



Virginia Range Horses Fencing Project

**Naomi Duerr, P.G.
*Reno City Councilmember
Ward 2***

June 5, 2025

Virginia Range Habitat

- Dry, steep, mostly **volcanic rock**
- Vegetation is **sagebrush, rabbitbrush, pinion pine, juniper, native grasses, invasive grasses like cheatgrass** – which the **horses eat**
- As development pressure grows, the **habitat for wildlife** is reduced, and **access to water sources** like Steamboat Creek are restricted.
- People love to **walk, hike, run, bike** in the Virginia Range - but in the south Reno area, **the Virginia Range is 90-95% privately owned and subject to development**



Nevada is the Mustang State

- Wild horses in 10 western states
- > 50% of wild horses live in Nevada
- 43,000 of 86,000 wild horses
- Horses have existed in Nevada for thousands of years
- Came to this area from Mexico, Spain or the Siberian land bridge
- Horse fossils have also been found in Nevada, Arizona & Utah dating back 30,000 yrs
- Ongoing studies about horse origin and time of appearance
- In general, BLM manages the Wild Horses in Nevada

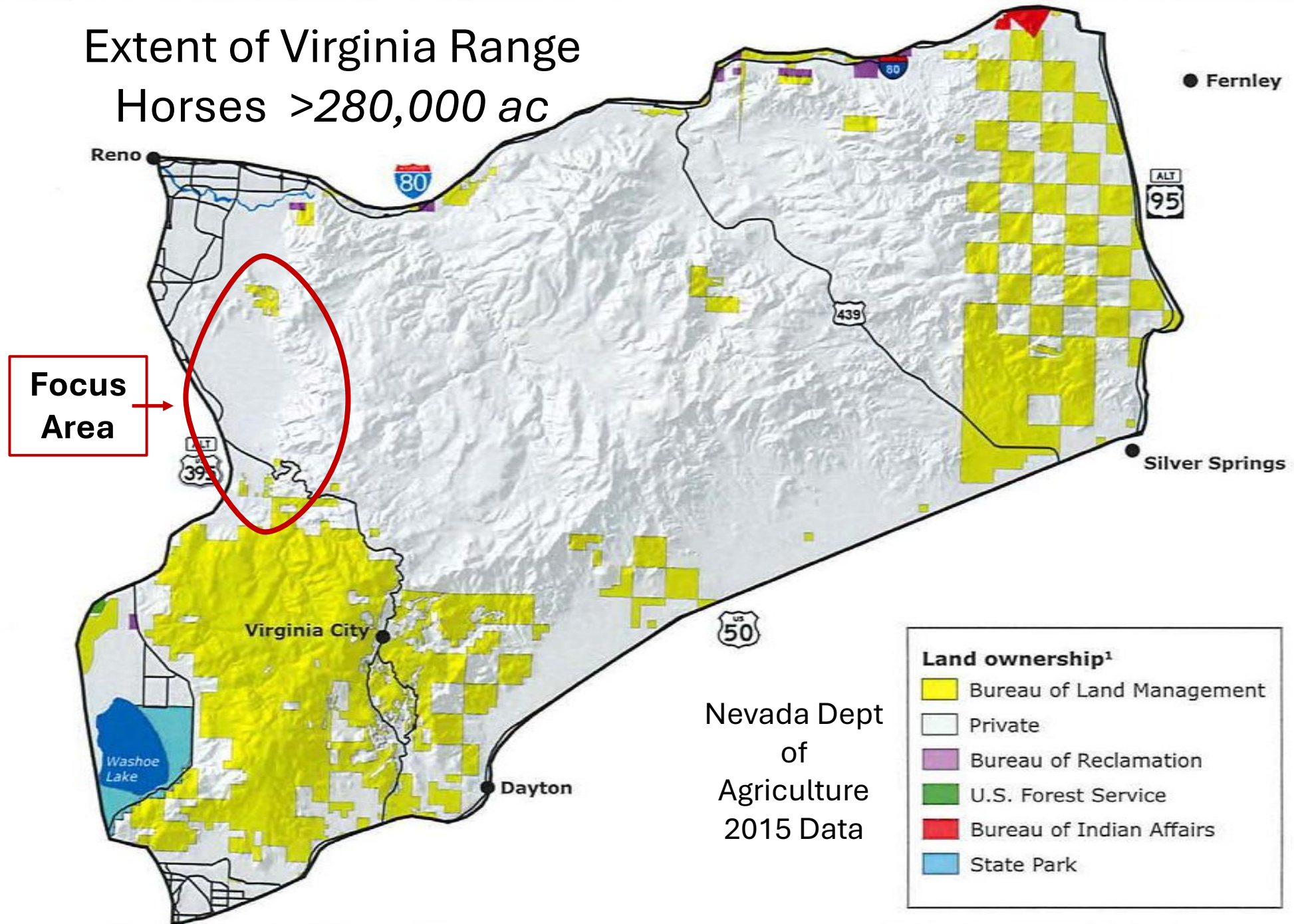


Virginia Range

- I-80, 95A, US 50, 395
- Reno, TRIC, Fernley, Silver Springs, Dayton, Carson City, Washoe Valley



Extent of Virginia Range Horses >280,000 ac



Nevada Dept
of
Agriculture
2015 Data



Virginia Range Horses

- The Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) has jurisdiction over horses found in the Virginia Range
- These horses are variously labeled “estrays horses,” “feral horses,” & “Virginia Range Horses”

Wild horses have strong support...

- 673,800 AWHC supporters across all social media
- 116,900 WHC supporters across all social media

2024 polling has shown:

- 76% of Nevadans agree that Wild Horses are a defining symbol of both Nevada and the American West
- 81% of Nevadans believe that Wild Horses should be protected from slaughter
- Only 13% of Nevadans support helicopter round ups of wild horses

“Nevada Wouldn’t be Nevada Without its Wild Horses”

