



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Carson City District Office
1535 Hot Springs Rd., Ste. 300
Carson City, NV 89706-0638



IN REPLY REFER TO:

4700
(NV-03337)

JUN 8 1993

*post gathering
flights?
orphan foals*

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a draft Removal Plan, Environmental Assessment (EA) and 28-Day Notice for the Garfield Flat Herd Management Area. This EA does not become final until the Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record is signed. Please submit your comments to this office by close of business July 12, 1993, to be considered.

Sincerely yours,

James W. Elliott
District Manager

2 Enclosures:

1. Draft Garfield Flat Wild Horse Capture Plan and EA
2. 28-Day Notice

DRAFT

GARFIELD FLAT WILD HORSE CAPTURE PLAN

I. Purpose and Authority

The proposed action is to gather data on age-specific fecundity and mortality rates and behavioral interactions between wild horses in the Garfield Flat Herd Management Area (HMA). This action will require that the wild horses be gathered, aged, checked for physical condition, marked and released back into the population. The Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195), Sec. 10, and 43 CFR 4710 provides the authority for the proposed action.

II. Area of Concern

The area of concern is the Garfield Flat HMA which is located approximately ten miles southeast of Hawthorne, Nevada. Attachment #1 is a map of the area.

III. Number of Wild Horses

Based on an aerial census conducted on 21 November 1991, there are approximately 116 wild horses in the HMA.

IV. Methods for Removal and Safety

The methods employed during the capture operation will be herding horses with a helicopter to a trap built with portable panels. The Bureau of Land Management will contract with a private party for this operation. Two or more Bureau employees will be supervising the contractor at all times during the gather. The following procedures will be followed to ensure the welfare, safety and humane treatment of the wild horses.

A. Roundup Procedures within Contract Area

The Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) or Project Inspector (PI) will determine specific gather areas and numbers of animals within the general contract area as animal concentration, terrain, physical barriers and weather conditions

dictate. Upon determination of the specific gather areas, the COR/PI will select the general location of trap sites in which to herd the animals. Animal concentration, terrain, physical barriers and weather conditions will all be considered when selecting trap sites. It is planned that all wild horses in the HMA will be captured for this study.

B. Motorized Equipment

All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of animals. Minimum specifications are contained within the State Gather Contract. Should conditions warrant, the COR/PI have the authority to further modify the specifications.

All vehicles used for transportation shall be at least 6 feet 6 inches in height. The floors and loading chute shall be covered with non-skid material.

Animals to be loaded and transported in any vehicle shall be as directed by the COR/PI and may include limitations on numbers according to age, size, sex, temperament and animal condition. A minimum of 1.4 linear foot per adult animal and .75 linear foot per foal shall be allowed per standard eight foot wide stock trailer/truck.

The COR/PI shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, distance to be transported, and other factors when planning for the movement of captured animals. The COR/PI shall provide for any brand inspection or other inspection services required for the captured animals.

C. Trapping and Care

1. All capture attempts of wild horses shall be accomplished by the utilization of a helicopter. A minimum of one saddle horse shall be immediately available at the trap site to accomplish roping if necessary. Under no circumstances shall animals be tied down for more than one hour.
2. The helicopter shall be used in such a manner that bands of horses will remain together. Foals shall not be left behind.

Saddle horses may be used to place a BLM observer on a point overlooking the area of the helicopter herding operations.

3. The rate of movement and distance the animals travel shall not exceed limitations set by the COR/PI who will consider terrain, physical barriers, weather, condition of the animals and other factors.

BLM will not allow horses to be herded more than 10 miles nor faster than 20 miles per hour. The COR/PI may decrease the rate of travel or distance moved should the route to the trap site be steep or rocky enough to pose a danger or cause avoidable stress. Animal condition will also be considered in making distance and speed restrictions.

Temperature limitations are 10 degrees F. as a minimum and 95 degrees F. as a maximum. Special attention will be given to avoiding physical hazards such as fences.

4. It is estimated that only one trap location will be required to accomplish the work. All trap locations and holding facilities must be approved by the COR/PI prior to construction. The contractor may also be required to change or move trap locations as determined by the COR/PI. All traps and holding facilities not located on public land must have prior written approval of the landowner.

