



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ely District Office
HC 33 Box 33500
Ely, Nevada 89301-9408

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AMERICA

IN REPLY REFER TO:

4710(NV-042)

MAR 11 1999

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

Dear Ms. Lappin:

In response to your letter of February 16, 1999 I am enclosing the notes of the 12/04/98 meeting concerning the fencing of Highway 93 north of Shellbourne, Nevada to the Elko and White Pine county line.

I had a recent conversation with Mr. Chuck Nixon of NDOT who gave me an update as to the construction progress of the Highway 93 fence. The fence is approximately one-third finished with an anticipated completion date in late July of 1999.

The BLM is in the process of completing the draft evaluations of allotments in the area that contains the west half of the Antelope HMA. We will soon start discussions with the permittees in these allotments on all matters including retaining the area west of Highway 93 as an HMA and combining it with the Cherry Creek HMA.

We will keep you, as well as NDOT apprised of our discussions with the permittees, as well as the progress of the evaluations for these allotments.

If I can be of further assistance please feel free to contact me at 775-289-1860.

Sincerely,

James Perkins
Assistant Field Manager Renewable Resources
Ely Field Office

cc: Chuck Nixon, NDOT

MEETING RE: HIGHWAY 93 FENCE AND ANTELOPE HMA

ATTENDEES :

JAMES PERKINS, ASSISTANT FIELD MANAGER RENEWABLE RESOURCES,
ELY
GENE DRAIS, ASSISTANT FIELD MANAGER NON-RENEWABLE, ELY
CHUCK NIXON, N-DOT REPRESENTATIVE, ELY
TED BENDURE, N-DOT ENVIRONMENTAL REPRESENTATIVE, RENO
DAWN LAPPIN, WILD HORSE ORGANIZED ASSISTANCE

In response to a letter received by the Bureau of Land management (BLM) from Dawn Lappin, of Wild Horse Organized Assistance expressing her concerns over the NEPA documentation pertaining to the fencing of Highway 93; the BLM arranged a meeting to discuss the concerns raised by Ms. Lappin with the Nevada Division of Transportation.

On DECEMBER 4, 1998 the persons listed above met to discuss the issues raised by Ms. Lappin about Highway 93, north of Shellborne, Nevada to the Elko county line with Nevada Department of Transportation (N-DOT).

At this 12/4/98 meeting we reviewed with Ms. Lappin the 10/29/98 meeting that was held between NDOT and BLM Assistant Field Managers concerning the issues Ms. Lappin had raised about said fence. We discussed the three alternatives that had been identified that may resolve the issues raised by Ms. Lappin. NDOT also agreed to hold construction of the fence for 60 days until a meeting could be held with NDOT, Ms. Lappin and BLM Assistant Field Managers in Reno, NV.

NDOT stated that the public safety concerns on Highway 93 are paramount as there had been 23 reported incidents of automobiles hitting livestock or wild horses in the past few years. Chuck Nixon presented the most recent map of accidents with livestock and wild horses at the meeting. This map was given to Ms. Lappin for her records.

Ms. Lappin stated that she and the WHOA organization did not dispute the public safety issues but wanted to insure that the same process that the BLM uses in ascertaining issues and conflicts was applied to wild horses in the issues. James Perkins and Gene Drais assured Ms. Lappin that the process was followed, however we did not have a meeting with her organization and NDOT prior, and this had caused some misunderstandings.

Mr. Perkins then explained the three alternatives developed from the 10/29/98 meeting with NDOT. The alternatives were:

- construction of an underpass on highway 93,
- leaving gaps in the right of way fence,
- fencing the highway and cost sharing a well on the west side of the Highway for wild horse use.

The BLM and NDOT discussed the problems and costs of constructing an underpass and leaving gap fences along the highway. Costs of engineering ,as well as not solving the public safety issue, were the chief reasons why NDOT and BLM felt that these two alternatives were not viable.

James Perkins and Gene Drais proposed to Ms. Lappin another alternative, which would in effect leave the area west of Highway 93 as an HMA (the third alternative developed with NDOT) and combine it with Cherry Creek HMA. These two areas adjoin each other, and there would be no restrictions to movement for horses in these areas. As both areas are now considered HMAs the only effect would be a name change for the Antelope HMA area west of Highway 93. BLM would still pursue cost sharing with NDOT the development of an existing well located near mile marker 107 along Highway 93.

Ms. Lappin agreed that the engineering problems and safety issues did make two of the alternatives not viable. She did agree that the simplest and most agreeable method would be to combine the two areas west of highway 93 as it was the most viable and sensible proposal.

Ms Lappin also requested that when meetings were held with permittees, she be notified as to the results and NDOT made the same request. Both parties were assured that when the permittees were met with they would be informed.

After some further discussions on non-related items the meeting concluded.

JP:djm