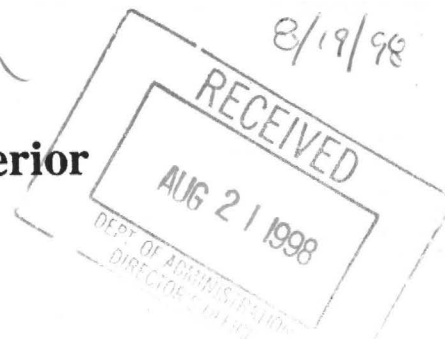




United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Carson City Field Office
5665 Morgan Mill Rd.
Carson City, Nevada 89701
(702) 885-6100



In Reply Refer To:

4000

(NV-032)

AUG 19 1998

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed for your review is the Lahontan Allotment Evaluation Summary. Please submit your comments to this office by close of business September 8, 1998.

Sincerely,

James Gianola
Rangeland Management Specialist

ALLOTMENT EVALUATION SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Allotment Name & Number: Lahontan - 3036
- B. Permittees: Harriman and Son; Kent Bros; Gary Snow
- C. Evaluation Period: 1994 - 1998
- D. Selective Management Category & Priority: M, no priority assigned

II. Initial Stocking Level

A. Livestock Use

1. Adjudicated Aums:

a. Total Preference:

1,155 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) cattle
Harriman and Son 375 AUMs.
Kent Bros. -- No preference, EOU only (75 AUMs when authorized)
Gary Snow - 780 AUMs TNR.

b. Suspended:

0

c. Active:

1,155 cattle

d. Exchange of use (Kent Bros.):

75 AUMs

2. Season of Use:

November 1 to March 31.

3. Kind and Class of Livestock:

Cow/Calf.

4. Percent Federal Range/Exchange of Use:

100% Federal Range/75 AUMs

B. Wild Horse and Burro Use:

1. Population:

The entire Lahontan Herd Management Area (HMA) is within the allotment, the HMA comprises 21% of the Allotment. There are no wild burros within the allotment. Approximately 50 wild horses are estimated to occur within the allotment.

2. Herd Management Area:

The appropriate management level (AML) for the Lahontan HMA was set through the multiple use decision processes in 1993, and has a range of 7- 10 horses.

C. Wildlife Use:

1. Species:

Low numbers of mule deer and a variety of non game small mammals, birds and reptiles.

2. Key or Critical Management Areas:

None

III. Allotment Profile:

A. Description:

The Lahontan Allotment is within the Fort Churchill Planning Unit, approximately 8 miles south west of Fallon, NV. Elevations vary from 4,000 to 5,500 feet (Map 1).

B. Acreage:

1. Total:

77,220 acres

2. Pastures:

None

C. Allotment Specific Objectives:

Lahontan Resource Management Plan and Final EIS Nov. 8, 1984.

1. Land Use Plan (LUP) Objectives:

a. Short Term:

Develop AMPs/grazing systems on category I allotments and grazing systems as needed on category M and C allotments to improve condition, provide for proper utilization within key areas, achieve better livestock distribution to obtain more uniform

utilization, and provide an increase in available forage and water for livestock, wild horses and wildlife.

Continue existing rangeland monitoring studies, and establish new studies as recommended by the 1981 Nevada Range Monitoring Procedures, to determine if management objectives are being reached and what adjustments in livestock use, wildlife reasonable numbers, and wild horse numbers are necessary.

When reasonable numbers of mule deer are attained, these numbers may be adjusted based on joint monitoring studies by NDOW and BLM.

Conduct wild horse gathering as necessary to maintain the herd at the AML of 7 to 10 head (1993 MUD).

Develop range improvements to protect and improve mule deer, sage grouse, bighorn sheep, fisheries and riparian habitat, and to improve livestock and wild horse distribution and vegetation utilization.

b. Long Term:

In the long-term, the range monitoring program would provide data on which to base future adjustments in livestock, wildlife reasonable numbers, and wild horse use, and to identify additional range improvements. All future adjustments and improvements would be designed to achieve the objectives of this alternative.

