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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ely Field Office
HC 33 Box 33500 (702 No. Industrial Way)
Ely, Nevada 89301-9408
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>

In Reply Refer To:
4130 (NV-042)
FEB 16 1999

Dear Interested Public:

Following are the allotments which are being evaluated by the Ely Field Office this year. Allotment evaluations currently in progress, which have been previously initiated include:

Map#	Allotment	Allotment Category	Wildhorse Herd Management Area (HMA)
160	Rabbit Spring	Custodial	Miller Flat
166	Sheep Spring	Improve	Miller Flat
170	Uvada	Maintain	Miller Flat
177	Oak Wells	Improve	Miller Flat
111	Rock Canyon	Custodial	Non-HMA
121	Big Six Well	Custodial	Non-HMA
259	Dee Gee Spring	Custodial	Non-HMA
128	North Cove	Improve	Non-HMA
133	Sorenson Well	Custodial	Non-HMA
109	Cattle Camp/Cave Valley	Improve	Non-HMA
136	Well's Station	Improve	Non-HMA
135	Maybe Seeding	Maintain	Non-HMA
137	Sheep Trail Seeding	Maintain	Non-HMA
134	East Wells	Custodial	Non-HMA
118	Brown Knoll	Improve	Non-HMA
125	Swamp Cedar	Maintain	Non-HMA
32	30 Mile Spring	Improve	Non-HMA
17	Maverick Springs	Improve	Buck/Bald
123	Hamblin Valley	Maintain	Wilson Creek
86	Major's	Maintain	Non-HMA
113	South Spring Valley	Maintain	Non-HMA
188	Mustang Flat	Custodial	Clover Creek
262	Sand Hills	Custodial	Clover Mountain
180	Clover Creek	Custodial	Clover Creek
181	Sawmill	Custodial	Clover Creek
223	Cottonwood	Custodial	Clover Mountain

Map#	Allotment	Allotment Category	Wildhorse Herd Management Area (HMA)
190	Pennsylvania	Custodial	Clover Mountain
187	Sheep Flat	Improve	Clover Mountain

Allotment evaluations which will be initiated this year include:

5	Cherry Creek	Improve	Cherry Creek/Antelope/ Butte
15	Goshute Basin	Maintain-New	Cherry Creek
6	Indian Creek	Maintain	Cherry Creek
97	White Rock	Improve	Non-HMA
19	Warm Springs	Improve	Buck/Bald
241	Wilson Creek	Improve	Seamon, Wilson & Dry Lake
201	Garden Spring	Improve	Blue Nose Peak
206	Summit Spring	Improve	Blue Nose Peak
202	White Rock	Improve	Blue Nose Peak

The purpose of the allotment evaluation is to assess if existing multiple uses and current management practices are consistent with the standards for the Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council, Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council, and the allotment specific and land use plan objectives.

This year (1999) the Ely Field Office is scheduled to complete the allotment evaluation process for these allotments.

I request that those individuals and groups that have an interest in any or all of the listed allotments please submit or inform us of your intention to submit by March 30, 1999, any specific data or information related to the allotments.

The Ely Field Office will coordinate the review of the evaluation with the permittee and other interested publics that request involvement through an allotment specific response to this inquiry.

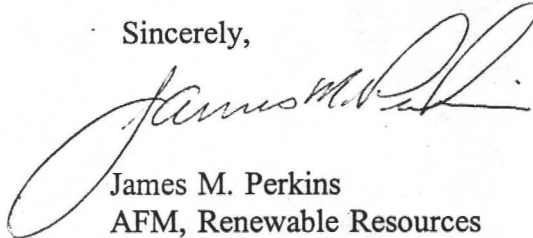
The Ely Field Office will consider the input received on the evaluation through the coordination process and will prepare the final section of each evaluation, entitled the Management Action Selection Report. The Management Action Selection chosen will be incorporated into a grazing agreement or multiple-use decision. Agreements or multiple-use decisions associated with the allotment evaluations will be issued beginning in 1999 and 2000. The agreement or multiple-use decision will outline the management actions needed to assure the attainment of the objectives listed for the allotment. If the evaluation shows that no

changes in management are required, or if additional data is needed to assess progress, the allotment file will be documented accordingly.

The above described procedures provide the opportunity for the permittee and other interested public(s) to be involved in the allotment evaluation process and become informed of the conclusion of the allotment evaluation process.

In response to this letter, please send your allotment specific data and information to the above address, attention: Chris Mayer, Rangeland Management Team Lead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James M. Perkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

James M. Perkins
AFM, Renewable Resources

February 23, 1999

James M. Perkins, AFM
Renewable Resources
BLM-Ely Field Office
HC33 Box 33500
Ely, NV 89301-9408

Dear Mr. Perkins,

We are responding to your scoping document for you updated mailing list. The Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses is a State of Nevada Agency. By Nevada Statute we are the agency responsible for the oversight of the management of the wild horses and their habitat within the boundaries of the State of Nevada, therefore are an interested and affected party on all issues concerning wild horses and/or the habitat they reside on. Please continue to keep us on your mailing list for all actions:

Designating or changing allotment boundaries
Increasing or decreasing permitted use
Modification of terms and conditions of grazing permits
Development or revision of Allotment Management Plans
Planning range developments or range improvement programs
Reports which evaluate monitoring data (ie allotment evaluations)
Issuance of non-renewable grazing permits
Closures of allotments due to drought, fire, flood, infestation, or continued use would pose significant resource damage, trespass grazing,
and, any other document that affects the wild horses and/or the habitat they reside on in the State of Nevada.

James M. Perkins
February 23, 1999
Page 2

Please include the Nevada Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses on the mailing list for all of the allotments and herd management areas affecting wild horses and the habitats they reside on. If this request is not adequate without naming each one individually, please notify me and I will respond again to your request for your mailing list. Thank you for consulting us.

Sincerely,

CATHERINE BARCOMB
Administrator

11/24/98

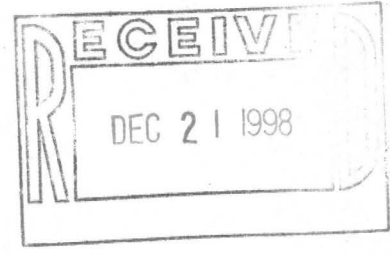
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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ely Field Office
HC 33 Box 33500
Ely, NV 89301-9408



In Reply Refer To:
6000 (NV-042)
NOV 24 1998

Dear Interested Party,

Enclosed is the Draft Lincoln County Elk Management Plan for your review. The plan was prepared by a Technical Review Team under the direction of the Lincoln County Coordinated Resource Management Steering Committee. The team was comprised of Federal, State, and County representatives, permittees, sportsmen, and other interested parties. When finalized this plan will guide the Nevada Division of Wildlife and the Bureau of Land Management in the management of elk and elk habitat in Lincoln County. This plan will also fulfill the requirements of Nevada Assembly Concurrent Resolution Number 46.

Please review the draft plan, and submit any comments to the Bureau of Land Management, Ely Field Office at the address above before December 31, 1998. In addition, there will be a public meeting to discuss the draft plan and answer any questions anyone might have on December 11, 1998 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Courthouse in Pioche. Your comments are important to the Technical Review Team. We look forward to receiving them.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Podborny, Secretary
Lincoln County Elk Management
Technical Review Team

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- 1 Enclosure
- 1. Draft Lincoln County Elk Management Plan

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11-3-98

NOV 3 1998

Joel Twitchell, Chairman
White Pine Co. CRMP
HC 33 Box 33575
Ely, NV 89301

Dear Joel:

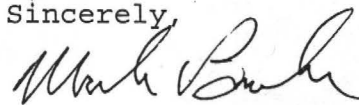
The White Pine County Elk Management Plan Technical Review Team (TRT) has completed a draft of the White Pine County Elk Management Plan (enclosed) for review by the White Pine CRM Steering Committee. It is the TRTs desire to meet with the steering committee at the next White Pine CRM Steering committee meeting scheduled for Friday, December 4, 1998 starting at 9 am at the BLM Ely Field Office. Per our conversation, I am sending copies of the draft elk plan to members of both the White Pine County Coordinated Resource Steering Committee and members of the TRT so they can review it prior to our joint December meeting.

The TRT was unable to come to consensus on one item. This was the inclusion of the following statement as part of the plans objectives: "No reduction in authorized livestock use due to elk". Representatives of both the U.S. Forest Service and Great Basin National Park felt this statement could cause problems with future livestock management. Local ranchers, who are team members, felt that this statement must be included in the plan in order to keep the trust of area ranchers that increasing elk will not take the place of existing livestock use on public lands. The TRT requested that this issue be elevated to the steering committee for resolution.

Also the TRT wanted to seek direction from the steering committee on how public input and review of the draft plan is to be handled. During the last two and a half years (31 meetings) the minutes and handouts from all TRT meetings have been sent to all 24 TRT members although some were unable to attend most meetings. Also minutes were sent by request to Mel Ewald of the Elko Free Press.

It is the hope of the TRT that this plan can be finalized and presented to the agencies for implementation by early 1999. We hope to present the final plan at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation national Elk Camp gathering in Reno, Nevada in February 1999.

Thank you for your prompt handling of this request. If you have any questions you can contact Mark Barber, team clerk at 289-1842 or Jeff Gardner, team leader, at 238-5258.

Sincerely,

Mark Barber,
TRT Clerk

Enclosures (1)

- 1. Draft White Pine Co. Elk Management Plan

LINCOLN COUNTY



ELK MANAGEMENT PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In 1995 the Nevada State Legislature adopted Assembly Concurrent Resolution Number 46 (ACR 46). This resolution urged the Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW) to prepare a statewide elk management plan for approval by the Board of Wildlife Commissioners. On February 8, 1997, the Board of Wildlife Commissioners adopted the Nevada Elk Species Management Plan (hereinafter referred to as the State Plan). The first goal of the State Plan was "To prepare subplans for all existing elk populations by the year 2000." One of the strategies listed under this goal was "Coordinate the preparation of subplans with land management agencies and affected interests."

At the same time the Division of Wildlife was preparing the statewide elk management plan, the White Pine/Lincoln County Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Steering Committee established the Lincoln County Elk Management Technical Review Team (TRT). The TRT was assigned the task of preparing a plan for Lincoln County which would meet the requirements of an elk management subplan as referenced in ACR 46. Specifically the TRT would: 1) Conduct a general assessment of elk habitat and current elk populations in Lincoln County, and identify areas of high, moderate, low, and no potential populations. 2) Work with all interested groups to refine issues pertaining to elk management in Lincoln County. 3) Identify zones that define the interrelationships of habitat, populations, and issues, and prioritize these zones for goal-setting and strategy-development purposes. 4) Develop goals and objectives for elk management based on zones and/or groups of zones. 5) Develop strategies for achieving the goals and objectives. 6) Develop a timetable for revisiting and revising goals, objectives and strategies.

