

The attached document was submitted to the **Washoe County Board of Commissioners** during the meeting

held on October 11, 2016

by Marsha Berkbigler

for Agenda Item No. 14

and included here pursuant to NRS 241.020(7) as

amended by AB65 of the 2013 Legislative Session.



University of Nevada, Reno

#14

Marc A. Johnson
President

October 3, 2016

Washoe County Commission
Chair Marsha Berkgigler
1001 E Ninth Street
Reno, NV 89512

Chair Marsha Berkgigler:

The University of Nevada, Reno maintains a research field station in Little Valley which is part of the Whittell Forest and Wildlife areas. The Whittell Forest consists of 2,650 acres situated between the Lake Tahoe Valley and Washoe Valley. The land was donated to the University in 1959 by George Whittell, Jr. to support teaching and research. The habitat is mostly old-growth pine and mixed coniferous forest. The University has maintained the area as a 'natural area.'

Our mission is to support field research by faculty and graduate students, and support the teaching of field courses to undergraduates during spring, summer and autumn. To protect our mission of teaching and research in a natural and secure field setting and to forestall future commercial development in Little Valley, the University would like to request several parcels of land adjacent to the Whittell Forest and Wildlife Area as part of the Washoe County Economic Development and Conservation Act (WCEDCA). The largest parcel of the requested property is between our current western boundary and the ridgeline of the Carson Range directly to the west. In addition, the University would like to 'square up' its eastern boundary by obtaining two smaller parcels of federal land in the northeastern portion of Little Valley. Obtaining these latter parcels would allow the University to consolidate its forest management program over the northern end of the valley as well as provide more space and habitats for forest research. All parcels would be held in the name of the Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education on behalf of the University of Nevada, Reno. The parcels are described below and are illustrated in the attached map.

Parcel 1 – Township 16 N, Range 19 E, the western portion of sec. 6 east of the Carson Range ridgeline, the western portion of sec 7, east of the ridgeline, and the western portion of sec. 18 (a total of about 760 acres).

Parcel 2 -- Township 16 N, Range 19 E, the northeast portion of sec. 8 (about 240 acres).

Parcel 3 -- Township 16 N, Range 19 E, the northeast portion of sec. 5 (about 160 acres).

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- BCC 10-11-16. #14 -
Marsha Berkgigler

The University has been a good steward of this land and maintains a very active forest management program in Little Valley. Over the last 10 years, we have reduced fuels, with the help of the Nevada Division of Forestry, on about 300 acres of the valley bottom along the access roads. These activities were conducted while minimizing disruption of teaching and research in the valley at a cost of approximately \$1 million. In early October, the Nevada Division of Forestry will be conducting a series of broadcast burns on University property to reduce fuels over about 250 acres. This fuel reduction program will reduce the risk of wild fires in Little Valley and to our neighbors in the Washoe Valley and Incline Village.

It is the University's understanding that Diamond Peak Ski Resort in Incline Village has requested approximately 480 acres of federal land in Little Valley be transferred to them under WCEDCA. The land Diamond Peak Ski Resort has identified is within the same parcel as our request on the east slope of the Carson Range and adjacent to the Whittell Forest. Currently, all of Diamond Peak Ski Resort's ski slopes are on the west slope. If this land exchange occurs, there may be ski slopes in Little Valley, coming right up to the western boundary of the University's property. This could include ski lifts, maintenance buildings and other developments in Little Valley. Construction and maintenance roads would need to be constructed over this very steep terrain and Diamond Peak Ski Resort may seek access across University property since the only current road access is from Washoe Valley across University property.

