Name:

# Final Assessment: Wildfire in Nevada

# **Historic Land Use and Wildfire**

Date:

Science Period:

## Introduction

In the wildfire ecology unit, we focused on recent and future wildfire in Nevada. For this assignment, use what you know about wildfire and plant populations in Nevada to describe what wildfire was like during different historic times in Nevada. The two times you will be comparing are **before and after 1850. Before 1850,** Native tribes, including the Washoe, Paiute and Shoshone peoples, were the only peoples using and managing lands. **After 1880,** European settlers removed many of the Native peoples and became the dominant group of people using and managing lands.

### Compare what wildfire was like in Nevada during these two times

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| **Tribal management: 10,000+ years ago to 1850** | **European settler management: 1880 - present** |
| **Key Ecological Characteristics**   * Sagebrush and some tree branches were used for cooking fires * The area around pinyon trees was cleared of burnable material most years during pine nut harvesting * Some small fires were intentionally set and used * Cheatgrass was not present * Wildfires were not put out and allowed to burn naturally | **Key Ecological Characteristics**   * Cheatgrass was introduced * Any wildfires that did happen were attempted to be put out as quickly as possible * Many trees were cut down to build houses and mines * Many of the perennial grasses were intensively eaten by livestock such as cows and sheep |

Use your knowledge of wildfire and Nevada to compare how these two different ways of using land impacted plant populations and wildfire in Nevada. Possible differences in wildfire can include fire severity, frequency, and size. Possible differences in plant populations can include changes in plant population sizes, carrying capacity, biodiversity and wildfire resilience.

**See the rubric on the second page for more details. ­­­­**

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### Single-point rubric for evaluating this assessment

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| Exceeds standard | At standard | Needs improvement |
|  | Supports any claims made with evidence from the wildfire unit. |  |
|  | Makes multiple claims about how wildfire and plant populations might be different or similar between these two time periods. |  |
|  | Describes how wildfire and plant populations might change or be stable during these two time periods. |  |
|  | Describes cause and effect relationships that impact plant populations and wildfire. For example, higher amounts of \_\_\_ plant populations would lead to \_\_\_ fire severity because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. |  |