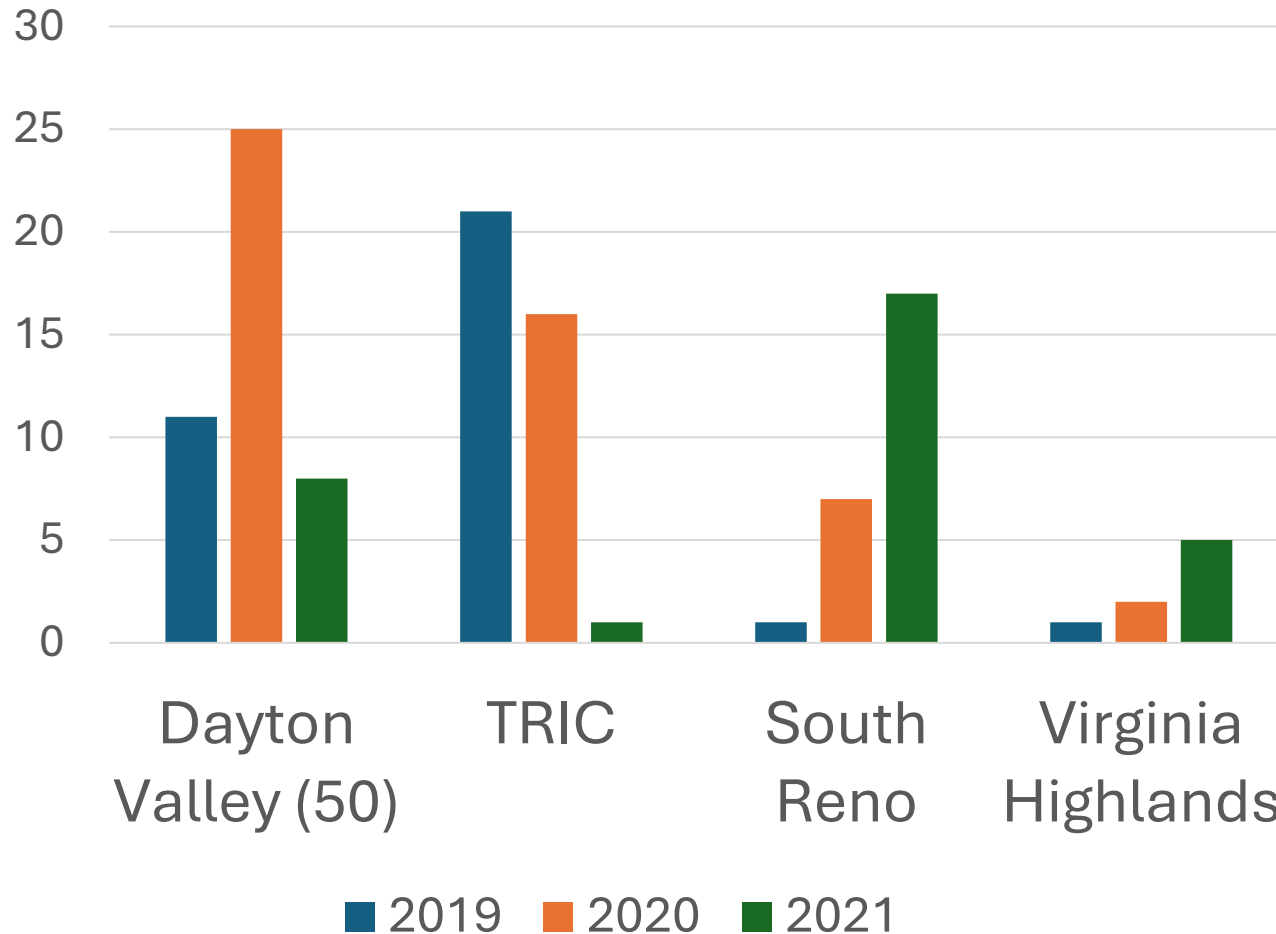


Critical Issues

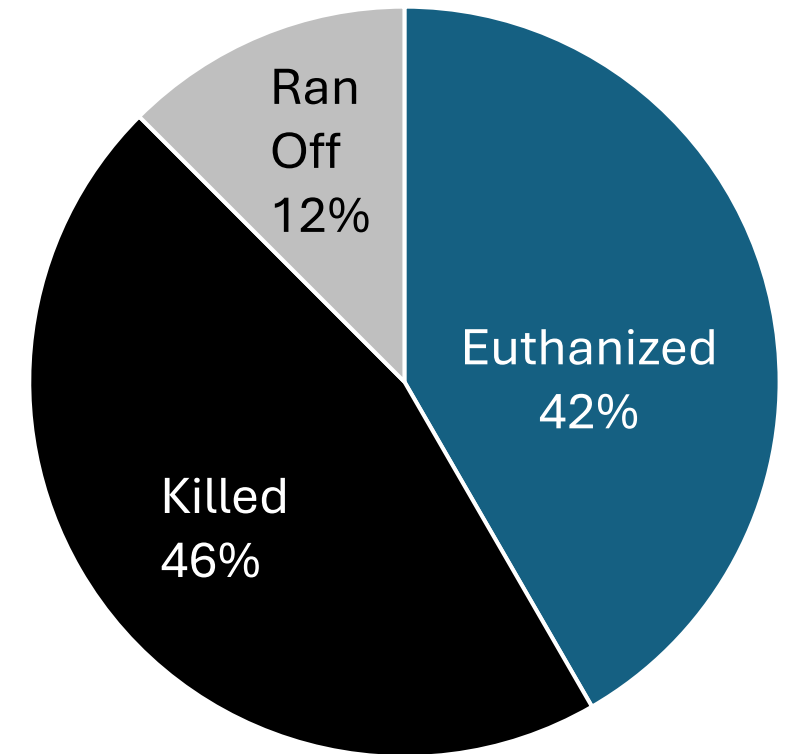
- South Reno has been the **fastest growing** area in Reno
- Added about **15,000 people and cars** in last 10 years
- Development has **displaced** horses and other wildlife from both their natural habitat and water access
- Horses are attracted by the **grass and water** in the developments
- People sometimes **feed horses (illegal)** drawing them in
- **Vandalism** - Fences and gates being cut/left open
- **Speed** on dark south Reno roads – **~95% collisions at night**
- By 2023, ~30 horse collisions in the South Reno - Geiger Grade-Toll Road area
- **21 horses or 88% killed or euthanized in a 3 yr period (2019-2021)**
- **Collisions often end with the death of the horse, a totaled car, and very stressed people.**



