



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

Appeal # NV-030-95-013
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

4400
(NV-03580)

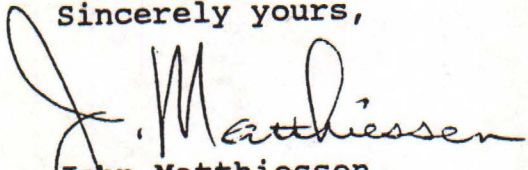
JUL. 07 1995

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a copy of the Proposed Multiple Use Decision for the nine allotments which encompass the Pine Nut Herd Management Area. Accompanying the decision are Sections VII (Consultations) and VIII (Management Action Selected) of the allotment evaluations. Note that after the 15-day protest period a Final Multiple Use Decision will be issued.

Sincerely yours,


John Matthiessen
Area Manager
Walker Resource Area

10 Enclosures:

1 - 9. Sections VII and VIII of allotment evaluations for Buckeye, Churchill Canyon, Clifton, Eldorado, Hackett Canyon, Mill Canyon, Rawe Peak, Sand Canyon, and Sunrise allotments.

10. Pine Nut Proposed Multiple Use Decision.

PINE NUT PROPOSED MULTIPLE USE DECISION

The Record of Decision for the Reno Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) was issued on December 21, 1982. This document established the multiple use goals and objectives which guide management of public land in the allotments contained within the Pine Nut Herd Management Area (HMA). The Reno Rangeland Program Summary (RPS), issued on May 30, 1984, identified allotment specific objectives.

As identified in the Reno GEIS and Reno RPS, monitoring has been conducted on these allotments to determine if existing multiple uses for the allotments were consistent with the attainment of the objectives. Monitoring data has been collected and analyzed through the allotment evaluation process to determine what changes in existing management are required in order to meet specific multiple use objectives for these allotments.

Through the consultation, coordination, and cooperation process (CCC), input from the interested parties has been considered. Based on the evaluation of the monitoring data, technical recommendations contained within the allotment evaluations, and input through the CCC process, my proposed decision is presented below.

BUCKEYE ALLOTMENT
LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT DECISION

Decisions relating to the grazing of livestock on public lands in the Buckeye Allotment are as follows:

- A. In accordance with §4130.6-1(a) the active preference for sheep will be maintained at 4973 AUMs.
- B. In accordance with §4130.6-1(a), if cattle are grazed instead of sheep, the active preference for cattle initially will not exceed 2200 AUMs. In accordance with §4110.3, this preference will remain in effect for five years, after which time a final active preference will be established based on additional monitoring data.
- C. In accordance with §4130.6-1 (a), if both sheep and cattle are grazed, the initial active preference will be proportioned in the direct ratio of 4973 sheep AUMs equalling 2200 cattle AUMs. For example, if the ranch uses half the preference for sheep grazing and half for cattle, this would result in 2486 sheep AUMs and 1100 cattle AUMs initial active preference.
- D. In accordance with §4130.6, §4130.6-1(a) and §4130.6-2, cattle will be authorized in the summer use portion of the allotment in conjunction with private lands. Livestock shall leave the riparian zones by mid-July. Cattle will be authorized in the west portion of the allotment only in the winter (November 1 through March 31). Grazing within the HMA will not be authorized by livestock during the growing season (April 1 through July 15).

RATIONALE

Utilization studies detailed in the evaluation showed the allotment provided full preference sheep grazing use (4973 AUMs) at light or moderate use levels. This can continue with application of good forage management techniques.

Utilization studies also showed an estimated 2700 AUMs of grass forage within the entire allotment, which includes the portion within the HMA. Excluding the potential stocking level for wild horses, there is an estimated 2200 AUMs available for cattle. Five years of studies will provide adequate information to determine a final active preference for cattle.

The narrow band of public land in the summer use area (southeast portion of the allotment) is not practically grazed by itself by cattle (although herded sheep could use the area as a unit). But used in conjunction with the lower, primarily private, canyons, this area could comprise the high, steep portion of a three-pasture unit requiring minimal fencing to be effective.

