

The purpose of this report is to present findings and conclusions regarding investigations into the cause of death of at least 46 wild horses in the North end of the Clan Alpine Herd Management Area (HMA) of the Carson City District. The death of these wild horses was discovered initially on 17 September 1987 and the investigation into the cause of death was concluded on 30 Oct. 1987. Members of the investigation team included the following:

- Andy Anderson, Carson City District Office
- Len Sims, Nevada State Office
- Milt Frei, Nevada State Office
- Jerry Peck, Carson-Tahoe Veterinary Hospital
- Tom Eagle, University of Minnesota
- Tim Reuwsaat, Carson City District Office

FACT  
NSO/CC Resource people met with U/Min people to set ground rules which included a. b. c.

FACT  
AM met with Tim Reuwsaat & Tom Eagle (U of Min)

discussed some factors, distance, time

traditional stuff  
— flesh this out.

ADD ~~Responsibilities~~ General

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Responsibilities  
Add why we are even out there in the first place what the responsibilities were:

- a. BLM WG — COAR
- b. BLM NSO — SC — CO
- c. BLM C.C. DO —
- e. BLM Lahontan RA —

2. Pre field work <sup>conference of U of Minn. —</sup> activities & discussions

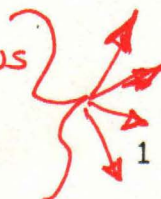
To complete an experiment concerning wild horse fertility control in the Clan Alpine Herd Management Area 150 mares between 3 and 12 years old had to be implanted with silicone capsules. Of these 150 mares, 100 were to receive capsules impregnated with hormones (estrogen or progesterone) and the remaining 50 received plain (control) silicone capsules.

FACT  
No P.I. assigned

FACT  
No gather plan  
WHAT PLANS/  
STRATEGIES

FACT was there any EA on the research plan was it reviewed.

ADD THE FACTS ON THESE VARIOUS SUBJECTS



FACT  
State what the rules are for research? ~~rules are~~ EAs for

Capture and treatments began 24 August 1987 and continued through 3 September 1987. During that period 493 horses were captured and handled (205 males, 288 females). Of these horses, 301 were marked with numbered collars, <sup>149</sup>150 of which were equipped with radio transmitters and were attached to the treated mares. The other <sup>152</sup>151 collars were attached to males and females too old for inclusion among experimental animals. One hundred ninety-two horses were not collared because they were less than 3 years old and considered too young to be fitted with permanent collars.

On 2 and 3 September 1987, a total of 133 horses were captured from the Augusta Mountains HMA and brought through an opening in the fence separating that HMA from the Clan Alpine HMA to the trap located in the northern part of the Clan Alpine HMA (86 on 2 Sep. and 47 on 3 Sep.) to complete treatment of mares for fertility control. All of the horses were taken from the area between Hole-in-the-Wall spring and the fence between the two HMA's. Thus, the maximum distance horses were moved was approximately 10 miles to the trap site (4-5 straight line miles). The path to the trap site was relatively flat with only one ridge, approximately 500 feet high, between the horses original position and the trap (Map 1).

Mares  
TO  
INSERT#)

Creek  
Clan Alpine HMA  
got 70 more  
than back to  
Shoshone

i.e. SEQUENCE - 1. SHOSHONE = DATE - X horse  
2. War Canyon = 100 Y  
3. Considered Camp Creek  
4. ~~got~~ went to Horse Creek in

ADD PRE - 31 AUGUST INFO

On 31 August 1987 after moving the trap to Horse Creek, 70 horses were caught and processed. At that time the gathering sub-contractor stated he was having difficulty locating unmarked horses. Some were present but were widely scattered and ran immediately when the helicopter was in the general area. Thus, capture would be inefficient due to the low density of horses and inhumane because any horses taken would have to be moved too far.

when did  
efficiency.  
enter picture

ADD HISTORIC FACTS  
DATA

On 1 September the representative from BLM drove to the Hole-in-the-Wall spring, north of the boundary fence between the Augusta and Clan Alpine HMA's.

ADD WEATHER  
FACTS.

ADD HORSE CONDITION  
FACTS.

Several bands of horses were seen watering, and 3-5 collared horses were present. These marked horses could have come only from south of the fence having been marked during the first 3 days of the capture effort. The horses at the spring were in very poor condition and flow from the spring was low requiring much effort for the horses to drink their fill.

Need to say when the horse was moved back to trap was Shoshone & retrievable.  
(moved back to Shoshone Sept 1 in P.M.)

Upon inspection of the fence separating the two allotments, several large (20-40 foot) gaps were found. There was a horse trail going through one of the gaps to a spring on the south side of the fence. The trails to the spring were well travelled from north to south of the fence. Similar trails occurred in two other locations indicating regular movement of horses between the two HMA's.

After discussing the lack of available horses in the Clan Alpines and the evidence suggesting regular movement between the two HMA's, BLM and University of Minnesota personnel decided the best alternative would be to move back to the north end of the Clan Alpine HMA and bring horses from the Augusta HMA through the gaps in the fence to the formerly used trap site near in Shoshone Meadow. It appeared that such a decision would have limited affect on either the welfare of the horses, which appeared to cross the fence regularly, or on the study being conducted by the University of Minnesota.

ADD FACT THE TO MOVE NORTH OF THE

INSERT \* 1

Of the 133 horses captured 75 were tagged with numbered collars. Silicone rubber capsules were implanted into 40 mares between 3 and 12 years old, and these 40 were equipped with radio collars. The remaining 33 marked horses were males or females too old to include in the fertility experiment. The remaining 58 were unmarked.

of the 75 tagged animals

MATH DOES NOT CHECK OUT

Eighty-one of the 86 horses captured on 2 Sep were released together approximately 7:30 that evening following appropriate experimental treatments. The 5 horses retained (3 young females and 2 young males) overnight in the corral were provided hay and water. These 5 horses were released together on the morning of 3 Sep after handling. The 47 horses captured on 3 Sep. were kept together until treatments were complete and all ~~could be~~ released at once.

Did the 86 get water  
Add water availability  
on the same day.

DISCOVERY

On 17 September 1987, during a routine census of the Augusta Mountain Herd Management Area (which includes the Hole-in-the-Wall allotment north of the Clan Alpine Herd Management Area), three dead horses were sighted along the fence near the cattleguard in T.23N, R.39E, Sec.13. Later that afternoon, an additional five carcasses were sighted at T.23N, R.38E, Sec. 13. cursory examinations of the carcasses, which were bloated, revealed no direct evidence of the cause of death, such as bullet wounds. However, ~~because of~~ the aggregation of the carcasses and their proximity to the fence, suggested a possibility the animals were shot.

zerial.  
add statement on why the 5 were held over. → ran out of time

AERIAL?  
OR  
GROUND?

On 18 September the Lahontan Resource Area Manager was briefed on the discovery of the dead animals. Also, the Nevada State Office law enforcement division was notified, as was the University of Minnesota. ~~The assumption was made~~ at that time was that the horses had been killed.

The NSO law enforcement staff began investigating the possibility of violations of the wild horse and burro act. This investigation is continuing due to the fact that during the capture operations, one yearling with a fresh brand and one yearling with a rope around it's neck were observed.

BLM (BOTH LAW ENFORCEMENT & OTHER RESOURCE TYPES)  
STATE SPECIFICALLY WHAT WAS GOING ON BETWEEN 9/18 & 10/28

On 8 October research personnel from the University of Minnesota drove to the research area to inspect the previously located horse carcasses. During that

visit 5 additional carcasses were discovered, each showing no obvious sign of cause of death, but like the 8 carcasses found earlier, were grouped together. Marker collars on several of the dead horses identified them as part of the University's research project on fertility control in wild horses. All of the marked horses had been captured on 2 or 3 September 1987 as part of groups brought across the fence separating the Augusta Mountain and Clan Alpine HMA's.

The university notified the Carson BLM office.

GIVE LOCATION

Show sequence of discovery

~~TRAP~~

Following these discoveries, University researchers chartered a helicopter on 19 October to locate and assess the status of all horses radio-tagged on 2 and 3 Sep. This search revealed additional dead horses and brought the total number of deaths recorded to 40. Included in these were two radio-tagged mares located by telemetry approximately one-half mile south of the trap site.

NEED LOCATIONS OF THESE NEW ONES

On 21 Oct the U of Minn notified Tim Reuss (BLM person)

FORMAL INVESTIGATION

what happened between 10/19 & 10/28 setting up team

On 28-30 October 1987 an investigation team composed of a veterinarian and BLM personnel, from law enforcement and management divisions, searched the entire fence line between the two allotments and examined the carcasses located there. In addition, a thorough search of areas north and south of the fence was conducted. A total of 46 dead horses was located, all of which were proximate to the fence. The two mares located south of the trap site were the only horses found by radio telemetry that were not included in the search by the investigation team. Thus, a total of 48 dead horses were discovered.

on date

Examination of each of 46 carcasses by BLM's law enforcement agent produced no evidence of shooting. Thus, no criminal activity was indicated in the deaths of the wild horses.

while walking the fence line in a westerly direction within 3 miles of the cattle guard located in Sec.

The 48 dead horses included 28 collared and 20 unmarked horses. Age and sex of the unmarked horses were not determined. Among the 28 collared horses were 8 males and 20 females, 16 of which had been treated with ~~hormone~~ implants and fitted with radio collars.

is this

#### VETERINARIANS STATEMENT - CAUSE OF DEATH

The 46 dead horses were found along the south side of the fence line between the Clan Alpine and Hole-in-the-Wall management areas. When I first viewed the dead animals, they had been dead approximately 6-8 weeks and the carcasses were in advanced decomposition. Because of this condition, no laboratory tests (ie. tissue samples and blood samples) could be used. All the dead horses were found in lateral recumbency without any signs of struggle before death. They were found in a few groups of 2 or 3 or as single horses with the exception of one large group of 22 horses. No sex or age group seems to predominate. Many were collared in the study but about 40% were not marked.

Various causes of death (ie. gunshot, poisoning, or toxic plants) were ruled out by physical examination of the carcasses and by finding no other horses or any type of animal affected in the same area.

In my best professional opinion, the cause of death was dehydration coupled with exhaustion and hyperthermia. From the history of the capture and release of the horses, it seems likely that they tried at great effort to return to the north side of the fence. Even though they were given water at the trap site before being released, the intense physical effort of trying to return to their home range along with an already quite poor body condition, the high

environmental temperatures at the time, and the lack of water in the area of the fence line, these horses became dehydrated to the point of exhaustion. The horses then collapsed or stayed with the collapsed horses until they too collapsed from the stress of dehydration and hyperthermia.

Dehydration is a very rapidly debilitating condition. Once this condition is present, reversal would require intravenous electrolyte solutions, rest, and shade to cool the animals. Therefore, even supplying water orally to these horses probably would not be able to correct the electrolyte imbalance already present.

signed: Gerald R. Peck, DVM

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon analysis of the above information, it is the consensus of the investigating team that the animals which died, did so as a result of a combination of the factors of: 1. high ambient temperatures; 2. animals being chased by a helicopter; 3. animals being handled for collection of research information; 4. animals being removed from their home range and; 5. animals not knowing the route to return to their home range/known water sources. As a result, the following recommendations are presented for consideration by the BLM in the future management of wild horses and burros on public lands.

Immediate Actions-- The Carson City District should return to the general area where the animals were captured and utilize a radio receiver to locate the two animals reported to be dead but not discovered by the investigating team, as well as any other radio telemetered animals which may be dead in that location. If confirmed that other animals are indeed dead in that general

*Animals chased 10 mi.  
Animals chased 1 hr before  
Animals poor condition*

location, it may be necessary to re-evaluate the logic that the fence played a major factor in the deaths of the animals. For example, the discovery of additional dead animals which are not located against the fence, may indicate that the animals were stressed to the point that even if they could have gotten through the fence, they may not have been capable of returning to their home range.

Future Actions-- The BLM in Nevada should adopt a policy regarding capture of wild horses and burros which provides for an analysis of various environmental conditions before the capture process begins. While it is difficult to determine an exact combination of factors which should exist in particular combination before attempting capture, a combination of travel distance and ambient temperatures should be considered. For example, it may be logical to place a limitation on the distance wild horses are herded, depending on the air temperatures or animal conditions encountered on a particular day of capture.

BLM should also adopt a policy regarding the movement of wild horses through fences with emphasis on minimizing or eliminating such movement. Some alternative examples of policy which could be adopted are as follows:

1. Do not move wild horses through fences under any circumstances
2. Do not move wild horses through fences unless the purpose of the capture effort is to remove the captured animals from the area forever.
3. Do not move wild horses through fences when the intent of the capture effort is to permanently remove the animals from the area, unless the trap being used has been proven to be a functional trap for capturing wild horses.
4. Whenever wild horses must be captured in a particular area, change trap locations instead of moving wild horses through fences.



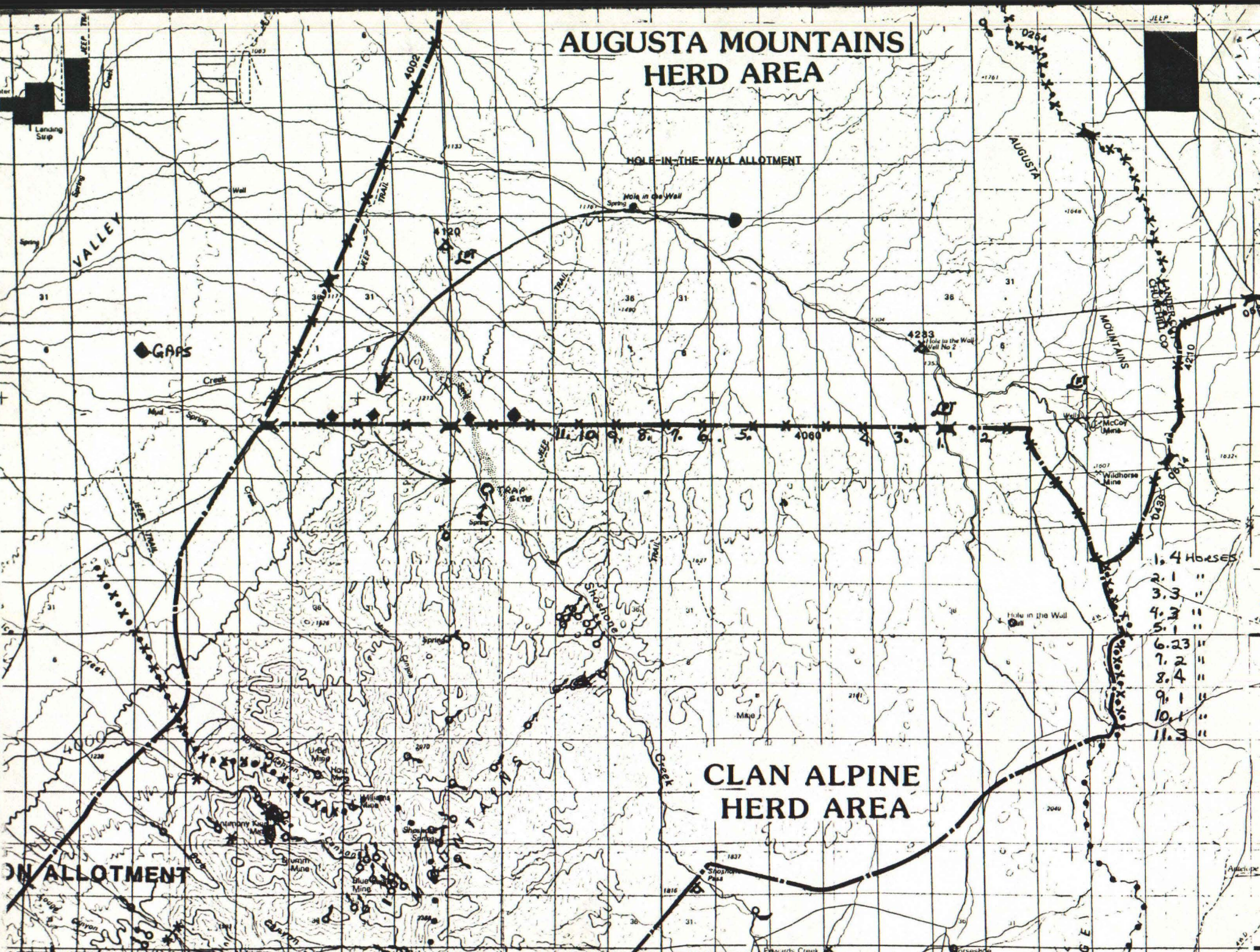
5. Do not move wild horses through fences unless free access around the fence can be obtained within a distance of a specified number of miles.

6. Do not move wild horses through fences when the intent of the capture effort is to return the animals to the range unless the animals can be returned to the side of the fence previously occupied upon release.

7. Do not relocate wild horses into new areas where fences could be encountered unless the animals are pre-conditioned into knowing where at least one water source is located prior to being released as free-ranging animals.

Finally BLM should assure that all employees involved in the wild horse and burro program are aware of the details of the wild horse deaths in the Clan Alpine HMA, so that to the extent possible, future incidences of this nature can be avoided.

# AUGUSTA MOUNTAINS HERD AREA



1.	4	Horses
2.	1	"
3.	3	"
4.	3	"
5.	1	"
6.	23	"
7.	2	"
8.	4	"
9.	1	"
10.	1	"
11.	3	"

# CLAN ALPINE HERD AREA

ON ALLOTMENT

R 37 E

R 38 E

R 39 E

R 40 E

MARKED UP FROM  
11/13/87 MTG

CONTRIBUTING ADMINISTRATIVE FACTORS

1. There were no written documents specifically defining the geographic and operational limits of the proposed operation in the Clau Alpine HMA. CHECK THIS OUT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A MEMO OR TWO.
2. There was no designated, on site project inspector with clear lines of communications <sup>and delegations</sup> of authorities, ~~and lines of communications.~~
3. There was no written log to provide continuity when BLM, on site personnel were changed.
4. No second observation helicopter was employed. CHECK THIS OUT
6. No attempt was made to verify the <sup>sub-</sup>contractors' <sup>(who had a vested interest)</sup> opinion that there were insufficient horses in the Horse Creek area. Data suggests that the sub-contractor ~~was not likely to have been~~ was motivated by ease of capture rather than meeting the objectives of the research. Specifically ~~the~~ the most successful day of capture <sup>in Horse Creek area</sup> was August 31, <sup>(70 head on August 31).</sup> ~~when 70 head were gathered~~ In addition the ~~capture area~~ Horse Creek area is rougher and has denser vegetation than the ~~rest of~~ portion of the Augusta Mountain HMA that was <sup>later</sup> selected.
7. No effort was made to locate horses in other parts of the Clau Alpine HMA. CHECK THIS OUT
4. <sup>By</sup> Going outside of the Clau Alpine HMA, although sanctioned by a BLM employee, <sup>this action</sup> was not consistent with earlier commitments ~~made~~ or the <sup>standing</sup> policy that horses will not be driven from one HMA to another. Because a gather was ~~planned~~ planned for FY88 for the Augusta Mountain ~~HMA~~ HMA it was specifically excluded from the research.   
The University of Minnesota abrogated their contract agreement.
8. ~~Herding~~ Herding horses a distance of twelve miles was not consistent with earlier commitments. This is particularly significant in light of the high temperatures and known poor condition of the horses.
9. There was limited exchange of information between the parties involved in collection of information.
10. There was no immediate follow up after handling the animals and disrupting their normal routines.
11. There is a familiarity with the sub contractor that causes some to believe his expertise is greater than our own and thus accept his opinions even when they contradict our own judgments.

~~\*~~  
NEXT STEPS

1. Clean this up
2. Add Draft Recommendations
3. Circulate to (Elliott, Phillips, Sweeney, R. Frei, Steele)
4. Call mtg for 24th 9:00AM to finalize the draft.
5. Put in semi final

INVESTIGATION REPORT  
INTO THE  
DEATHS OF WILD HORSES  
IN THE  
CLAN ALPINE HERD MANAGEMENT AREA

MARKED UP  
FROM 11/13/87

INTRODUCTION

6. Meet with SD/ASD on 12/8/87

← R., Steele, Elliott,

mail to D-R

649 Keelo Rd  
Las Cruces, NM 88005

The purpose of this report is to present findings and conclusions regarding investigations into the cause of death of at least 46 wild horses in the North end of the Clan Alpine Herd Management Area (HMA) of the Carson City District.

The death of these wild horses was discovered initially on 17 September 1987.

~~Further~~ field reviews revealed additional dead horses and the full field

and the investigation into the cause of death was concluded on 30 Oct. 1987.

Members of the investigation team included the following:

Andy Anderson, Carson City District Office

Len Sims, Nevada State Office

Milt Frei, Nevada State Office

Jerry Peck, Carson-Tahoe Veterinary Hospital

Tom Eagle, University of Minnesota

Tim Reuwsaat, Carson City District Office

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the Fiscal Year 1985, as a part of the Appropriation Act for the Bureau of Land Management, Congress directed the BLM to expend one million dollars in the research of wild horses on public lands. Pursuant to that Congressional direction, the BLM, in cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences, contracted with the University of Minnesota to undertake a scientific investigation into the area of fertility control in wild horse populations.

CHECK FOR DATA  
WE BELIEVE IT  
WAS SPRING  
86

As a part of this study, BLM representatives from the Washington Office, Nevada State Office and several Nevada District Offices met with the University of Minnesota research personnel on numerous occasions <sup>beginning in the Spring of 1986</sup> to select wild horse herds upon which to conduct the research and to agree upon other terms and conditions of the research. Some of the criteria and conditions which were understood, included the following:

1. The COR for the research contract would be located in the Washington Office <sup>Division of Wild Horses and Burro</sup> of BLM and a project inspector at the state or district level would not be assigned. <sup>SFT NUMBER by HMA</sup>

*In order to support the contract*

2. BLM would make <sup>versus</sup> ~~the~~ wild horse herds available for conducting the research and would not conduct any wild horse removals in those areas for ~~three~~ years. *Areas selected and numbers are —*

3. The University of Minnesota would work closely with BLM and advise them whenever horses were to be captured for research purposes

*4. Documentation for the above was accomplished through various correspondence.*

5. ~~4.~~ No capture plan or environmental assessment would be required since the capture of animals would be associated with research rather than the removal of excess animals.

As a result of <sup>the</sup> this understanding between BLM and the University of Minnesota, the Clan Alpine Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA) was selected as one of the research areas. *(COVERED ABOVE)*

*on ——— a post gather census was conducted in the Clan Alpine HMA and ——— horses were counted predominantly in the ——— portion of the HMA.*

On ~~Sept.~~ <sup>August</sup>, the University of Minnesota contacted the Carson City BLM office and told them that the University intended to capture and attach radio

telemetry devices to wild horses in the Clan Alpine HMA, <sup>beginning</sup> on ~~24 August~~ <sup>24 August</sup>. Therefore,

On <sup>21 August</sup> ~~21 August~~ the Carson City BLM conducted <sup>a</sup> ~~an~~ informal meeting with

representatives from the University of Minnesota to inform them that a district representative would be present at the capture site at all times and to

identify any restrictions which would be placed upon the research/capture effort. ~~As a result,~~ the University of Minnesota personnel were informed that any wild horses captured by them would not be <sup>run</sup> chased any further than 5 <sup>miles</sup> all wild horses would be herded by the helicopter in a manner that bands and foals would remain together and wild horses would be herded by the helicopter in a manner that foals would remain with their mothers.

To complete the experiment concerning wild horse fertility control in the Clan Alpine Herd Management Area, 150 mares between 3 and 12 years old had to be implanted with silicone capsules. Of these 150 mares, 100 were to receive capsules impregnated with hormones (estrogen or progesterone) and the remaining 50 received plain (control) silicone capsules.

Capture and treatments began 24 August 1987 and continued through 3 September 1987. During that period 493 horses were captured and handled (205 males, 288 females). Of these horses, 301 were marked with numbered collars, 149 of which were equipped with radio transmitters and were attached to the implanted mares. The other 152 collars were attached to males and females too old for inclusion among experimental animals. One hundred ninety-two horses were not collared because they were less than 3 years old and considered too young to be fitted with permanent collars.