Trap sites will not be approved where barbed-wire fences are used as wings, wing extensions, or to turn the horses, during herding, toward the trap.

5. All traps, wings and holding facilities shall be constructed, maintained and operated to handle the animals in a safe and humane manner and be in accordance with the following:
 - a. Traps and holding facilities shall be constructed of portable panels, the top of which shall not be less than 72 inches high, the bottom rail of which shall not be more than 12 inches from the ground level. All traps and holding facilities shall be oval or round in design.
 - b. All runways shall be a minimum of 20 feet long and a minimum of 6 feet high and shall be covered with plywood or like material a minimum of 1 foot to 6 feet above ground level.
 - c. Wings shall not be constructed out of barbed-wire or other materials injurious to animals and must be approved by the COR/PI.
 - d. All crowding pens including the gates leading to the runways shall be covered with material which prevents the animals from seeing out (plywood, burlap, etc.) and shall

be covered. a minimum of 2 feet to 6 feet above ground level. Eight linear feet of this material shall be capable of being removed or let down to provide a viewing window.

- e. All pens and runways used for the movement and handling of animals shall be connected with hinged self-locking gates.

- 6. No fence modification will be made without authorization from the COR/PI. The contractor shall be responsible for restoration of any fence modification which he has made.

- 7. When dust conditions occur within or adjacent to the trap or holding facility, the contractor shall be required to wet down the ground with water.

- 8. Alternate pens, within the holding facility shall be furnished by the contractor to separate mares with small foals, sick and injured animals, and estray animals from the other horses. Animals shall be sorted as to age, number, size, temperament, sex, and condition when in the holding facility so as to minimize injury due to fighting and trampling.

As a minimum, studs will be separated from the mares and foals when the animals are held overnight.

Animals shall not be held in traps or temporary holding facilities on days when there is no work being conducted except as specified by the COR/PI.

- 9. The contractor shall provide animals held in the traps or holding facilities with a continuous supply of fresh clean water at a minimum of 10 gallons per animal per day. Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps or holding facilities shall be provided good quality hay at the rate of not less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day.

- 10. It is the responsibility of the contractor to provide security to prevent loss, injury or death of captured animals until delivery to final destination.

- 11. The contractor shall restrain sick or injured animals if treatment by the government is necessary. The contractor will also be required to restrain animals requiring marking or other procedures. The COR/PI will determine if injured animals must be destroyed and provide for destruction of such animals. The contractor may be required to dispose of the carcasses as directed by the COR/PI.

12. When refueling, the helicopter shall remain a distance of at least 1,000 feet or more from animals, vehicles (other than fuel truck), and personnel not involved in refueling.
13. Proposed trap sites and holding facilities will be inventoried prior to construction in order to avoid those areas where cultural resources exist.

V. Disposition of Removed Animals

~~It is anticipated that no animals will be removed. All captured animals will be released back into the HMA. Studs will be released first, dry mares second and mares with foals will be released last.~~

Impounded, privately-owned animals will be processed as outlined in the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Office Instruction Memoranda NV-84-116 and NV-85-416.