Cattle will tend to leave the west side of the allotment anytime the valley below is green; but in winter-time the valley will be both brown and colder than the rangeland and cattle will remain on the allotment. The north end of the allotment which is within the HMA already receives growing season use by wild horses, so that additional growing season use would result in significant overgrazing which would diminish the grass vegetation.

CHURCHILL CANYON ALLOTMENT LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT DECISION

Decisions relating to the grazing of livestock on public lands in the Churchill Canyon Allotment are as follows:

- A. In accordance with §4130.6-1(a), the active preference for livestock will be maintained at 1074 AUMs. In accordance with §4410.3, continue to use standard Actual Use/Utilization study techniques over a three year period to refine this estimate and establish a preference for cattle which is sustainable and allows plenty of forage for wild horses and mule deer.

RATIONALE

The 1074 AUMs for livestock is a reasonable initial stocking level based upon the figures shown in the utilization study contained in Appendix IV of the evaluation. The Bureau will obtain further data to refine the estimate and establish an allocation which is sustainable.

CLIFTON ALLOTMENT LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT DECISION

Decisions relating to the grazing of livestock on public lands in the Clifton Allotment are as follows:

- A. In accordance with §4110.3-2(b) and §4130.6-1(a), the active preference for cattle will be adjusted from 772 AUMs to 613 AUMs. In accordance with §4110.3-3(a) &(b), this reduction in active preference will be phased in over a five year period, beginning with the effective date of the Final Multiple Use Decision (1995). The reduction will be implemented as follows:

1995 From 772 AUMs to 719 AUMs
1997 From 719 AUMs to 666 AUMs
1999 From 666 AUMs to 613 AUMs

In accordance with §4110.3-2(c), 159 AUMs will be suspended.

B. In accordance with §4130.6-1(a), the authorized season of use will be changed from 4/1 - 5/31 to 1/1 - 5/31.

RATIONALE

Insufficient forage is available to provide 772 AUMs for livestock. The existing livestock authorized period of use occurs during a portion of the active growing season. Wild horse use occurs throughout the active growing season. This amount and concentration of use is resulting in the loss of grass plants at the mid and lower elevations of the allotment. Adjusting livestock numbers will, in part, begin to allow these areas an opportunity to recover. By eliminating the compressed season of use for livestock and allowing more flexibility, use can be made during plant dormancy when they are least vulnerable. Snow, when available, will further help by providing the opportunity to distribute livestock over a larger portion of the allotment. These actions should provide adequate forage on a sustainable basis.

ELDORADO ALLOTMENT LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT DECISION

Decisions relating to the grazing of livestock on public lands in the Eldorado Allotment are as follows:

A. In accordance with §4130.4-2, livestock grazing will be authorized on a temporary non-renewable basis to take pressure off of or supplement use from other allotments.

B. In accordance with §4130.6-1 (a), the authorized season of use will be from 11/1 to 2/28. The authorization will be limited to sheep. A total of 270 AUMs will be available for livestock use.

RATIONALE

Authorizing grazing use on a temporary non-renewable basis is at the discretion of the authorized officer. If the authorized officer determines that livestock grazing, as applied for, would not meet land use plan objectives, the application would not be authorized. If the authorized officer determines that a modification to the application would meet these objectives, use would be authorized accordingly.

Authorizing sheep use during the winter is advantageous. Grass plants are in a dormant state, so are not susceptible to overgrazing. Harvesting the old growth from the grass plants will allow better access to sunlight for the spring growth and the plants can better remain vigorous. In addition, heavy browsing of the shrubs by sheep will favor the growth of the grasses which make up the bulk of the diet for wild horses.

HACKETT CANYON ALLOTMENT
LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT DECISION

Decisions relating to the grazing of livestock on public lands in the Hackett Canyon Allotment are as follows:

A. In accordance with §4110.3-2(b) and §4130.6-1(a), the active preference will be adjusted from 515 AUMs to 187 AUMs. No more than 146 AUMs of sheep use will be authorized in the North Pasture. No more than 41 AUMs of livestock use will be allowed in the South Pasture. In accordance with §4110.3-3(a) &(b), this reduction in active preference will be phased in over a five year period, beginning with the effective date of the Final Multiple Use Decision (1995). The reduction will be implemented as follows:

1995 From 515 AUMs to 406 AUMs
1997 From 406 AUMs to 297 AUMs
1999 From 297 AUMs to 187AUMs

In accordance with §4110.3-2(c), 328 AUMs will be suspended.