The following table depicts a summary of the University of Minnesota's wild horse captures and trap locations in the Clan Alpine study area:

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>START DATE</u>	<u>END DATE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ANIMALS CAPTURED</u>	
Shoshone Meadows	8/24/87	8/26/87	165	55/day
War Canyon	8/28/87	8/30/87	125	41/day

Chase helicopter  
used 1/2 day's  
on 8/29

Not avail.  
on other days

Horse Creek 8/31/87 9/1/87

Shoshone Meadows 9/2/87 9/3/87

70

192

70 does not track with the 133 on pps  
86 and 47

When was the trap actually moved 8/30 or 8/31?

On 31 August 1987 after moving the trap to Horse Creek, 70 horses were caught in the Clan Alpine HMA and processed. At that time the gathering sub-

contractor stated he was having difficulty locating unmarked horses. Some were present but were widely scattered and ran immediately when the helicopter was

in the general area. Neither University nor BLM personnel verified the observation regarding horse numbers.

On 1 September the representative from BLM drove to the Hole-in-the-Wall spring, north of the boundary fence between the Augusta and Clan Alpine HMA's.

Several bands of horses were seen watering, and 3-5 collared horses were present. These marked horses could have come only from south of the fence in the Clan Alpine HMA, having been marked during the first 3 days of the capture effort. The horses at the spring were in very poor condition and flow from the spring was low.

Upon inspection of the fence separating the two allotments, several large (20-40 foot) gaps were found. There was a horse trail going through one of the gaps to a spring on the south side of the fence. The trails to the spring were well travelled from north to south of the fence. Similar trails occurred in two other locations indicating regular movement of horses between the two HMA's.

After discussing the lack of available horses in the Clan Alpines and the evidence suggesting regular movement between the two HMA's, BLM and University of Minnesota personnel decided the best alternative would be to move back to the north end of the Clan Alpine HMA and bring horses from the Augusta HMA through the gaps in the fence to the formerly used trap site in Shoshone Meadow. It appeared that such a decision would have limited affect on either

ADD WHETHER OR NOT WE HAD A CHASE HELICOPTER AND WHAT DAYS IT WAS PRESENT.

CHECK THIS OUT

Show the gaps and the trails on the map.

the welfare of the horses, which appeared to cross the fence regularly, or on the study being conducted by the University of Minnesota. Accordingly, the trap was moved back to the Shoshone Meadows location during the afternoon of 1 Sept.

On 2 and 3 September 1987, a total of 133 horses were captured from the Augusta Mountains HMA and brought through an opening in the fence separating that HMA from the Clan Alpine HMA, to the trap located in the northern part of the Clan Alpine HMA (86 on 2 Sep. and 47 on 3 Sep.) to complete treatment of mares for fertility control. All of the horses were taken from the area between Hole-in-the-Wall spring and the fence between the two HMA's. Thus, the maximum distance horses were moved was approximately 12 miles to the trap site, ~~(4-5 straight line miles)~~. The path to the trap site was relatively flat with only one ridge, approximately 500 feet high, between the horses original position and the trap (Map 1). Air temperatures were in the 90 plus degree range which was unusually warm for that particular time of year.

does not agree w/ pp 4 which says 192  
56  
47  
133

(PLOT THE STUFF ON THE MAP & LET'S MEASURE IT)

(SHOW THE HILL ON THE MAP)

Of the 133 horses captured, 75 were tagged with numbered collars. Of the 75 tagged animals, silicone rubber capsules were implanted into 42 mares between 3 and 12 years old, and these 42 equipped with radio collars. The additional 33 marked horses were males or females too old to include in the fertility experiment. The remaining 58 animals were not marked.

NUMBERS

Eighty-one of the 86 horses captured on 2 Sept. were released together approximately 7:30 that evening following appropriate experimental treatments. These animals were provided free access to water. The 5 horses retained (3 young females and 2 young males) overnight in the corral were provided hay and water. These 5 horses were held over night because there was not enough time remaining in the day to process them with the others and were released together on the morning of 3 Sep after handling. The 47 horses captured on 3 Sep were



kept together until treatments were complete and all could be released at once on the same day.

### DISCOVERY

On 17 September 1987, during a routine aerial census of the Augusta Mountain Herd Management Area (which includes the Hole-in-the-Wall allotment north of the Clan Alpine Herd Management Area), three dead horses were sighted along the fence near the cattleguard in T.23N, R.39E, Sec.13. Later that afternoon, an additional five carcasses were sighted from the helicopter at T.23N, R.38E, Sec. 13. cursory examinations of the carcasses, which were bloated, revealed no direct evidence of the cause of death, such as bullet wounds. However, the aggregation of the carcasses and their proximity to the fence, suggested a possibility the animals were shot.

*This seems to contradict George's notes. His notes say that he was notified 9/25/87.*

On 18 September the Lahontan Resource Area Manager was briefed on the discovery of the dead animals. Also, the University of Minnesota was notified and the investigation was turned over to the Nevada State Office law enforcement staff for investigation into what was assumed at that time to be a case of wild horses being shot illegally by a person or persons unknown.

*Message left on answering machine*

The NSO law enforcement staff began investigating the possibility of violations of the wild horse and burro act. This investigation is continuing because

*ADD THE ESSENCE OF GEORGE'S REPORT IN HERE IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.*

during the capture operations, one yearling with a fresh brand and one yearling with a rope around it's neck were observed.

On 26 Sept ----- (George's)

On 8 October research personnel from the University of Minnesota drove to the research area to inspect the previously located horse carcasses. During that visit, 5 additional carcasses were discovered while walking the fenceline.

