

6/25/84
Initial Routing Date

FD _____

DIVISION OF LANDS & RENEWABLE RESOURCES ROUTING SLIP

	Info.	Actn.	Sum.	Remarks
DEPUTY STATE DIRECTOR				
Secretary				
NSRT Range Con.				
Saval Project Mgr.				
Wildlife Biologist				
Clork-Typist				
BIO. RES. (NV-931)				
Branch Chief				
Secretary				
Range Spec.				
Range Con.				
Wildl. Spec.				
Hydrologist				
Soils Scientist I				
Soils Scientist II				
Fish. & Frstry. Spec.				
Wildlife Spec.				
LANDS & REC. (NV-932)				
Branch Chief				
Secretary				
Archaeologist				
Realty Spec.				
Outdoor Rec. Plnr.				
Wilderness Specialist				
PLANNING (NV-933)				
Staff Chief				
Secretary				
Regional Plnr.				
Sociologist				
Regional Econ.				
Policy Analyst				
Env. Prot. Spec.				
Com. Plng. Tech.				

2/2/87
See me re:
Don Payne
BIA & his
latest visit
w/ SD
Responded to
District
Approver Plans
DG

DRAFT

PAH RAH WILD HORSE REMOVAL PLAN

I. Objective

The objective of this Plan is to discuss the implementation of the proposed action presented in the accompanying Environmental Assessment.

II. Area of Concern

The Pah Rah Wild Horse Herd Use Area is located north of Reno along State Route 33 and extends to the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation (see attached map).

III. Numbers of Wild Horses

Census information for the HUA shows that the wild horse population has been increasing since 1972. All horses within the Herd Use Area (HUA) will be removed during the capture operations. After capture operations are completed, the area will be considered wild horse free. Any horses found on public lands after the capture operation shall be considered unauthorized, privately-owned and subject to trespass.

IV. Claiming

Impounded privately-owned animals will be processed as outlined in BLM, NSO Instruction Memo NV-83-26.

V. Capture Operations

All horses that are present within the HUA boundary shall be removed during the capture operations. Capture of these wild horses will be through the use of a helicopter and temporary capture corrals. The horses will be directed toward the capture corrals with a helicopter. The helicopter will carry a BLM employee only when necessary, and should the horses become unnecessarily stressed, the BLM employee or the pilot will break off the pursuit, so that the animals may rest and recover. All attempts will be made to move and keep bands together. A BLM employee will make careful determination of boundary lines to serve as an outer limit, within which attempts will be made to herd horses to a given trap. Topography, distance and current condition of the horses are factors that will be considered in setting the limits to avoid undue stress on the horses while they are being herded. Each area will be flown prior to the start of trapping to locate any hazards to the horses while being herded (fences, cliffs, etc.).

The temporary capture corrals will be constructed from portable pipe panels (height 6 to 7 feet). An adjoining holding corral will be constructed to hold the horses after capture. Extending from the capture corral will be wings (1/8 to 1/4 mile) also constructed from portable panels. The entire trap will be camouflaged with sagebrush or juniper.

The helicopter will drive the horses toward the wings of the trap. When the horses are just about to enter the wings, riders on horseback will then flank the animals and drive them into the trap. Once the horses are in the trap, the gate will be closed by hand. Should a horse turn back at the trap, it will be roped, if possible, by the riders.

It is expected that the number of animals that will be driven into the trap will vary from 1 to 35 head.

A portable chute will be used to load the animals onto stock trucks for transportation to Palomino Valley Corrals. BLM is authorized to transport the horses to Palomino Valley, prior to brand inspection.

VI. Trap Sites

A variety of trap sites will probably be needed to gather the horses from the area. Each site will be selected after determining the habits of the animals and observing the topography of the area. In general, all sites will be located to cause as little damage to the natural resources of the area as possible. Sites will be located on or near existing roads and ways, and all sites will receive cultural clearance prior to use. If archaeological values are found, the trap will be moved.

VII. Responsibility

It will be the responsibility of the authorized representative to locate the trap sites, provide humane treatment to the horses (both using the helicopter and on the ground), work in a safe manner, observe the guidelines set forth in this removal plan, and to determine if destruction of any sick or injured animals is necessary.

The Carson City District Wild Horse and Burro Specialist will have the responsibility to assure that the capture is being conducted in accordance with applicable regulations, BLM policy, and this removal plan. If for some reason the Wild Horse and Burro Specialist is unavailable, the District Staff Range Specialist or a Lahontan Resource Area Range Conservationist will act in his absence.

VIII. Destruction of Injured or Sick Animals

Any severely injured or seriously sick animal shall be destroyed in accordance with 43 CFR 4740.3-1. Such animals shall be destroyed only when a definite act of mercy is needed to alleviate pain and suffering.

Destruction shall be done in the most humane method available.

IX. Injuries and Disease

For injuries and disease not requiring destruction, the authorized representative will transport the animal to Palomino Valley Corrals (PVC) without further injury, harm or undue pain. A veterinarian will treat the animal upon arrival at PVC.

X. Safety

All capturing and handling of the horses shall be done in the safest manner possible for the wild horses, personnel and saddle horses. Some guidance may be obtained from "Safety Guidelines for Handling Wild Horses," prepared by the BLM.

XI. Longevity of the Removal Plan

This Removal Plan is in effect for the duration of removal of all the horses from the Pah Rah HUA. The total operation should take 75 to 80 days to complete.

