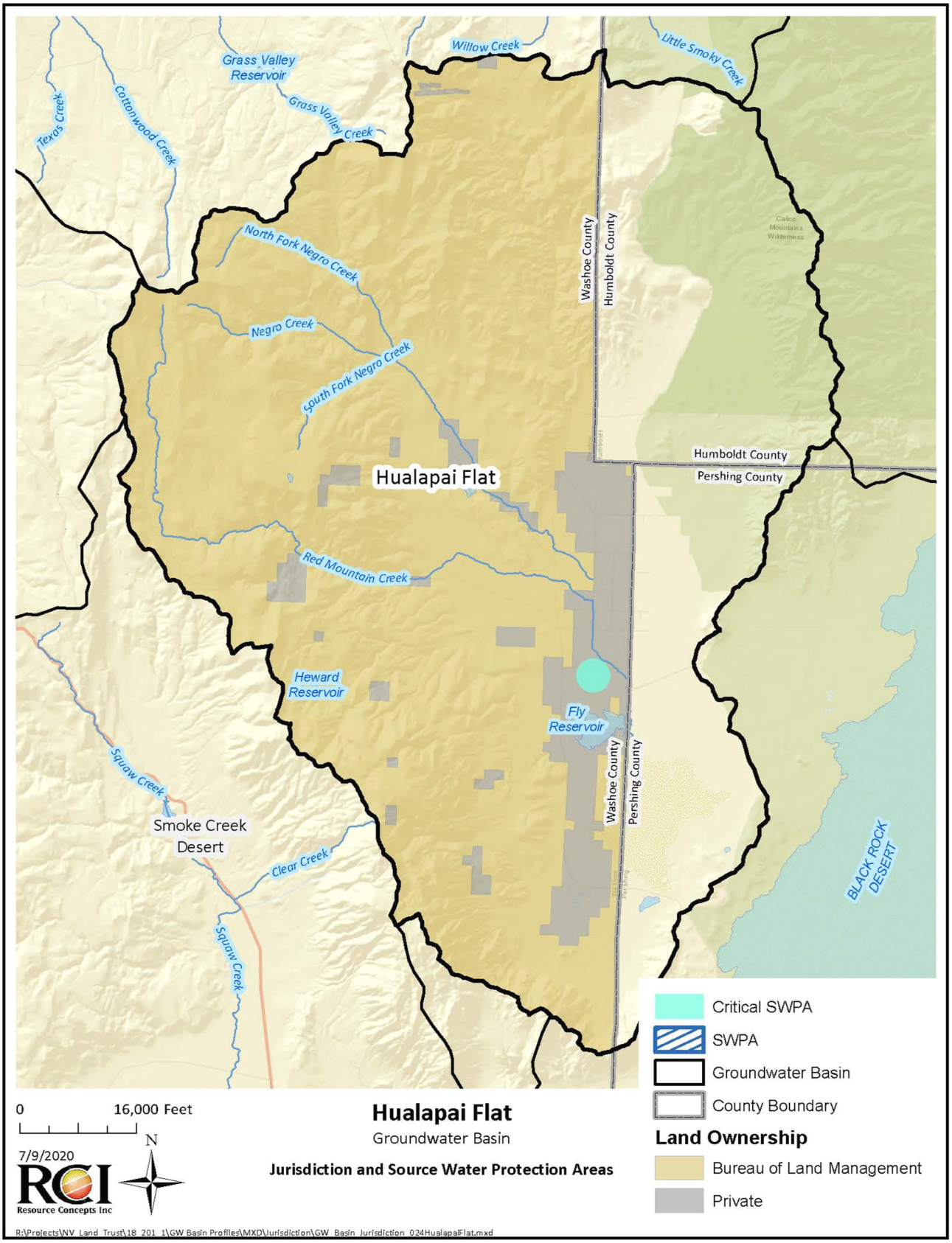
The following education and outreach objective is intended to help effectuate positive actions to protect water quality:

- Inform landowners and developers within SWPAs about the importance of avoiding contamination and their proximity to a valuable drinking water source.

Resource Investigation and Planning

Stakeholders may consider supporting the following resource investigation and planning, which can help fill data gaps, inform implementation designs and prioritize projects:

- Explore and engage funding sources available for the Black Rock Station to expand monitoring, implement improvements, and develop contingency plans.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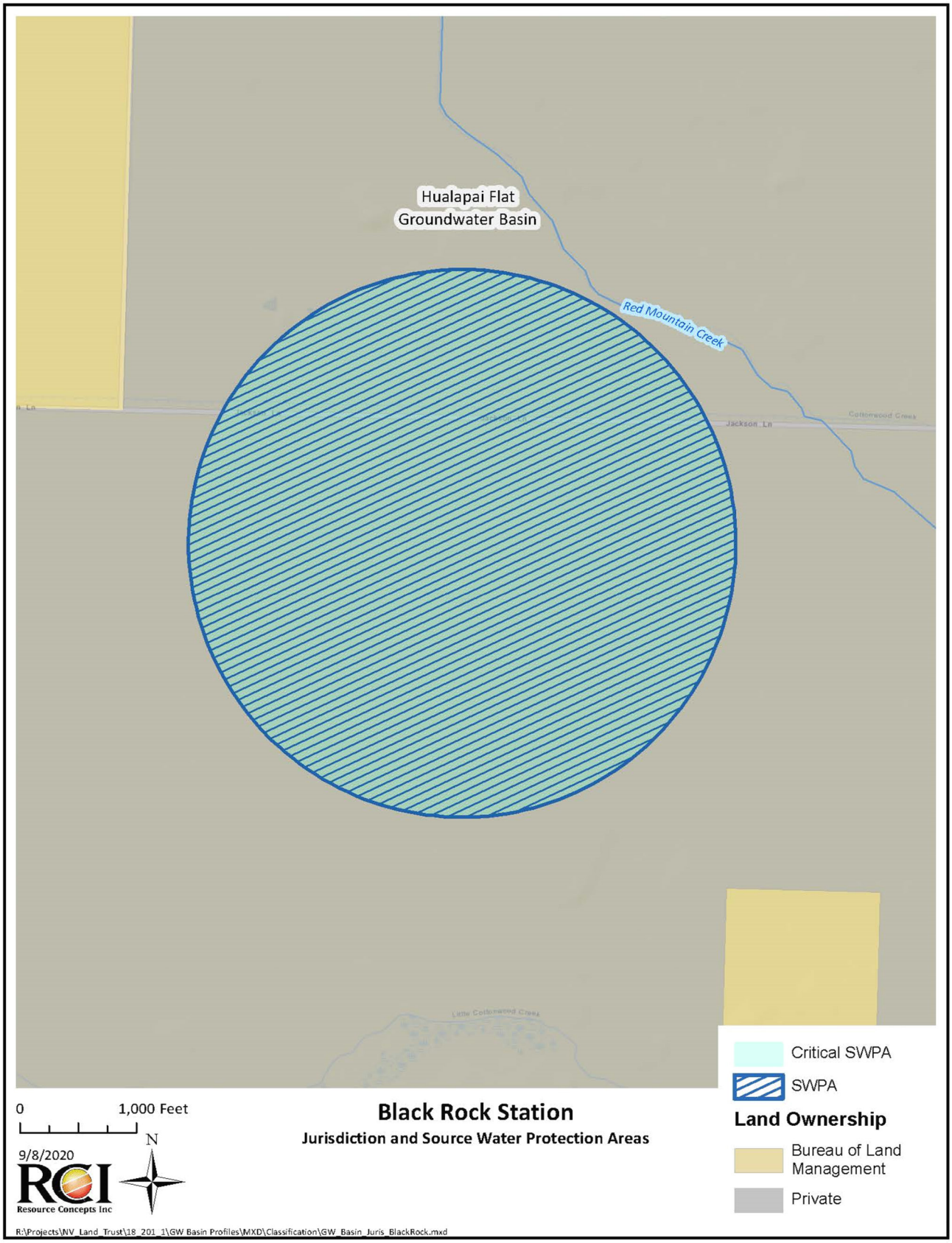
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Water Quality Best Management Practices

Stakeholders may consider supporting the following Water Quality Best Management Practices, or BMPs, that may improve and prevent degradation to water quality resources:

- Water quality improvement projects.
- Proper abandonment of wells.
- Physical improvements prioritized in SWPAs for water quality improvement and protection.

Proposed Implementation Projects

Proposed implementation actions are generally described under the Strategies to Protect and Improve Water Quality. Specific implementation actions have been developed into proposed projects by local stakeholders and are described in Project Profiles. These Project Profiles include the information needed, as identified in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidance for nine critical elements for an endorsable watershed management plan or the Nevada Integrated Source Water Protection Program. Future projects could also be brought forward to funding agencies through:

- Demonstrating advancement of the strategies identified for this watershed in the Source Water and Watershed Protection Plan.
- Using the Project Profile format to establish consistency with the nine critical elements of an EPA endorsed plan.

As discussed in the following Stakeholders and Plans section, municipality and agency projects are also incorporated by reference.

Stakeholders and Plans

Stakeholder information and existing plans were used extensively in development of this Plan for Washoe County. These municipalities and agencies each have unique strategies and capital improvement plans that include water quality protection or improvement projects. These are updated regularly at differing timeframes (i.e. annually, every five years, etc.) according to their specific budgeting and planning processes. The applicable planning documents are briefly described and referenced in this section. Those projects pertaining to water quality protection and improvement are incorporated by reference.