Horse/Vehicle Collisions



South Reno Result
25 horses hit; 21 died



2022 Win: Horse vehicle accidents reduced by more than 50% in 2022 due to collaborative community education and WHC work by volunteers.

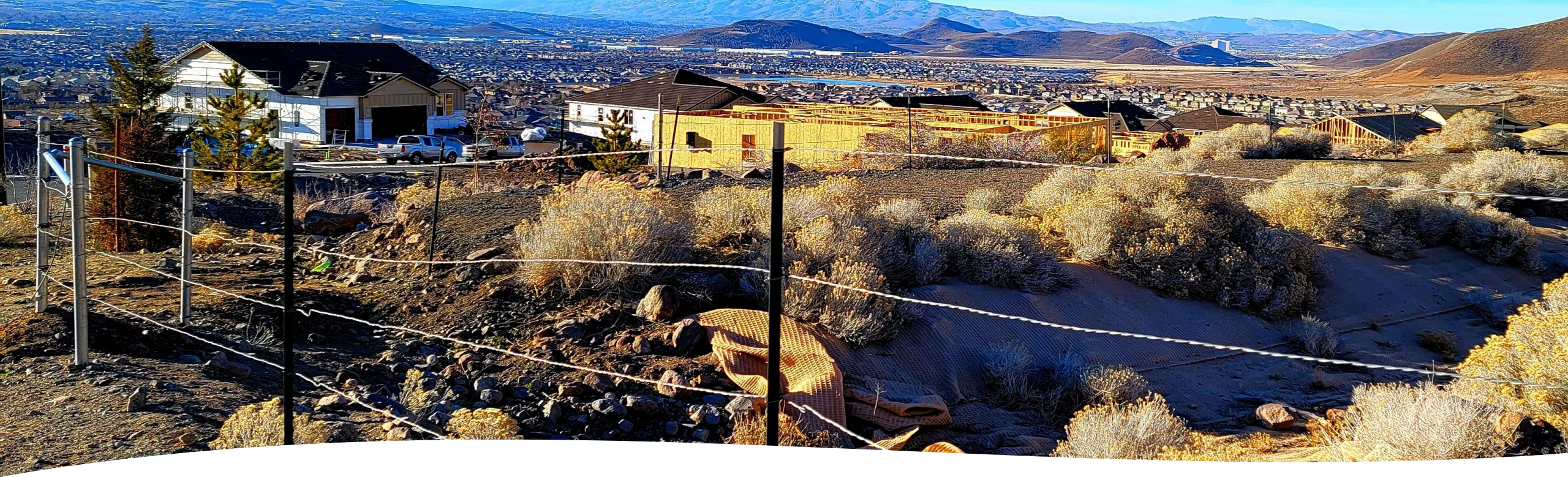
Horse Vehicle Collision – Last 4 Years

2025 – 0	(through 6/5/25)
2024 – 7	(4 horse deaths)
2023 – 11	(8 horse deaths)
2022 – 8	(4 horse deaths)