XII. Herd Use Area Status

Although the Pah Rah HUA shall be considered wild horse free upon completion of capture operations, the area shall always be considered as a Wild Horse Area because of the presence of wild horses when the Wild, Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act came into effect. This area could be considered in future land use planning for possible relocation of wild horses should circumstances change.

XIII. Signatures

Prepared by;

James M. Gianola
James M. Gianola
Range Conservatonist
Lahontan Resource Area

6-13-84
Date

Reviewed by:

Timothy B. Reuwsaat
Timothy B. Reuwsaat
Wild Horse and Burro Specialist

June 13, 1984
Date

Norman L. Murray
Norman L. Murray
Asst. District Manager for Resources

6-13-84
Date

Approved:

James M. Phillips
James M. Phillips
Area Manager
Lahontan Resource Area

6/19/84
Date

Thomas J. Owen
Thomas J. Owen
District Manager

6-19-84
Date

DRAFT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Pah Rah Wild Horse Removal

The purpose of this Environmental Assessment is to analyze the effects of wild horse removal from the Pah Rah Wild Horse Herd Use Area and other alternatives.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The proposed action is to remove the wild horses from the Pah Rah Wild Horse Herd Use Area. The capture method used will be gathering with a helicopter and herding the horses toward a temporary trap. The traps will be built from portable pipe corrals. The trap locations may have to be moved several times depending on the terrain and location of the horses.

The captured horses will be transported to the Palomino Valley Wild Horse and Burro Placement Center, where the wild horses will be made available for adoption. Once the capture operations have been completed, the area will be considered horse-free in the future.

Alternatives to this proposed action are to leave the horses in the area, or remove only a portion of the animals.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

The Pah Rah Wild Horse Use Area (HUA) extends from Sparks, Nevada, north to Mullen Pass and east along the Truckee River to the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation (see attached map). A majority of the HUA is under private control with portions of the eastern and southern ends being alternate sections of private and public.

The HUA includes 6 allotments - Olinghouse, White Hills, Mustang, Spanish Springs, Pah Rah and Cottonwood. Percentage of federal lands by allotment is as follows:

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>% Federal Range</u>
Cottonwood	4
Mustang	48
Olinghouse	52
Pah Rah	91
Spanish Springs	46
White Hills	55

Although the Pah Rah Allotment has a significant percentage of its acreage under federal control, it comprises only a small portion of the total HUA. Palomino Valley and Monte Cristo Ranches, Inc., own a majority of the private lands within the HUA. Other major land owners within the HUA are Depaoli Brothers, Oppio and Gaspari and Southern Pacific. Since there are relatively few fences between the federal and private lands, wild horses are free to roam and graze the private lands at will. There is some drift of horses between the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation and the HUA.

The final decision in the Reno Management Framework Plan, Step III, approved on 12-21-82 calls for removal of the wild horses in the Pah Rah HUA.

Habitat Management Plan, N3-WHA-T12, a cooperative effort between BLM & NDOW, also calls for removal of all wild horses.

A large subdivision, Palomino Valley Estates, is located at the base of the Pah Rah Mountains within the boundaries of the HUA. As the size of the subdivision and population of wild horses increase, there has been a corresponding rise in the number of complaints brought forth by the home owners in the area.

Numerous residents have complained concerning the traffic hazard the horses pose as well as the damage they are doing to the lawns and landscaping around the houses in the area.

In July of 1983, a formal complaint was filed by a Palomino Valley home owner asking for damages in the amount of \$1745.80. A group of wild horses broke through their fence and mauled several domestic horses in the pasture causing a mare to abort her foal.

Letters from two of the major land owners in the area, Depaoli Brothers and Gaspari and Oppio, requested removal of the wild horses from their private lands within the HUA.

The Depaoli Brothers have since written a second letter asking for immediate action on their request to remove the wild horses.

Several years of census information is currently available. Between the years 1972 and 1979, the HUA was counted with the results tabulated as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Nos.</u>
1972	101
1975	119
1979	275

In 1981, the University of Minnesota (U of M), under contract to the BLM performed research on census methods in the Pah Rah area. Numerous counts were performed by various aircraft types. These counts were adjusted based on the number of animals resighted, which had been marked (Lincoln-Peterson Estimates). The population estimates varied from a low of 637 to a high of 923 adult animals with a mean of 746 for a super cub fixed-wing aircraft and 730 for a B-2 helicopter. The mean standard deviation was 39 and 31.2, respectively. With this data, it is impossible to pinpoint an actual number of animals, but it is estimated that 800 to 1000 adults, yearlings, and foals currently inhabit the area.

During the period of the research project by U of M, some drift of horses is thought to have occurred between the Indian Reservation and the HUA. This may account for some of the variation in total counts and estimates.

Vegetation within the herd unit is represented by 2 major plant communities common to areas in northern Nevada - the Northern Desert Shrub and Salt Desert Shrub.

Within the Northern Desert Shrub, two major vegetation types occur - Juniper Savannah and Loamy 10-12" ppt.

Dominant plants in the Juniper Savannah are Western juniper, Wyoming big sagebrush and antelope bitterbrush. The major grass species are squirreltail, Thurbers needlegrass and Nevada bluegrass. The loamy 10-12" PZ supports much the same vegetation minus the Western Juniper. The Salt Desert Shrub community is located in the lower elevations of the unit and is made up of shadscale, dryland greasewood, and scattered stands of Indian ricegrass and galleta grass. The spaces between the shrubs in most of the area are bare, rocky desert pavement.