The following is the list of the members of the TRT, who they represent, and where they're from:

Bevan Lister (Chairman)	Lincoln County Public Lands Committee	Pioche
Paul Podborny (Secretary)	BLM - Wildlife Management	Ely
Kraig Beckstrand	Nevada Division of Wildlife	Panaca
Frank Cheeney, Jr.	Pioche Rod & Gun Club	Pioche
Pete Tony Delmue	Livestock Permittees	Pioche
Merlin Flake	Livestock Permittees	Ely
Rey Flake	Farm Bureau	Caliente
Bryan Fuell	BLM - Range Management	Ely
Pat Gloeckner	Lincoln County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife	Pioche
Roger Hatch	Lincoln County Conservation District	Alamo
Linda Lytle	Livestock Permittees	Pioche
Delbert Matson	Wild Horses	Panaca
Richard Orr	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Caliente
Shawn Smith	BLM - Range Management	Caliente
Kyle Teel	BLM - Wildlife Management	Caliente
Phil Trousdale	Hunting Guides	Pioche

The TRT's goal was to **"Prepare a management plan to guide the long-term management of elk in Lincoln County."** Before the TRT started to write the plan, they identified seven objectives which they would try to meet through preparation of the plan. These objectives are:

- * **Manage for proper rangeland condition.**
- * **Manage for a huntable population of elk in Lincoln County.**
- * **No reductions in authorized livestock use due to elk.**
- * **No reductions in wild horse *appropriate management levels* (AML) due to elk.**
- * **Elk will not be allowed to adversely affect indigenous wildlife populations (i.e., deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, other mammals and birds, etc.).**
- * **Provide adequate habitat (i.e., food, water, cover, and space) for existing and future elk populations.**
- * **Protect private property from elk depredation.**

The TRT met monthly during the past two years to discuss the issues and develop action items and strategies to address the issues.

When completed, the draft management plan will be mailed to all affected interests for review. In addition, a public meeting will be held in Pioche to answer any questions people may have regarding the draft plan. The TRT will review all comments received and, if necessary, revise the plan. The final management plan will then be given to the Lincoln County CRM Steering Committee. (Note: In 1998 Lincoln County split off from the White Pine County CRM Steering Committee and formed its own steering committee.) Once the Steering Committee accepts the plan, it will be forward to the appropriate agencies for implementation. The Steering Committee and the TRT recognize that NDOW is responsible for management of the wildlife and BLM for management of the land/habitat. Each agency will implement those actions/strategies they are responsible for within existing laws, regulations, and policies. Environmental analysis will be done by the agencies prior to implementation of specific actions/strategies.

BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

Lincoln County is the third largest county in Nevada, and encompasses about 10,650 square miles in the southeast portion of the state (Figure 1). Elevations range from less than 2,000 feet above sea level in the Tule Desert to over 9,000 feet in the Schell Creek Range, the Wilson Creek Range, and the White Rock Mountains.

Over 98 percent of Lincoln County is managed by the federal government with the BLM responsible for almost 9,000 square miles, or 82 percent of the area (Table 1). The Department of Defense and Department of Energy lands which are located in the southwest portion of the County include the Nellis Air Force Base Bombing and Gunnery Range and the Nevada Test Site (Figure 2). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the Desert National Wildlife Range, which includes part of the Nellis Range, and the Pahranaagat National Wildlife Refuge. There are several state parks and wildlife management areas owned by the State of Nevada. Private lands are scattered throughout the County. The main towns within Lincoln County are Caliente, Pioche (the county seat), Panaca, Alamo, and Hiko.

Table 1. Land Status in Lincoln County.

Ownership	Acres *	Percent
Federal		
BLM	5,610,500	82.3
U.S. Forest Service	28,800	< .5
Department of Energy	33,500	< .5
Department of Defense	236,200	3.5
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	261,500	3.8
DOD and USFWS	503,900	7.4
State	6,700	< .1
County	2,000	< .1
Private	132,900	1.9
Total	6,816,000	100.0

* Acres are rounded to the nearest hundreds.

Figure 1. General Location of Lincoln County.

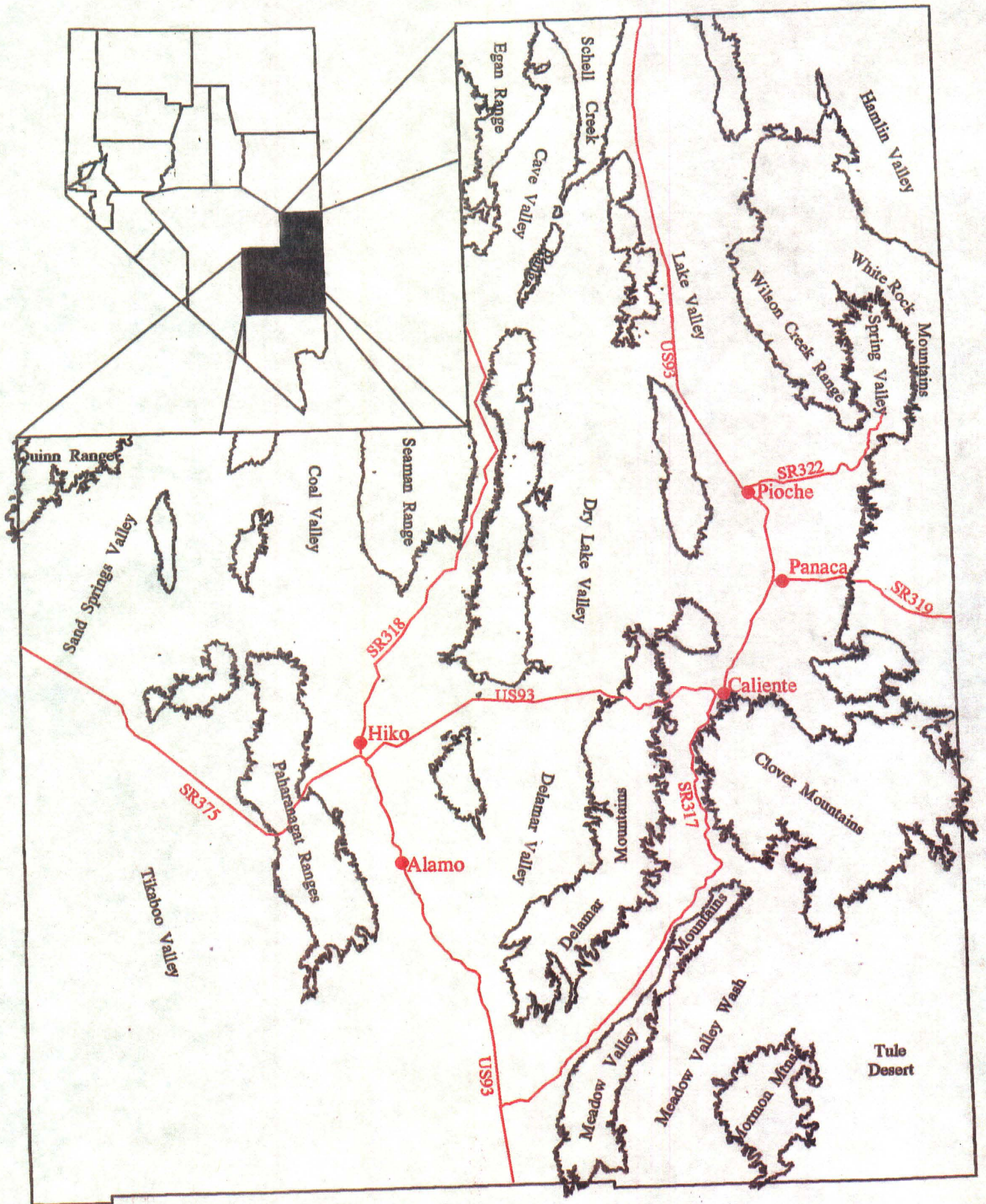
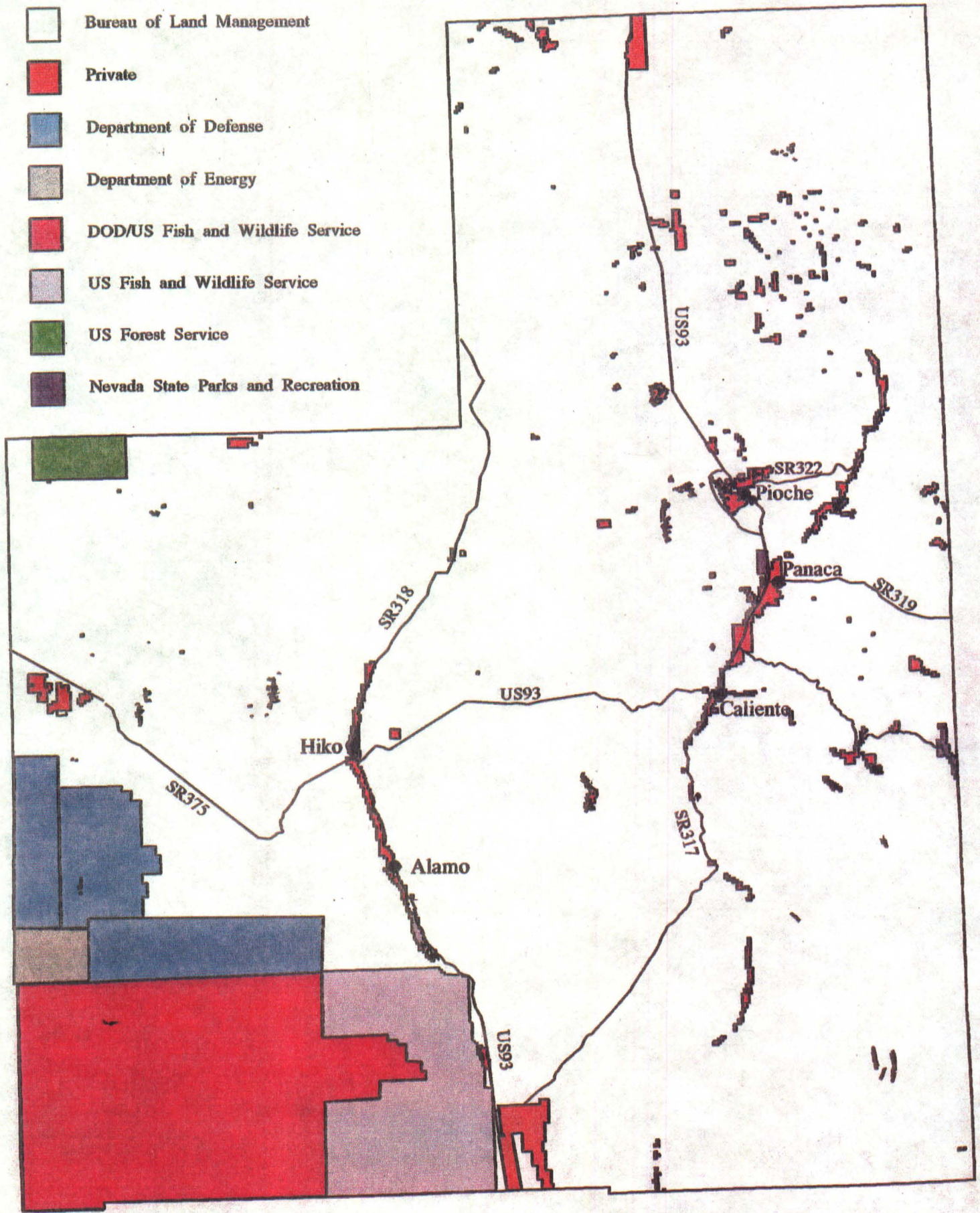


Figure 2. Land Status within Lincoln County.



NDOW has divided the state into Management Areas (MA) and Hunt Units to aid in the management of big game populations. Lincoln County includes portions of Management Areas 11, 13, 22, 23, 24, 27 and 28 (Figure 3). Although part of Units 115, 221 and 222 are in Lincoln County, management of elk in these units is being addressed in the White Pine County Elk Management Plan because the majority of the elk habitat in those units are in that county.

There are 115 BLM grazing allotments all, or partially, within Lincoln County (Figure 4). These allotments vary in size from about 1,000 acres and less than 100 animal unit months (AUMs) to over 1,000,000 acres and 44,000 AUMs. Most of the allotments are cattle only allotments, some are sheep only, and some are both cattle and sheep. In addition, there is one allotment that is horses only and five that are horses and cattle. These six allotments are outside of any wild horse herd management area. The season-of-use on these 115 allotments varies from a few months to yearlong.