VI. Responsibility

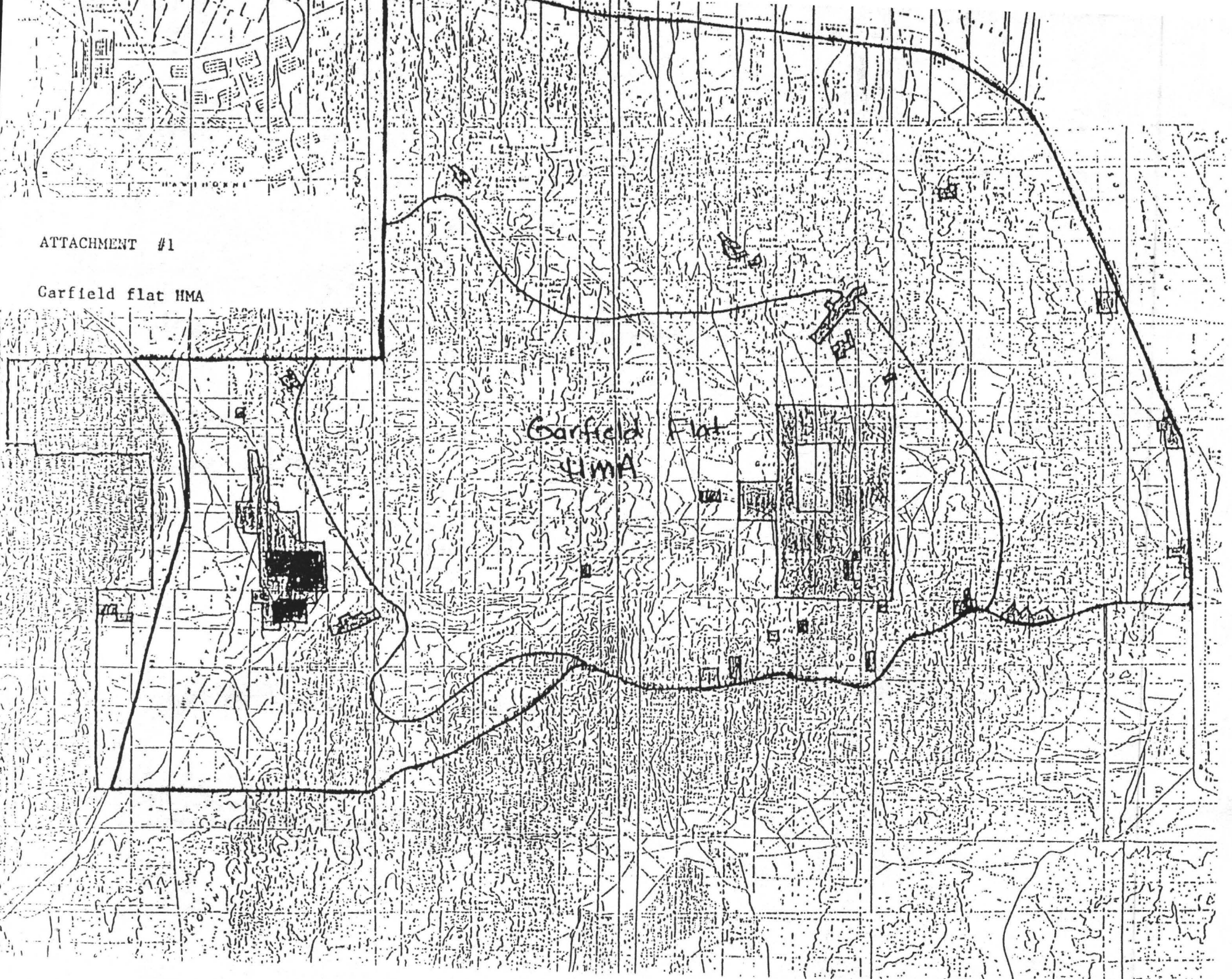
The District Manager is responsible for maintaining and protecting the health and welfare of the wild horses. To ensure the contractor's compliance with the contract stipulations, the COR and PIs, all from the Carson City District, will be on site. The health and welfare of the animals is the overriding concern of the District Manager, Area Manager, COR and PIs.

The COR and/or PI will constantly, through observation, evaluate the contractor's ability to perform the required work in accordance with the contract stipulations. Compliance with the contract stipulations will be through issuance of written instructions to the contractor, stop work orders and default procedures should the contractor not perform work according to the stipulations.

Prior to issuance of the "Notice to Proceed" to the contractor, the COR and PIs will inspect the equipment to be used during the contract, to insure the equipment meets or exceeds the standards contained in the contract stipulations. Prior (less than 20 days) to the start of the contract and constantly during the course of the contract the COR and/or PIs will evaluate the conditions which may cause undue stress to the animals. The factors considered will include animal condition, prevailing temperatures, drought conditions, soil conditions, topography, animal distribution, distance animals travel to water, quantity of available water and condition of roads that animals are to be transported over. These factors will be evaluated to determine if additional constraints, other than those already discussed above, need be initiated in order to safely capture and transport the animals (i.e., veterinarian present, or delay of capture operations).