Numerous springs and intermittent streams throughout the HUA provide water, however, several wells located at the lower elevations are also utilized. The springs and wells are shown on the attached map.

In addition to a diverse population of small rodents, moderate populations of deer, mountain lion, bobcat, sagegrouse, chukar, California quail, and mourning dove are found in the area. A small herd of 50 antelope have also been sighted within HUA boundaries.

The Mullen Pass area supports numerous golden eagles and other raptors.

No threatened or endangered animal species are known to exist in the HUA area.

The public lands within the HUA are grazed by livestock to the extent of 3400 AUMs.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Proposed Action

a. Anticipated Impacts

Horses will experience stress during the actual capture operations, but will be properly cared for following capture, both in the corral and when adopted. Some horses may be injured or killed in the process of capture or being transported to the adoption center. From past gatherings in Nevada, this has been approximately 1 to 2 percent.

If livestock numbers remain the same, the vegetation resource condition would improve from less utilization after the horses are removed.

With removal of the horses, stress placed on the animals during periodic capture of wild horses that drift onto the Indian Reservation would be eliminated. Also, wild horses would not be subject to additional stress of capture during impoundment procedures of trespass horses.

By removing the wild horses, the occurrence of automobile accidents involving wild horses would be eliminated.

Private land owners would be satisfied that their request to remove the wild horses from their private lands had been accomplished in accordance with Section 4 of the Wild, Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act.

There would be minimal disturbance to the vegetation and soils, associated with the capture operations.

b. Possible Mitigating or Enhancing Measures

- (1) If a BLM employee is unsure as to the severity of an injury, a veterinarian will be summoned to the capture site.
- (2) No capture operations will occur during the months of March, April, May and June when the majority of foaling takes place.

c. Recommendation for Mitigation or Enhancement

The above mitigating or enhancing measures be adopted as stated.

d. Residual Impacts

Localized disturbance to soil and vegetation cannot be entirely avoided under the proposed action. Natural revegetation will reduce the severity of the disturbance over a short period of time.

Injury or death of some wild horses could occur despite safety and humane precautions.

2. Relationship Between Short-Term Use and Long-Term Productivity

Wild horses will be removed from the area; however, the HUA will retain its status as a wild horse area.

3. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

If a wild horse is sick or injured, it may be destroyed.

B. Alternative No. 1 - Leave the Wild Horses in the Area

1. Environmental Impacts

a. Anticipated Impacts

This alternative initially would have the least impact on horses, since they would not be subject to the stress of capture; however, the horse population could increase over time through natural demographics. The vegetation resource would be subject to an increased utilization from that in the past. The competition for forage and water would increase between livestock, wildlife, and wild horses as the horses increase in the future.

If horses remained in the area, as their numbers and the size of the subdivision increased, the conflicts between the two will also rise.

The drift of the wild horses between the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation and the HUA would also increase. The wild horses that drift onto the Reservation could be subject to capture, sale, and possible slaughter.

The possibility of automobile accidents involving wild horses would become greater with the result being injury or death of some wild horses and property damage, injury, or death to individuals in the accidents.

Wild horses would continue to use the private lands for part of their habitat against the wishes of the land owner and in violation of the provisions of Sec. 4 of the WH&B Act of 1971.

b. Possible Mitigating or Enhancing Measures

- (1) Develop springs and watering sites to allow better opportunities for watering by livestock, wildlife, and wild horses.
- (2) Reduce livestock as wild horse numbers increase.
- (3) Fence the private lands and the highway right-of-way.

c. Recommendations for Mitigation and Enhancement

The above mitigating or enhancing measures should be adopted with the exception of the livestock reduction and fencing. Through additional vegetation monitoring and the Resource Management Planning process, any needed adjustment in livestock use and wild horse numbers will be made. Fencing would not be a practical solution, as fencing the checkerboard land would create one square mile pastures, some with water, some without. The free-roaming nature of wild horses would be eliminated.

d. Residual Impacts

Wild horses would continue to use the private lands as a portion of their habitat. The BLM would not be satisfying the land owners' request for removal of wild horses from their lands.

2. Relationship Between Short-Term Use and Long-Term Productivity

The wild horses would remain, but utilization of forage would continue and be accelerated if the wild horse population increased. As the forage was depleted, the animals may move into other areas. Increased highway accidents, accelerated deterioration of private lands and increased unauthorized capture to remove the wild horses from the private lands would occur. The vegetation may never be able to recover if some plant species disappear. The only possible recovery may be through costly rehabilitation.

3. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

If horses are to remain and populate at a natural rate, at some time in the future, the basic soil and vegetation resource may be damaged to a point where it may never be able to return to a desirable state.

Wildlife habitat degradation may eventually occur.

Some wild horses would be lost through highway accidents and unauthorized capture.

C. Alternative No. 2 - Remove Only a Portion of the Wild Horses

1. Environmental Impacts

a. Anticipated Impacts

In this alternative, those horses which would be removed may experience stress associated with the capture operations. Most would be stressed even though not actually caught. Some of these horses may be injured or killed in the process of being captured or transported to the adoption center.

The vegetation resource would benefit from slightly less utilization with a reduction of wild horses.

The possibility of drift by wild horses onto the Indian Reservation and automobile accidents involving wild horses may be reduced, but would still exist.

The area would still have competition for forage and water between livestock, wildlife, and wild horses and this competition would increase should the wild horse population increase.

By leaving a portion of the horses, BLM would not be satisfying the land owners' request to remove the wild horses from their private land in accordance with Section 4 of the Wild, Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act.