There are seventeen Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in Lincoln County (Figure 5). Eleven of the WSAs include occupied or potential elk habitat. Elk management within WSAs will comply with the Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review which states in part, "The BLM will continue to cooperate with State wildlife agencies in the management of resident wildlife species in accordance with established policies and procedures. Hunting, fishing, and trapping are permitted on lands under wilderness review, under State regulations. State and Federal agencies may use temporary enclosures and installations to trap or transplant wildlife as long as the nonimpairment criteria are met. Stocking of wildlife and fish species native to North America may be permitted within the former historical range of the species. . . . Certain permanent installations may be permitted to maintain conditions for wildlife and fish, if the benefitting native species enhance wilderness values. . . . Guzzlers may be maintained, and new ones may be installed if they enhance wilderness values, are substantially unnoticeable, would not require maintenance involving motor vehicles, and all alternative locations outside the WSA have been ruled out."

Wild horses are found throughout Lincoln County. There are fifteen Herd Management Areas (HMAs) in the county (Figure 6). The appropriate management level (AML) for horses has been established on three HMAs (Seaman, Dry Lake, and Wilson). The BLM is currently in the process of collecting and evaluating monitoring data to set the AML on the other twelve HMAs.

Figure 3. Nevada Division of Wildlife's Big Game Management Areas and Hunt Units.

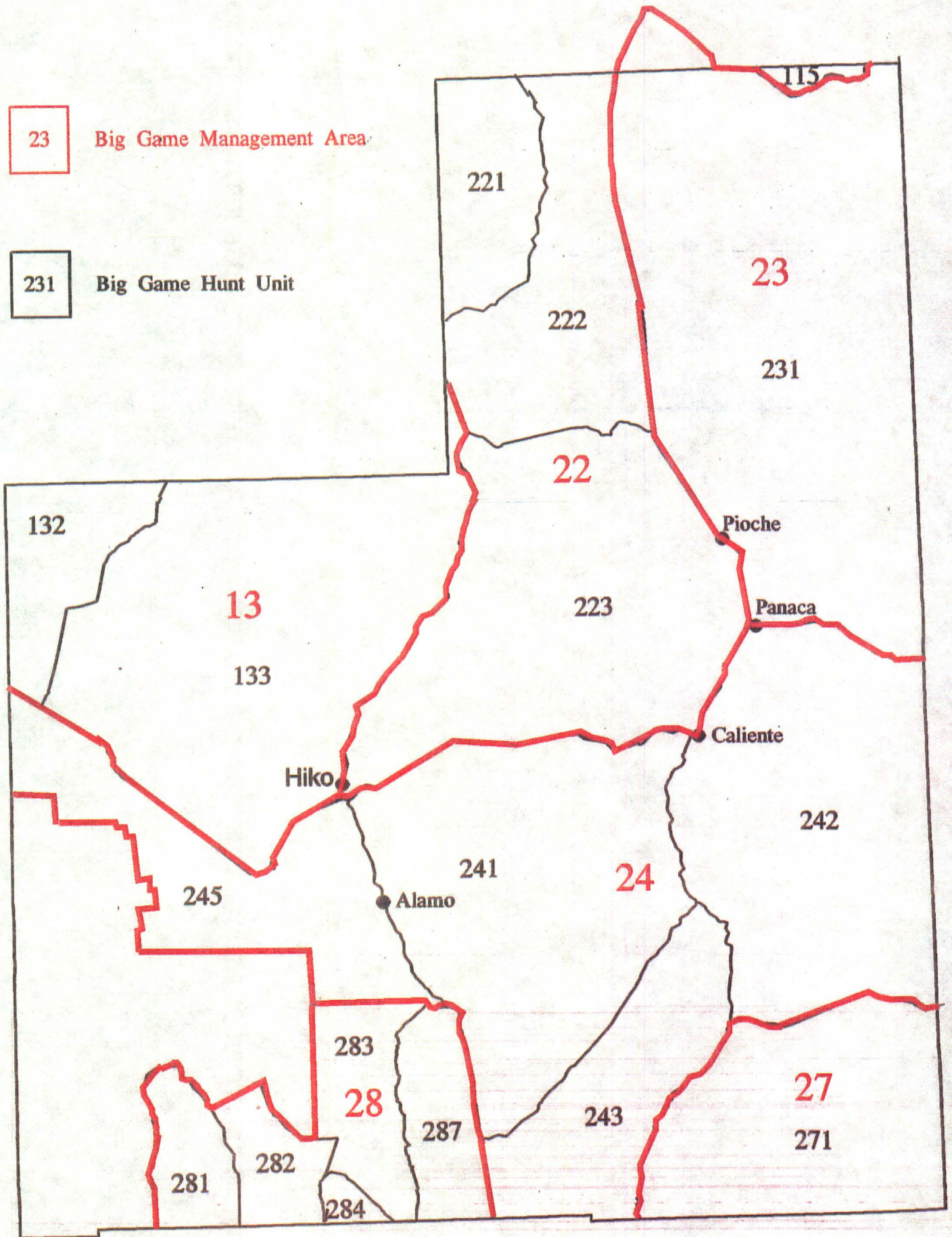


Figure 4. Grazing Allotments within Lincoln County.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 - Hardy Springs | 41 - Pioche | 80 - Oak Wells | 90 - Cottonwood | 100 - Boulder Spring | 109 - Gourd Spring |
| 2 - Shingle Pass | 42 - N4 | 81 - Clover Creek | 91 - Pennsylvania | 101 - Grapevine | 110 - Beacon |
| 3 - Haggerty Wash | 43 - Narrows | 82 - Sawmill Canyon | 92 - Meadow Valley | 102 - Breedlove | 111 - Sand Hollow |
| 4 - Cave Valley Seeding | 44 - Rattlesnake | 83 - Cottonwood | 93 - Ash Flat | 103 - Rox-Tule | 112 - Jackrabbit |
| 5 - Cave Valley Ranch | 45 - Ely Springs | 84 - Sand Hills | 94 - Delamar | 104 - Mormon Peak | 113 - Pulsipher Wash |
| 6 - Geyser Ranch | 46 - Black Canyon | 85 - Mustang Flat | 95 - Elgin | 105 - White Rock | 114 - Flat Top Mesa |
| 7 - South Spring Valley | 47 - Highalnd Peak | 86 - Closed | 96 - Schlarman | 106 - Snow Springs | 115 - Highway |
| 8 - Cottonwood | 48 - Condor Canyon | 87 - Barclay | 97 - Lime Mountain | 107 - Terry | 116 - Caliente |
| 9 - Hamlin Valley | 49 - Deer Lodge | 88 - Haypress | 98 - Garden Springs | 108 - Summit Spring | 117 - Crossroads |
| 10 - Chokecherry | 50 - Mahogany Peak | 89 - Sheep Flat | 99 - Henrie Complex | | |
| 11 - Wilson Creek | 51 - McGuffry Spring | | | | |
| 12 - Sunnyside | 52 - Rabbit Spring | | | | |
| 13 - Fox Mountain | 53 - Panaca | | | | |
| 14 - Red Bluff | 54 - Black Hills | | | | |
| 15 - USFS | 55 - Warm Springs | | | | |
| 16 - Cottonwood | 56 - Roadside | | | | |
| 17 - Pine Creek | 57 - Comet | | | | |
| 18 - Coal Valley Lake | 58 - White Hills | | | | |
| 19 - West Timber Mtn | 59 - Panaca Cattle | | | | |
| 20 - Timber Mountain | 60 - Uvada | | | | |
| 21 - Sand Springs | 61 - Sheep Spring | | | | |
| 22 - McCutcheon Springs | 62 - Buckboard Spring | | | | |
| 23 - Shadow Wells | 63 - Little Mountain | | | | |
| 24 - Worthington Mtn | 64 - Peck | | | | |
| 25 - Murphey Gap | 65 - Rocky Hill | | | | |
| 26 - South Coal Valley | 66 - Bennett Spring | | | | |
| 27 - Black Bluff | 67 - Klondike | | | | |
| 28 - Black Horse | 68 - Cliff Springs | | | | |
| 29 - Irish Mountain | 69 - Oak Springs | | | | |
| 30 - Crescent N4 | 70 - Mustang | | | | |
| 31 - Crescent N5 | 71 - White River | | | | |
| 32 - Bald Mountain | 72 - Pahroc | | | | |
| 33 - Naquinta Spring | 73 - South Hiko | | | | |
| 34 - Wildhorse | 74 - Six Mile | | | | |
| 35 - Pine Cone | 75 - Pahrangat East | | | | |
| 36 - Crystal Springs | 76 - Lower Lake East | | | | |
| 37 - Pahrangat West | 77 - Buckhorn | | | | |
| 38 - Lower Lake West | 78 - Enterprise | | | | |
| 39 - Simpson | 79 - Crestline | | | | |
| 40 - Ely Springs Sheep | | | | | |

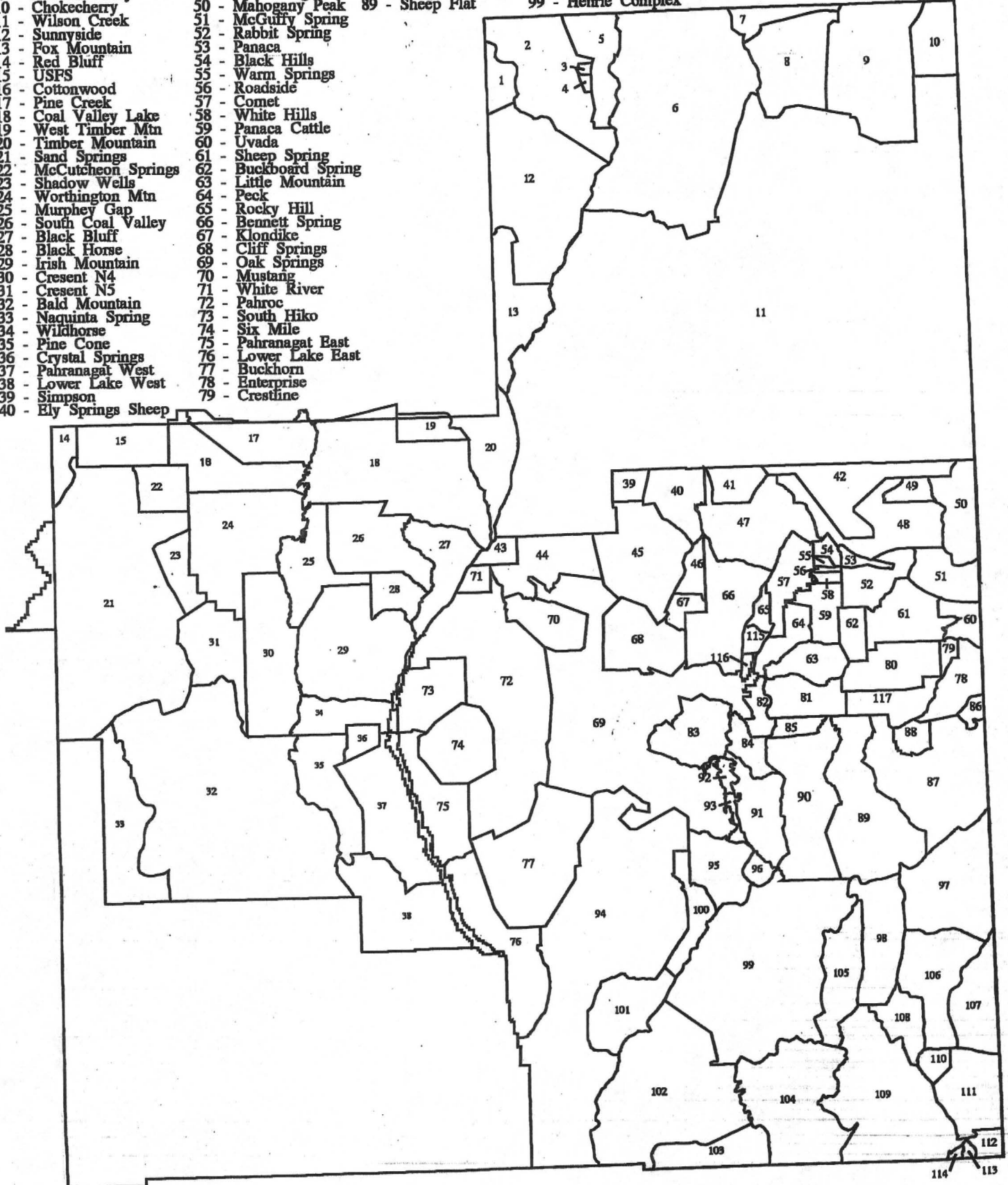


Figure 5. Wilderness Study Areas within Lincoln County.

