



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ely District Office
Star Route 5, Box 1
Ely, Nevada 89301

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APR 12 1988

Dear Participant:

Enclosed for your information are the highlights of the March 3, 1988, Wilson Creek Consultation Meeting held in Ely, Nevada.

Included in the highlights are two separate letters received by our office from interested individuals or groups that indicate their desires for the area.

An Ely District Advisory Council field tour has been scheduled for the Wilson Creek Allotment. There will be a tour briefing on the evening of May 24, 1988, in the Lincoln County Courthouse at 6:00 p.m. The actual field tour will begin the next day at 8:00 a.m. on May 25, 1988. The Wilson Creek Consultation Group is invited to join the council in this tour. This will enable the group and the council to see first hand those problems identified at this time in an actual on-the-ground visit. We will be sending additional information on this field tour later this month as the details are finalized.

We appreciate your participation in the consultation process and plan for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Gerald M. Smith, Manager
Schell Resource Area

1 Enclosure

1. Meeting Highlights (24 pp)

March 25, 1988

WILSON CREEK CONSULTATION MEETING
MARCH 3, 1988

It must be pointed out that these are only highlights of the meeting and not intended to be minutes of the meeting.

The first agenda item was the introduction of the participants. The Area Manager introduced himself as the facilitator of the consultation effort for the Wilson Creek Allotment. A sign-up sheet was passed around the room to take attendance of the participants in the meeting (Attachment 1). As part of the introduction, the facilitator explained how the meeting would be conducted, why the consultation group was established, what the basic functions of the consultation process would be, past actions and future plans of the group, and the current meeting agenda items. In brief summary:

The group was established to identify problems/conflicts and to develop objectives to resolve the identified problems/conflicts on the Wilson Creek Allotment.

The basic functions of the consultation process are to start with informative meetings to make the participants knowledgeable about the resources in the area, then meetings to identify the known problems/conflicts, and subsequent meetings to develop best available alternatives to resolve the identified problems/conflicts.

The past action of the group was an informative meeting, where resource data was presented by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to assist participants in what information was available for the area. The second meeting will be a follow-up of the first meeting to again provide the group with additional information. Future meetings will be a field tour(s) to again familiarize the group with the actual on-the-ground situation. Other future meetings after the field tour will be to start formalizing a list of problems and conflicts that will need to be resolved by developing objectives for future management consideration.

See the attached agenda item handout (Attachment 2), for a list of the agenda items discussed at the March 3, 1988, meeting.

Enclosure 1

Although it was nice to see a lot of new individuals in this meeting, it was explained that many of the individuals present were here for other reasons than the Wilson Creek consultation effort (i.e., relevant to the wildlife depredation meeting the night of March third). It was pointed out that this meeting was to address only those issues that were relevant to the Wilson Creek Allotment.

The second agenda item was Rangeland Monitoring. This item was divided up into seven topics: Allotment Objectives, Monitoring Guidelines, Animal Use Areas, Key Areas/Key Management Areas, Use Pattern Mapping, Objectives Met/Not Met, and Summary of Problems Identified by Monitoring Data. The following is a short summary of this agenda item. Those objectives that pertain to the Wilson Creek Allotment were handed out at the meeting and are attached to these highlights (Attachment 3). The BLM then explained the reasons for conducting monitoring studies on the public lands and the difference between short-term and long-term monitoring. The Nevada Monitoring Task Force Guidelines were also discussed and the BLM's conformance with these minimum standards established for the State of Nevada. Use areas of the different grazing animals were explained and discussed, along with the established key areas and those key areas that are considered to be key management areas. The past use pattern mapping was then displayed and discussed as to the importance and results. It was also explained that the results of the short-term monitoring data would be the basis for determining whether the allotment objectives were considered met or not met. This led to the next discussion of those objectives that were considered met or not met. The final topic was a general discussion of the problems that were identified through the evaluation of the short-term monitoring data and, where available, trend information. The following is a list of problems that were identified through the evaluation of the monitoring data.

- 1) Most of the vegetative objectives are not being met and will not be met due to utilization levels in excess of the established allowable use levels and due to improper grazing distribution.
- 2) Grazing use is in excess of the established land use plan allowable use levels.
- 3) Major portions of the Patterson and Meadow Valley seedings are over utilized. In some pastures it may be a factor of improper livestock distribution.
- 4) Major portions of the Hamblin and Dry Lake Valley winter use areas are over utilized.

- 5) Meadow Valley Creek riparian habitat is rated in fair condition. Excessive grazing use on portions of the area are not conducive to achieving improvement in the habitat condition.
- 6) Important sage grouse brooding complexes (wet meadow associations) in the summer use area are being over utilized.
- 7) Wild horse populations in the allotment are over the Appropriate Management Levels established in the land use plan.

Based on the presentation of the monitoring evaluation data a discussion by the participants followed in regards to the results. Many of the participants wanted to discuss the possible causes and resolutions of the problems. It was explained by the BLM that at this time we wanted to only identify the problems and recognize that we must resolve them in future meetings in order to meet the land use plan objectives. The BLM then explained that any person interested in additional monitoring information on the area can come into the office and discuss the data with the appropriate resource specialists.

The third agenda item was the Draft Fire Management Planning and Preliminary Confinement Zones. Based on the response in the last meeting to managing the Bureau's wildfires, it was decided to give the group a brief preview of the current planning strategies for wildfires in the Ely District, especially the Wilson Creek Allotment. It was stressed heavily that these guidelines and strategies are not final and are only a preliminary draft and would not be draft until the end of the fiscal year. It was also pointed out that at this time we were not seeking public comment but would be having an official public comment period at a later date.

The BLM then explained the new fire management planning concepts. The main discussion was on the development of protection zones and how these zones were applied to the Wilson Creek Allotment. An overlay was displayed that illustrated the preliminary draft protection zones for the Wilson area. It was also explained that these zones were derived from current resource values associated with each area. In addition, it was explained that at a later date each zone would have economics applied to it and possibly be adjusted. This would be based on the economics (costs) of putting out the wildfire versus the resource values to be lost if the fire were allowed to burn a predetermined amount of acres. However, the BLM stressed that the overriding primary objective of wildfire control would still be applied, as in the past, which is the protection of life and private property.

The group then discussed in detail their desires towards the management of wildfires in the area. In summary, the group felt that wildfires should be allowed to burn to reduce the Pinyon-Juniper within the Wilson area and that the BLM should actively pursue each wildfire with site rehabilitation to make the area more suitable for wildlife habitat and livestock grazing. This led to another discussion on vegetative conversions. The group felt that a lot of the known problems associated with the area could be resolved by the use of increased funding towards ~~vegetation conversions~~, thereby providing sufficient forage for all the users' demands. It was again pointed out by the BLM that we were not attempting at this time to resolve the problems, but that this would be a topic for discussion at later meetings.

The fourth agenda item was an Overview of the Monitor Elk Herd Management Plan provided by the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), Region III. The NDOW gave the presentation on how the plan was coordinated with all the affected interests. They indicated that the effort was a cooperative venture between the NDOW and Forest Service to rehabilitate meadows, set population objectives, and the methods of how the Elk would be controlled prior to the actual release of the animals. The plan identified the responsibilities of both the NDOW and the Forest Service in regards to out going years for the management of the animals. The plan established a target population level for the animals and established hunting as a control method on the population. The plan also established a time period for re-evaluation of the plan and the objectives. Since the population levels in the plan have been met and monitoring information indicates that the current levels are not damaging the vegetative resources, the NDOW would now like to consider modifying the original population objective to that which would be controlled by resource monitoring data. The NDOW pointed out that the Monitor Elk Herd Management Plan was only one possible approach and not necessarily a prototype for every other herd area. In fact, the NDOW would like to consider using monitoring data in the Wilson area to manage the elk numbers in the future, although they did recommend a 400-head population level initially. However, this would be one of the issues that they would like to see resolved by recommendations from this group. There were several discussions on this topic by the group members.

The fifth agenda item was a general discussion on those issues and conflicts that have been identified at this time. It must be pointed out that these are not the final list of problems or conflicts but are an initial starting point that can be modified as the consultation process proceeds and new information and data become available. The following is a list of those issues, problems, or conflicts that have been identified to date.

- 1) Pinyon-juniper encroachment is causing a loss of understory and desirable forage for all users.
- 2) A conflict with cattle, horses, and deer occurs on deer winter ranges. Wild horses use grasses before cattle begin grazing. When the cattle begin grazing they are forced onto browse before seed ripe and the remaining browse could be limited for wintering deer.*
- 3) A shortage of winter forage exists for livestock, antelope, and wild horses.
- 4) Wild horses, livestock, and antelope compete for spring green-up in Hamblin Valley.
- 5) In the summer use area excessive grazing use has resulted in riparian problems. The wet meadow areas are showing signs of head cutting and the associated problem of lowering the water table. However, a great deal of these areas (wet meadows) are located on private lands and the water rights are held by private interests (permittees).
- 6) Consideration needs to be given for management of juniper stringers adjacent to winterfat areas for ferruginous hawk nests. The current excessive grazing use of the winterfat areas in the winter use areas are not conducive to site improvement of these areas. The excessive use will not provide for adequate nesting habitat of the hawks.
- 7) There is currently improper distribution of livestock within the 12 use areas. This is causing a lack of forage for 100 percent of livestock use (active preference) in the allotment as a whole.
- 8) There is poor vigor of key plant species on some of the deer winter ranges.*
- 9) There are conflicts between cattle and sheep in the Dry Lake Valley use area. This is associated with the timing of use and a lack of forage in the use area.
- 10) The summer use area for livestock is also key summer range for mule deer and elk. Although the grazing use is generally not too heavy, there are problems with excessive use on riparian areas (wet meadows). This appears to be a matter of livestock distribution, however, the monitoring data in the summer use area is considered inconclusive at this time, due to only one years use pattern mapping in the summer use area.

11) There are forage competition problems between livestock and antelope on crucial antelope kidding areas in the Hamblin Valley use area.

12) The augmentation of elk into the allotment will cause increased demands on the available forage resource.

13) A large common use allotment offers little administrative control of livestock.

14) All proposed projects and actions within the Colorado River drainage portion of the allotment will be assessed as to a potential increase in contributions to the salinity of the river.

15) The livestock permittees are concerned about their maintenance responsibilities for livestock fences in the areas elk are currently using. The permittees would like to be able to renegotiate their responsibilities because the elk are causing a great deal of increased maintenance problems.

* This indicates that current monitoring data does not indicate that these problems exist. These problems will need to be considered in detail at a later date.

The following additional problems were identified as a result of the monitoring evaluation information.

16) Most of the vegetative objectives are not being met and will not be met due to utilization levels in excess of the established allowable use levels and due to improper grazing distribution.

17) Grazing use is in excess of the established land use plan allowable use levels.

18) Major portions of the Patterson and Meadow Valley seedings are over utilized. In some pastures it may be a factor of improper livestock distribution.

19) Major portions of the Hamblin and Dry Lake Valley winter use areas are over utilized.

20) Meadow Valley Creek riparian habitat is rated in fair condition. Excessive grazing use on portions of the area are not conducive to achieving improvement in the habitat condition.

21) Important sage grouse brooding complexes (wet meadow associations) in the summer use area are being over utilized.

22) Wild horse populations in the allotment are over the Appropriate Management Levels established in the land use plan.

The last agenda item was to discuss Future Meeting Dates, Agendas, and Field Tours. The next meeting has already been set for a field tour in the Wilson Creek Allotment. This will be an official meeting of the Ely District Advisory Council. The Wilson Creek Consultation Group is invited along to join the Council. The meeting dates for the field tour are May 24 and 25, 1988. There will be an evening meeting the night of May 24 at 6:00 p.m. in the Lincoln County Courthouse. This meeting will be to present to those interested individuals a general session on what the group will be seeing the next day on the actual field trip and provide for a public comment period. The intent of the field tour will be to see on-the-ground, those problems that have been identified to date. Subsequent information will be forthcoming on the field tour at a later date, when the actual agenda items and routes are chosen, which will depend on current weather conditions and time available. It was also suggested that the group take a summer tour later in the season. This will be decided later depending on the group's interest and available time.

The meeting was adjourned.

We are enclosing two letters that have been sent to our office by two separate interest groups that are participating in the consultation process through the mail. These are their opinions relevant to the current planning process.

P.S. Hope to see all of you at the field tour on May 24 and 25, 1988.

Attachment 1

Wilson Creek Consultation Meeting
Attendance
March 3, 1988

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>REASON FOR ATTENDING</u>
Randy Kelley	SCS	P.O. Box 8 Caliente, NV 89008	Wilson Creek area within Lincoln Co.
Richard Orr	SCS	P.O. Box 8 Caliente, NV 89008	Wilson Creek, Lincoln County
Richard Donohue	Pioche Rod & Gun	P.O. Box 344 Pioche, NV	Wilson Creek, Lincoln County
Tom Brown	Lincoln County Game Board	P.O. Box 441 Pioche, NV	
Ruby Lister	Farmer	P.O. Box 402 Pioche, NV	Farm involved in Wilson Allotment
Wayne Lister	Farmer	P.O. Box 402 Pioche, NV	
Ken Lytle	Rancher	P.O. Box 245 Pioche, NV	
Matt Bulloch	Rancher	62 North 300 East Cedar City, UT	Permit holder
Richard Sewing	National Mustang Association	P.O. Box 42 Newcastle, UT	Wild Horse Protection Group
William Davidson	N-4 Grazing Board	P.O. Box 1077 McGill, NV	Information
Frank Delmue	Rancher	P.O. Box 415 Pioche, NV	
Joe Delmue	Rancher	P.O. Box 415 Pioche, NV	
Steven Carter	Rancher	Lund, NV 89317	
Al Stone	WP Sportsmen	Ely, NV 89301	
Van C. Gardner	Rancher	P.O. Box 265 Lund, NV 89317	