Some localized disturbance of vegetation and soils would occur at the trap sites.

b. Possible Mitigating or Enhancing Measures

Same as those for both the Proposed Alternative and Alternative No. 1.

c. Recommendations for Mitigation and Enhancement

All the possible measures for mitigation and enhancement should be adopted with the exception of reducing livestock and fencing. The same reasoning applies as in Alternative No. 1.

d. Residual Impacts

Same as those for Alternative No. 1.

2. Relationship Between Short-Term Use and Long-Term Productivity

Same as those for Alternative No. 1.

3. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Same as those for Alternative No. 1. Also, wild horses may be injured or destroyed during capture operations.

IV. INTENSITY OF PUBLIC INTEREST

It is anticipated that public interest will be low, as the opportunity for public comment was provided during the Land Use Planning Process for the Reno Planning Area.

V. PERSONS, GROUPS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES CONSULTED

The Draft Environmental Assessment was sent to the following persons, groups and agencies for review and comment:

American Bashkir Curley Register
American Horse Protection Association
American Humane Association
Animal Protection Institute
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Depaoli Brothers
Funds for Animals
Louis Garaventa
Gaspari Brothers
Humane Society of Southern Nevada
International Society for the Protection of Wild Horses and Burros
Tina Nappe
National Mustang Association
National Wild Horse Association
Nevada Cattleman's Association
Nevada Farm Bureau Federation
Nevada Humane Society
Nevada State Department of Agriculture
Nevada Wildlife Federation
Palomino Valley Homeowners Association
Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation
Save the Mustang
Sierra Club
State Clearinghouse
Aldo Urrutia
U.S. Humane Society
Wild Horse Organized Assistance

VI. PARTICIPATING AND REVIEWING STAFF

Prepared by:

James M. Gianola
James M. Gianola
Range Conservationist
Lahontan Resource Area

6-13-84
Date

Reviewed by:

Timothy B. Reuwsaat
Timothy B. Reuwsaat
District Wild Horse and Burro Specialist

June 13, 1984
Date

Norman L. Murray
Norman L. Murray
Assistant District Manager for Resources

6-13-84
Date

Stephen Weiss
Stephen A. Weiss
Environmental Coordinator

June 13, 1984
Date

James M. Phillips
James M. Phillips
Area Manager, Lahontan Resource Area

6/19/84
Date

DRAFT

PINENUT AND JUMBO WILD HORSE REMOVAL PLAN

I. Objective

The objective of this plan is to discuss the implementation of the proposed action presented in the accompanying Environmental Assessment.

II. Area of Concern

The Pinenut Wild Horse Herd Use Area (HUA) is located southeast of Carson City, Nevada. The Jumbo wild horse herd originated from wild horses from the Pinenut HUA. The Jumbo HUA is located north of Carson City. (See Map I)

III. Capture Areas

The capture areas within these two HUAs are prioritized as follows (see Map I):

1. Jumbo
2. Carson Plains
3. Southern Pinenuts
4. Buckskin Range/Lincoln Flat

IV. Numbers of Wild Horses

An attempt will be made to remove all wild horses from the areas listed above. Estimates of wild horses to be removed from each area are listed.

	<u>Area</u>	<u>Population Estimate</u>
1.	Jumbo	25-50 (may include claimed domestic animals)
2.	Carson Plains	25-50
3.	Southern Pinenuts	250-500
4.	Buckskin Range/Lincoln Flat	25-50
	Total:	325 to 650

It is estimated that between 825 to 950 head of wild horses now inhabit the two HUAs, therefore, after the removals take place, the estimated remaining population in the Pinenut HUA would be between 175 and 625 head.

Aerial censuses will be attempted before and after the removals to determine an up-to-date estimate of the population.

After all the horses are removed from the Jumbo HUA, the area will be declared wild horse free. Any horses found on public land thereafter will be considered unauthorized, privately-owned and subject to trespass.

V. Capture Operations

Capture of the wild horses will be through the use of a helicopter and temporary capture corrals. A BLM employee will make careful determination of boundary lines to serve as an outer limit, within which attempts will be made to herd horses to a given trap. Topography, distance and current condition of the horses are factors that will be considered in setting the limits to avoid undue stress on the horses while they are being herded. Each area will be flown prior to the start of trapping to locate any hazards to the horses while being herded (fences, cliffs, etc.). The helicopter will carry a BLM employee only when necessary, and should the horses become unnecessarily stressed during herding, the BLM employee or the pilot will break off the pursuit, so that the animals may rest and recover. All attempts will be made to move and keep bands together.

Trap sites will be selected after determining the habits of the animals and observing the topography of the area. In general, all sites will be located to cause as little damage to the natural resources of the area as possible. Sites will be located on or near existing roads and ways, and all sites will receive cultural resource clearance prior to use. If significant cultural values are found, the trap will be moved.

The temporary capture corrals (traps) will be constructed from portable panels (height 6 to 7 feet). Extending from the capture corral will be wings (up to 1/4 mile in length) also constructed from portable panels. The entire trap may be camouflaged with sagebrush, juniper or pinyon. The helicopter will direct the horses toward the trap. When the horses enter the wings, riders on horseback will fall in behind the animals driving them into the trap. Once the horses enter the trap, the gate will be closed by hand. Should a horse turn back at the trap, it would be roped, if possible, by the riders.

After capture, the animals may be placed in a central holding corral in or near the capture area. If held overnight or longer, prior to transportation to the Palomino Valley Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Facility, the horses will be fed and watered. If the horses are held overnight in the trap, they will be fed and watered.