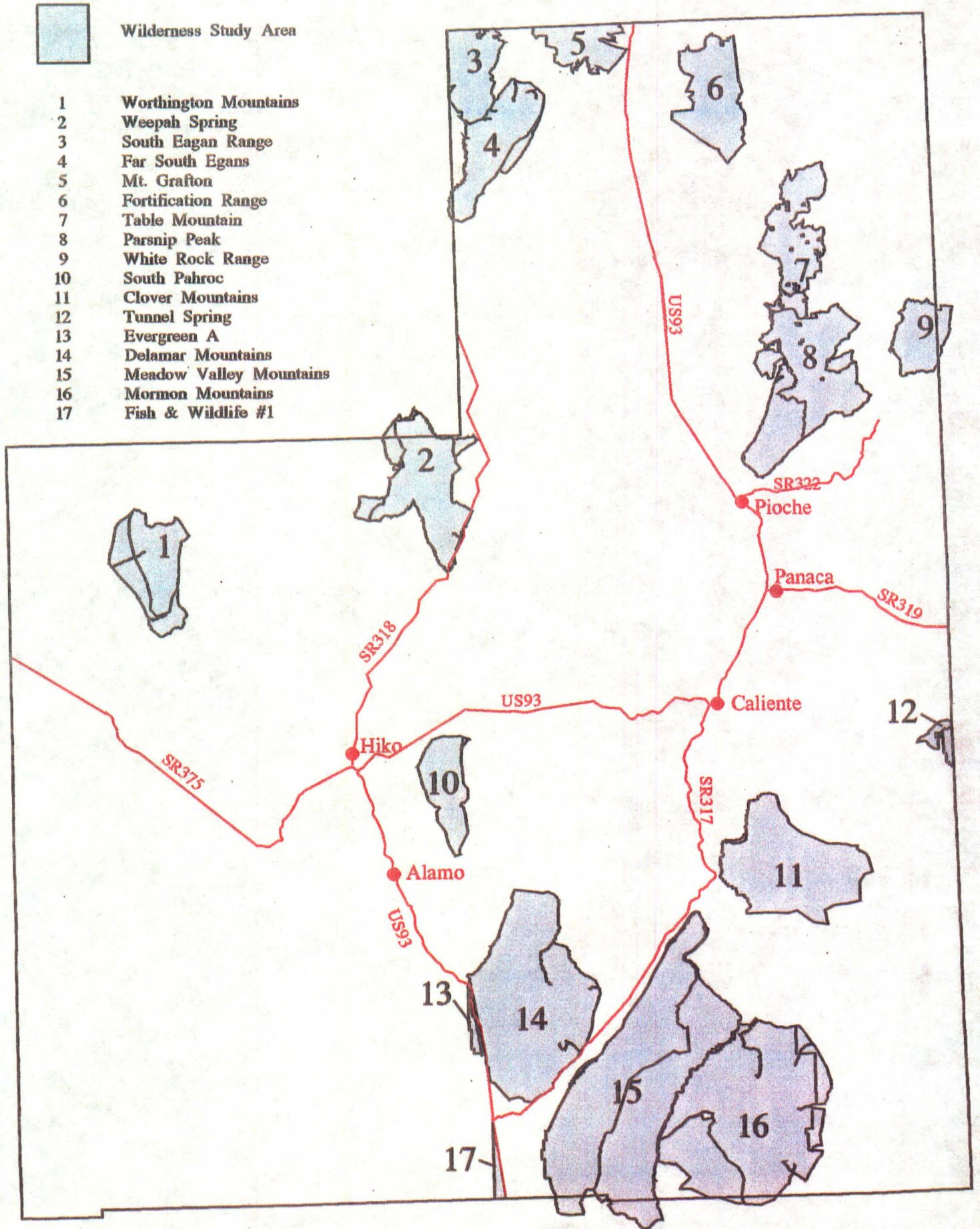
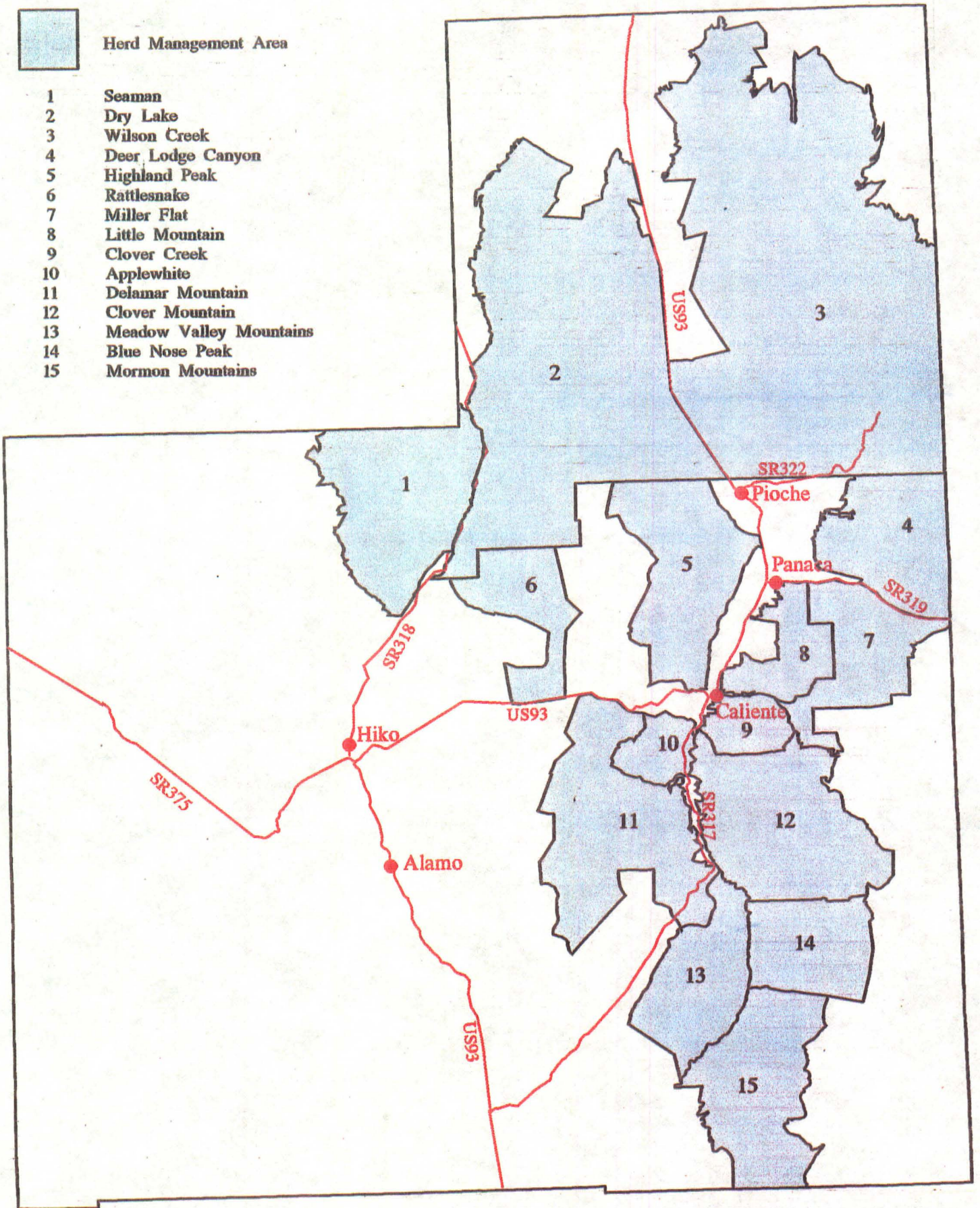


Figure 6. Wild Horse Herd Management Areas within Lincoln County.



HISTORY OF ELK IN LINCOLN COUNTY

At the present time there is no recorded evidence that indicates elk were native to Lincoln County; however, elk were native to Nevada. Elk remains have been found at the Baker Site located near Baker, Nevada along the Nevada-Utah border just a few miles north of the Lincoln County line (Hockett, 1998). The Baker Site was occupied by the Fremont people about 800 years ago.

Elk remains were also recovered from the Smith Creek Cave on the east side of Mount Moriah in White Pine County, Nevada during excavations in 1968, 1971, and 1974 (Miller, 1979). The following is a quote from the excavation report, "Cervus (elk) is not an unknown or unexpected component of Late Pleistocene-Holocene faunas; and is found in localities where its numbers have been reduced in historic times. It was formally thought to be widespread. Their disappearance in Nevada was due to reduction in numbers below viable population levels, although they were probably not abundant during prehistoric occupations."

James H. Simpson reported seeing an elk in Stevenson's Canon (Schell Creek Range) and another one in Red Canon (Snake Range) during his exploration of the Great Basin in 1859.

Mr. Elwin A. Robison (1985) of Reno, Nevada wrote a letter to NDOW describing the native wildlife that existed in Snake Valley and Spring Valley in White Pine County when his grandfather settled there in 1876. Mr. Robison's grandfather established a livestock business which was eventually passed on to his father. The ranch headquarters was located along Willard Creek in Spring Valley. Their range rights included much of the area on the east side of the Snake Range from Strawberry Creek south to Lexington Creek. Personal experiences and stories told to him by his grandfather and father provided an insight into the rise and fall of wildlife in the area. In his letter, Mr. Robison wrote, "Elk were native to the Snake Range and were observed most frequently on their winter range, south of Lexington on the Choke Cherry Bench. Their summer habitat was mostly the alpine meadows of Mt. Jeff Davis, now known as Mt. Wheeler." He also wrote, "It is sad to say that the elk were soon killed off at the hands of the early pioneers." By the end of the 19th century, elk were extirpated from Nevada.

In 1932 Nevada sportsmen reintroduced elk into Nevada. Thirty elk were transplanted from Yellowstone National Park to the Schell Creek Range in White Pine County. Nevada's elk population grew slowly until recently. In 1975 elk were sighted two miles north of Mt. Grafton in MA 22. During the 1980's elk sightings became more frequent in the Cave Valley portion of MA 22.

The first recorded sighting of elk in MA 23 occurred in the White Rock Mountains during the summer of 1979. Approximately 27 elk, mostly cows and calves, were observed by personnel from the BLM's Cedar City District. These elk probably migrated from the Indian Peaks area which is only about five miles east of the White Rock Mountains in Utah. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources had been transplanting elk into this area for several years during the 1970's.

One of the wildlife objectives in the Caliente MFP, completed in February 1982, states, "Return native fauna to historic ranges or improve population numbers in current use areas...The establishment of the species should be consistent with Bureau policy (i.e., Habitat Management Plans, environmental assessments, and proper forage allocation)."

In 1982 the Draft Schell Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) identified as one of the major resource problems in the Schell Resource Area "A decline in historic wildlife numbers, and crucial habitat that is unprotected." The objective developed to eliminate this problem was "Attain and maintain habitat for reasonable numbers of wildlife, reestablish bighorn, pronghorn antelope, and elk on historic ranges, and protect crucial wildlife habitat." The decisions reached as a result of the Schell Grazing EIS were included in the Schell Management Framework Plan (MFP) which was completed in April 1983. One of the MFP Step III Decisions (WL-1.6) states, "Provide forage for elk introductions on Mt. Grafton and Mt. Wilson on a share basis with livestock and other wildlife when monitoring data indicates forage suitable to elk is available. Prepare HMP's on introduction proposals and consider elk habitat requirements in land treatment proposals. EA's are not necessary as they are addressed specifically as a categorical exclusion."

The Lincoln County Board of County Commissioners adopted the Lincoln County Policy Plan for Public Lands in December 1984. One of the measures says, "Public lands should be managed for the introduction of elk in Lincoln County. Suitable habitat has been identified in the Wilson Creek Range and the White Rock Mountains. These introductions should not conflict with livestock grazing."

NDOW proposed releasing elk on the Wilson Creek Range and the White Rock Mountains in 1987; however, the BLM requested these elk releases be delayed until suitable forage was documented. Because of this request and the fact elk had become established in the area naturally, no elk releases were ever done. The closest elk release to Lincoln County that has ever been done occurred in March 1992 when 50 elk were released along North Creek on the east side of Mt. Grafton in the White Pine County portion of MA 22.

CURRENT STATUS OF ELK IN LINCOLN COUNTY

Elk are presently found in the Egan Range and the Schell Creek Range of MA 22 and in the Wilson Creek Range and White Rock Mountains of MA 23 (Figure 7). In addition, sightings of elk have been reported on Panaca Summit, in the Clover Mountains, on Oak Springs Summit, in the Delamar Mountains, and as far west as the Pahrangat Range.

NDOW has conducted winter aerial surveys of the elk in MA 23 since 1992. Table 2 shows the results of those surveys. The survey data is used to calculate bull:cow:calf ratios. Population estimates are then computed using the POP-4 computer model. The population estimate for 1998 for MA 23 is 330 animals.

Figure 7. Distribution of Elk within Lincoln County.

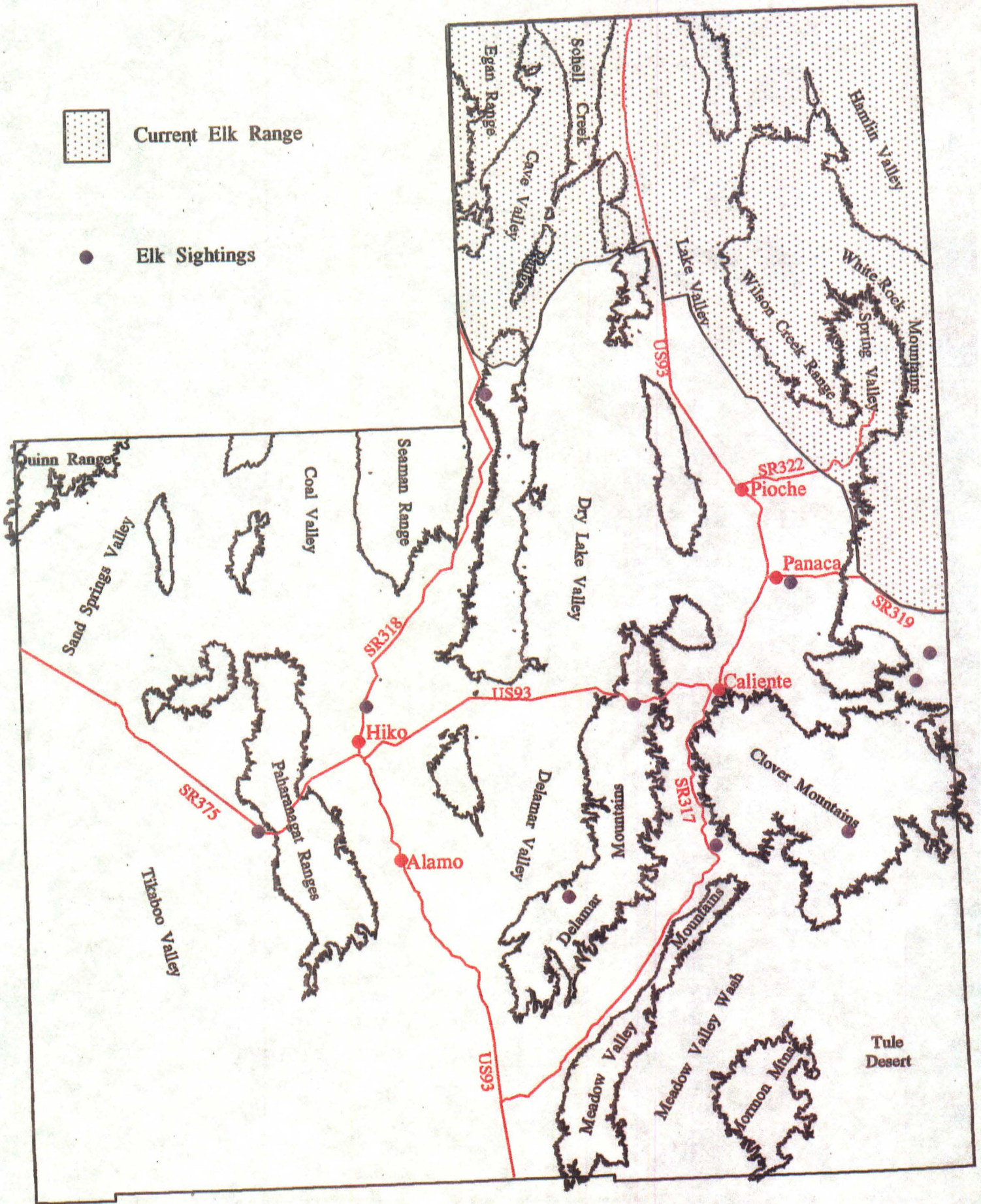


Table 2. Aerial Survey of Elk in Management Area 23.

Year	Number of Animals Observed					Ratios
	Bulls	Cows	Calves	Unclassified	Total	Bulls : Cows : Calves
1992	14	52	29	0	95	27 : 100 : 56
1993	12	24	11	14	61	50 : 100 : 46
1994	11	65	33	0	109	17 : 100 : 51
1995	29	91	41	0	161	32 : 100 : 45
1996	14	72	30	0	116	19 : 100 : 42
1997	31	63	28	0	122	49 : 100 : 44
1998	40	149	70	0	* 259	34 : 100 : 42

* Of the 259 animals observed, 87 were near the Geyser Ranch in the northern portion of Management Area 23. This was the first year this part of the area was included in the survey.

The first hunting season for elk in Lincoln County (excluding Units 221 and 222) occurred in 1990 when two tags were issued for the September resident bull hunt. The first archery season and the first antlerless season occurred in 1992 with the issuance of one and three tags, respectively. The elk harvest and hunter success data for all hunts is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Elk Tag Quota, Harvest, and Hunter Success for Management Area 23.

Year	Tag Quota *		Animals Harvested		Percent Hunter Success	
	Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Cows
1990	2	0	2	0	100	--
1991	2	0	2	0	100	--
1992	4	3	4	2	100	67
1993	6	0	6	0	100	--
1994	7	12	6	7	86	58
1995	10	25	9	10	90	40
1996	12	40	10	15	83	39
1997	18	50	16	13	89	26
1998	27	145	--	--	--	--

* Includes all hunts (i.e., resident and nonresident; archery, muzzleloader, and rifle) except emergency depredation hunts.

ELK DEPREDAATION PROBLEMS IN LINCOLN COUNTY

The first elk depredation problem in Lincoln County was reported in the fall of 1989.

In 1991, a commercial tree grower along Wilson Creek reported elk damage to his trees, and received \$500 compensation. A landowner in Camp Valley received \$1,150 compensation in 1991 and \$3,403 compensation in 1996 for elk damage to his alfalfa, corn, and potato crops. In 1993, the owners of the old Johnson Ranch, on the east side of the White Rock Mountains, reported damage to their haystack and fruit trees. They were paid \$3,680 for their losses. In addition, NDOW provided them the materials to construct an elk-proof fence around their property to prevent future damage.

In 1995, elk began to cause considerable damage to private pastures in Spring Valley/Meadow Valley. As a result, an emergency depredation hunt was held in September of that year. Ten antlerless tags were issued, and three elk were harvested. In 1996 and 1997 a depredation archery hunt was held. Fifteen tags were issued in 1996, and ten in 1997. One elk was killed in 1996, and none in 1997. Damage payments of \$1,600 and \$2,350 were paid in 1995 and 1996, respectively, to compensate the rancher for the loss of feed caused by the elk. In 1997 construction began on an elk-proof fence around the private property where the majority of the elk damage was occurring. The fence was completed in 1998.

Also in 1995, elk made measureable use on a crested wheatgrass seeding prior to cattle being turned into the pasture in the spring. The seeding was established in the sixties for livestock, and is part of a rest-rotation grazing system. There is a concern that if elk continue to use this seeding and other seedings on public land at that level it could affect livestock use in the future.

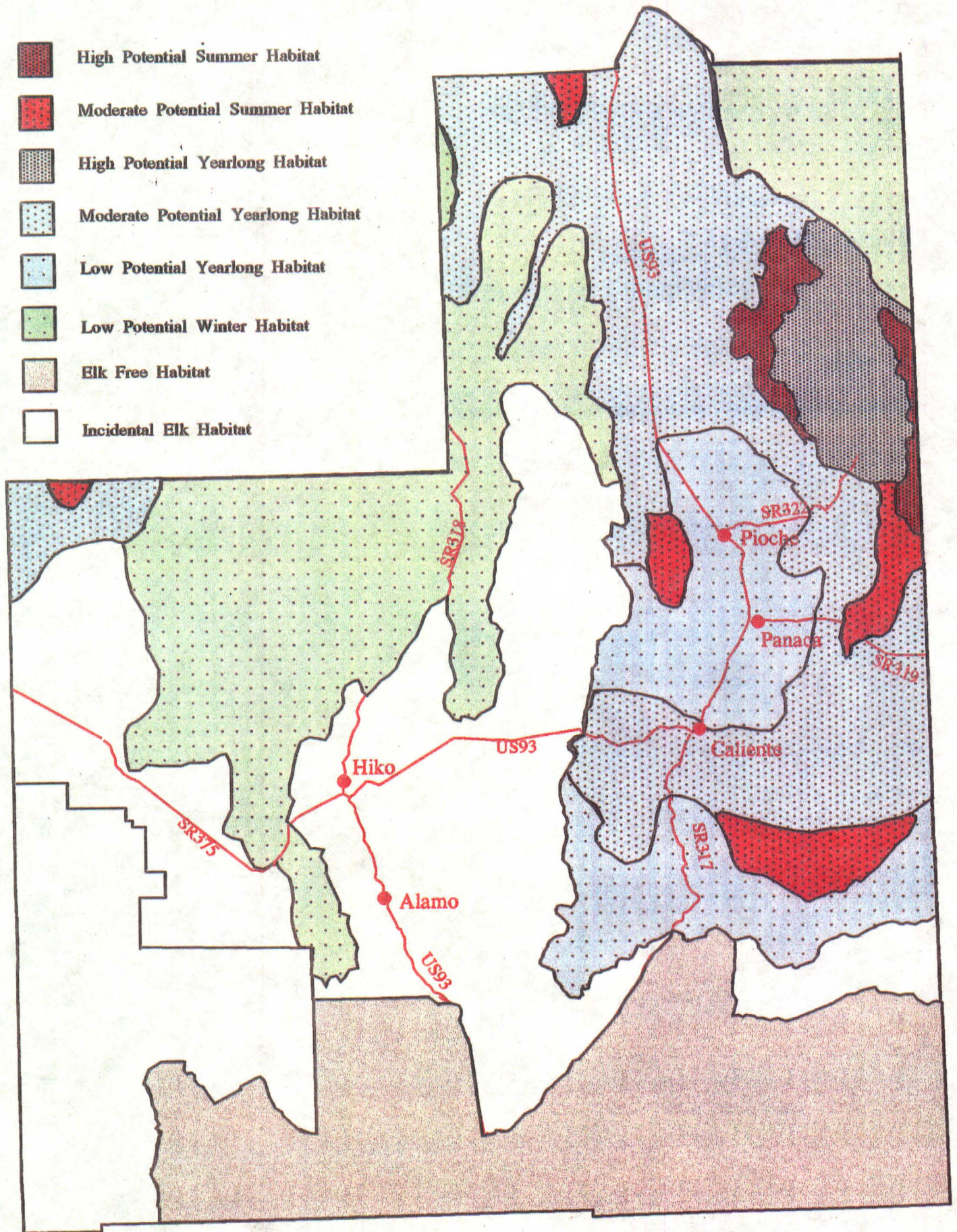
Another elk depredation problem was reported on the Geyser Ranch located east of U.S. Highway 93 on the White Pine/Lincoln County Line in 1997. Elk from Mt. Grafton in MA 22 were crossing the highway to graze in the alfalfa fields on the ranch. Damage payments were again paid to the rancher. Two emergency depredation hunts were held that fall with fifteen antlerless tags being issued for each hunt. Twelve hunters were successful during the first hunt, and six during the second hunt. The problem was reported again in 1998. NDOW and the Geyser Ranch are currently working on solving the problem which included holding depredation hunts again in 1998.