Completed Actions

- Added 8 standard permit conditions
- Speed Study
 - Lowered speed limits on Rio Wrangler & Steamboat from 45 mph to 35 mph
 - Installed Day and Night speed on Veterans Pkwy
- Secured the [Rio Wrangler Gate](#)
- Improved educational signage:
“Do Not Feed Horses”
- Better enforcement of permit conditions





Current Project: Fence and Horse Guards

- 12 miles of Fencing – Hidden Valley to Geiger Grade to Toll Road to S. Virginia
- Cattle/Horse Guards
- Wildlife Preserve

With permission and support of landowners

Horse Fencing *Project Team*

- Naomi Duerr – City of Reno Councilmember
- John Flansberg, PE – City of Reno, Project Manager
- Garth Oksol – JUB Engineers
- Tracy Wilson and Deana Kirk – American Wild Horse

Horse Fencing *Project Partners*

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • City of Reno | Wild Horse Connection |
| • Washoe County | American Wild Horse |
| • NDOT | General Public |
| • Nevada Dept of Agriculture | |
| • BLM | |

Phase 1 – Complete

(~50% of total
project)

Installed 5 miles of fence
and cattle guards

Installed Pedestrian
Gates

Created Wildlife Preserve



Phase 1 - North

- Mira Loma to Alexander lake Rd.
- Wildlife Preserve



Phase 1- South





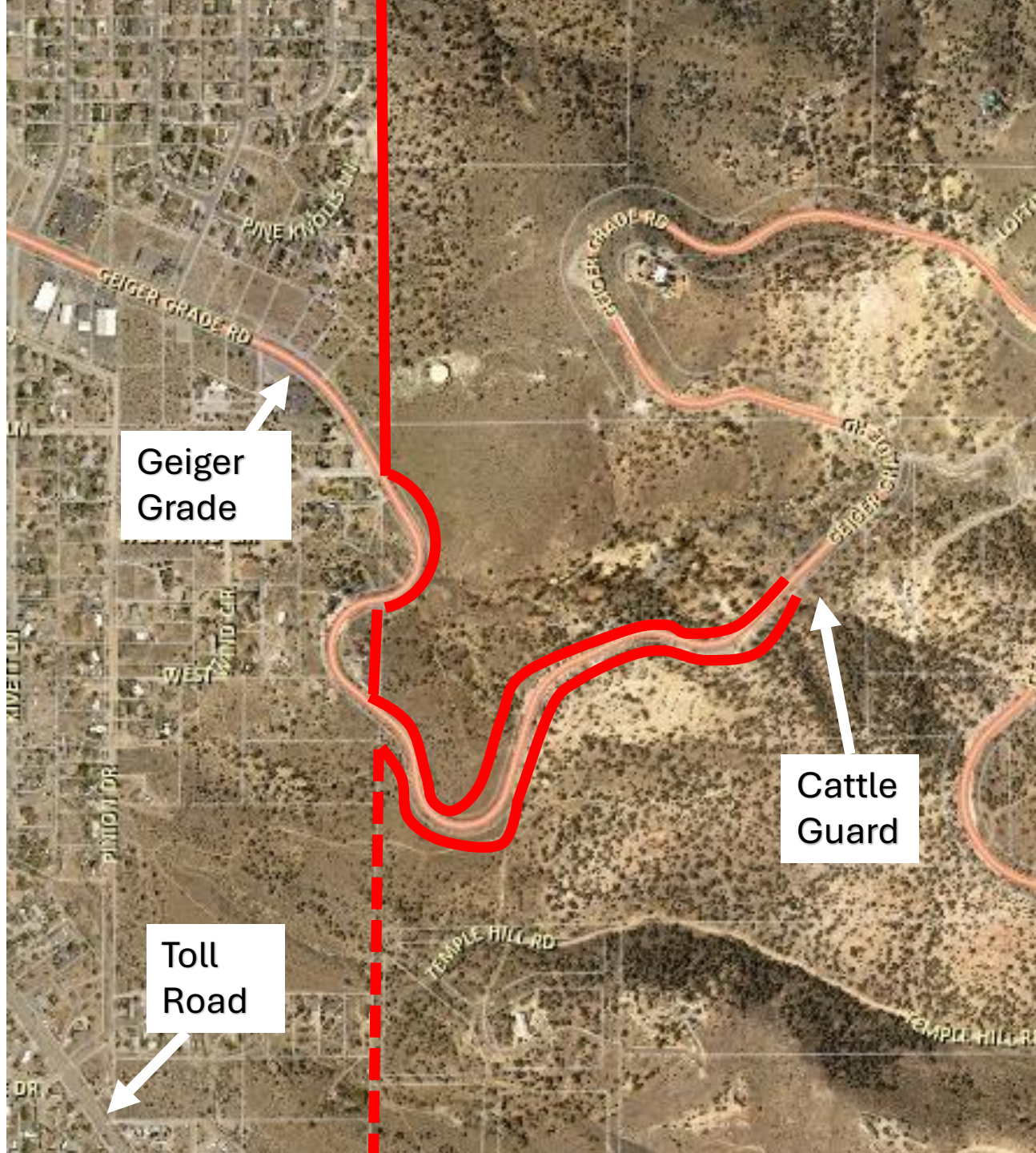
Established a Wildlife Preserve for horses & all animals