These animals were scattered westerly along the fenceline within 3 miles of the cattleguard located in Section 12 T.23 N. R. 39 E. Each animal showed no obvious sign of cause of death, but like the 8 carcasses found earlier, were grouped together. Marker collars on several of the dead horses identified them as part of the University's research project on fertility control in wild horses. All of the marked horses had been captured on 2 or 3 September 1987 as part of groups brought across the fence separating the Augusta Mountain and Clan Alpine HMA's. On ----- Oct. 1987, the University of Minnesota notified the Carson City BLM Office of this discovery.

on 13 October - (use George's material)  
on 18 October - (metal detector - use George's material)

Following these discoveries, University researchers chartered a helicopter on 19 October to locate and assess the status of all horses radio-tagged on 2 and 3 Sep. This search revealed additional dead horses and brought the total number of deaths recorded to 40. Included in these were two radio-tagged mares located by telemetry approximately one-half mile south of the trap site. The University of Minnesota notified Tim Reuwsaat, Wild Horse Specialist, Carson City District Office on or about 21 Oct. 1987. need to explain here what

happened between 10/19 and 10/28

24 October - contacted ranchers Dixie valley - use  
~~27~~ 27 October - arranged for vet

#### FORMAL INVESTIGATION

On 28-30 October 1987 an investigation team composed of a veterinarian and BLM personnel, from law enforcement and management divisions, searched the entire fence line between the two allotments and examined the carcasses located there. In addition, a thorough search of areas north and south of the fence was conducted. A total of 46 dead horses was located, all of which were proximate to the fence. The two mares located south of the trap site found by University of Minnesota personnel through radio telemetry were the only horses that were

not included in the search by the investigation team. Thus, a total of 48 dead horses was discovered.

Examination of each of 46 carcasses by BLM's law enforcement agent on 30 Oct. produced no evidence of shooting. Thus, no criminal activity was indicated in the deaths of the wild horses.

The 48 dead horses included 28 collared and 20 unmarked horses. Age and sex of the unmarked horses were not determined. Among the 28 collared horses were 8 males and 20 females, 16 of which had been treated with implants and fitted with radio collars.

#### VETERINARIANS STATEMENT - CAUSE OF DEATH

The 46 dead horses were found along the south side of the fence line between the Clan Alpine and Hole-in-the-Wall management areas. When I first viewed the dead animals, they had been dead approximately 6-8 weeks and the carcasses were in advanced decomposition. Because of this condition, no laboratory tests (ie. tissue samples and blood samples) could be used. All the dead horses were found in lateral recumbency without any signs of struggle before death. They were found in a few groups of 2 or 3 or as single horses with the exception of one large group of 22 horses. No sex or age group seems to predominate. Many were collared in the study but about 40% were not marked.

Various causes of death (ie. gunshot, poisoning, or toxic plants) were ruled

out by physical examination of the carcasses and by finding no other horses or any type of animal affected in the same area.

In my best professional opinion, the cause of death was dehydration coupled with exhaustion and hyperthermia. From the history of the capture and release of the horses, it seems likely that they tried at great effort to return to the north side of the fence. Even though they were given water at the trap site before being released, the intense physical effort of trying to return to their home range along with an already quite poor body condition, the high environmental temperature at the time, and the lack of water in the area of the fenceline, these horses became dehydrated to the point of exhaustion. The horses then collapsed or stayed with the collapsed horses until they too collapsed from the stress of dehydration and hyperthermia.

Dehydration is a very rapidly debilitating condition. Once this condition is present, reversal would require intravenous electrolyte solutions, rest, and shade to cool the animals. Therefore, even supplying water orally to these horses probably would not be able to correct the electrolyte imbalance already present.

signed: Gerald R. Peck, DVM

CONTRIBUTING

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon analysis of the above information, it is the consensus of the

fence gap - maintenance

MAP entire HMA

Show gaps in fence

Show War Canyon trap site

Show Horse Creek " "

Showone Creek " "

~~2nd of~~ Show drive route for 2/3 sept

Show the 500' hill.

INVESTIGATION REPORT  
INTO THE  
DEATHS OF WILD HORSES  
IN THE  
CLAN ALPINE HERD MANAGEMENT AREA

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to present findings and conclusions regarding investigations into the cause of death of at least 46 wild horses in the North end of the Clan Alpine Herd Management Area (HMA) of the Carson City District.

The death of these wild horses was discovered initially on 17 September 1987 and the investigation into the cause of death was concluded on 30 Oct. 1987.

Members of the investigation team included the following:

Andy Anderson, Carson City District Office

Len Sims, Nevada State Office

Milt Frei, Nevada State Office

Jerry Peck, Carson-Tahoe Veterinary Hospital

Tom Eagle, University of Minnesota

Tim Reuwsaat, Carson City District Office

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the Fiscal Year 1985, as a part of the Appropriation Act for the Bureau of Land Management, Congress directed the BLM to expend one million dollars in the research of wild horses on public lands. Pursuant to that Congressional direction, the BLM, in cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences, contracted with the University of Minnesota to undertake a scientific investigation into the area of fertility control in wild horse populations.

## CONTRIBUTING ADMINISTRATIVE FACTORS

1. There were no written documents specifically defining the geographic and operational limits of the proposed operation in the Clay Alpine HMA.
2. There was no designated, on site project inspector with clear lines of communications, delegations, authorities and lines of communications.
- 3
3. There was no written log to provide continuity when BLM, on site personnel were changed.
54. No attempt was made to verify the <sup>sub-</sup>contractor's opinion that there were insufficient horses in the Horse Creek area. Data suggests that the sub-contractor ~~was could easily have been~~ was motivated by ease of capture rather than meeting the objectives of the research. Specifically ~~the~~ the most successful day of capture was August 31<sup>in Horse Creek area (70 head on August 31)</sup> ~~when 70 head were gathered~~. In addition the ~~capture area~~ Horse Creek area is rougher and has denser vegetation than the ~~rest of~~ portion of the Augusta Mountain HMA that was selected.
65. No effort was made to locate horses in other parts of the Clay Alpine HMA.
37. Going outside of the Clay Alpine HMA, although sanctioned by a BLM employee, was not consistent with earlier commitments. ~~made~~
67. Herding horses a distance of twelve miles was not consistent with earlier commitments. This is particularly significant in light of the high temperatures and known poor condition of the horses.

Dan

One thing which is still missing from the wild horse report, is some info. from law enforcement concerning what they were doing between 9/18 & 10/28

Bob. Steele. \_\_\_\_\_

We need for Lynn or George to write down a chronological discussion of what they were doing between 9/18-10/28. The ball was pretty much in their court during that time. We don't necessarily need names of who they were investigating but we are trying to specifically show that we were active during that period. To do this the other sections (AM, Tim, etc.) are giving a description of each action they took with date, location, nature of the activity. - Frei is the point of contact on this. - ~~do~~ you heard Fred W. in staff meeting as far as priorities & getting it done. - Can you ~~help~~ pass this on to them, please. -

Thank you  
Dan R 11/9/87

1. Wants qualified/certified people  
outly working in the program

~~2. No collected report.~~  
2. No sanitized report.