B. In accordance with §4130.6, the following terms and conditions will apply to the North and South Pastures.

1. Specific areas within the allotment will be grazed for two weeks or less each year.
2. During most years, these two week grazing authorizations will occur between 3/15 and 6/30.
3. At the discretion of the authorized officer, grazing use can occasionally be authorized after 6/30.
4. In order to provide forage for over-wintering mule deer, allow no more than 25% use on bitterbrush by livestock and wild horses before October. Yearlong use by all herbivores will not exceed 45%.

RATIONALE

Insufficient forage is available to provide 515 AUMs for livestock. The influence of pinyon-juniper woodlands severely restricts the areas that produce forage and are usable by livestock. The ability of these woodlands to out-compete other vegetation and intercept/utilize precipitation has resulted in declines of desirable forage for livestock, wild horses, and wildlife. In order to balance grazing with forage production, adjusting the livestock active preference was necessary.

Without construction of more fencing in the north pasture, cattle will probably drift off the public lands to the developing private lands north of the allotment. The allotment is historically a sheep allotment, which provides a situation where animals can be controlled through herding in the North pasture. Use in the South pasture can be made by either sheep and/or cattle since access to the developing private lands is blocked by the Eldorado Canyon Fence.

MILL CANYON ALLOTMENT
LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT DECISION

Decisions relating to the grazing of livestock on public lands in the Mill Canyon Allotment are as follows:

- A. In accordance with §4130.6-1(a), the active preference for sheep will be maintained at 2049 AUMs.
- B. In accordance with §4110.3 and §4130.6-1(a), if cattle are grazed rather than sheep, the active preference for cattle initially will not exceed 776 AUMs. This preference will remain in effect for 5 years following such conversion, after which time a final active preference will be established based on additional monitoring data.
- C. In accordance with §4130.6-1(a), the authorized season of use will be changed from 11/1 -1/31 and 4/1 -5/31 to 11/1 - 3/31.
- D. In accordance with §4130.6-2, livestock use within the HMA portion of the allotment will be made between 11/1 and 2/28. After 2/28, all livestock use will be shifted outside of the HMA.

RATIONALE

Sheep and horses have a limited dietary overlap. Sheep prefer browse species while horses prefer grasses. The exception to this is during spring green-up, when sheep will also use the grasses. A large portion of the allotment is comprised of low sagebrush. By changing the grazing season of use for sheep from spring to fall/winter, the competition for grasses is eliminated and heavy shrub browsing by sheep will favor the grasses used by horses. Grazing occurs during plant dormancy when they are least vulnerable. Due to these factors, maintaining the active preference for sheep is practical.

Based on information provided in the evaluation it was determined that adequate forage is present to initially support 776 AUMs of cattle use in the event that a conversion is requested. Five years of studies will provide adequate information to determine a final active preference for cattle.

A sage grouse use area is located within the HMA. By removing livestock prior to the initiation of growth (i.e., green shoots of grass, forb production), the competition for this forage between livestock and wild horses will be eliminated. The vegetation along with the associated insect population are important to the sage grouse.

RAWE PEAK ALLOTMENT
LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT DECISION

Decisions relating to the grazing of livestock on public lands in the Rawe Peak Allotment are as follows:

- A. In accordance with §4110.3-2(b) and §4130.6-1(a), the active preference for cattle will be adjusted from 552 AUMs to 54 AUMs. In accordance with §4110.3-3(a) &(b), this reduction in active preference will be phased in over a five year period, beginning with the

effective date of the Final Multiple Use Decision (1995). The reduction will be implemented as follows:

1995 From 552 AUMs to 386 AUMs
1997 From 386 AUMs to 220 AUMs
1999 From 220 AUMs to 54 AUMs

In accordance with §4110.3-2(c), 498 AUMs will be suspended.