ATTACHMENT #1

Garfield flat HMA



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Garfield Flat Wild Horse Capture

EA No. NV-030-93031

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the proposal is to gather data on age-specific fecundity and mortality rates and behavioral interactions between wild horses in the Garfield Flat Herd Management Area (HMA). This proposal will require that the wild horses be gathered, aged, checked for physical conditions, marked and released back into the HMA.

II. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

The proposed action is in support of the goals of the Strategic Plan for Management of Wild Horses and Burros on public lands. Goal #5 states: Integrate and incorporate research, science, and technical development into the overall Wild Horse and Burro Program. This action also supports the overall goals of the Walker RMP by providing research data for the better management of wild horses.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

- A. The proposed action is to gather wild horses within the Garfield Flat HMA with the use of a helicopter and other motorized equipment. The wild horses would be herded by a helicopter into traps constructed of portable steel panels. The Bureau of Land Management would contract with a private party for the capture operation. A total of 116 wild horses are proposed for capture.
- B. Alternative No. 1 is to conduct the gather by herding the wild horses from horseback.
- C. Alternative No. 2 is to conduct the gather by water trapping.
- D. The no action alternative is to not conduct the wild horse gather.

IV. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A. Wild Horses

Based on an aerial census conducted on November 21, 1991, there are approximately 116 wild horses in the HMA. The earliest population census was conducted in 1973 when 184 head were counted. Wild horses have been removed from the HMA twice, 183 head in 1977 and 380 head in 1985.

The physical condition of the wild horses appears to be good within this HMA. The past years of drought have not had the detrimental effect on these wild horses as they have had in other HMAs.

B. Livestock Use

The season of use for cattle in the Garfield Flat Allotment is from 11/1 to 4/15. Active preference is 3516 AUMs.

C. Cultural Resources

Cultural resources in the form of prehistoric hunting and gathering related artifacts or historic mining activities may exist within the gather area.

D. Wildlife

There is a wide variety of wildlife species within the HMA. These include: chukar, mourning dove, cottontail, black-tailed jackrabbit, coyote, mountain lion, kit fox, numerous small mammals, birds and reptiles. The important big game species is mule deer.

E. Threatened and Endangered Species

There are no known threatened or endangered species within the HMA.

F. Key Species

There are several key species throughout the HMA. Indian ricegrass (Oryzopsis hymenoides) is the most important forage species for wild horses. Another key forage species is needlegrass (Stipa spp.) and to a lesser extent, squirreltail (Sitanion hystrix).

V. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS/MITIGATION MEASURES

A. Proposed Action

The capture and subsequent study of these wild horses will provide knowledge which will be beneficial to the long-term management of all wild horses.

No impacts would occur to cultural resources, as the trap sites would be cleared prior to construction.

Some stress to the wild horses will be associated with the helicopter herding. This stress will be temporary. Care will be taken by the helicopter pilot to ensure mares and foals are not separated during the herding process. This will be monitored carefully by the BLM personnel at the gather site.

Unavoidable impacts in the form of injuries to the horses may occur as a result of the capture process. Death loss is not expected to exceed 1% of the horses captured at the trap site. Potential injuries and fatalities would be limited through strict enforcement of contract specifications for safety and humane treatment of animals. BLM representatives will be monitoring the contractor's activities at all times to ensure compliance with specifications and humane treatment of animals.

Band structure would not be able to be maintained during the handling process. Studs, mares and mares with foals would be separated into different corrals and kept there until the capture operation is complete. It is anticipated that no horses would be held longer than 72 hours. When they are released back into the HMA, they will be released as follows to prevent undue stress on the foals: studs first, mares second and mares with foals last. The mares with foals will not be released until the studs have had sufficient time to leave the trap site area.