3. Not looking for a public hearing

## Map.

A. location Clan Alpine HMA / location Augusta  
POP 1449 / AML 1575 POP 782 / AML 684

B. location of fence

C. location of trap

D. location of where animals were brought from N  
side of fence

E. location of where animals were brought from S  
side of fence

F. direction taken to fence + trap

G. location of dead

H. age + sex of dead

I. direction animals were released

J. Where is the plan for contingencies?

1. How many horses were captured in  
Clan Alpine?
2. How many horses were captured in  
Augusta?
3. How many horses were captured, implanted,  
and/or collared in Clan Alpine?
4. How many horses were captured, implanted,  
and/or collared in Augusta?
5. Does the fence separate the Clan Alpine  
HMA and the Augusta HMA?
6. What is the purpose of the fence?



- 7. Who is responsible for its maintenance?
- 8. Did Bem know the fence was there when capture was authorized in the Augusta?  
*What idea was it to expand area?*
- 9. How many animals/hands were brought in at one time? *In general - ~~was~~ what was the size of the groups that were being brought in.*
- 10. How do you read the distance on the map the horses were moved?
- 11. Were you aware that ~~Wron~~ had the personal assurances from Mike Phillips that horses would not be brought more than 3-4 miles?
- 12. It was my understanding from Jim that Bem had agreed not to touch the research horses for at least 3 years?
- 13. Isn't the Augusta HMA scheduled for roundup in FY 88?
- 14. How are you going to keep that commitment to the research now that the research area has been expanded to the Augusta?
- 15. How this mean no roundup in the Augusta?
- 16. How are you going to assure no hard disruption of these research animals if roundups do occur?

- 17. How many of the dead horses were implanted and/or collared?
- 18. How do you know the animals that died were from the N side of fence?
- 19. What time were animals captured?
- 20. What time were they released?
- 21. What was the temperature during capture?
- 22. Were horses from N side of fence released with horses from S side of fence.
- 23. When the research project began Eagle said he had trouble locating enough horses. If the actual count given by BEM is 1449 horses and 50% of that population is females, assuming 30% are non reproductive, the 60-70% reproductive females left in the population would be 420-490. Is BEM trying to tell me that they couldn't locate 200 mares out of the Clan Alpine population?

Having quite some knowledge about previous capture techniques the first idea that springs to mind for a possible explanation of why BEM would expand the research area is the fact the S side would have been so disrupted &

(4)

Scattered, the easiest & cheapest method would be to go into an area that had not been ~~disturbed~~ disrupted.

24. Why was Andy Anderson supervising the Contract?

25. Who was the observer in the chase helicopter?

26. Where were the horses released?

27. Why, when the initial 8 horses were discovered on Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> did it take so long for an investigative team?

Oct 17 (dead about a wk) Oct 19 - 5 more

Oct 27 - 40

28. How long was helicopter gone between captures?

29. It is my understanding that water was made available to the captured horses, is that true?

30. How many roundups have you attended? Have you spent any time observing captured animals?

It is my experience, as well, others that panicked animals will not drink unless kept long enough to settle down.

Location	Start Date	End Date	Number Horses	Number Radios	Number Markers	Number Unmarked
Shoshone Meadow	8-24-87	8-26-87	165	52	54	59
War Canyon	8-28-87	8-30-87	125	35	37	53
Horse Creek	8-31-87	9-01-87	70	20	28	22
Shoshone Meadow	9-02-87	9-03-87	133	42	33	58
Total			493	149	152	192

TABLE 1. Summary of University of Minnesota's Wild Horse Captures in the Clear Alpine Mountains, 24 Aug 87 - 3 Sep 87.

~~NOTE - THE FIRST TRAP ON 8-24-87~~

ALL HORSES CAPTURED ON 2-3 SEP CAME FROM AUGUSTA MOUNTAINS ALLOTMENT.

2-3 Sep 87

SORTED BY COLLAR #

VIEW DATA

CASE	HORSE	DATE	AGE	SEX	MHZ	DEATH
115	460	870902	11	1	0	0
116	461	870902	15	1	0	0
131	476	870902	3	1	0	870915
132	477	870902	20	1	0	0
133	478	870902	3	1	0	870915
134	479	870902	3	1	0	0
135	480	870902	20	2	0	0
136	481	870902	14	2	0	0
137	482	870902	25	1	0	870915
138	483	870902	11	1	0	0
139	484	870902	3	1	0	0
140	485	870902	16	1	0	0
141	486	870902	4	1	0	0
142	487	870902	11	1	0	870915
143	488	870902	13	1	0	0
144	489	870902	22	2	0	0
190	675	870903	15	2	0	870915
191	676	870903	11	1	0	0
192	677	870903	20	1	0	0
193	678	870903	11	1	0	870915
194	693	870902	3	2	164	0
195	694	870903	3	2	164	0
196	698	870902	5	2	164	0
197	700	870902	9	2	164	0
198	702	870903	3	2	164	0
199	704	870903	8	2	164	870915
200	705	870902	6	2	164	870915
201	706	870902	5	2	164	0
202	707	870903	8	2	164	870915
203	708	870902	3	2	164	0
204	709	870902	3	2	164	0
205	710	870903	7	2	164	0
206	711	870902	7	2	164	0
207	712	870903	3	2	164	870915
208	713	870902	10	2	164	0
209	714	870903	3	2	164	870915
211	720	870902	8	2	165	870915
212	721	870903	8	2	165	870904
213	723	870902	4	2	165	0
214	724	870903	3	2	165	870915
215	725	870903	3	2	165	0
216	726	870902	8	2	165	870915
217	727	870903	8	2	165	0
218	728	870902	7	2	165	0
219	729	870903	6	2	165	870915
220	730	870902	8	2	165	0
221	743	870902	3	2	165	870915
222	745	870903	3	2	165	0
223	746	870902	4	2	165	0
225	749	870902	7	2	165	0
226	752	870902	8	2	165	870915
230	757	870902	6	2	165	0
231	758	870902	3	2	165	870915
232	759	870902	3	2	165	0
233	760	870902	3	2	165	870915
234	761	870902	3	2	165	870915
235	762	870902	8	2	165	0
236	763	870902	10	2	165	870915
239	766	870902	3	2	165	0
240	767	870902	11	2	164	0
241	768	870902	7	2	164	870915
242	769	870902	4	2	164	870915
289	978	870903	18	2	0	0
290	979	870903	3	1	0	0
291	982	870903	18	2	0	0
292	983	870903	11	1	0	0
293	984	870903	7	1	0	0
294	985	870903	18	2	0	870915
295	986	870902	8	1	0	0
296	987	870902	14	1	0	870915
297	992	870902	17	2	0	0
298	993	870902	20	1	0	870915
299	994	870902	15	2	0	0
300	995	870902	4	1	0	870915
301	997	870902	19	2	0	870915