B. In accordance with §4130.6-1(a), the authorized season of use will be changed from 5/16 - 7/31 to 11/1 -3/31.

C. In accordance with §4110.3 and §4130.6-1(a), if sheep are grazed rather than cattle, the active preference for sheep will be initially established at 301 AUMs. This preference will remain in effect for five years, after which time a final active preference will be established based on additional monitoring data.

RATIONALE

Insufficient forage is available to provide 552 AUMs for livestock. The influence of pinyon-juniper woodlands severely restricts the areas that produce forage and are usable by cattle. The ability of these woodlands to out-compete other vegetation and intercept/utilize precipitation has resulted in declines of desirable forage for livestock, wild horses, and wildlife. In order to balance grazing with forage production, adjusting the livestock active preference was necessary.

The existing livestock authorized period of use occurs during the active growing season. Wild horse use also occurs throughout the active growing season. This concentration of use, coupled with the problems associated with the influence of the pinyon-juniper woodlands, has resulted in the loss of desirable forage.

Adjusting livestock numbers will, in part, begin to allow those areas that are usable an opportunity to recover. Use can be made by livestock during plant dormancy when they are least vulnerable. Snow, when available, will further help by providing the opportunity to distribute livestock.

SAND CANYON ALLOTMENT LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT DECISION

Decisions relating to the grazing of livestock on public lands in the Sand Canyon Allotment are as follows:

- A. In accordance with §4110.3, the active livestock preference is cancelled.
- B. In accordance with §4130.4-2, livestock grazing will be authorized on a temporary non-renewable basis.
- C. In accordance with §4130.6-2, utilization shall not exceed the Allowable Use Level of 55%. This applies to livestock and wild horses.

RATIONALE

The area adjoining the allotment is a developing urban area. As Carson City continues to expand, the public lands will become valuable as open space for residents. It has become impractical as a cattle allotment.

However, it may be in the best interest of the public to use intensively managed livestock grazing as a tool in accomplishing specific environmental goals (e.g., noxious weed control, trampling seed into the soil on barren areas, stimulating decadent vegetation, etc.). Authorizing grazing use on a temporary non-renewable basis is at the discretion of the authorized officer. If the authorized officer determines that livestock grazing, as applied for, would not meet an objective(s), the application would not be authorized. If the authorized officer determines that a modification to the application would meet objective(s), use would be authorized accordingly.

SUNRISE ALLOTMENT LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT DECISION

Decisions relating to the grazing of livestock on public lands in the Sunrise Allotment are as follows:

A. In accordance with §4110.3-2(b) and §4130.6-1(a), the active preference for livestock will be adjusted from 1092 AUMs to 159 AUMs. In accordance with §4110.3-3(a) &(b), this reduction in active preference will be phased in over a five year period, beginning with the effective date of the Final Multiple Use Decision (1995). The reduction will be implemented as follows:

1995 From 1092 AUMs to 781 AUMs
1997 From 781 AUMs to 470 AUMs
1999 From 470 AUMs to 159 AUMs

In accordance with §4110.3-2(c), 933 AUMs will be suspended.

B. In accordance with §4130.6, the following terms and conditions will apply:

1. Specific areas within the allotment will be grazed for two weeks or less each year.
2. During most years, these two week grazing authorizations will occur between 3/15 - 6/15.
3. At the discretion of the authorized officer, grazing can occasionally be authorized after 6/30.
4. The allowable use level of 27.5% is established for use on perennial grasses and 22.5% on bitterbrush by livestock.
5. No livestock grazing will be authorized until utilization levels by wild horses are below the allowable use level for grasses and/or bitterbrush.

RATIONALE

Insufficient forage is available to provide 1092 AUMs for livestock. This is a result of use by wild horses and the influence of pinyon-juniper woodlands. The terms and conditions set forth will provide plants the opportunity to regrow during their active growing season (spring and summer).

