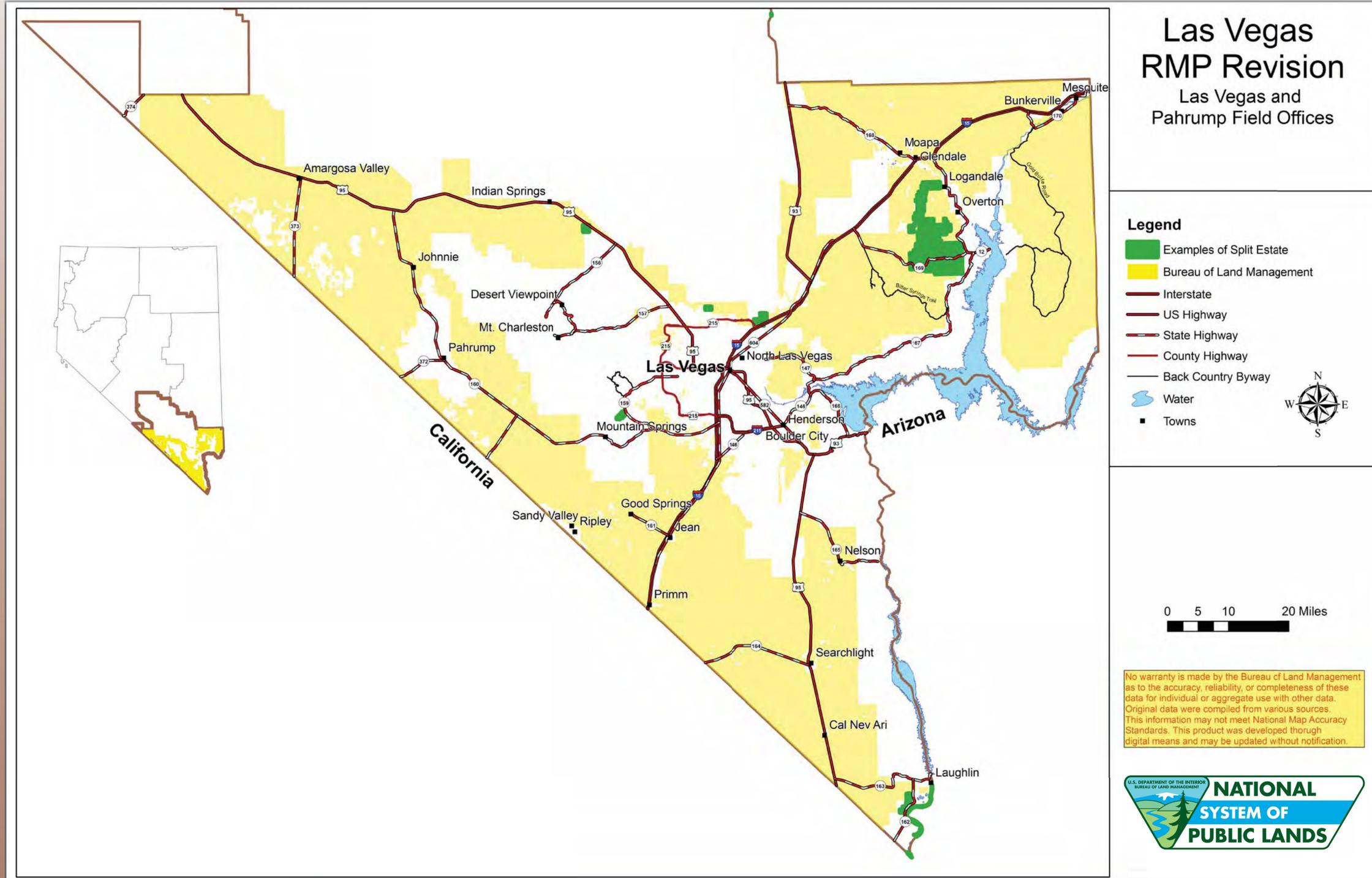


Management of Split-Estate Lands



Split-estate lands are areas where the land surface is managed by another agency (state or federal) or is privately owned, but the subsurface minerals are managed by the BLM. These minerals could include oil and gas, gypsum, sand and gravel, and other leasable, locatable, and salable minerals. In some cases, this relationship exists because the surface rights were conveyed by the federal government at some point, but ownership of the mineral estate and rights of mineral development were retained in federal ownership. Most recent sales of public lands have been the conveyance of only the surface estate, while BLM has retained the mineral rights. This creates issues with the grandfathered management of federal mineral rights in areas of non-federal surface ownership. Requests for development of these mineral estates could cause heightened public interest and conflicts. Management of these types of lands is an issue that needs to be clarified during the Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision.