



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CARSON CITY DISTRICT OFFICE
1535 Hot Springs Rd., Ste. 300
Carson City, Nevada 89701

G 10/24/86
IN REPLY REFER TO:

4700
(NV-037)

OCT 24 1986

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

Dear Sir:

Enclosed is the Pinenut Wild Horse Removal Plan and Environmental Assessment. There were several changes in the Plan in response to comments received concerning the amount of Bureau of Land Management contract supervision.

Individual responses to commenters, whom have requested information, will be forthcoming.

Sincerely yours,

Norman L. Murray
District Manager

Enclosure:
As Stated

PINENUT
WILD HORSE REMOVAL PLAN

I. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to discuss implementation of the proposed action which is to remove excess numbers of wild horses to bring the population down to the appropriate management level identified in the Walker Resource Management Plan.

II. Area of Concern

The area of concern is the Pinenut Herd Area which is located in the Pinenut Mountains east and southeast of Carson City, Nevada (see attached map).

III. Numbers of Wild Horses

Two aerial censuses have been conducted in the Pinenut Herd Use Area recently. The first census was conducted on June 9, 1986, and resulted in 466 wild horses being counted. In the most recent census, conducted on September 18, 1986, 437 wild horses were counted. This second count is within six percent of the first count and therefore supports the 466 figure used to determine the number of wild horses to be removed.

The removal of 209 wild horses will bring the number visually counted down to 256 wild horses. By applying the ratio of visual sightings to estimated numbers which was determined by the University of Minnesota specifically for this herd area, the estimated number of wild horses remaining will be 387. This is the appropriate management level as identified in the 1986 Walker Management Decisions Summary.

IV. Methods for Removal and Safety

The methods employed during this 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. Several Bureau employees will be supervising the

contractor at all times during the gathering operation. The following stipulations and procedures will be followed during the contract to ensure the welfare, safety and humane treatment of the wild horses.

1. The helicopter shall be used in such a manner that bands or herds will tend to remain together, this includes small foals.

The Carson City District will use an observation helicopter as the primary means in which to supervise the use of the project helicopter. In the absence of an observation helicopter, the project helicopter or saddle horses may be used to place a BLM observer on a point overlooking the area of the helicopter herding the wild horses.

2. The rate of movement shall not exceed limitations set by the Contracting Officer's Representative, (COR), a BLM employee, who shall consider terrain, weather, distance to be traveled, and condition of the animals.

BLM will not allow horses to be herded more than 12 miles nor faster than a rate of 20 miles per hour. The COR may determine the distance and rate needs to be reduced if the route to the trap site is so steep and/or rocky that wild horses are being stressed or risk injury.

3. When refueling, the helicopter must remain a distance of at least 1,000 feet or more from the temporary holding facility, vehicles (other than fuel truck), and personnel not involved in refueling.
4. All such transportation shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of horses and burros.
5. Vehicles shall be inspected and approved by the COR.
6. Vehicles shall be in good repair, or adequate rated capacity, and operated so as to insure that captured animals are transported without undue risk or injury. Bobtail trucks and trucks with stockracks may not be used to transport animals from traps to holding facilities. Only stocktrailers (minimum height 6'6") will be allowed for this purpose.
7. Only Bobtail trucks (minimum height 6'6"), stocktrailers (minimum height 6'6"), or single deck trucks (minimum height 6'6") can be used to haul horses from the temporary holding facility to final destination. Single deck trucks with

trailers 40 feet or longer are required to have two partition gates to separate horses. Trailers less than 40 feet need only one partition gate to separate the horses. The use of double deck trailers is unacceptable and shall not be allowed.

8. All vehicles used to transport animals to final destination shall be equipped with doors at the rear end of the vehicle. At least one of these rear doors shall be capable of sliding either horizontally or vertically.

The contractor will not be allowed to proceed working on the contract until all vehicles and equipment are in compliance with these stipulations.

9. Floors of vehicles shall be provided with a non-skid surface such as sand, mineral soil, or wood shavings in sufficient quantities to prevent the animals from slipping.

This will be confirmed prior to every load by a BLM employee before loading will be allowed.

10. The number of animals to be loaded and transported in any vehicle shall be as directed by the COR and may include limitations on numbers according to age, size, sex, temperament and animal condition.

The BLM employee supervising the loading of the wild horses to be transported from the trap to the temporary holding corral will require separation of small foals and/or weak horses from the rest should he feel that they may be injured during the trip. He will consider the distance and condition of the road in making this determination. Horses shipped from the temporary holding corral to the BLM facility will be separated by studs, mares and foals (including small yearlings). Further separation may be required should condition of the animals warrant. However, during the most recent census, the condition of the animals appears to be good.

The BLM employee supervising the loading will exercise his authority to off load animals should he feel there are too many horses on the trailer.

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

12. If the COR determines that dust conditions are such that the animals could be endangered during transportation, the contractor will be instructed to reduce speed.

Periodic checks by BLM employees will be made as the horses are transported along dirt roads. If speed restrictions are placed in effect, then BLM employees will follow and/or time trips to ensure compliance.

13. The COR shall be responsible for determining the need and providing for the treatment of sick or injured animals. The COR shall also determine if injured, sick, lame, or old animals must be destroyed and provide for destruction of such animals. The Contractor shall dispose of the carcasses as directed by the COR. If the COR is unsure of the severity of an injury or sickness, he will require the contractor to separate the animal from the others to better examine the animal.
14. All capture attempts shall be accomplished by the utilization of a helicopter and wing riders if necessary. Roping will be done only when necessary, as determined by the COR. Under no circumstances will horses be tied down for more than one hour.

Roping will be allowed only to capture an orphaned foal or a suspected wet mare.

15. All traps and holding facilities not located on public land must have prior approval of the landowner. All locations must be approved by the COR prior to construction.

If tentative trap sites are not located near enough to the concentrations of horses (as noted during the latest census), then the trap site will not be approved. The trap will be moved closer to the horses. Also, trap sites will not be approved where barbed-wire fences are used as wing, wing extension or to turn the horses, during herding, toward the trap.

16. All traps, wings, and holding facilities shall be constructed to handle the animals in a safe and humane manner. Traps, wings and holding facilities shall be constructed of portable panels, the top of which shall not be less than 72 inches high, and the bottom rail of which shall not be more than 12 inches from ground level. All traps and holding facilities shall be oval or round in design. All loading chute sides and runway panels shall be covered with plywood or like material. The runway shall be a minimum of 36' long and a minimum of 6' high. The loading chute shall also be a minimum of 6' high.

Particular attention will be to ensure that there are no sharp corners for horses to run into. All the standards for equipment in this stipulation will be checked during the inspection prior to work commencing.

17. No fence modification will be made without authorization.

If the route the contractor wishes to herd horses passes through a fence, the contractor will be required to roll up the fencing material and pull up the posts to provide at least 1/4 mile of gap. The standing fence on each side of the gap will be well flagged for a distance of 300 yards from the gap on each side. Fence locations and hazards have been plotted on a map which will be provided to the contractor during the pre-work conference.

18. Where required by the COR, animals shall be sorted as to age, number, size, temperament, sex and condition when in holding corrals so as to minimize, to the extent possible, injury due to fighting and trampling. Alternate corrals shall be furnished by the contractor to separate mares and small foals, and stray animals from the other horses.

For this contract, the studs will be separated from the mares and foals as a minimum. As mentioned, a sick pen may be required.

19. Horses held for 10 hours or more in the traps and/or holding facilities shall be provided fresh clean water by the Contractor, in an amount of a minimum of 10 gallons per horse per day.

If the animals are left in the trap overnight, the studs must be separated from the mares and foals.

20. Horses held for 10 hours or more in the traps or holding facility shall be provided good quality grass or grass alfalfa hay mix at the rate of not less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of body weight per day.