The initial assignment of allotments into the categories of "maintain", "improve", and "custodial" will be evaluated periodically. These evaluations will assure that the management objectives are being reached and that AMPs and range improvements will be initiated for those allotments requiring more intensive management.

Providing forage for reasonable numbers (3,201 AUMs; planning area wide) of big game would be a long term objective.

It is anticipated that additional habitat management plans will be prepared and implemented in the long term.

2. RPS Objectives (Lahontan RPS Update Dec. 1989):

a. Short Term:

Utilization levels are not to exceed 55 percent on identified key species on upland key areas. Initially allow 1,155 AUMs of livestock use.

b. Long Term:

1. Maintain existing ecological condition and trend.

2. Maintain or improve wild horse habitat consistent with wildlife and livestock objectives. Maintain or improve free roaming behavior of wild horses by protecting or enhancing wild horse home ranges. Maintain or improve wild horse habitat by assuring that all waters remain open to use by wild horse. Initially provide approximately 504 AUMs of forage for approximately 42 head of wild horses.

3. Activity Plan Objectives:

No activity plan has been scheduled for this "M" category allotment. However, specific objectives have been refined for key management areas on the allotment.

a. Short Term:

Allow no more than 55% utilization of Indian ricegrass (Oryzopsis hymenoides; Orhy), needle and threadgrass (Stipa comata; Stco) and 45% on winter fat (Eurotia lanata; Eula).

b. Long Term:

If short term utilization objectives are met long term RPS objectives will also be met.

4. Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E):

There are no known T&E plants within the allotment. Wintering bald eagles, an endangered species, utilize cottonwood trees on lands administered by the State Parks Department which are adjacent to BLM administered land.

D. Key Species Identification:

1. Upland:

Indian Ricegrass (Oryzopsis hymenoides)
Needle and threadgrass (Stipa comata)
Winter fat (Eurotia Lanata)
Bottlebrush squirreltail (Sitanion hystrix)
Spiny hopsage (Tetradymia spinosa)

2. Riparian Areas:

None

IV. Management Evaluation:

A. Purpose:

The purpose of this evaluation is to summarize the base data to determine whether or not Activity Plan Objectives are being met. Further base data will aid in making technical

recommendations for those objectives which are not being met and to provide a basis for making any future decisions regarding authorized use.

B. Summary of Studies Data:

1. Actual Use:

Livestock use is from November 1 through March 31, wild horse use is yearlong (table 1).

Table 1. Actual Use/ Annual Precipitation

<u>Yr.</u>	<u>AUMs Actual Use Cattle</u>	<u>AUMs Actual Use Wild Horses</u>	<u>% Horse use, AUMs</u>	<u>Total AUMs</u>	<u>% Use</u>	<u>Annual Precipitation</u>
76	1,984	144	07%	2,128	61%	3.99"
77	1,787	180	09%	1,967	60%	4.95"
78	2,375	228	11%	2,603	46%	6.85"
79	2,775	288	09%	3,063	28%	7.06"
80	2,800	360	11%	3,160	63%	5.76"
81	1,236	444	26%	1,680	25%	4.22"
82	1,323	504	28%	1,827	21%	8.75"
83	1,550	665	30%	2,215	23%	10.92"
84	1,354	878	39%	2,232	28%	4.57"
85	1,573	1,159	42%	2,732	40%	6.10"
86	1,504	1,560	51%	3,064		4.19"
87	473	1,716	92%	2,139	17%	4.23"
88	75	2,064	96%	2,139		3.15"
89	75	2,220	97%	2,295	47%	5.14"
90	197	2,400	92%	2,597		3.18"
91	250	2,212	90%	2,462		5.27"
92	1037	1,200	54%	2,237	24%	N/A
93	234	1,344	85%	1,578	20%	N/A
94	302	516	63%	818	19%	4.74"
95	462	852	65%	1,314	13%	7.28"
96	780	600	43%	1,380	39%	N/A
97	780	696	47%	1,476	39%	N/A
98	740	969	48%	1,436	38%	N/A

Wild horse numbers were obtained by aerial censuses.