SEX - 1 = MALE  
2 = FEMALE

MHZ - 0 means  
IMPLANTED + RADIO-TAGGED

2-3 Sep 87

SORTED BY ORDER OF HANDLING

VIEW DATA

CASE	HORSE	DATE	AGE	SEX	MHZ	DEATH
363	769	870902	4	2	164	870915
364	698	870902	5	2	164	0
368	461	870902	15	1	0	0
370	749	870902	7	2	165	0
372	730	870902	8	2	165	0
374	476	870902	3	1	0	870915
375	460	870902	11	1	0	0
376	<u>752</u>	870902	8	2	165	870915
377	<u>763</u>	870902	10	2	165	870915
378	768	870902	7	2	164	870915
380	761	870902	3	2	165	870915
381	767	870902	11	2	164	0
383	489	870902	22	2	0	0
385	746	870902	4	2	165	0
386	488	870902	13	1	0	0
388	<u>487</u>	870902	11	1	0	870915
390	<u>720</u>	870902	8	2	165	870915
391	486	870902	4	1	0	0
392	485	870902	16	1	0	0
393	759	870902	3	2	165	0
397	<u>758</u>	870902	3	2	165	870915
398	757	870902	6	2	165	0
399	484	870902	3	1	0	0
400	483	870902	11	1	0	0
401	<u>760</u>	870902	3	2	165	870915
402	<u>482</u>	870902	25	1	0	870915
403	728	870902	7	2	165	0
404	700	870902	9	2	164	0
407	766	870902	3	2	165	0
409	481	870902	14	2	0	0
410	723	870902	4	2	165	0
411	762	870902	8	2	165	0
412	711	870902	7	2	164	0
414	693	870902	3	2	164	0
416	480	870902	20	2	0	0
417	479	870902	3	1	0	0
418	<u>478</u>	870902	3	1	0	870915
420	477	870902	20	1	0	0
421	<u>997</u>	870902	19	2	0	870915
422	<u>995</u>	870902	4	1	0	870915
428	705	870902	6	2	164	870915
429	994	870902	15	2	0	0
430	<u>993</u>	870902	20	1	0	870915
431	992	870902	17	2	0	0
433	<u>726</u>	870902	8	2	165	870915
434	706	870902	5	2	164	0
438	<u>987</u>	870902	14	1	0	870915
440	743	870902	3	2	165	870915
442	708	870902	3	2	164	0
443	986	870902	8	1	0	0
444	709	870902	3	2	164	0
446	713	870902	10	2	164	0
447	694	870903	3	2	164	0
453	<u>985</u>	870903	18	2	0	870915
454	984	870903	7	1	0	0
455	745	870903	3	2	165	0
456	727	870903	8	2	165	0
458	<u>707</u>	870903	8	2	164	870915
460	725	870903	3	2	165	0
461	983	870903	11	1	0	0
462	982	870903	18	2	0	0
464	<u>704</u>	870903	8	2	164	870915
468	979	870903	3	1	0	0
473	729	870903	6	2	165	870915
475	678	870903	11	1	0	870915
476	676	870903	11	1	0	0
479	714	870903	3	2	164	870915
481	677	870903	20	1	0	0
482	721	870903	8	2	165	870904
484	<u>675</u>	870903	15	2	0	870915
488	702	870903	3	2	164	0
489	978	870903	18	2	0	0
490	712	870903	3	2	164	870915
492	<u>724</u>	870903	3	2	165	870915
493	710	870903	7	2	164	0

Horse #8 ~~is~~ Sorrel mare under 2 yr

#9 Bay ♂ Collar #478 9/2/87

#10 Bay ♀ collar #752 9/2/87

#11 Sorrel mare #726 9/2/87

#12 Sorrel mare #758 9/2/87

#13 Black foal

#14 Sorrel Stud < 2 yr

#15 Sorrel mare #707 9/3/87

#16 Sorrel stud #987 9/2/87

#17 Bay stud #997 9/2/87

#18 Brown stud < 2 yr

#19 Brown filly < 2 yr

#20 Sorrel > 12 yr

#21 Buckskin #760 9/2/87

#22 Buckskin > 12 yr

#23 Black foal or (parts only)

#24 Brown foal

#25 Sorrel stud < 2 yr

#26 Sorrel stud < 2 yr

#27 Sorrel foal or

#28 Sorrel stud #995 9/2/87

#29 Sorrel pinto <sup>stud</sup> #993 9/2/87

#30 Black filly < 2 yr

724 }  
487 }  
9/2 720 } found by  
9/3 675 } T. Reuwsaat  
9/3 704 }  
9/3 985 }

478 ✓

752 ✓

726 ✓

758 ✓

707 ✓

987 ✓

997 ✓

760 ✓

995 ✓

993 ✓

724 ✓

487 ✓

720 ✓

675 ✓

704 ✓

985 or 785

11



11/3/87

insert 2.

TO: Milt Frei, Wild Horse Specialist, N.S.O.  
FROM: Len Sims, SAC/N.S.O.  
Subject: Investigation NV-03-09-87-021-093  
Wild Horses, Clear Alpine Range

This writer inspected 41 carcasses of wild horses along the fence line of the Hole in the Wall and the Clear Alpine grazing allotments on 10/28 - 10/30.

The carcasses had no bullets, no bullet holes and no broken bones that would indicate that they had been shot.

Each carcass was examined with the use of a metal detector (bullet sniffer). Each animal was turned over so that each side was examined.

The above actions show that no criminal activity was involved in the death of the wild horses.

Leonard L. Sims  
SAC/N.S.O.