V. Disposition of Removed Animals

The wild horses removed will be sent to either Palomino Valley Wild Horse and Burro Placement Center or Susanville District Wild Horse Processing Center, to be processed for adoption. Some wild horses may be shipped to a contract holding facility in Fallon, Nevada, to await processing at Palomino Valley.

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

VI. Dates of the Removal

This removal is planned to begin on or around October 15, 1986. The removal is expected to be completed by the end of October, 1986.

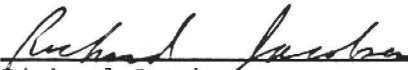
VII. Responsibility

The Contracting Officer's Representative and Project Inspectors, all from the Carson City District, have the responsibility to ensure the contractor's compliance with the contract stipulations. However, the Walker Area Manager and the Carson City District Manager are very involved with guidance and input into this removal plan and contract monitoring.

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.

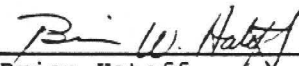
VIII. SIGNATURES

Prepared by:



Richard Jacobsen
Range Conservationist
Walker Resource Area

9-29-86
Date

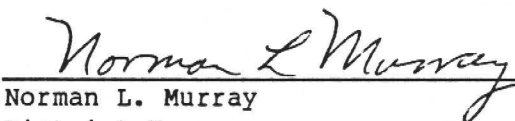
Concurred by:


Brian Hatoff
Assistant District Manager, Resources

9/29/86
Date

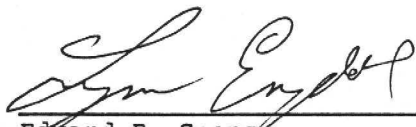

John Matthiessen
Area Manager
Walker Resource Area

9/30/86
Date

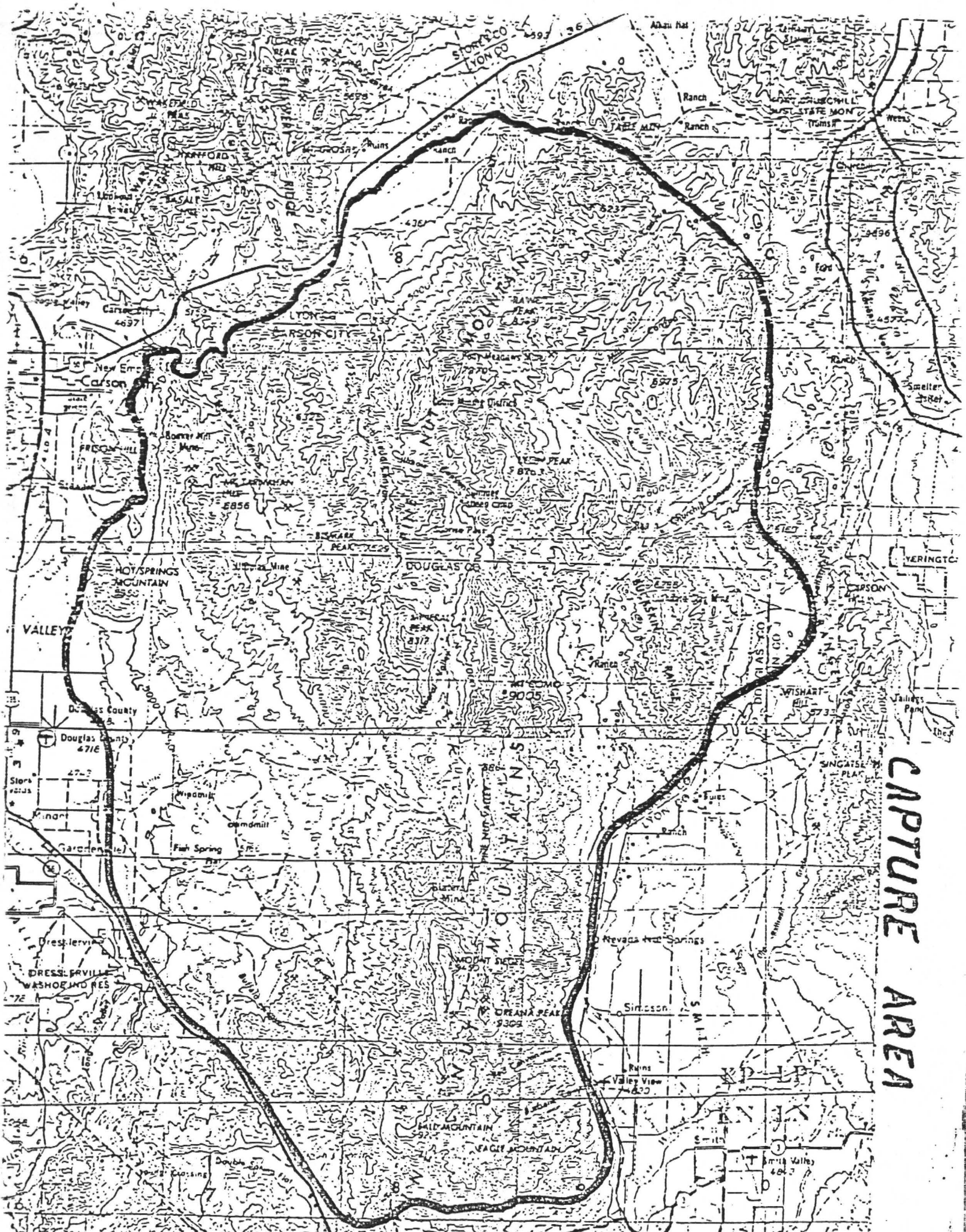

Norman L. Murray
District Manager

10-3-86
Date

Approved by:


Edward F. Spang
State Director, Nevada

10/30/86
Date



CAPTURE AREA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Pinenut Wild Horse Removal

Decision

Impacts associated with implementation of the proposed action are not of a significant nature, therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.


The proposed action of removing approximately 209 wild horses to bring the population of wild horses to the appropriate management level for the Pinenut Herd Area in accordance with the Walker Resource Management Plan and the recommended mitigating measures shall be adopted.

Rationale

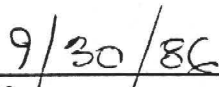
Based on the environmental assessment, a net beneficial impact would result from implementing the proposed action. With reduction of wild horses, their habitat and the vegetation resource will benefit over the long term.

Public interest was light based on the small number of responses to the draft removal plan. Two responses were from State Agencies. One was concerned with surface disturbance and the other with cultural resources. One comment was received from an individual concerned with the number of horses to be removed. He was also concerned with "the setback of the (wild horse) population's general adaption to the rigors of survival found in the Pinenut Range." All these concerns have been addressed in planning for this removal.

Approved:

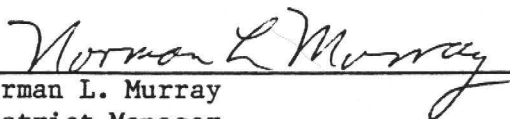


John Matthiessen
Area Manager
Walker Resource Area

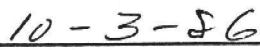


Date

Concurred:



Norman L. Murray
District Manager
Carson City District



Date

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PINENUT WILD HORSE REMOVAL

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this environmental assessment (EA) is to analyze the impacts associated with the proposed action and the alternatives.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The proposed action is to remove approximately 209 head of wild horses by helicopter from the Pinenut Wild Horse Herd Management Area. The captured horses will be transported to either the Palomino Valley or Susanville, California BLM processing centers and made available for adoption.

The alternative is not to conduct the removal operation.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A. Wild Horses

The Pinenut Wild Horse Herd Management Area is located east and southeast of Carson City, Nevada.