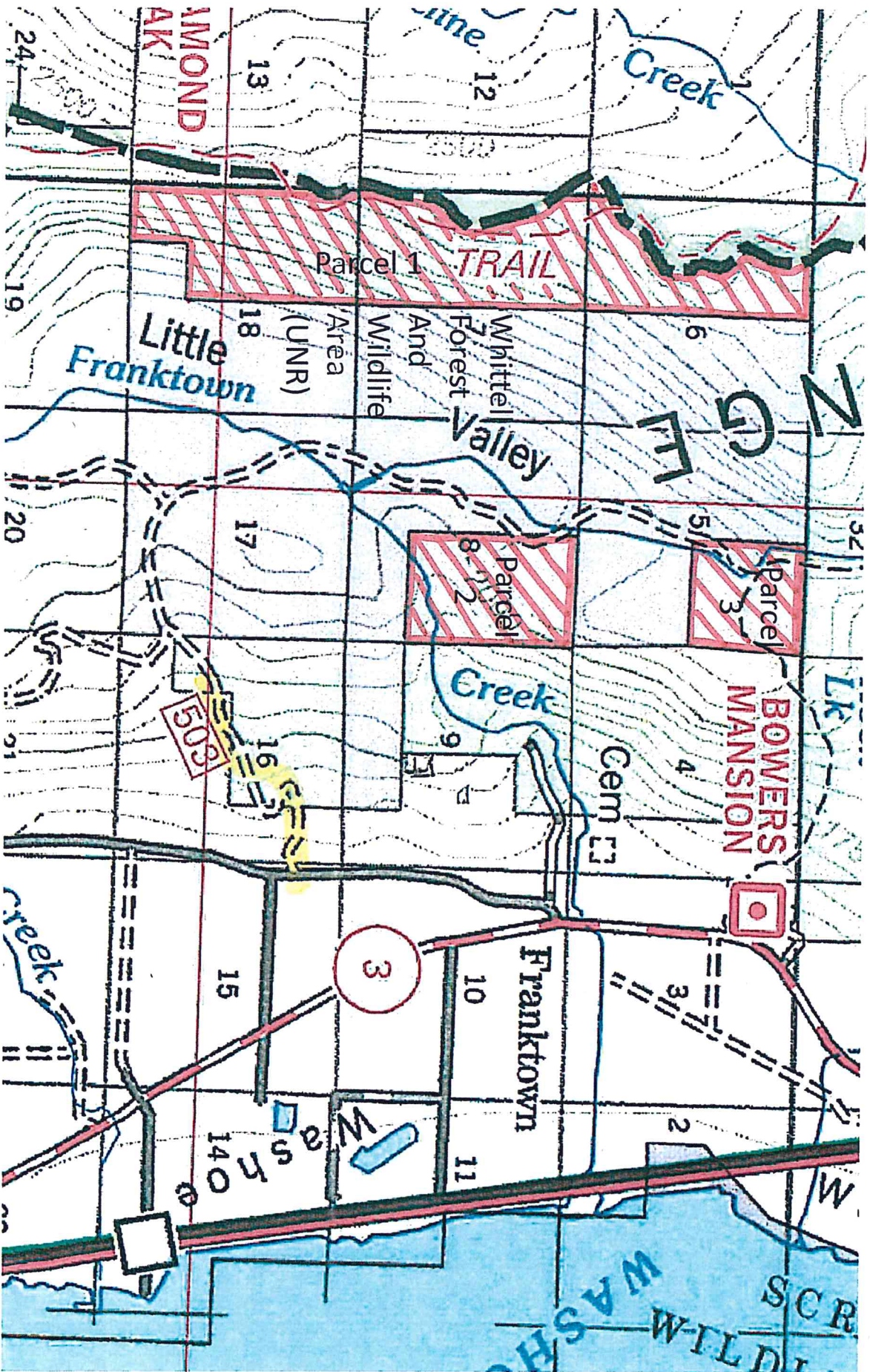
This proposed land transfer with its ensuing development constitutes a major threat to the University's interests in Little Valley. Little Valley is an ideal research location because of its near pristine conditions and restricted access. Ski slopes would destroy the present condition of the slopes and disrupt research in the valley. While the University would like to receive the property on the eastern slopes, we have no objection to the transfer of federal lands Diamond Peak Ski Resort requested on the west slope of the Carson Range.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. Please contact Heidi Gansert, at (775) 784-4805 if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Marc A. Johnson



Reno (10 miles)

Carson City (5 miles)

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