Because the capture area and the Palomino Valley Facility are located in the same Nevada State Brand Inspection District, the animals will be transported prior to brand inspection.

- VI. Impounded, privately-owned animals will be processed as outlined in Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Office Instruction Memorandum NV-83-26. A copy of this Instruction Memorandum may be obtained at the Carson City District Office.
- VII. It will be the responsibility of the contractor, who has entered into a contract with the BLM for the purpose of removing the wild horses from the Pinenut and Jumbo Herd Use Areas, to locate the trap sites (with concurrence from a BLM employee), provide humane treatment to the horses during capture, holding and transportation, and to observe the guidelines set forth in this capture plan and the contract specifications.

The Carson City District Wild Horse and Burro Specialist (designated as the Contracting Officer's Authorized Representative, COAR) will have the responsibility to assure that the capture, holding and transportation of the wild horses is being conducted in accordance with applicable regulations, BLM policy, this capture plan and the contract specifications. He will also have the responsibility to determine if destruction of any sick or lame animals is necessary prior to transportation. If the COAR is not at the site, the alternate COAR or a Project Inspector (P.I.), a BLM employee will act in his absence.

It may be necessary for BLM to perform small capture operations to remove problem horses from areas within the indicated capture areas. The same procedures will apply to these BLM conducted capture operations.

VIII. Destruction of Injured or Sick Animals

Any severely injured or seriously sick animal shall be destroyed in accordance with 43 CFR 4740.3-1. Such animals shall be destroyed only when a definite act of mercy is needed to alleviate pain and suffering. When the COAR or P.I. is unsure as to the severity of an injury or sickness, a veterinarian will be summoned to make a final determination.

Destruction shall be done in the most humane method available.

IX. Injuries and Disease

For injuries and disease not requiring destruction, the COAR or P.I. will determine if the animal can be transported to Palomino Valley Corrals (PVC) without further injury, harm or undue pain to the animal. If the animal can be transported, the veterinarian will treat the animal upon arrival at PVC. If the animal cannot be transported, or if the COAR or P.I. is uncertain, a veterinarian will examine the injured or sick animal at the trap site.

X. Safety

All capturing and handling of the horses shall be done in the safest manner possible for the wild horses, personnel and saddle horses. Some guidance may be obtained from "Safety Guidelines for Handling Wild Horses," prepared by the BLM.

XI. Longevity of the Removal Plan

This plan will remain in effect until the areas identified for removal of wild horses in this plan are free of wild horses. As wild horses may drift back into these capture areas, repeated capture operations may be necessary.

XII. Signatures

Prepared by:

Timothy B. Reuwsaat
Timothy B. Reuwsaat
Wild Horse and Burro Specialist

June 7, 1984
Date

Reviewed by:

Norman L. Murray
Norman L. Murray
Assistant District Manager, Resources

June 11, 1984
Date

Approved by:

James M. Phillips
James M. Phillips
Area Manager, Lahontan Resource Area

6/11/84
Date

Sid Haupt - acting
John Matthiessen
Area Manager, Walker Resource Area

6/13/84
Date

jc 6-14-84
Tom Owen
Thomas J. Owen
District Manager
Carson City District

6/14/84
Date

DRAFT

4700
(NV-033)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PINENUT AND JUMBO WILD HORSE REMOVAL

The purpose of this Environmental Assessment is to analyze the effects of wild horse removal from the Jumbo Herd Use Area and portions of the Pinenut Herd Use Area and other alternatives.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The proposed action is to remove all wild horses from the Jumbo Herd Use Area (HUA) and portions of the Pinenut HUA (see Map I). The capture method used will be gathering with a helicopter and herding the horses toward a temporary trap. The traps will be built from portable pipe corrals. The trap locations will be moved several times depending on the terrain and location of the horses.

The captured horses will be transported to the Palomino Valley Wild Horse and Burro Placement Center, where the wild horses will be made available for adoption.

Alternatives to the proposed action are: (1) Leave all the wild horses in the areas where they occur now; and (2) remove all the wild horses from the Jumbo and Pinenut HUAs.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING SITUATION

The Jumbo HUA is located north of Carson City, Nevada. The Pinenut HUA is located southeast of Carson City. The wild horses in the Jumbo HUA originated from the population in the Pinenuts. These wild horses crossed the Carson River and established themselves in the Jumbo area after passage of the Wild, Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (PL-92-195). Wild horses have also expanded into the Buckskin Range and Lincoln Flat areas (see Map II). Current policy provides that wild horses and burros be managed only on lands where herds existed at the time of passage of Public Law 92-195 (December 15, 1971). In the Pinenuts, various censuses over the years have indicated differing estimates of numbers of horses. In February of 1975, a direct count census was undertaken, which resulted in 297 head being counted.

Another direct count census in April of 1978 resulted in 629 head being counted. During 1981, the University of Minnesota, under contract to the Bureau of Land Management to research census techniques, flew the area several times. Their estimates of the adult population were based on marked/resighted animals to obtain a Lincoln Peterson Estimate. Their results are as follows:

<u>Aircraft Type</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Total Count</u>	<u>Collars</u>		<u>Lincoln-Peterson Estimate</u>
			<u>Available</u>	<u>Observed</u>	
Piper Super Cub	9/17-18/81	295	89	32	820
B2 Helicopter	2/18-20/81	344	64	28	786
B2 Helicopter	7/1-2/81	367	92	47	718
B2 Helicopter	9/3-4/81	297	89	46	575

The first census of the Jumbo HUA was conducted in 1975 which resulted in nine head being censused. In 1979, twenty-one head were censused in the area.