The most recent census was conducted on June 9, 1986, and resulted in 466 wild horses being counted in the Pinenut Herd Use Area. The planned removal of 209 wild horses will bring the number visually counted down to 256 wild horses. By applying the ratio of visual sightings to estimated numbers which was determined by the University of Minnesota specifically for this herd area, the estimated number of wild horses remaining will be 387. This is the appropriate management level as identified in the 1986 Walker Management Decisions Summary.

B. Vegetation

Vegetation types of the area varies from higher elevation pinyon-juniper to sagebrush, saltbrush, and shadscale at the lower elevations. Grasses found are primarily Indian ricegrass, squirrel tail, and cheatgrass.

C. Wildlife

The capture area encompasses key deer summer range and deer winter range. Conflicts have been identified with horse overutilization of riparian habitats and trampling of water sources.

D. Wilderness

The Burbank Canyons Wilderness Study Area lies within the Herd Management Area. No wild horses were sighted in the WSA during the most recent census on June 9, 1986.

E. Cultural Resources

Cultural resources exist within the gather area. The temporary trap sites could impact these. As a standard operating procedure, all trap sites will receive a cultural clearance prior to construction.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Proposed Action

During the capture operations, it is expected that death loss will occur. This loss should not exceed 3 percent of the horses captured.

Some stress to the horses will be associated with the operations, however, after adoption the horses will become accustomed to domestication and most will receive proper care and feed.

The wild horse habitat will improve as more feed will become available to the remaining population. This will allow the vegetation resource a short term rest from the grazing pressure. However, in the long term, the utilization of the forage will increase when the population increases.

There will be a short term impact to the vegetation and soil resources at the trap sites. In the long term any disturbance will recover.

Removal of 209 horses will substantially reduce the conflicts with overutilization of riparian habitats and trampling of water sources. As a result, habitat conditions for wildlife, particularly mule deer, mountain quail, sage grouse, raptors, and chukars will be improved at least in the short term.

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

B. Mitigating Measures

- a. Placement of traps will not occur within the Wilderness Study Area. No use of motorized vehicles will occur within the WSA.
- b. All stipulations included in the Removal Plan and contract will be adhered to.

C. No Action Alternative

The wild horses in the population will not be subjected to stress and possible death during capture operations. However, in the long term, should the population increase to the point where the habitat becomes severely deteriorated, the population will suffer starvation or the population would expand to another area of public lands, which would require removal (by law). The habitat would be damaged to a point that would take many, possibly hundreds of years, to recover.



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CARSON CITY DISTRICT OFFICE

1535 Hot Springs Rd., Ste. 300
Carson City, Nevada 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

4740
(NV-037)

AUG 8 1986

Enclosed is a copy of the Draft Pinenut Wild Horse Removal Plan and accompanying Environmental Assessment.

Please review these documents and comment if you so desire. Comments should be received at this office by September 8, 1986 for consideration in the Final Plan.

Sincerely yours,

Norman L. Murray
District Manager

Enclosures:
As Stated Above

PINENUT

WILD HORSE REMOVAL PLAN

I. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to discuss the implementation of the proposed action in the accompanying environmental assessment. The proposed action is to remove excess numbers of wild horses to bring the population down to the appropriate management level identified in the Walker Resource Management Plan.

II. Area of Concern

The area of concern is the Pinenut Herd Area which is located in the Pinenut Mountains east and southeast of Carson City, Nevada (see attached map).

III. Numbers of Wild Horses

The most recent census was conducted on June 9, 1986 and resulted in 466 wild horses being counted in the Pinenut Herd Use Area.

The removal of 209 wild horses will bring the number visually counted down to 256 wild horses. By applying the ratio of visual sightings to estimated numbers which was determined by the University of Minnesota specifically for this herd area, the estimated number of wild horses remaining will be 387. This is the appropriate management level as identified in the 1986 Walker Management Decisions Summary.

IV. Methods for Removal and Safety

The methods employed during this 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. A Bureau employee will be supervising the contractor at all times during the gathering operations. The following stipulations will be followed during the contract to ensure the welfare, safety, and humane treatment of the wild horses.