B. Horseback Herding

Impacts from this alternative would be very similar to the proposed action. Once captured, the impacts on the wild horses would be identical to those of the proposed action. The difference is in the capture technique. This method is much more time consuming and less efficient than helicopter herding. The capture plan proposes that all of the wild horses be captured. It is very unlikely that all of the wild horses could be captured by horseback. It is also more time consuming, requiring the captured animals to be held longer at the trap site and therefore causing more undue stress on the wild horses.

C. Water Trapping

As in Alternative B, the impacts on the wild horses would be identical to the proposed action once the animals are caught. This method is also time consuming, probably even more so than Alternative B. Wild horses would have to be held at the trap site for a long period of time. Water trapping can be an efficient method for catching wild horses given the right circumstances, however, this proposed capture plan requires that all the wild horses be captured. Scattered water sources in and outside the HMA are too numerous to fence. This would prevent not only a total capture of all the wild horses, but would result in very few actually being caught.

D. No Action

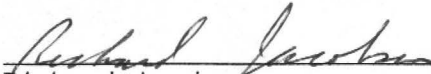
The "no action" alternative would result in no wild horses being captured. The animals would not have to undergo stress, injuries or possible fatalities related to capture and handling. However, without capturing these wild horses, there cannot be a study conducted on these animals. The knowledge gained from this study is necessary to further our ability to properly manage the wild horses. This information will not be available if the capture is not accomplished.

E. Mitigation Measures

We do not anticipate any adverse impacts associated with the proposed actions, therefore, mitigation measures are not needed.

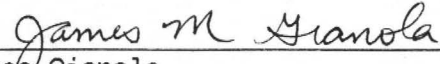
VI. SIGNATURES

Prepared by:

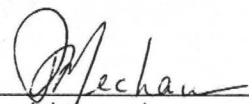

Richard Jacobsen
Wild Horse and Burro Specialist
Walker Resource Area

6-2-93
Date

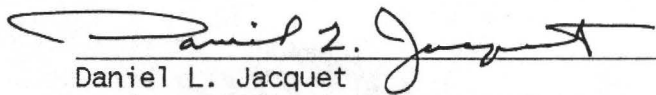
Reviewed by:


James Gianola
Wild Horse and Burro Specialist
Carson City District

6-2-93
Date


for David Loomis
Environmental Coordinator

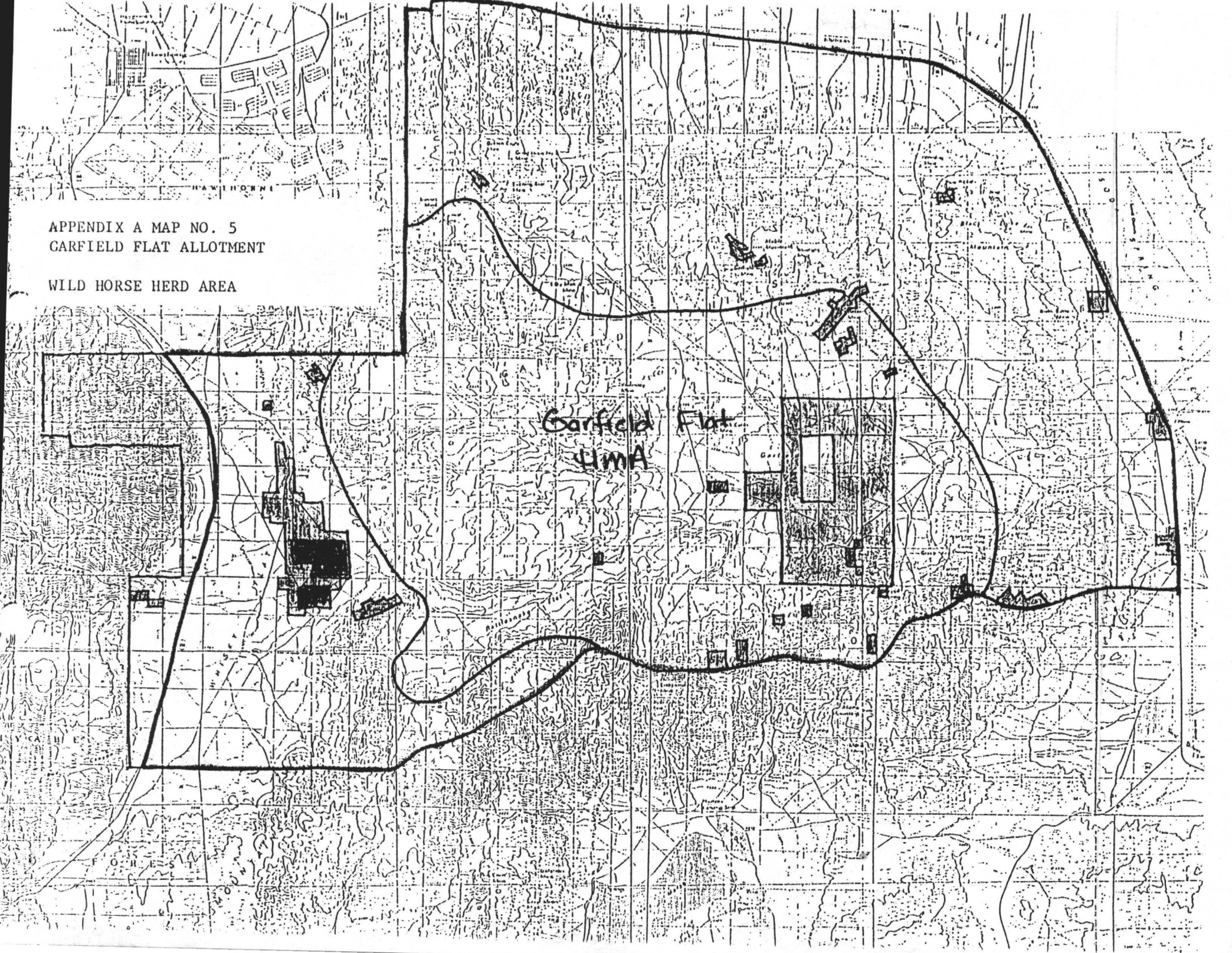
6/4/93
Date


Daniel L. Jacquet
Assistant District Manager, Resources
Carson City District

6/4/93
Date

APPENDIX A MAP NO. 5
GARFIELD FLAT ALLOTMENT

WILD HORSE HERD AREA

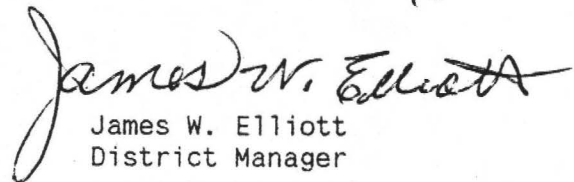


28-DAY NOTICE

The Bureau of Land Management proposes to capture wild horses from the public lands in the State of Nevada no sooner than 28 days from receipt of this letter.