POTENTIAL FOR ELK IN LINCOLN COUNTY

Lincoln County has tremendous potential for elk (Figure 8). Less than half the potential habitat is currently occupied by elk. The eastern portion of Units 223 and 241, the southern portion of Unit 231, and most of Unit 242 are moderate and low potential summer and yearlong habitat. Units 133 and 245 are low potential winter habitat.

Several limiting factors exist that will keep elk from reaching their potential without impacting existing uses. These factors include a lack of adequate forage and/or water. This plan identifies actions/strategies that would improve the forage and water in Lincoln County and allow elk to be able to utilize all of the potential habitat.

Figure 8. Potential Elk Habitat within Lincoln County.



**ELK MANAGEMENT
ISSUES**

ELK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Working from the "List of Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities for Nevada's Elk Species Management Plan" developed by the State Steering Committee, the TRT refined the list to include only those issues they felt were of concern in Lincoln County.

<u>Issue(s)</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Vegetation Monitoring, Range Damage, Forage Adjudication, and Vegetative Carrying Capacity	1
Population Goals and Objectives and Population Management Levels	2
Competitive Interaction	3
Vegetation Manipulation	4
Potential for Elk Distribution and Elk Free Zones (This was eventually combined with Priority No. 2.)	5
Habitat Management Objectives and Habitat Requirements including Water	6
Who is Accountable for What?	7
Increased Hunting Opportunities	8
Constraints on Public Land Users	9
Coordination with Affected Interests	10
Funding	11

ELK MANAGEMENT
ACTIONS
AND
STRATEGIES

ELK MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES

VEGETATION MONITORING, RANGE DAMAGE, FORAGE ADJUDICATION, AND VEGETATIVE CARRYING CAPACITY

The TRT's first objective is to "Manage for Proper Rangeland Condition." The TRT realizes this is the only way to maintain a healthy elk herd. Only through intensive monitoring will the BLM know if the rangeland is in the proper condition. If it is not in the proper condition, the BLM will need to be able to determine why, and then make the necessary adjustments to solve the problem. The following Actions/Strategies reiterate the evaluation process currently being used by the BLM.

Action 1: Establish *key areas*, and identify *key species*.

Strategies: This will be done by a team (minimum BLM, NDOW, Permittee/County/Other). Any others who desire may be involved.

Key areas and key species will be determined by seasonal use patterns.

Establish for MA 22 and MA 23 by October 1, 1999.

Note elk movement and establishment into other management areas.

Action 2: Determine *ecological status (seral stage)* at each key area.

Strategies: This will be done by a team (minimum BLM, NDOW, Permittee/County/Other). Any others who desire may be involved.

Use Rangeland Management Handbook and Technical Guide Range Site Descriptions.

Establish for MA 22 and MA 23 by October 1, 1999.

Action 3: Identify proper *seral stage* for each key area.

Strategies: This will be done by a team (minimum BLM, NDOW, Permittee/County/Other). Any others who desire may be involved.

Use Rangeland Management Handbook and Technical Guide Range Site Descriptions.

Establish for MA 22 and MA 23 by October 1, 1999.

Action 4: Establish *allowable use levels* (AUL) by the different users (i.e., elk, cattle, wild horses, deer, and sheep) for key species for key areas.

Strategies: This will be done by a team (minimum BLM, NDOW, Permittee/County/Other). Any others who desire may be involved.

Use Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook as a minimum.

Establish for MA 22 and MA 23 by October 1, 1999.

Action 5: Collect sufficient data to determine how much available forage is being consumed by each of the different users. (Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook as a minimum plus agency manuals and technical references)

Strategies: Prior to March 15th of each year, the TRT will have a meeting to discuss monitoring needs for the year.

Monitoring will be done by a team (minimum BLM, NDOW, Permittee/County/Other). Any others who desire may be involved.

As a minimum, collect utilization data prior to livestock turn out and immediately after livestock come off to differentiate use by livestock versus other users. In addition, collect utilization data at the end of the grazing season (including any rested pastures).

BLM will consider monitoring data collected by other sources (i.e., other agencies, private consultants, etc.).

Action 6: Evaluate data collected.

Strategies: Evaluation will be done by a team (minimum BLM, NDOW, Permittee/County/Other). Any others who desire may be involved.

This evaluation will be done in accordance with BLM Technical Reference 4400-7.

Evaluate utilization data, actual use information, and survey data by March 15th of each year.

Evaluate monitoring data for the Wilson Creek Allotment (MA 22 and MA 23) in 1999 and every five years thereafter. (Note: Additional key areas for elk will be established in 1999.)

Action 7: In the *short-term*, identify problem areas that need to be addressed immediately.

Strategies: If it is anticipated that the allowable use level for elk will be exceeded prior to livestock turnout, implement management actions (i.e., early livestock turnout, grazing system adjustments, or other techniques to be researched) to prevent the problem from occurring and negatively impacting the livestock operator.

Develop new forage areas through all appropriate management techniques (i.e., improved water distribution, placement of mineral/salt blocks, etc.) to address concentration problems.

If possible, identify which elk herd/group is causing the problem (i.e., If elk are causing problems in the Meadow Valley Seedings), and implement management actions against those animals. These management actions may include, but are not limited to, hazing, trapping, and special hunts.

Action 8: In the *long-term*, when monitoring identifies elk causing the same problem three out of five years take appropriate management actions to correct the problem.

Strategies: Use range improvements (i.e., burning, seeding, fencing, etc.) to address long-term problems.

Adjust elk population levels, as necessary, by herd management area.

Action 9: Initiate an informal outside review for alternative dispute resolution when there is disagreement on monitoring data interpretation.

Strategies: This should occur within 60 days.

Each member of the monitoring team could select an independent reviewer to examine the data and make recommendations.

Action 10: When additional forage is made available (i.e., through maintenance of existing vegetation conversion projects, new vegetation conversion projects, other range improvements, management strategies, etc.), use will be allocated among the different users.

Strategies: Prior to any forage development, all parties will be given the opportunity to participate in funding the project.

Proportions will be based on dollars invested by all parties that participate.

Regardless of funding, other users will be allowed incidental use on new forage areas as long as short-term utilization objectives are being met.

On range betterment projects and fire rehabilitation projects (which are totally funded by the government), use will initially be split 70 percent for livestock and 30 percent for wildlife.

On maintenance of existing vegetation conversion projects, additional forage will be allocated based on the intent/purpose of the original project.

Based on mutual agreement of all parties involved, proportional splits of forage may be adjusted or changed to fit a particular situation.

POPULATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, POTENTIAL FOR ELK DISTRIBUTION, POPULATION MANAGEMENT LEVELS, AND ELK FREE ZONES

Based on the number of applications for elk tags in Nevada, there is a lot of interest in being able to hunt elk in the state. To meet this demand, the TRT set one of its objectives to "Manage for a huntable population of elk in Lincoln County." The TRT understands, however, that an acre of ground can support only so many elk, livestock, wild horses, and other wildlife. To be able to meet this objective as well as the other objectives such as "No reductions in authorized livestock use due to elk; No reductions in wild horse appropriate management levels due to elk; and Elk will not be allowed to adversely affect indigenous wildlife populations (i.e., deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, other mammals and birds, etc.)," the TRT identified the following Actions/Strategies to keep the number of elk in Lincoln County within the capacity of the habitat.

Action 1: In the *short-term*, manage tag quotas to maintain 300 head of elk in that portion of MA 23 south of Horse Corral Pass. Evaluate monitoring data in 1999 in conjunction with the Wilson Creek Allotment reevaluation to determine if this number is appropriate.

Strategies: Monitoring data will be evaluated by a team (minimum BLM, NDOW, Permittee/County/Other). Any others who desire may be involved.

Action 2: In the *short-term*, manage tag quotas to maintain 50 head of elk in that portion of MA 23 north of Horse Corral Pass (i.e., the Fortification Range). Evaluate monitoring data within five years to determine if this number is appropriate.

Strategies: Monitoring data will be evaluated by a team (minimum BLM, NDOW, Permittee/County/Other). Any others who desire may be involved.

Action 3: In the *long-term*, manage elk populations in Lincoln County to the potential of available habitat.

Strategies: Figure 8 shows potential elk habitat in Lincoln County. *Potential habitat* is identified by season-of-use (i.e., yearlong, summer, winter) and potential (i.e., high, moderate, low).

The Draft White Pine County Elk Management Plan has proposed a target population for Unit 221 of MA 22 of 850 elk. Only about 20 percent of this unit is in Lincoln County.

The Draft White Pine County Elk Management Plan has proposed a target population for Unit 222 of MA 22 of 750 elk. Approximately 60 percent of this unit is in Lincoln County.

The long-term population objective for elk in Unit 223 of MA 22, which is entirely in Lincoln County, is 150 animals.

The long-term population objective for elk in MA 23 is 900 animals.

The long-term population objective for elk in MA 24 is 800 animals.

Realizing that forage resources are limited, before elk will be allowed to increase over the short-term population objective or establish outside of currently occupied habitat (i.e., MA 22 and MA 23), monitoring must determine that extra forage is available for elk.

Management practices to promote elk population growth in Units 133 and 245 will not be encouraged. These units are considered low potential winter habitat and the potential summer habitat the elk would use is in Nye County. In addition, the monetary return on management of elk in areas of low potential habitat is limiting.

Reevaluate available habitat each time the plan is evaluated (every five years).

Action 3: Under present habitat conditions and concern for desert bighorn sheep, Units 243, 271, 281 - 284 and 287 will be considered *Elk Free Zones*.