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>REASON FOR ATTENDING</u>
Vaughn M. Higbe	Nevada Coop. Extension	P.O. Box 68 Caliente, NV 89008	
Dave Toull	Nevada Coop. Extension	P.O. Box 126 Logandale, NV 89021	
Walt Gardner	Rancher	Ruby Valley, NV 89833	
Charley Gardner	Rancher	Ruby Valley, NV 89833	
Cliff Gardner	Rancher	Ruby Valley, NV 89833	Nevada Farm Bureau representative
D. J. Woodworth	Rancher	Rose Valley Ranch Pioche, NV	
Phyllis M. Woodworth	Rancher	Rose Valley Ranch Pioche, NV	
Charles Crunden	Outdoor Writer	5517 Heron Avenue Las Vegas, NV 89107	
Andy Leitch	Board Wildlife Commissioners	820 East Sahara Las Vegas, NV 89104	
George Kaminski	Rocky Mtn. Elk Foundation	3789 Millwood Las Vegas, NV 89121	
Bruce W. Wilkin, M.D.	WP County Wildlife Management Board	P.O. Box 286 East Ely, NV 89315	
Phillip C. Seegmiller	BLM, Caliente RA	P.O. Box 237 Caliente, NV 89008	
Larry T. Gilbertson	NDOW	P.O. Box 1109 Ely, NV 89301	
Kraig Beckstrand	NDOW	P.O. Box 237 Panaca, NV 89042	
John Donaldson	NDOW	Las Vegas, NV	
Jack Armstrong, DVM	NV Dept. Ag.	P.O. Box 11100 Reno, NV 89510	Awareness
A. Z. Joy	Nevada Coop. Extension	P.O. Box 210 Ely, NV 89301	Information

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>REASON FOR ATTENDING</u>
Vickie Turner	Nevada Cattlemen	419 Railroad Elko, NV 89801	Information
Kent Howard	AFBF Public Land Committee	P.O. Box 1627 Elko, NV 89801	
Loyd Sorensen	Rancher	591 13th Street Elko, NV 89801	
Von Sorensen	Rancher & President Nevada Woolgrowers	Clover Valley Wells, NV	Interest in planning
Bob Dickenson	Rancher		Private
Pam Willmore	Fund for Animals/WHOA		Horse protection
Wayne Burkhardt	College of Ag., UNR		Public interest
Bob McKay	Ranch Manager, Bidart Brothers		Wildlife depredation
Larry Barngrover	NDOW	Elko, NV	
Fred Wright	Nevada Wildlife Federation	1122 Greenbrae Drive Sparks, NV	
Steve Bore	Rancher, Wildlife Commission	Wells, NV	
Les Stewart	Nevada Cattlemen's Association		Wildlife
Don Henderson	RCI	340 North Minnesota Carson City, NV	N-4/N-5

Attachment 2

WILSON CREEK ALLOTMENT
PLANNING AND CONSULTATION MEETING
March 3, 1988

AGENDA ITEMS

Introduction	(BLM)
Rangeland Monitoring	(BLM)
Draft Fire Management Planning and Preliminary Confinement Zones	(BLM)
Overview of the Monitor Elk Herd Management Plan	(NDOW)
Issues and Conflicts	(Group Discussion)
Future Meeting Dates, Agendas, and Field Tours	(Group Discussion)

Attachment 3

OBJECTIVES

Livestock

VEGETATION:

1. To improve range condition and trend, increase or maintain forage production, and obtain good livestock distribution and proper utilization. [MFP (RM-1)]
2. Manage the vegetation resource and its uses to attain utilization rates not to exceed those recommended by the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Task Force for sustained yield. (EIS/ROD)
3. Improve 167,374 acres for cattle and 221,400 acres for sheep from fair to good; improve 605,487 acres for cattle and 231,162 acres for sheep from poor to fair; and maintain all acres in good livestock forage condition. (RPS)

ANIMAL NUMBERS:

1. Establish livestock grazing capacities on all allotments in the Schell Resource Area by September 1983. [MFP (RM-2)]
2. Establish an initial stocking rate for all large herbivores and base future adjustments of the initial levels on adequate monitoring data or through agreement.