1. The helicopter shall be used in such a manner that bands or herds will tend to remain together, this includes small foals.
2. The rate of movement shall not exceed limitations set by the Contracting Officer's Representative, (COR), a BLM employee, who shall consider terrain, weather, distance to be traveled, and condition of the animals.
3. When refueling, the helicopter must remain a distance of at least a 1,000 feet or more from the temporary holding facility, vehicles (other than fuel truck), and personnel not involved in refueling.
4. Vehicles shall be inspected and approved by the COR.
5. All such transportation shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of horses and burros.
6. Vehicles shall be in good repair, or adequate rated capacity, and operated so as to insure that captured animals are transported without undue risk or injury. Bobtail trucks and trucks with stockracks may not be used to transport animals from traps to temporary holding facilities. Only stocktrailers (minimum height 6'6") will be allowed for this purpose.
7. Only Bobtail trucks (minimum height 6'6"), stocktrailers (minimum height 6'6"), or single deck trucks (minimum height 6'6") can be used to haul horses from the temporary holding facility to final destination. Single deck trucks with trailers 40 feet or longer are required to have two partition gates to separate horses. Trailers less than 40 feet need only one partition gate to separate the horses. The use of double deck trailers is unacceptable and shall not be allowed.
8. All vehicles used to transport animals to final destination shall be equipped with doors at the rear end of the vehicle. At least one of these rear doors shall be capable of sliding either horizontally or vertically.
9. Floors of vehicles shall be provided with a non-skid surface such as sand, mineral soil, or wood shavings in sufficient quantities to prevent the animals from slipping.
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16. Horses held for 10 hours or more in the traps and/or holding facilities shall be provided fresh clean water by the Contractor, in an amount of a minimum of 10 gallons per horse per day.
17. Horses held for 10 hours or more in the traps or holding facility shall be provided good quality grass or grass alfalfa hay mix at the rate of not less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of body weight per day.
18. If the COR determines that dust conditions are such that the horses could be endangered during transportation, the contractor will be instructed to reduce speed. There are approximately 8 miles of dirt road.

V. DISPOSITION OF REMOVED ANIMALS

The wild horses removed will be sent to either Palomino Valley Wild Horse and Burro Placement Center or Susanville District wild horse processing center, to be processed for adoption. Some wild horses may be shipped to a contract holding facility in Fallon, Nevada to await processing at Palomino Valley.