2. Wild Horse & Burro:

In 1993 a Multiple Use Decision was issued for the Lahontan Allotment and set the AML for wild horses at 112 AUMs. Currently 696 AUMs of forage are being consumed by horses which has resulted in excessive vegetative use in certain areas.

3. Precipitation:

The closest weather station is at the Lahontan Dam, which is located at the north edge of the allotment. Precipitation data is collected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and is provided by the Western Region Climate Center (table 1).

4. Utilization:

a. Key Area:

Utilization is read on the key area yearly and every 3 years allotment wide.

b. Use Pattern Mapping:

The 1998 use pattern map showed that 64% of the allotment is receiving slight, light or moderate use, 36% of the allotment is receiving heavy use (use pattern map, attached).

c. Noxious Weeds:

This allotment was inventoried for noxious weeds, no noxious weeds have been identified.

5. Trend:

Two Key Area frequency transects have been established on this allotment one in 1984 and the other in 1998:

Key Area #1 1984 Indian ricegrass = at the 30% frequency level
1998 " " = at the 11% frequency level

Key Area #2 1991 Indian ricegrass = at the 54% frequency level
1998 Indian ricegrass = at the 32% frequency level

The decrease on both transects is statistically significant. Both transects are located within the HMA, during the late 1980's and early 1990's the horse population was 20 times greater than the management level, many ricegrass plants were uprooted by the horses. By managing the horses and the appropriate level and distributing livestock throughout the allotment the trend will increase.

6. Ecological Condition:

<u>Early Seral</u>	<u>Mid Seral</u>	<u>Late Seral</u>	<u>Potential Natural Community</u>
14%	54%	32%	<1%
6,719 acres	26,053 acres	14,763 acres	342 acres

The data for ecological status was collected in 1982.

6. Wildlife Habitat:

The allotment provides habitat for sparse populations of deer, rabbits, coyotes, and a variety of non-game birds, mammals and reptiles.

8. Riparian/Fisheries Habitat:

None within the allotment.

9. Wild Horse Habitat:

The allotment provides habitat for wild horses, with the Lahontan HMA comprising 21% of the Allotment.

C. Allotment Objectives:

1. LUP:

a. Short Term:

see RPS

b. Long Term:

see RPS

2. RPS:

a. Short Term:

Portions of the allotment are receiving heavy use, however, with improved livestock distribution utilization objectives could be met. Overall utilization levels are less than 55% use on key species.

b. Long Term:

Ecological condition could be maintained or improved with better livestock distribution

3. Activity Plan:

a. Short Term:

Objectives are being met. Utilization is less than 55%.

b. Long Term:

Ecological condition will be maintained or improved with current use.

4. T&E Species:

T&E species would not be adversely impacted with the current use.

V. Conclusions:

The allotment is capable of supporting the current number of active livestock AUM's. There are several areas receiving heavy use (66% utilization on 18,500 acres), this is a distribution problem and will be solved by utilizing the existing wells. The heavy use (4,480 acres) in the north west portion of the allotment is attributed to use by wild horses outside of the herd management area and can be solved by reducing the wild horse numbers down to the levels identified in the multiple use decision and the herd management area plan.


VI. Technical Recommendations:

Distribute livestock evenly over the allotment, by repairing existing wells and if necessary implementing water hauling and herding livestock.

Reduce the wild horse population down to the levels identified in the multiple use decision and the herd management area plan.