AUTHORITY

Authority for this decision is found in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, which states in pertinent parts:

§4100.0-8: "The authorized officer shall manage livestock grazing on the public lands under the principle of multiple-use and sustained yield, and in accordance with applicable land use plans. Land use plans shall establish allowable resource uses (either singly or in combination), related levels of production or use to be maintained, areas of use and resource condition goals and objectives to be obtained. The plans also set forth program constraints and general management practices needed to achieve management objectives. Livestock grazing activities and management actions approved by the authorized officer shall be in conformance with the land use plan as defined at 43 CFR §1601.0-5(b)."

§4110.3: "The authorized officer shall periodically review the grazing preference specified in a grazing permit or grazing lease and may make changes in the grazing preference status. These changes shall be supported by monitoring, as evidenced by rangeland studies conducted over time, unless the change is either specified in an applicable land use plan or necessary to manage, maintain, or improve rangeland productivity."

§4110.3-2(a): "Active use may be suspended in whole or in part on a temporary basis due to drought, fire, or other natural causes, or to facilitate installation, maintenance, or modification of range improvements."

§4110.3-2 (b): "When monitoring shows active use is causing an unacceptable level or pattern of utilization or exceeds the livestock carrying capacity as determined through monitoring, the authorized officer shall reduce the active use if necessary to maintain or improve rangeland productivity, unless the authorized officer determines a change in management practices would achieve the management objectives."

§4110.3-2(c): "Where active use is reduced it shall be held in suspension or in nonuse for conservation/protection purposes, until the authorized officer determines that active use may resume."

§4110.3-3(a): "Changes in active use in excess of 10 percent shall be implemented over a 5-year period, unless after consultation with the affected permittees or lessees and other affected interests, an agreement is reached to implement the increase or decrease in less than 5 years."

§4110.3-3(b): "After consultation, coordination and cooperation, suspensions of preference shall be implemented through a documented agreement or by decision. If data acceptable to the authorized officer are available, an initial reduction shall be taken on the effective date of the

agreement or decision and the balance taken in the third and fifth years following that effective date, except as provided in paragraph (a) of this section."

§4120.2 (a): States in part that "The allotment management plan shall include terms and conditions under §§ 4130.6, 4130.6-1, 4130.6-2 and 4130.6-3 of this title, and shall prescribe the livestock grazing practices necessary to meet specific multiple-use management objectives."

§4120.2 (c): "Completed allotment management plans shall be incorporated into the terms and conditions of the affected grazing permits and leases."

§4120.3-1 (a): "Range improvements shall be installed, used, maintained, and/or modified on the public lands, or removed from these lands, in a manner consistent with multiple-use management."

§4130.4-2: "Nonrenewable grazing permits or leases may be issued on an annual basis to qualified applicants when forage is temporarily available, provided this use is consistent with multiple-use objectives and does not interfere with existing livestock operations on public lands."

§4130.6: "Livestock grazing permits and leases shall contain terms and conditions necessary to achieve the management objectives for the public lands and other lands under Bureau of Land Management administration."

§4130.6-1 (a): "The authorized officer shall specify the kind and number of livestock, the period(s) of use, the allotment(s) to be used, and the amount of use, in animal unit months for every grazing permit or lease. The authorized livestock grazing use shall not exceed the livestock carrying capacity as determined through monitoring and adjusted under §§4110.3, 4110.3-1 and 4110.3-2."

§4130.6-2: "The authorized officer may specify in grazing permits and leases other terms and conditions which will assist in achieving management objectives, provide for proper range management or assist in the orderly administration of the public rangelands..."

§4130.6-3 "Following careful and considered consultation, cooperation and coordination with the lessees, permittees, and other affected interests, the authorized officer may modify terms and conditions of the permit or lease if monitoring data show that present grazing use is not meeting the land use plan or management objectives."

PROTEST

In accordance with 43 CFR §4160.2, if you wish to protest this proposed decision, you are allowed 15 days from receipt of this decision to file such protest with the Walker Resource Area Manager, 1535 Hot Springs Rd., Suite 300, Carson City, NV 89706-0638. The protest should state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why you think the decision in error (4160.2).

