



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:

4130 CF
(NV-03480)
273014
273037

Certified Mail (P 398 784 745)
Return Receipt Requested

Wild Horse Organized Assistance
P.O. Box 555
Reno, NV 89504

JUN 10 1994

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a copy of the Mississippi Canyon Allotment Multiple Use Decision (MUD) for your review and comment. The review period ends on June 24, 1994. Thank you for your interest and involvement.

Sincerely yours,

ACTING

James M. Phillips
Area Manager
Lahontan Resource Area

Enclosure:

1. Mississippi Canyon Allotment Multiple Use Decision.



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

RECEIVED

IN REPLY REFER TO:

JUN 07 1994

CF-4130
(NV-03480)
273014
273037

DEPT. OF ADMINISTRATION
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Certified Mail (P 398 784 737)
Return Receipt Requested

Certified Mail (P 398 784 738)
Return Receipt Requested

Gary Snow
3500 Cushman Road
Fallon, NV 89406

Joyce Casey
P.O. Box 1323
Fallon, NV 89406

JUN 07 1994

Proposed Multiple Use Decision Mississippi Canyon Allotment

The Record of Decision for the Lahontan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Lahontan Resource Management Plan was completed September 3, 1985. These documents established the multiple use goals and objectives which guide management of the public land on Mississippi Canyon Allotment. The Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) issued in October of 1985, and updated in 1989, further identified the allotment specific objectives for Mississippi Canyon Allotment. On November 9, 1989, a final livestock decision was issued for the Dixie Valley, Hare Canyon and Mississippi Canyon Allotments. The final decision established the normal operation for the Mississippi Canyon Allotment (03025) to be 12 cattle from March 1 to February 28 each year at 100 percent public land and 150 AUM's preference. The Mississippi Canyon Allotment Evaluation was completed on May 6, 1994.

Monitoring data has been collected since 1976. Additional monitoring, as identified in the RPS, was established on Mississippi Canyon Allotment to determine if existing multiple uses for the allotment were consistent with attainment of the objectives established by the RPS.

The data was analyzed in 1994, through the allotment evaluation process, to; (1.) Determine progress in meeting multiple use objectives for Mississippi Canyon Allotment, and (2.) Determine what changes if any in existing management are required in order to meet specific multiple use objectives for this allotment. Through the consultation, coordination and cooperation process (CCC), input from affected interests was considered in the Mississippi Canyon Allotment Evaluation. It was determined that a change in existing management was required, in order to meet multiple use objectives for this allotment. The evaluation identified specific technical recommendations which included monitoring, removal of all wild horses outside of the HMA and a rangeland division that would place portions of the Mississippi Canyon Allotment in both Boyer Ranch and Copper Kettle Allotments.

The specific multiple use objectives of the Lahontan RMP, Rangeland Program Summary and the Mississippi Canyon Allotment Management Evaluation for Mississippi Canyon Allotment are found in Appendix I.

Using the above planning documents and activity plans and in consideration of the current condition of the rangeland resources on the Mississippi Canyon Allotment, my proposed decision is as follows:

By maintaining the wild horses and livestock AUM's at this level (current number) it is anticipated that Land Use Plan objectives will be met including maintaining or improving current ecological condition. Because the existing number (2) of horses is in balance with their habitat no action will be taken with regard to adjusting the horse population.

AUTHORITY: Authority for the this decision is contained in Section 3(a) and (b) of the Wild-Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (P.L. 92-195) as amended and in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, 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."

4710.4: "Management of wild horses 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: "Upon examination of current information and a determination by the authorized officer that an excess of wild horses or burros exists, the authorized officer shall remove the excess animals immediately..."

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 Lahontan 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 proposed decision is in error.

WILDLIFE DECISION

It has been determined through the allotment evaluation process that cattle utilization in the allotment since 1989 has not exceeded acceptable levels in either bighorn sheep or riparian habitat.

Monitoring will continue and may result in future adjustments if data indicate habitat conditions are declining.

RATIONALE: The Mississippi Canyon Allotment provides habitat and forage for an unquantified number of mule deer, bighorn sheep, and a variety of other species. Mule deer have never been abundant in the allotment. Desert bighorn sheep numbers in the entire Stillwater Mountain Range have shown an increasing or stable trend since 1989. Limiting utilization of grasses in upland and riparian areas to 55% should allow sufficient growth on these and other species to maintain or improve the vegetative community which provides wildlife habitat.

GUIDANCE: Stillwater Range Habitat Management Plan, 1987. Lahontan Resource Management Plan, Environmental Impact Statement, 1985.

APPENDIX I.

Lahontan Allotment Specific Objectives:

1. Land Use Plan Objectives (Lahontan RMP, 1985):

The Rangeland Program Summary (1989) developed more specific objectives for the Mississippi Canyon Allotment based on the Land Use Plan Objectives (Lahontan RPS) Update Objectives (1989). Further refinement of these objectives (by habitat area) will be identified in the Conclusions and proposed in Technical Recommendations sections.

2. Rangeland Program Summary Update Objectives (1989):

a. Long Term:

1. Maintain existing ecological condition and trend.
2. Maintain or improve wild horse habitat consistent with wildlife and livestock objectives.
3. Maintain or improve free-roaming behavior of wild horses by protecting or enhancing wild horse home ranges.
4. Maintain or improve wild horse habitat by assuring that all waters remain open to use by wild horses.

b. Short Term:

1. Maintain utilization not to exceed 55% on identified key species on upland key areas.
2. Initially allow 150 AUM's for cattle.
3. Initially provide approximately 24 AUM's of forage for approximately 2 wild horses.

3. Mississippi Canyon Allotment Evaluation Recommendations - May 1994.

The following Technical Recommendations have been approved by the Lahontan Area Manager.

A. TR#1:

Add the following objectives:

Riparian:

Long Term:

Achieve and maintain proper functioning condition of all riparian areas within the allotment.

B. TR#2:

A rangeland division would be made between the Boyer Ranch Allotment and Copper Kettle Allotment whereby portions of Mississippi Canyon will be attached to each.