- On City of Reno-owned land along Southeast Connector (Mira Loma to Alexander Lake Rd / Rattlesnake Mtn)
- 3000 feet long by 500 feet wide
- Moved fence from east side of Steamboat Creek to west of creek along Connector
- Seen as many as 50 horses at one time

Phase 2

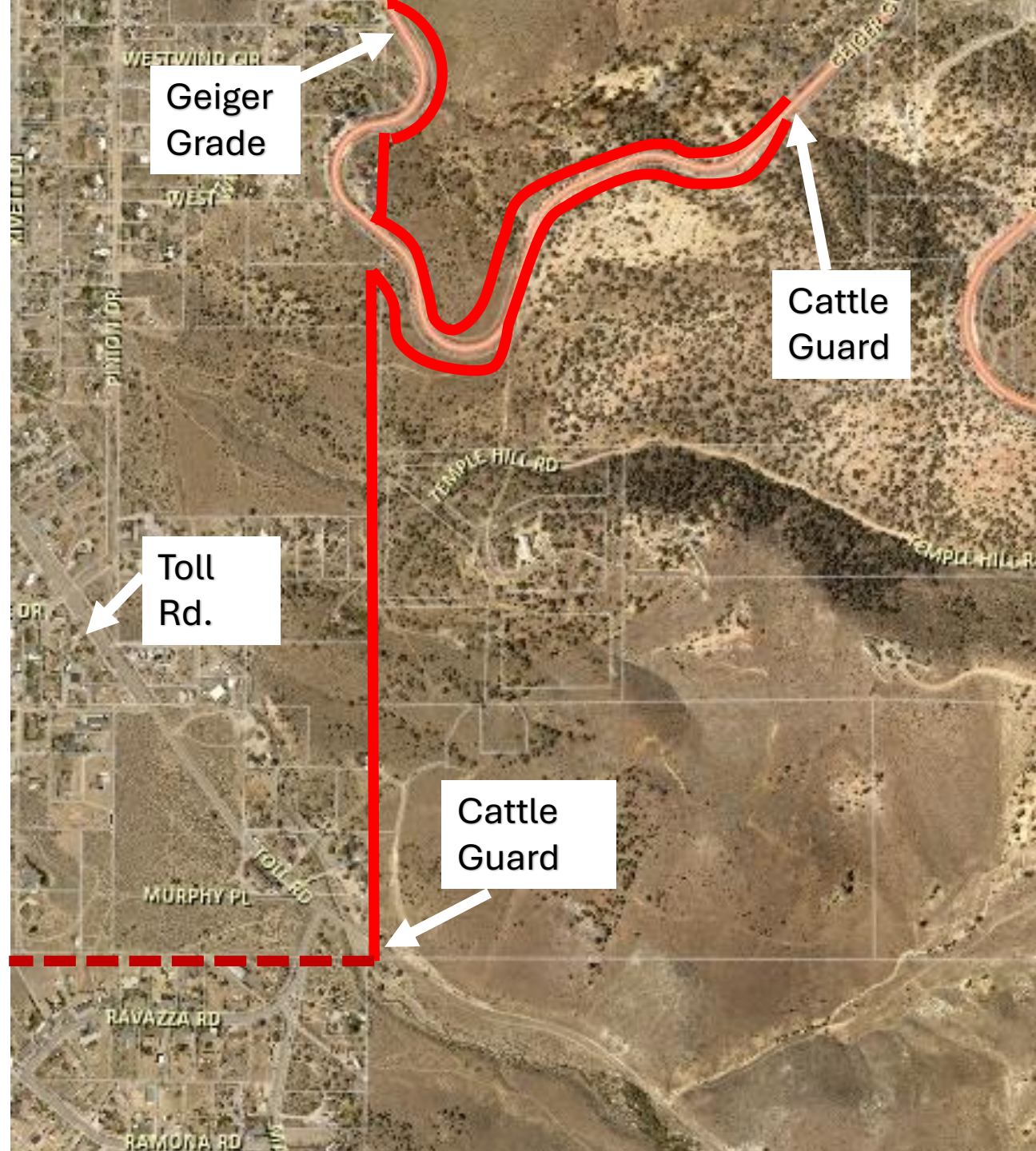
- Completed Bid
- About to Award Contract
- 7 miles of Fence from Kenneth Way to Geiger Grade to Toll Rd to South Virginia
- Install Horse Guards across Geiger Grade and Toll Rd. and wherever needed