VII. List of Preparers

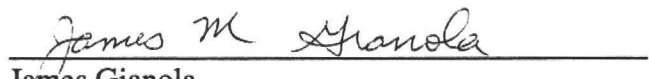
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13 Aug 98
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8-19-98
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Date



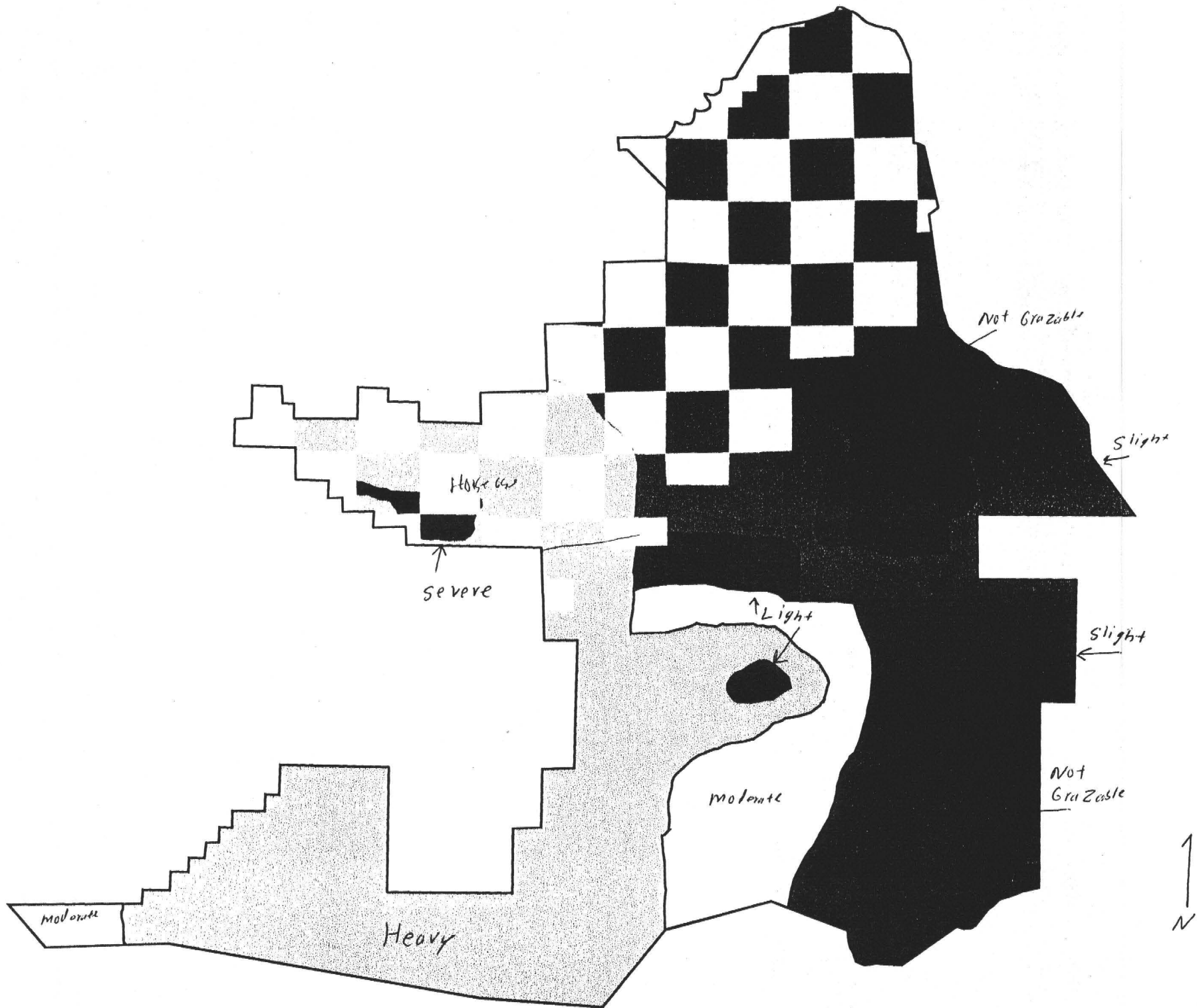
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1998 use pattern map