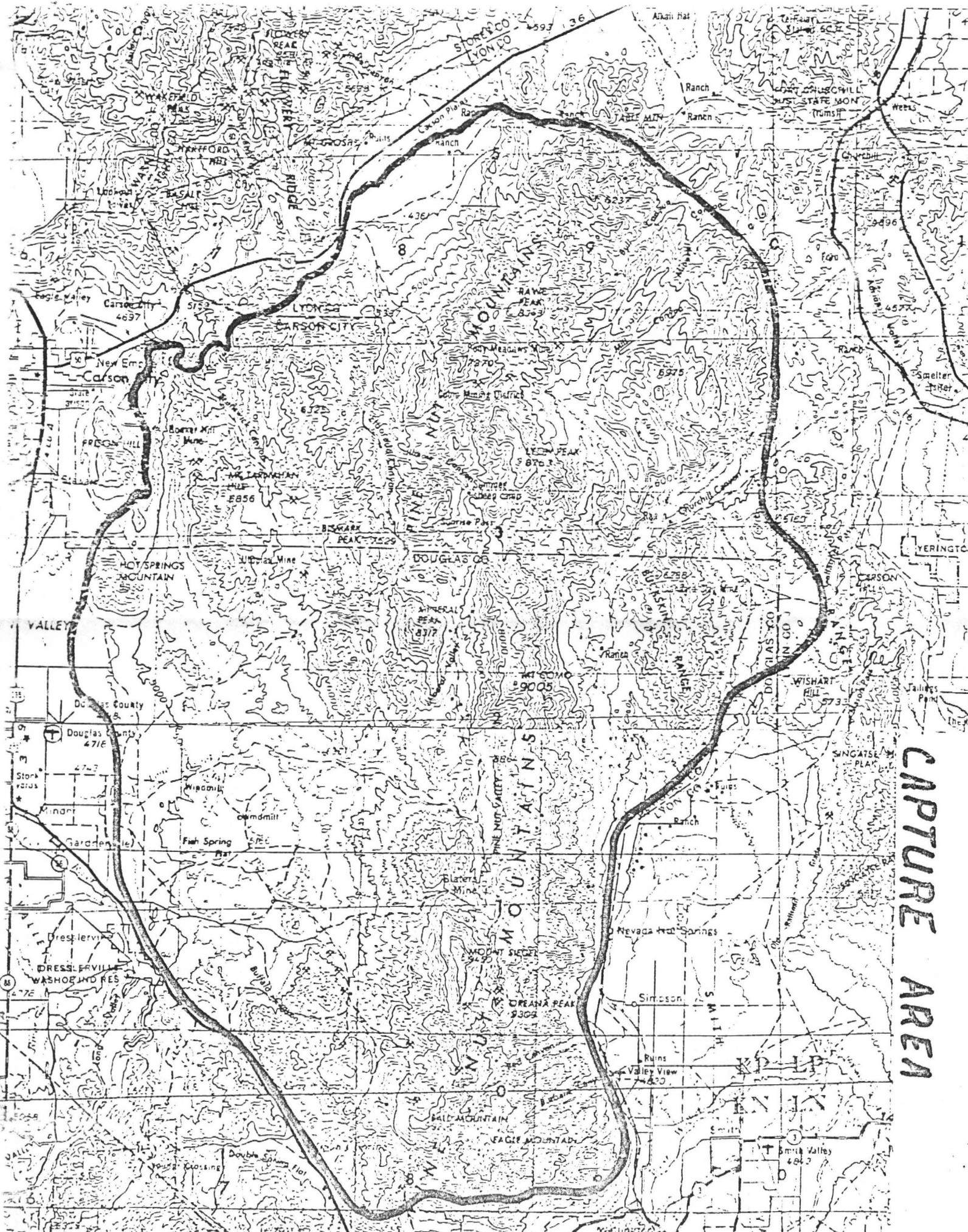
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VI. DATES OF THE REMOVAL

This removal is planned to begin on or around ~~October 27, 1986~~. The removal is expected to be completed by ~~November 10, 1986~~.

Oct. 1

Oct 15, 1986



CAPTURE AREA

Smith Valley
6842

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PINENUT WILD HORSE REMOVAL

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II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

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E. Cultural Resources

Cultural resources exist within the gather area. The temporary trap sites could impact these. As a standard operating procedure, all trap sites will receive a cultural clearance prior to construction.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Proposed Action

During the capture operations, it is expected that death loss will occur. This loss should not exceed 3 percent of the horses captured.

Some stress to the horses will be associated with the operations, however, after adoption the horses will become accustomed to domestication and most will receive proper care and feed.

The wild horse habitat will improve as more feed will become available to the remaining population. This will allow the vegetation resource a short term rest from the grazing pressure. However, in the long term, the utilization of the forage will increase when the population increases.

There will be a short term impact to the vegetation and soil resources at the trap sites. In the long term any disturbance will recover.

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

B. Mitigating Measures

- a. Placement of traps will not occur within the Wilderness Study Area. No use of motorized vehicles will occur within the WSA.
- b. All stipulations included in the Removal Plan and contract will be adhered to.

C. No Action Alternative

The wild horses in the population will not be subjected to stress and possible death during capture operations. However, in the long term, should the population increase to the point where the habitat becomes severely deteriorated, the population will suffer starvation or the population would expand to another area of public lands, which would require removal (by law). The habitat would be damaged to a point that would take many, possibly hundreds of years, to recover.