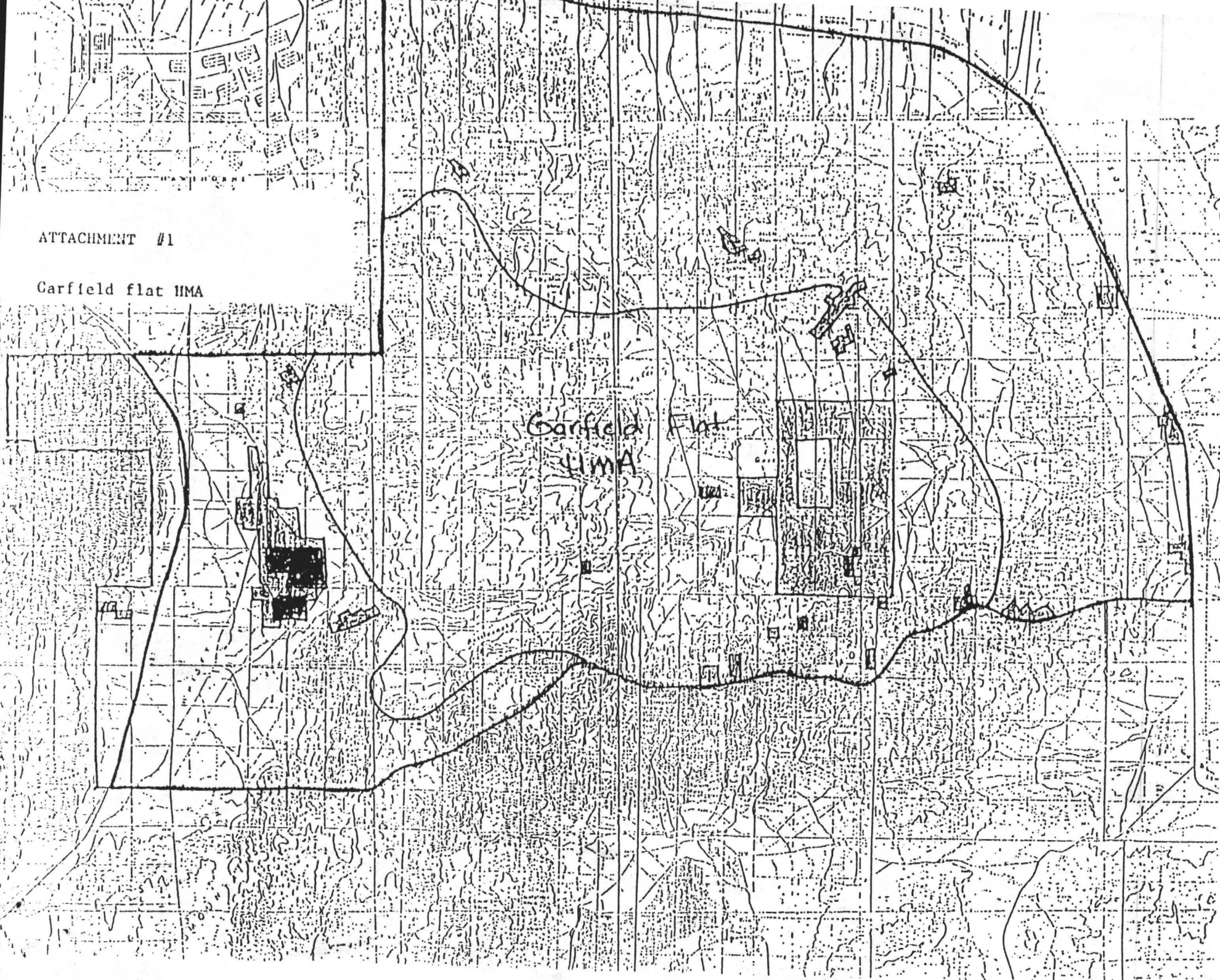
The proposed capture will be conducted in the Carson City District in the areas shown on the enclosed map and as described below.

<u>Herd Mgmt. Area/ Herd Area Name</u>	<u>Environ. Analysis Record Number</u>	<u>Reason for Capture</u>	<u>Approximate No. to be Removed</u>	<u>Approximate No. to Retain</u>
Garfield Flat HMA	NV-030-93031	University of Nevada, Reno Behavior Mortality Study	0	116


