



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

6/8/84

IN REPLY
REFER TO: 4700
4528
(NV-046)

Memorandum:

To: Nevada State Director (NV-910)
From: District Manager, Ely
Subject: Wild Horse/Dan Russell Briefing Paper

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LAND MANAGEMENT
1984 JUN -8 A 11: 04
NEVADA STATE OFFICE

Dan Russell has livestock grazing privileges on allotments that encompass three wild horse herd areas in the Ely District, including Monte Cristo, Sand Springs, and Buck and Bald.

The Monte Cristo herd area has an approved wild horse management plan which sets 96 horses as the optimum level for management. An inventory following a 1983 gathering showed 325 horses remaining. The extremely poor gathering results (40 head captured) were because of the time of year, August. Monte Cristo is second priority in the Ely District for a wild horse gathering in 1985.

The Sand Springs herd area covers an allotment with twelve livestock operators, including Russell. A 1983 inventory showed 300 horses in the area. We currently have no plans to gather this area.

The third herd area, Buck and Bald, is probably one of the most complex and controversial areas in Nevada. Four major uses are being made in this area, including wild horses, livestock, mining and wildlife. This area is the winter range for the Ruby Mountain herd, the largest deer herd in Nevada. The area also has two large open-pit disseminated gold mines and an enormous amount of exploration. The 1983 inventory for horses was 1185 head. Dan Russell's Preference is 23,995 AUMs for the area.

During the 1974 claiming period 940 private horses were removed from this area. A 1978 inventory showed 700-800 horses. A 1980 inventory showed 1200 head, but 489 were gathered later that year. 1981 counts showed 391 horses and a Fall 1982 count showed 1185 horses.

A supplemental claim for 1,000 horses was made by Raymond Roselund in 1983. A District Manager's Final Decision said this was not a valid claim. This decision was appealed and will be heard before an Administrative Law Judge in late June, 1984.

In 1980-81, Dan Russell licensed 19,308 AUMs, 13,571 AUMs in 1981-82, 13,311 AUMs in 1982-83, and 17,017 AUMs in 1983-84. Mr. Russell has also recently acquired an old sheep operation in this area and has requested converting 10,550 AUMs from sheep to cattle. The District Manager's Proposed Decision allowed some conversion, but rejected other portions of the

request. Indications from Mr. Russell's attorney are that a protest will be filed. Russell has had an exceedingly difficult time with proper livestock management. He has been unable to move cattle at appropriate times, resulting in over-use of his winter and spring range. He has paid trespasses the past two years, after being unable to control livestock drift and seasons of use.

As livestock and wild horses have increased, available forage on summer range is decreasing, thus forcing wild horses and livestock to accelerate utilization of winter forage, especially browse species, into summer and fall. This has severely reduced the forage available for deer when the herd moves onto the winter range.

There have been numerous attempts to reach an agreement of all involved parties, but most are unwilling to support reductions of certain species, for fear that numbers of another species will increase. When NDOW representatives were asked about holding deer numbers to existing levels, their response was that they would rather see the deer starve to death than to unilaterally hold to current numbers. After an informal agreement between Russell and Dawn Lappin (WFOA) was reached which would reduce horses and livestock, Russell's attorney declined to enter into a formal agreement, saying they would rather fight it out in court than remove livestock. Upon hearing this Mrs. Lappin would not agree to any gathering, since she believes Russell would put more livestock on the range.

There is a great deal of distrust and unwillingness to work together among these groups and until this can be overcome, prospects for final resolution of these conflicts appear dim. Buck and Bald is first priority in the Ely District for wild horse gathering in 1985.

A 1985 wild horse gathering is badly needed to help alleviate the resource damage occurring, but it may in another sense be a concession to Russell that could hurt our position in arriving at a long term agreement with the wild horse groups.

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