PINE NUT HERD MANAGEMENT AREA
WILD HORSE MANAGEMENT DECISION

Decisions relating to wild horses managed within the Pine Nut HMA are as follows:

A. In accordance with § 4700.0-6(a), the potential stocking level for wild horses in the portions of the HMA located within each allotment is as follows:

Buckeye	493 AUMs
Churchill Canyon	154 AUMs
Clifton	444 AUMs
Eldorado	270 AUMs
Hackett Canyon	187 AUMs
Mill Canyon	296 AUMs
Rawe Peak	54 AUMs
Sand Canyon	95 AUMs
Sunrise	159 AUMs
Total	2152 AUMs

B. The management of wild horses within the HMA will be in accordance with the Strategic Plan for Management of Wild Horses and Burros on Public Lands (June 1992).

C. In accordance with §4710.3-1 and §4710.4, the maximum Appropriate Management Level for the HMA will be 179 head of wild horses. The population will be adjusted to 34% below this maximum level and allowed to increase to the AML of 179.

D. In accordance with §4710.3-1, the following allotment specific objectives will apply:

Hackett Canyon Allotment: In order to provide forage for over-wintering mule deer, allow no more than 25% use on bitterbrush by livestock and wild horses before October. Yearlong use by all herbivores will not exceed 45%.

Sand Canyon Allotment: Wild horses should be allowed to graze in the allotment under the following constraints:

1. Utilization shall not exceed the Allowable Use Level of 55%. This applies to livestock and wild horses.
2. No damage attributable to wild horses shall occur on riparian habitat along the Carson River.
3. Wild horses will be removed upon request in writing from private land owners in accordance to Title 43, Code of Federal Regulations, §4720.2-1.

Sunrise Allotment: An allowable use level of 27.5% for yearlong use on perennial grasses and 22.5% on bitterbrush shall be managed for by wild horses.

RATIONALE

Generally, in observing these horses over the last three years, the Range Conservationists and Wild Horse and Burro Specialist considered many of the bands to be showing stress from inadequate forage supplies. Many areas show evidence of a constant search for forage. Utilization is occurring several miles outside of the historic HMA. In certain portions of the HMA, ecological sites are declining. In other areas the ecological sites appear to be stable but they have stabilized at the low end of their productive potential.

The analysis of available monitoring data presented in the allotment evaluations for those allotments in the Pine Nut HMA indicate that a thriving natural ecological balance will be achieved at a level of 2152 AUMs of wild horse use.

In order to minimize the disruption of band structure and the stress to individual animals, the population of wild horses would be reduced 34% below the AML. This would allow the population to increase at a projected recruitment rate of 15% per year for three years. This would further allow a three or four year interval between removals. Managing the population to maximize the intervals between removals would minimize the stress associated with removals. Reducing the wild horse numbers to a point below the maximum and then allowing them to increase to AML would have several benefits. First, allowable use levels will not be exceeded therefore allowing the forage base to remain healthy. This, in turn, results in a healthier, more viable, population of wild horses that will have less competition for forage, water and space.

AUTHORITY

The authority for this decision is contained in Sec. 3(a) and (b) of the Wild-Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act (P.L. 92-195) as amended and Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), which states in pertinent parts:

§4700.0-6 (a): "Wild horses and burros shall be managed as self-sustaining populations of healthy animals in balance with other uses and the productive capacity of their habitat."

§4710.3-1: "Herd management areas shall be established for the maintenance of wild horse and burro herds. In delineating each herd management area, the authorized officer shall consider the appropriate management level of the herd, the habitat requirements of the animals, the relationship with other uses of the public land and adjacent private lands, and the constraints contained in §4710.4....."

§4710.4 "Management of wild horse and burros shall be undertaken with the objective of limiting the animals' distribution to herd areas. Management shall be at the minimum level necessary to attain the objectives identified in approved land use plans and herd management area plans."

§4720.1 States in part that, "Upon examination of current information and a determination by the authorized officer that an excess of wild horses or burros exist the authorized officer shall remove the excess animals immediately...."

§4720.2-1 States in part that, "Upon written request from the private landowner to any representative of the Bureau of Land Management, the authorized officer shall remove stray wild horses and burros from private lands as soon as practicable.