James W. Elliott
District Manager

ATTACHMENT #1

Garfield flat IMA

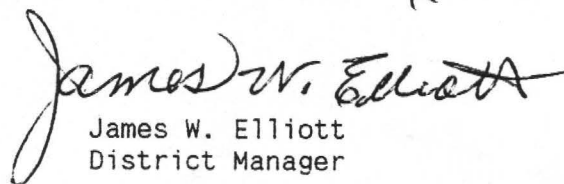


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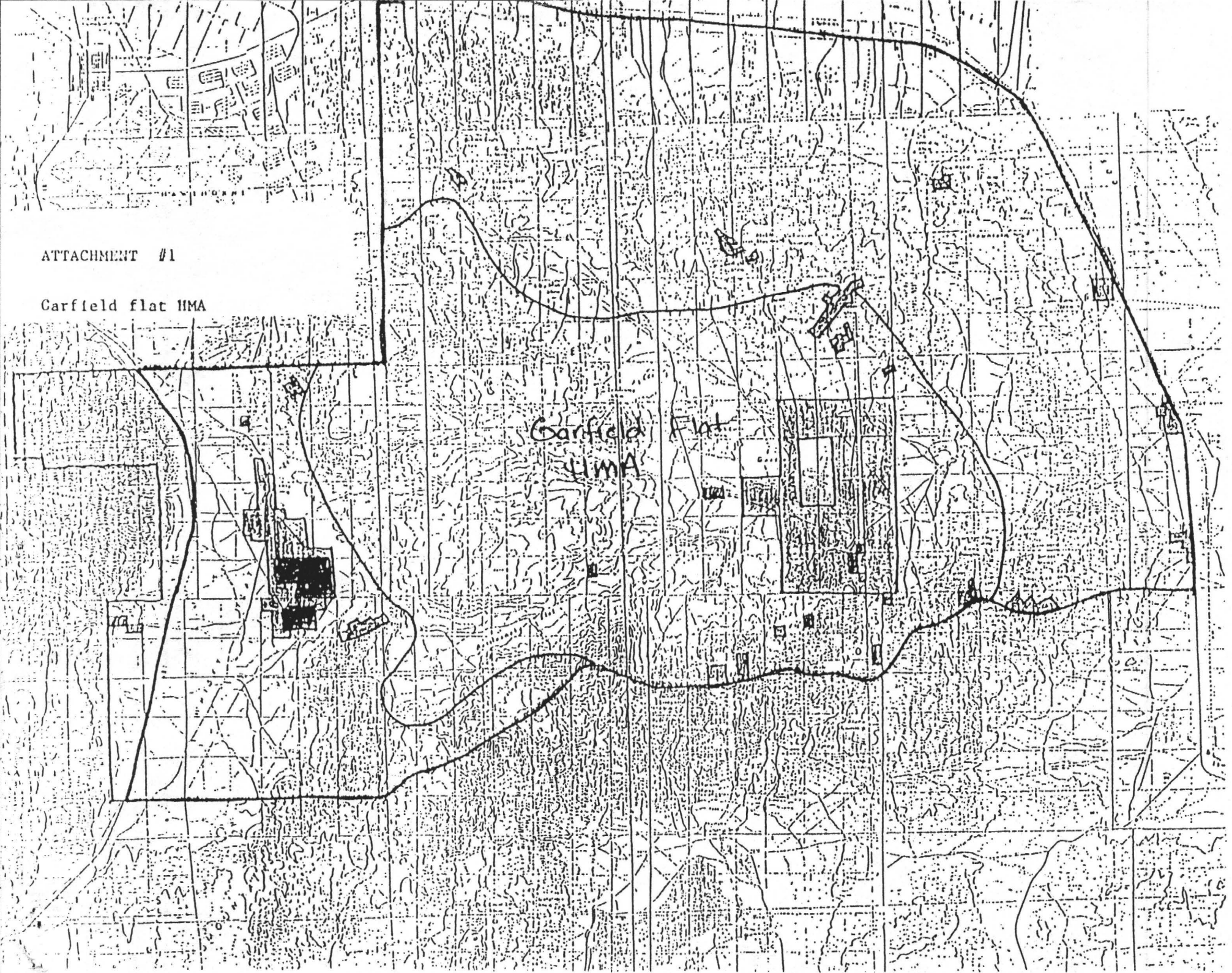
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7/7/93

BOB MILLER
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

CATHERINE BARCOMB
Executive Director



**COMMISSION FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES**

Stewart Facility
Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710
(702) 687-5589

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July 7, 1993

James W. Elliott, District Manager
BLM-Carson City District Office
1535 Hot Springs Rd., Ste. 300
Carson City, Nevada 89706-0638

Dear Mr. Elliott,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Removal Plan, EA and 28 day notice for the Garfield Flat Herd Management Area.

Our only concern is that we see no intent to fly the area post gather. We're concerned for foals that may be separated. We agree the contribution in studying these animals will give some foresight towards future management. Since this is a draft, we would greatly appreciate you addressing "orphan foals" and monitoring of that situation in your final.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Barcomb".

CATHERINE BARCOMB
Executive Director