



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Caliente Field Station**

P.O. Box 237
Caliente, Nevada 89008

In Reply Refer To:
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4700
Rainbow Case File
Delamar Mtn HMA
(NV-045.07)

JUL 30 1998

Catherine Barcomb, Administrator
Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses
123 W. Nye Lane, Room 248
Carson City, NV 89706-0818

Dear Cathy,

This letter is in response to your correspondence to me dated June 17, 1998. In your letter you requested some clarification of a Temporary Non-Renewable (TNR) Grazing Authorization request for the Rainbow Allotment by 7J Ranch. The following will hopefully answer your concerns.

The Rainbow Allotment is located approximately 20 miles southwest of Caliente, NV. This allotment is in the southeast portion of the Delamar Mountain Herd Management Area (HMA) and makes up less than 10% of the HMA area. This allotment is composed of primarily shrub communities with a very small percentage of perennial grasses in the understory. In favorable years, such as 1998, annual grasses (cheatgrass) are quite abundant.

On 17 April 1998, the Caliente BLM office received a verbal request by the 7J Ranch to extend grazing on Rainbow allotment until 15 May 1998. We received a written request on 21 April for TNR, from May 5 to May 15 for 250 head of cattle (91 AUMs). The other operator with authorized use on the allotment has taken non-use this grazing season.

On April 23, 1998, Alan Shepherd, Wild Horse Specialist, and Ann Dernburg, Rangeland Management Specialist, toured the allotment to see if the TNR request could be authorized or denied based on current use levels and available forage. As stated in the letter to the concerned publics dated 5 May 1998, utilization limits were within acceptable levels (less than 20%) and there was a large amount of cheatgrass available. Cool season grasses (primarily ricegrass and squirreltail grass) make up only a very small percentage of the community and are located within shrubs, where they are protected from grazing. The warm season grasses (small galleta and three-awn grasses), also a very small percentage of community, were just starting to grow for the year and showed no current use. Based on the monitoring of the allotment, the livestock and the few wild horses present were making the majority of their use on cheatgrass. The wild horses generally travel to this allotment in

order to water along a pipeline that supplies water to the livestock using the area. Horses do use a large burned area within the northeast portion of the allotment during the late fall and winter months when snow is available.

Regarding your concern on the state of emergency within Southern Nevada and the removal of horses, the proposed TNR area was identified as a removal area in 1996 due to the severe drought conditions. The area supported no current year's growth on the perennial grasses and no annual grasses grew. No gather was conducted in the area because the horses moved to an adjacent allotment within the HMA. Gathering was conducted approximately 20 miles to the northwest of this area in order to protect the perennial grasses and the lack of water. The approval of this authorization should not have created any hardship on the perennial grasses due to the abundance of cheatgrass.

We did not realize until 4 May 1998 that the letter to concerned publics had not been mailed. Consequently, Ann Dernburg called or faxed the interested parties from both the 1997 and 1998 mailing lists, including the Nevada State Clearing House. She was informed that a good faith effort to contact the State Departments of Conservation and Agriculture, the Nevada Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses and the Nevada Division of Wildlife would be sufficient to proceed with this TNR.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James M. Perkins, Acting".

James M. Perkins
Assistant Field Manager, Renewable Resources