The land ownership within the Jumbo HUA is approximately fifty percent, mostly in a checkerboard and scattered pattern. To the east of the HUA are blocked privately-owned lands. On the blocked lands are privately-owned horses. Since there is no fence between the public lands and the private lands, wild horses are free to cross over onto the private lands mingling with the privately-owned horses and vice versa.

Within the Pinenut HUA are lands owned by members of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (see Map III). On March 2, 1981, the Superintendent for the Western Nevada Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs, requested that the BLM remove the wild horses from the lands owned by the Tribal members.

Numerous requests by private landowners in the Fish Springs, Johnson Lane, Mound House and Dayton areas have resulted in the removal of approximately 350 head of problem animals (as defined in 43 CFR 4700.0-5(e)) from the Pinenut and Jumbo HUAs since 1977.

In February 1983, the Management Framework Planning Decisions for the Reno Planning Area became final. Included in the decisions was the total removal of wild horses from the Jumbo HUA and the southern portion of the Pinenut HUA.

On January 18, 1984, the Nevada Highway Patrol requested removal of wild horses from the vicinity of U.S. 50 and State Route 341. One traffic mishap and numerous near misses were reported.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Proposed Action

1. Impacts

Horses will experience stress during the actual capture operations, but will be properly cared for following capture, both in the corrals and when adopted or returned to their owners. Some horses may be injured or killed in the process of capture or being transported to the adoption center. From past gatherings in Nevada, this has been approximately 1 to 2 percent. By removing the wild horses, possible reoccurrence of automobile accidents involving wild horses would be eliminated. This will eliminate the concern by the Nevada Highway Patrol and wild horses will not be subject to injury or death.

The persons who have had and continue to have incidents with problem horses will be satisfied that the threat of damage to their property has been eliminated.

The persons and groups (Washoe Tribe) that have requested removal of wild horses from their private lands will be satisfied that their requests have been honored.

Some individuals and groups may be against a removal of wild horses, as they desire to see the horses in areas where they are easy to observe.

There would be some disturbance to the vegetation and soils, associated with capture operations.

2. Possible Mitigating or Enhancing Measures

- a. A veterinarian will be summoned, in the case where the responsible BLM employee is unsure of the severity of an injury to an animal during capture operations.
- b. No new roads, trails or permanent structures should be constructed. Travel should be confined to existing roads and trails.
- c. No capture operations should occur during the months of March, April, May and June when the majority of foaling takes place.

3. Recommendation for Mitigation or Enhancement

All of the above mitigating or enhancing measures be adopted as stated.

4. Residual Impacts

Localized disturbance to soil and vegetation cannot be entirely avoided under the proposed action. Natural revegetation will reduce the severity of the disturbance over a short period of time.

Injury or death of some wild horses could occur despite safety and humane precautions.

5. Relationship Between Short-Term Use and Long-Term Productivity

Wild horses will be eliminated from the Jumbo HUA.

6. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

If a wild horse is sick or injured, it may be destroyed.

B. Alternative No. 1 - Leave the Wild Horses in the Area

1. Impacts

This alternative would initially have the least impact on the horses, since they would not be subject to the stress of capture.

If horses remained in the Jumbo area, unauthorized capture could occur. The possibility exists that the unauthorized capture would go unnoticed by BLM personnel since the area is unfenced and wild horses can be driven off and trapped on private lands along with domestic horses. A portion of the captured horses could be subject to sale and possible slaughter.

Also, during impoundment procedures by BLM of trespass horses, wild horses in the Jumbo area could be captured, resulting in possible injury and death to the wild horses. Automobile accidents involving wild horses would continue to occur, resulting in injury or death of some wild horses and property damage, injury or death to individuals in accidents.

Wild horses would continue to use the private lands for part of their habitat against the wishes of the landowner in both the Jumbo Area and portions of the Pinenuts.

Some individuals and groups may favor this alternative, as they desire to see the horses in these areas.

The BLM would not be following their own land use decisions as presented in the Management Framework Plan, Reno Planning Area.

2. Possible Mitigating or Enhancing Measures

Fence the private lands and the highway right-of-way.

3. Recommendations for Mitigation and Enhancement

None, fencing is not a practical solution, as fencing would create small areas of use, some with water, most without. The free-roaming nature of wild horses would be eliminated. Wild horses would still have to be captured from the fenced private lands.

4. Residual Impacts

Wild horses would continue to use the private lands as a portion of their habitat. The BLM would not be satisfying the land owners' request for removal of wild horses from their lands.

5. Relationship Between Short-Term Use and Long-Term Productivity

The wild horses would remain, but highway accidents, use of private lands and increased unauthorized capture to remove the wild horses from the private lands would occur.

6. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Some wild horses would be lost through highway accidents and unauthorized capture.

C. Alternative No. 2 - Remove all the Horses from the Jumbo and Pinenut HUAs

1. Impacts

Horses will experience stress during the actual capture operations, but will be properly cared for following capture, both in the corrals and when adopted or returned to their owners. Some horses may be injured or killed in the process of capture or being transported to the adoption center. From past gatherings in Nevada, this has been approximately 1 to 2 percent.

By removing the wild horses, possible reoccurrence of automobile accidents involving wild horses will be eliminated. This will eliminate the concern by the Nevada Highway Patrol and wild horses will not be subject to injury or death.