Strategies: Elk Free Zone in Unit 243 is the Meadow Valley Mountains east of the Kane Springs Valley Road and south of Carp Pass. It does not include that part of the unit commonly known as the Schlarman Area.

The Desert National Wildlife Range will be managed as an Elk Free Zone.

Evaluate Elk Free Zones every time this plan is reviewed.

Action 4: Management practices which could lead to establishment of elk in *Incidental Use Areas* will not actively be encouraged.

Strategies: Incidental Use Areas will not a) be managed intensively for elk, b) have population objectives established, and c) have habitat improvements designed to attract elk installed.

Monitor these areas to determine the affects of elk use, if any, on rangelands.

If monitoring shows repeated elk use is occurring, and an elk herd may be establishing itself in the area, management actions will be taken to disburse, move, or remove the animals.

Action 5: Elk populations will be monitored using aerial surveys, radio telemetry, and ground counts.

Strategies: Fly a minimum of six hours in a helicopter during January or February of each year to monitor the existing elk herd in MA 23.

If needed to facilitate development of more accurate bull/cow ratios, conduct an aerial survey in late September/early October.

When an *established herd* is identified in MA 24, fly a minimum of six hours in a helicopter during January or February of each year.

As a minimum, attach one radio collar to an elk for every 50 elk in the herd in MA 23.

When an *established herd* is identified in MA 24, attach one radio collar to an elk for every 50 elk in the herd.

When an *established herd* is identified in other management areas, attach radio collars to monitor these new herds.

Attach some kind of visual marking (e.g., colored ear tag or collar) on every elk released into an area. In addition, attach one radio collar to an elk for every 10 elk released.

Fly a minimum of six to eight hours in a fixed-wing aircraft annually to monitor radio-collared elk in each management area.

Whenever feasible, one representative appointed by the Lincoln County Commissioners will accompany NDOW on aerial surveys.

Conduct ground surveys of released animals monthly for the first year.

Conduct ground surveys two or three times per month in problem areas.

Action 6: Use public hunting as the primary tool to manage elk populations to meet land use plan and elk management plan goals and objectives.

Strategies: In order to meet current public demand for a quality elk hunt in Lincoln County, maintain a post season ratio of between 25 - 40 bulls per 100 cows. Any annual variation in this ratio will be determined by the Lincoln County Game Board.

Action 7: Any other technique to manage elk populations will be available for use (e.g.,

trapping & transplanting).

Action 8: In accordance with NRS 571, maintain Disease-Free Status of domestic and wild animals populations in Lincoln County.

Strategies: Implement all strategies listed in the State Plan (NDOW 1997) which states,

"The Division of Wildlife will observe all pertinent Nevada Revised Statutes and Administrative Codes, and Federal regulations concerning the importation and release of elk.

The importation of wild trapped elk into the State will be certified brucellosis free by federal or state accredited veterinarian.

The State Division of Agriculture will be asked to notify the Division of Wildlife of areas where livestock tested positive for brucellosis. No release of elk will take place within areas where positive tests resulted."

In addition, when any elk are trapped for any purpose (e.g., transplanting, radio collaring, etc.) a blood sample will be collected and tested for communicable diseases such as brucellosis or tuberculosis.

If a communicable disease is detected in any elk, NDOW and the Nevada Department of Agriculture will immediately isolate, quarantine, or if necessary, eliminate the affected animal/herd.

If a communicable disease is detected in either elk or livestock, random samples will be taken in adjacent herds.

VEGETATION MANIPULATION

One of the objectives of the TRT is to "Provide adequate habitat (i.e., food, water, cover, and space) for existing and future elk populations." If this objective can be met, several other objectives may also be met. Those other objectives include "No reductions in authorized livestock use due to elk; No reductions in wild horse appropriate management levels due to elk; and Elk will not be allowed to adversely affect indigenous wildlife populations (i.e., deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, other mammals and birds, etc.)."

Within Lincoln County there are large areas of dense pinyon and juniper trees and big sagebrush with almost no understory which provide very little forage for elk, livestock, wild horses, and other wildlife (Figure 9). Elk favor grasses, but will use forbs and browse. In the last fifty years there have been numerous projects done to reduce the amount of pinyon and juniper trees and big sagebrush in the overstory and increase the amount of grasses, forbs, and browse in the understory (Figure 10). The opportunity exists to do more of these kinds of projects. Vegetation manipulation projects will focus on the eastern portion of Lincoln County within MA 22, MA 23, and MA 24 where there is high and moderate potential elk habitat.

Action 1: Increase available forage by manipulating vegetation to create more diverse plant communities.

Strategies: Encourage the use of prescribed natural fires in Wilderness Study Areas and seed these burned areas, where necessary to reduce soil loss and maintain site productivity.

Prioritize vegetation manipulation projects first in those areas where there are livestock/elk conflicts now. These areas are:

- + Spring Valley/Meadow Valley (entire)
- + Hamblin Valley (west side)
- + South Lake Valley
- + Panaca Summit north to Serviceberry Canyon

Second priority for vegetation manipulation projects are those areas identified as potential elk habitat and additional forage is needed before elk can be allowed to become established. These areas are:

- + Panaca Summit south to Beaver Dam Road
- + Fairview Range from Bristol Summit to Grassy Mountain
- + Clover Mountains
- + Delamar Mountains

Use best available method for vegetation manipulation given constraints for the identified area (i.e., prescribed natural fire, prescribed burning, spraying, chaining, riling, chopping, etc.) including seeding the area if necessary.

Figure 9. Existing Vegetative Treatment Projects within Lincoln County.

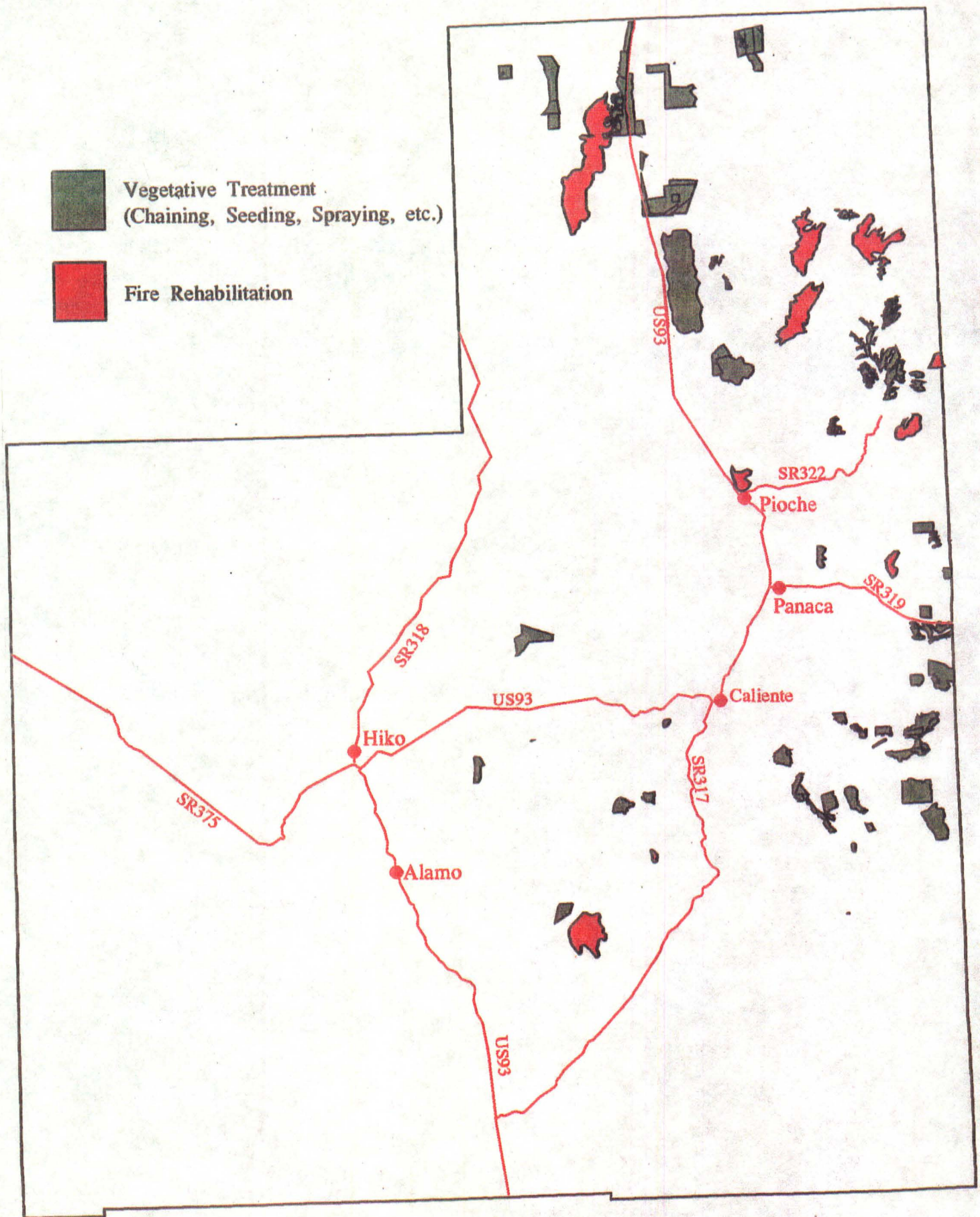
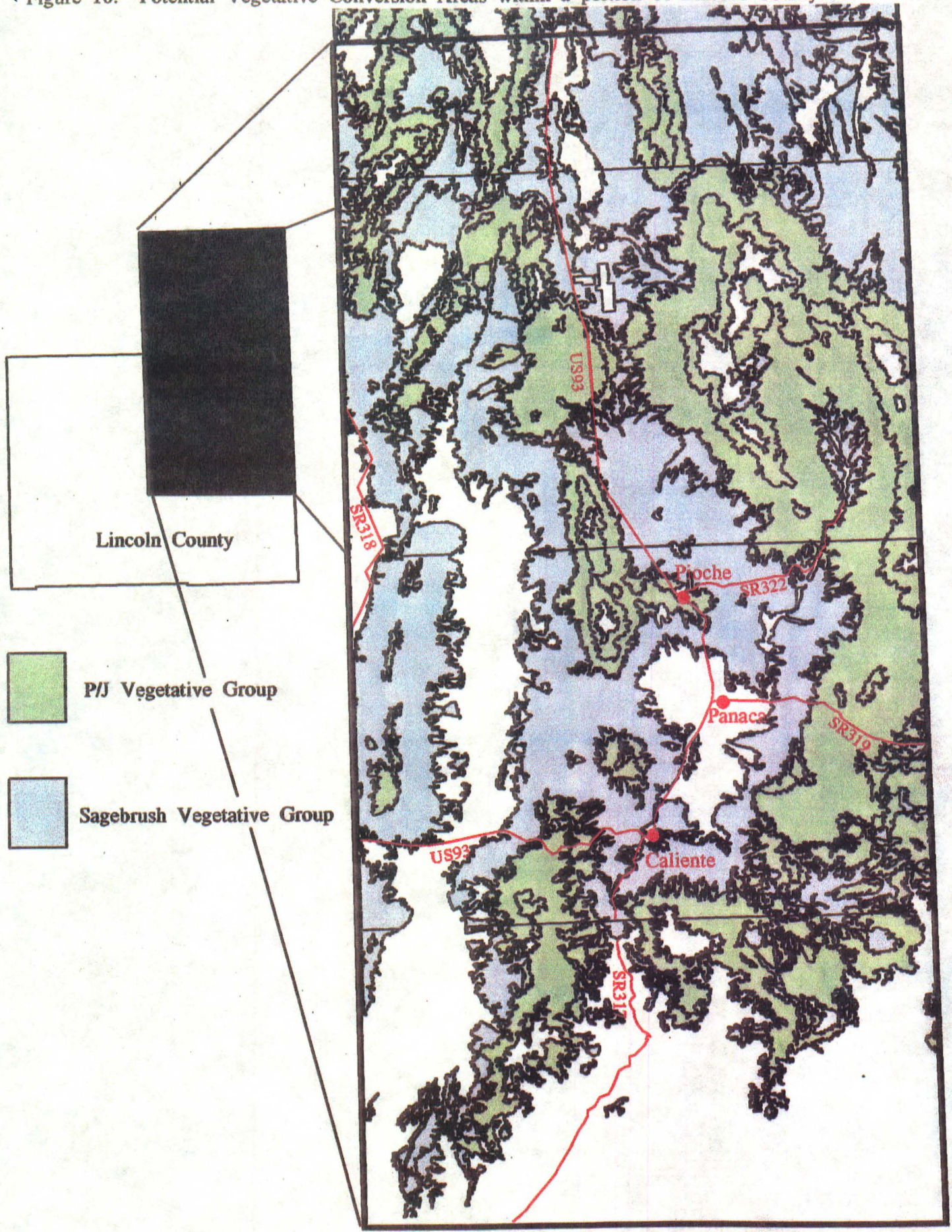


Figure 10. Potential Vegetative Conversion Areas within a portion of Lincoln County.