PROTEST

Although 43 CFR §4770.3 allows for an appeal with no mention of a protest, for the purpose of consistency the multiple use decision will be initially sent as a "Proposed" decision.

If you wish to protest this proposed decision, you are allowed 15 days from receipt of this decision to file such protest with the Walker Resource Area Manager, 1535 Hot Springs Rd., Suite 300, Carson City, NV 89706-0638. The protest should state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why you think the decision is in error.

GUIDANCE

Strategic Plan for Management of Wild Horses and Burros on Public Lands, 1992
Technical Reference 4400-7, *Rangeland Monitoring Analysis, Interpretation, and Evaluation*, 1985

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DECISION

In order to improve habitat for wildlife, the following actions will be taken:

- A. Pinyon-Juniper woodlands will be identified for treatments that will improve conditions for wildlife. Treatment areas will be designed to increase "edge effect" and promote increased production of palatable understory plant species. The long term management will be directed toward achieving an ecosystem containing a natural balance of pinyon-juniper woodlands, and other ecological sites. It will be necessary to develop a Pine Nut Mountain "desired landscape" description which uses the Potential Natural Community information as a general guide for meeting Land Use Plan objectives. This will be developed through the consultation, cooperation, and coordination with interested parties.
- B. If monitoring shows that a critical riparian area is not making satisfactory progress toward proper functioning condition, after changes/modifications in management have been in effect, fencing will be initiated. Fences will be constructed to wildlife standards. Water will be provided outside the source for livestock and wild horses.
- C. In order to provide forage for over-wintering mule deer, allow no more than 25% use on bitterbrush by livestock and wild horses in the deer winter range before October. Yearlong use by all herbivores should not exceed 45%.
- D. Following a reduction of the wild horse population to a level which allows the horses to live within their HMA at moderate forage utilization levels, work with the Nevada Division of Wildlife to introduce pronghorn antelope into Churchill Canyon and Mill Canyon allotments.

RATIONALE

Removal of pinyon-juniper trees will provide increased edge effect for mule deer and also expand the forage base. The amount of moisture that is intercepted and the amount of groundwater used on an annual basis would be available to re-charge underground aquifers. This could potentially rehabilitate springs that are currently dry or have reduced water flows.

Riparian areas are used year-round by a combination of wild horses and wildlife. Livestock use occurs during varying portions of the year. The cumulative effect can be detrimental and can result in diminished or total loss of flow.

Cattle and sheep browse more than horses and so should be monitored to insure that forage is available for mule deer. Limiting use on bitterbrush by livestock and wild horses to 25% will allow for adequate forage (unbrowsed leaders) to remain for mule deer after completion of the grazing season and the plants need a good number of leaders remaining unbrowsed at the end of the season, as these new leaders will be the primary seed producers for the next year.

Pronghorn antelope are an important big-game species. The introduction of a population has not been possible prior to management changes made primarily in the Churchill Canyon Allotment. With a light/moderate level of cattle grazing instead of heavy sheep grazing, and the wild horses not forced to constantly search the entire area for forage, the forbs and palatable grasses needed by pronghorn should achieve adequate abundance.

GUIDANCE

Reno Grazing Environmental Impact Statement, 1982

Pine Nut Habitat Management Plan, Revised 1987

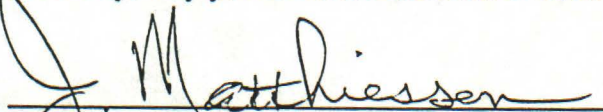
Management Framework Plan, 1975

Bureau of Land Management, Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990's

Technical Reference 1737-9, *Riparian Area Management, Process for Assessing Proper Functioning Condition*, 1993

PROTEST

If you wish to protest this proposed multiple use decision, you are allowed 15 days from receipt of this decision to file your reasons with the authorized officer at the Walker Resource Area Manager, 1535 Hot Springs Rd., Suite 300, Carson City, NV 89706-0638. The protest should state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why you think the decision in error.



John Matthiessen, Area Manager
Walker Resource Area

JUL. 07 1995