Livestock -

Obtain written agreements to establish the initial stocking rate with a goal of active use being consistent with the 3 year average shown in the EIS. The difference between total active preference and the agreed upon initial stocking rate will be shown as either regular non-use or will be within the limits of flexibility documented in an existing approved AMP. If an agreement cannot be reached then a decision will be issued identifying the data needed and the procedures to be used for arriving at the adjustments in authorized grazing use.

When adequate monitoring data becomes available adjustments to the grazing capacity will be made that are compatible with the multiple use objectives. (ROD)

Wildlife

VEGETATION:

1. Protect crucial habitat of 12 significant species. These species are: Mule Deer, Pronghorn Antelope, Sage Grouse, Blue Grouse, Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Red-Tail Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, Cooper Hawk, Goshawk. [MFP (WL-6)]
2. Increase present forage production to meet wildlife demand. [MFP (WL-2)]
3. Improve sage grouse key areas. Manage for good condition of wet meadow riparian sites (80 percent grass and grass-like plants, 15 percent forbs, and 5 percent shrubs). (RPS)
4. Maintain ferruginous hawk nest habitat in present condition. (RPS)
5. Maintain or improve condition of key deer winter and summer range. Improve quantity and quality of winter forage for mule deer. (RPS)
6. Maintain or improve condition of antelope concentration areas. Manage vegetative diversity on pronghorn range (mid-seral stage with 50 percent ground cover and 15 to 24 inch maximum height). (RPS)
7. Retain and/or improve upland game habitat in its natural habitat. (HMP)
8. Improve reproduction and survival rate of aspen. (HMP)
9. Reduce plant decadence and increase vigor of existing bitterbrush stands. Increase reproduction and seedling establishment of bitterbrush from 0 percent to 5 percent of stand composition.

Increase bitterbrush and cliffrose from the present 0-5 percent to 15-20 percent on native range with potential. (HMP)

10. Increase reproduction and seedling establishment of existing grass species from 0 percent to 5 percent of stand composition.

On native range with potential, increase grass/forb composition from the present trace to 10-15 percent. (HMP)

11. Maintain at least 30 percent of the usable forage of key vegetation for wildlife food and cover.

ANIMAL NUMBERS:

1. Expand the distribution of six fish and wildlife species within the Schell Resource Area by the year 1990. These species are: Pronghorn Antelope, Peregrine Falcon, Sandhill Crane, Utah Cutthroat Trout, Mountain Sheep, and Elk. [MFP (WL-1)]
2. Reserve forage for a reasonable number of four big game species by season of use and specific areas of use by 1983. [MFP (WL-7)]
3. Attain and maintain habitat for reasonable numbers of wildlife, reestablish bighorn, pronghorn antelope, and elk on historic ranges, and protect crucial wildlife habitat. (EIS/ROD)
4. Establish an initial stock rate for all large herbivores and base future adjustments of the initial levels on adequate monitoring data or through agreement.

Wildlife -

The actual number of animals that could reasonably be expected to use the public lands in the Schell Resource Area (during their respective season-of-use) at the time of approval of this MFP.

When adequate monitoring data becomes available adjustments to the grazing capacity will be made that are compatible with the multiple use objectives. (ROD)

5. Manage rangeland habitat and forage condition to support reasonable numbers of wildlife demand as follows:

Deer: 17,407 AUM's
Antelope: 230 AUM's
Elk: no estimate.

Wild Horses

VEGETATION:

1. Manage wild horse habitat to provide optimum forage, water, cover, and living space conditions. [MFP (WH-2)]

ANIMAL NUMBERS:

1. Maintain and improve wild horse populations. [MFP (WH-1)]
2. Establish an initial stock rate for all large herbivores and base future adjustments of the initial levels on adequate monitoring data or through agreement.

Wild horses -

The number present in each herd area as determined by the 1983 inventory.

When adequate monitoring data becomes available adjustments to the grazing capacity will be made that are compatible with the multiple use objectives. (ROD)

3. Maintain existing numbers as of the 1983 census (1,586 AUM's). (RPS)

WATERSHED/RIPARIAN*

1. Reduce soil loss and sediment production in the resource area. [MFP (W-1)]
2. Protect and enhance water quality to comply with State and Federal regulations. [MFP (W-2)]
3. Improve the habitat condition from unsatisfactory to satisfactory condition on 48.2 miles of stream habitat by the year 1990. [MFP (WL-4)]
4. Protect all wetland-riparian habitat for the benefit of 287 species of wildlife. [MFP (WL-5)]
5. Upgrade and maintain all riparian and wetland areas in good or better condition. (EIS/ROD)
6. Improve and increase meadow land areas. (HMP)
7. Improve and protect riparian vegetation. (HMP)

* Assumed to be vegetation-related, i.e., accomplished through management of grazing animals.

Fence!