The persons who have had and continue to have incidents with problem horses will be satisfied that the threat of damage to their property has been eliminated.

The persons and groups (Washoe Tribe) that have requested removal of wild horses from their private lands will be satisfied that their requests have been honored.

Some individuals and groups will be opposed to this alternative, as all wild horses would be removed from the entire Pinenut Wild Horse Area.

There would be some disturbance to the vegetation and soils, associated with capture operations.

2. Possible Mitigating or Enhancing Measures

Same as those in the Proposed Alternative.

3. Recommendations for Mitigation and Enhancement

All as indicated in the Proposed Alternative be adopted as stated.

4. Relationship Between Short-Term Use and Long-Term Productivity

Wild horses will be eliminated from the area in the short-term and long-term unless wild horses are relocated back into the area.

5. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

If a wild horse is sick or injured, it may be destroyed.

IV. PERSONS, GROUPS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES CONSULTED

The Draft Environmental Assessment was sent to the following persons, groups and agencies for review and comment:

American Horse Protection Association
American Humane Association
Animal Protection Institute
U.S. Humane Society
International Society for the Protection
of Wild Horses and Burros
Funds for Animals
National Mustang Association
National Wild Horse Association
Nevada Farm Bureau Federation
Tina Nappe
Sierra Club
Nevada Cattlemen's Assn.
Nevada Wildlife Federation
Nevada Humane Society
State Clearinghouse
Woodrow Cox
Wild Horse Organized Assistance
Save the Mustang
Nevada State Department of Agriculture
Joe Ricci
The Center for Wild Horse and Burro Research
John D. Winters
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
W.B. Park
F.M. Fulstone, Jr.
F.M. Fulstone, Inc.
Borda Brothers
Buckeye Ranch
I & M Sheep Company
Rolling "A" Ranch
Vernon Bryan
Frank List
Mendeguia & Laborde Sheep Co.
Need More Land & Livestock Co.
Anne Louise Cantlon
William Boegal
Henry Heidenreich
Joe Bessler
Ken Chichester

V. INTENSITY OF PUBLIC INTEREST

It is expected that interest will be low as the public had opportunity to comment on the proposed action during the land use planning.

VI. PARTICIPATING AND REVIEWING STAFF

Prepared by:

Timothy B. Keuwsaat
Timothy B. Keuwsaat
District Wild Horse and Burro Specialist

June 7, 1984
Date

Reviewed by:

Norman L. Murray
Norman L. Murray
Assistant District Manager for Resources

June 11, 1984
Date

Stephen A. Weiss
Stephen A. Weiss
Environmental Coordinator

June 7, 1984
Date

Sid Houpt - acting
John Matthiessen
Area Manager
Walker Resource Area

6/13/84
Date

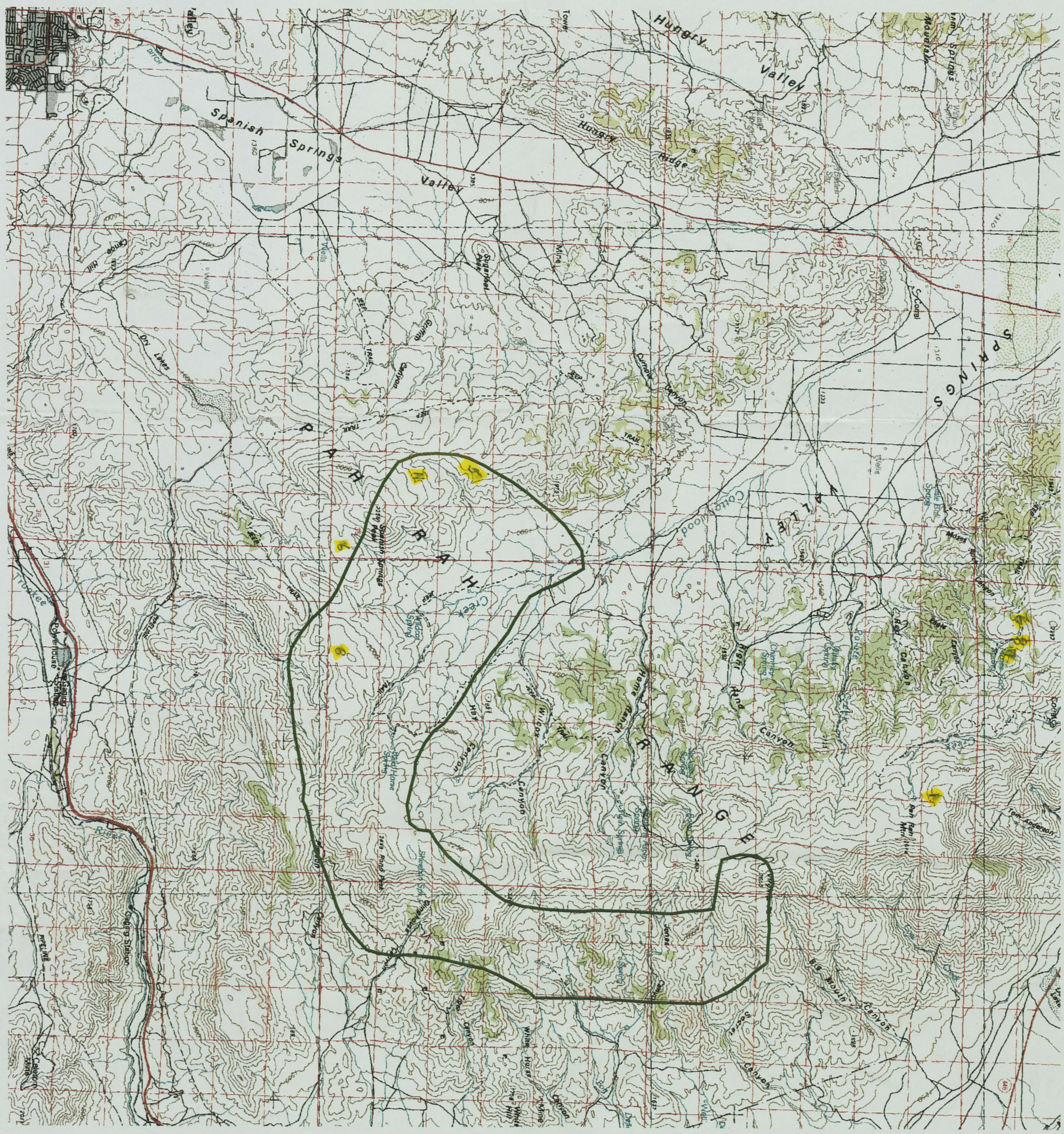
James M. Phillips
James M. Phillips
Area Manager
Lahontan Resource Area