Phase 2-North

- Cattle Guard at Kenneth Way
- Fence Kenneth to Geiger Grade
- Fence along Geiger Grade
- Install Cattle Guard at Geiger Grade



Phase 2 - South

- Fence Geiger Grade to Toll Rd.
- Install Cattle Guard at Toll Rd.
- Meet NDA Fence at Toll Rd. Cattle Guard

WASHOE COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD

341

NEVADA STATE OF

195
194

Phase 3 -
Toll Road to South Virginia Street

Geiger Grand

LORNULIAN
TRUST

ANDRADE
JOSEPH P
& ANNE

341

R&R
FAMILY
TRUST

REYNOLDS
RICHARD D
& BEVERLY
D

Lookout
Point

BENKOVICH
TEILHARD
D

TENBROECK
LIVING
TRUST

WESTERN
STATES
PROPERTIES

341

BLM

WASHOE COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD

BLM



Phase 3 -
Toll Road to
South Virginia

52°

12 mph
WSW

2000 ft

39.38246, -1

mapbox

Steamboat
Valley

KURTZ
TRUST
CHRIS &
FREDA

Steamboat

Ranch Rhodes Rd

Smile
Canyon



Reno
vs. NDA
fence
line

Remaining Issues

Need to Finalize a few easements

Want to Complete Work by FALL

Bid came in almost twice expected

Fill Cash Shortfall for Phase 3 – Need about \$200K

Need Water Options in Central and South Parts of Project



TOP STORY



DROUGHT BRINGS WILD HORSES INTO NEIGHBORHOOD

ANDREW LANE

Long Term – Next 10 years

- Additional City of Reno Permit Conditions to protect all wildlife, including wild horses
- Diversionary Water Stations
- Over or Underpass on Geiger Grade
- Outdoor Recreational and Wildlife Corridor along Virginia Range





Thank You!! – Questions

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