Project Stakeholders	
• Nevada Division of Environmental Protection • Washoe County	• Washoe County Health District • Western Regional Water Commission

Nevada Division of Environmental Protection

The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) has a goal to preserve and enhance the environment of the State to protect public health, sustain healthy ecosystems, and contribute to a vibrant economy. Specifically, the Integrated Source Water Protection Program under the Safe Drinking Water Bureau works to help protect source water quality. This program offers technical assistance for source water protection projects. The program coordinates source water protection activities at the local, state, and federal levels, and encourages community-based protection and preventive management strategies to ensure all public drinking water resources are kept safe from future contamination. The 2010 Nevada Integrated Source Water Protection Program guidance document details the program components as well as the requirements for a State-endorsed Community Source Water Protection Plan.

Washoe County Health District

The Washoe County Health District has regulatory authority over a wide variety of programs and services in the Truckee Meadows including underground storage tanks, septic systems, all public water systems, domestic wells, water projects and community development, grading permits, solid waste management, and emergency preparedness. The Health District regulations are provided in several documents as listed below:

- Regulations of the Washoe County District Board of Health Governing Sewage, Wastewater and Sanitation. These regulations provide the minimum requirements to be followed by any person developing property served by an on-site sewage disposal system. These requirements are promulgated to prevent the spread of disease, protect the water quality of this County, and ensure the on-site sewage disposal systems function properly.
- Regulations of the Washoe County District Board of Health Governing Well Construction. These regulations provide minimum requirements to be followed by any person when drilling and plugging specific kinds of wells. A well construction permit is required to drill a well for consumptive use or monitoring wells. These requirements are primarily promulgated to protect the quantity and quality of the waters of this County from waste and contamination, and to provide public protection by enforcing proper construction and plugging of wells.

- Regulations of the Washoe County District Board of Health Governing Solid Waste Management. These regulations protect water quality through the regulation of municipal solid waste landfills.

Washoe County

Activities in Washoe County are reviewed according to the Master Plan Planning Areas. The Hualapai Flat area is included in the Gerlach/Empire planning area. The County has Citizen Advisory Boards (CABs) which provide important community perspective on local issues to the Washoe County Board of Commissioners. The area is wholly within the Gerlach/Empire CAB (CAB Boundaries).

The Washoe County Master Plan (2008) has Goals and Policies for Public Services and Facilities, and Open Space and Natural Resource Management. Applicable sections include:

- Article 418, Significant Hydrologic Resources, which regulates development activity within and adjacent to perennial streams to ensure that these resources are protected and enhanced. (Note: this does not apply to the Truckee River).
- Article 420, Storm Drainage Standards, sets forth standards for ensuring that both private and public development provides adequate protection for citizens and property. Therefore, it minimizes and controls erosion and pollution impacts on the natural environment, and additionally minimizes maintenance costs for drainage and flood control systems.
- Article 421, the Storm Water Discharge Program, which protects and enhances the water quality of watercourses, water bodies, groundwater and wetlands in a manner pursuant to and consistent with the Clean Water Act.
- Article 810, Special Use Permits, which provides a method of reviewing certain uses to determine if they have the potential to adversely affect public facilities in the vicinity.

Washoe County also provides comprehensive services for construction and maintenance roads, landscaping and drainage facilities, county-wide planning and code compliance, and emergency response services for fire and hazardous materials. All of these roles contribute to preserving and improving water quality.

Western Regional Water Commission and the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission

The Western Regional Water Commission (WRWC) focuses on improving water resource planning at the regional level, and facilitating coordinated resource management among City of Reno, City of Sparks, Washoe County, Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF), South Truckee Meadows GID, and Sun Valley GID.

The Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission (NNWPC) is a technical advisory panel that reports to the WRWC. The NNWPC develops and updates a Comprehensive Regional Water Management Plan (RWMP) and makes recommendations to the WRWC for adoption. In addition, the NNWPC develops priorities and an annual budget for the Regional Water Management Fund, also for recommendations to the WRWC.

The Comprehensive Regional Water Management Plan includes several applicable objectives:

- Objective 1.2 Provide for a Sustainable Water Supply and an Acceptable Level of Service to the Community (including protecting groundwater recharge areas).
- Objective 1.3 Implement measures to protect and enhance water quality for a sustainable water supply (including source water protection).
- Objective 2.1 Promote Efficient Use of Resources (Reduction of Non-Point Source Pollution for TMWRF Pollutant Credit).
- Objective 2.2 Manage wastewater for protection and enhancement of water quality.
- Objective 3.1 Effective and integrated watershed management (protection of human health, property, and water quality, including storm water).

References

Harrill, J.R., 1969, Hydrologic response to irrigation pumping in Hualapai Flat, Washoe, Pershing and Humboldt Counties, Nevada, 1960-67: Nevada Division of Water Resources, Water Resources Bulletin No. 37, 75p.

NDEP BWQP, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, 2016-2018. Nevada 2016-2018 Water Quality Integrated Report

NDEP, Nevada Integrated Source Water Protection Program, 2010. Nevada Integrated Source Water Protection Program

Washoe County Master Plan, 2008. Washoe County 2008 Master Plan, Washoe County Health District

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