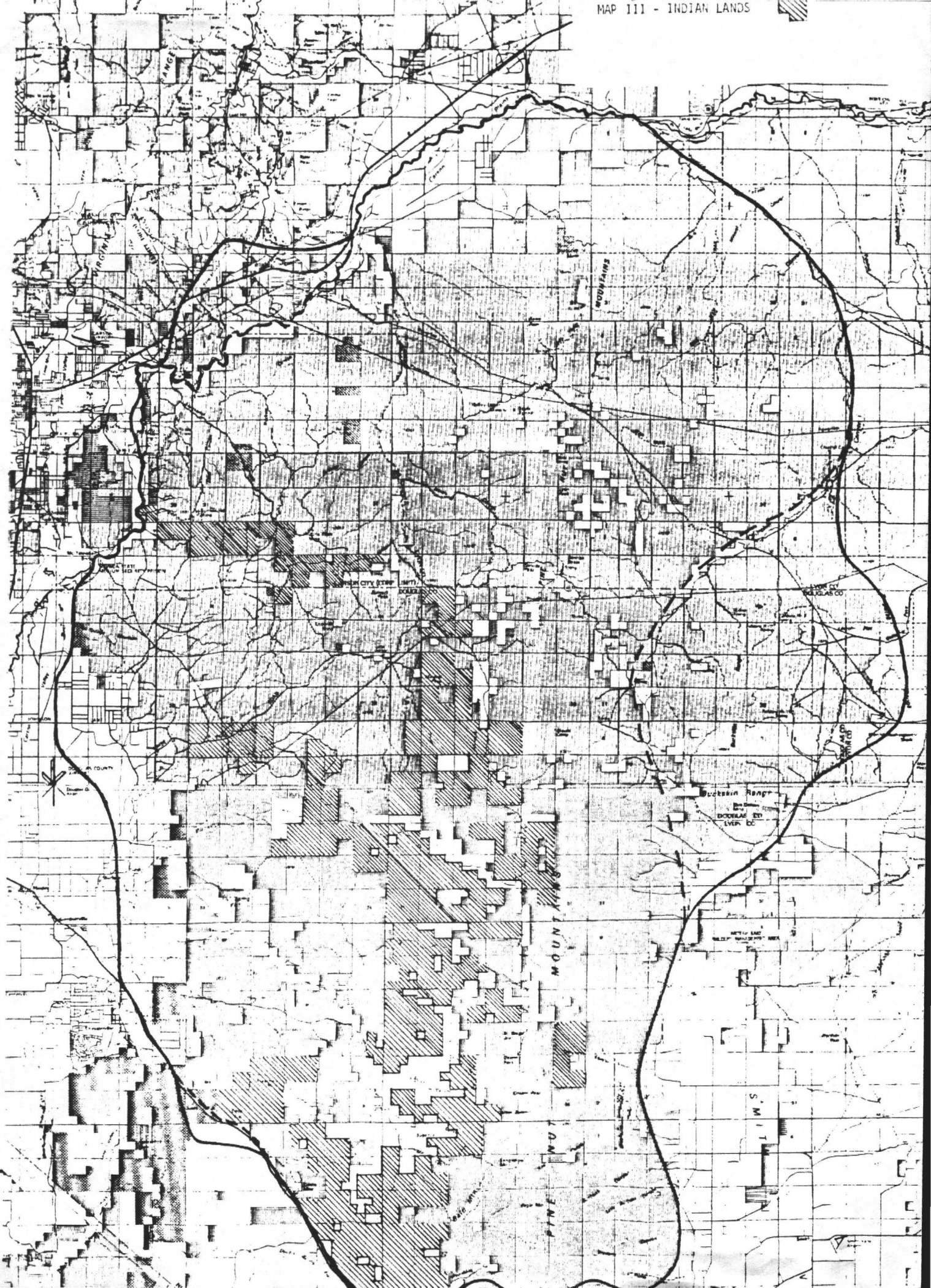
6/14/84
Date

MAP II - EXPANSION AREAS



PAH RAH RANGE





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areas.

It will be interesting to note the outcome of the Reno EIS suit and how the Carson District "protects" the remaining wild horse population.

Most sincerely,

Dawn Y. Lappin (Mrs.)
Chairman

cc: David R. Belding