See Action 10 under Vegetation Monitoring, Range Damage, Forage Adjudication, and Vegetative Carrying Capacity for allocation of additional forage.

Action 2: Maintain all vegetation manipulation projects to meet original project objectives.

Strategies: Evaluate all existing vegetation manipulation projects for maintenance needs.

Prioritize maintenance needs on existing projects.

Use best available method for maintenance of existing projects given constraints for the identified area (i.e., prescribed natural fire, prescribed burning, spraying, chaining, riling, chopping, etc.) including seeding the project area again if necessary.

Action 3: In any seeding project (i.e., maintenance of an existing project, new project, fire rehab, etc.) recommend use of those vegetative species that are palatable to elk and other wildlife species, and are most cost effective.

Action 4: TRT should participate on any fire rehab team reviewing any fire affecting identified elk habitat.

Action 5: A desired goal for vegetation manipulation projects (maintenance of existing projects, new projects, fire rehab projects, etc.) is 5,000 acres per year by all methods. This will be dependent on funding, manpower, etc.

Strategies: Solicit funding from all potential sources:

- + BLM
- + NDOW
- + Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- + Mule Deer Foundation
- + N4 Grazing Board
- + Lincoln County
- + Sportsmen Clubs
- + Livestock Permittees
- + Wild Horse Groups
- + RC&D
- + Nevada Division of Forestry (primarily for labor)
- + Grants
- + any other sources that are found

Action 6: The TRT will, during their annual review of this plan, review priorities for vegetation manipulation projects and make recommendations to the BLM and NDOW.

WATER DEVELOPMENT

One of the components of the objective "Provide adequate habitat (i.e., food, water, cover, and space) for existing and future elk populations" is water. Some people consider water to be the most limiting factor preventing elk from occupying all potential habitat. There are numerous springs throughout Lincoln County, but there are also large areas without any available water (Figure 11). The TRT has identified Actions/Strategies to meet this objective.

Action 1: Insure adequate water is available yearlong for desired distribution of elk.

Strategies: Evaluate existing water availability and prioritize need for development based on habitat potential (i.e., high potential habitat first, moderate potential habitat second, and low potential habitat last).

Develop, maintain, and improve availability and distribution of water through all possible means (i.e., natural springs, developed springs, pipelines, wells, reservoirs, guzzlers, etc.).

Develop maintenance agreements between NDOW and grazing permittees for existing water development projects to provide water for elk when livestock are not using an area.

Solicit funding from all potential sources:

- + BLM
- + NDOW
- + Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- + Mule Deer Foundation
- + N4 Grazing Board
- + Lincoln County
- + Sportsmen Clubs
- + Livestock Permittees
- + Wild Horse Groups
- + RC&D
- + Nevada Division of Forestry (primarily for labor)
- + Grants
- + any other sources that are found

Action 2: Recognize the value of private water rights and do not undertake any activity that would interfere with those rights.

Strategies: Evaluate where elk use is conflicting with privately held water rights.

Where appropriate, develop agreements with private water right holders for development and use of those waters where conflicts exist.

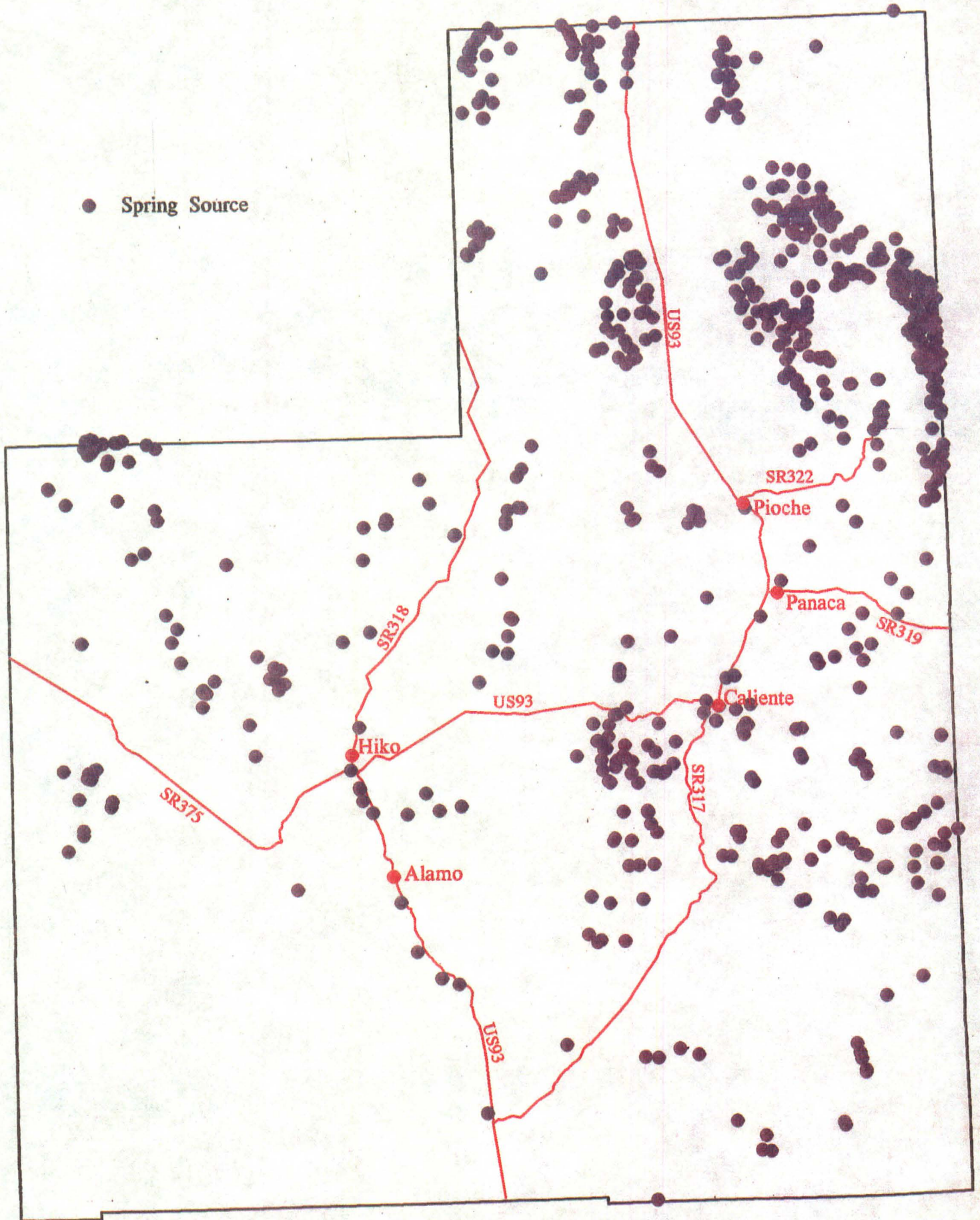
Develop agreements, where possible, with private water right holders prior to elk becoming established in other areas.

Action 3: Comply with all applicable federal and state laws and policies in development of new waters on public land.

Action 4: Comply with all applicable state water laws in development of water on private lands.

Action 5: Maintain riparian areas in proper functioning condition (PFC).

Figure 11. Spring Sources within Lincoln County.



ELK DEPREDACTION

Although private lands comprise less than two percent of the total acres within Lincoln County, elk depredation on private lands, especially those being cultivated, is a major concern. The TRT has identified as one of its objectives "Protect private property from elk depredation." Several laws and regulations already exist that address this issue. In addition, Elk Damage Management is discussed in the State Plan (NDOW 1997) (Appendix A). Since the State Plan was written, regulations have been passed by the Board of Wildlife Commissioners regarding the issuance of special incentive elk tags.

Action 1: Work with NDOW personnel and the Lincoln County Game Board to insure those strategies regarding Elk Damage Management listed in the State Plan are implemented locally.

PLAN REVIEW

The Lincoln County Elk Management Plan is meant to be a working document. It is recommended the TRT remain active and meet at least once a year to review the plan, and make recommendations to BLM and NDOW regarding monitoring needs, potential problems, and project proposals for that year. In addition, laws and regulations governing management of public lands by the BLM or management of wildlife species by NDOW are subject to change. These changes could affect whether the actions and strategies identified in the plan can be implemented or not. When changes in the laws and regulations occur, the TRT will review those changes at their annual meeting and decide if the plan needs to be modified to comply with the new law or regulation. Finally, as situations change on-the-ground through implementation of the actions and strategies identified in the plan, the plan will be evaluated by the TRT and revised, if necessary. As a minimum, this should occur every five years.

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY

Allowable Use Level (AUL) - (1) A degree of utilization of current year's growth which, if continued, will achieve management objectives and maintain or improve the long-term productivity of the site. (2) The percentage a plant is utilized when the rangeland as a whole is properly utilized. The allowable use varies with time and systems of grazing. Allowable use is synonymous with proper use.

Appropriate Management Level (AML) - The number of wild horses or burros established through the BLM's planning process and evaluation of monitoring data to achieve multiple use objectives and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance in a herd management area.

Ecological Status - The present state of vegetation of an ecological site in relation to the potential natural community (PNC) for the site. Ecological status is independent of use. It is an expression of the relative degree to which the kinds, proportions, and amounts of plants in a community resemble that of the PNC. The four ecological status classes correspond to 0-25, 26-50, 51-75, or 76-100 percent similarity to the PNC and are called early seral, mid seral, late seral and PNC, respectively.

Elk Free Zones - Those areas where elk use will be excluded.

Established Herd - Ten or more cow elk showing repeated use of an area during the same season for two consecutive years and/or continual use of an area for twelve consecutive months. This could occur through pioneering or through introduction or reestablishment efforts.

Incidental Use Areas - Those areas that have not been identified as potential habitat or Elk Free Zones, and where use is not concentrated or repeated during the same season of the year for two consecutive years.

Key Area - A relatively small portion of a rangeland selected, based on its location, use, or grazing value, as a monitoring site for grazing use. It is assumed that key areas, if properly selected, will reflect the overall acceptability of current grazing management over the range.

Key Species - (1) Forage species whose use serves as an indicator to the degree of use of associated species. (2) Those species which must, because of their importance, be considered in a management program.

Long-Term - Ten to twenty years.

Potential Habitat - Potential habitat is defined in terms of density with high potential being three elk per square mile, moderate potential being two elk per square mile, and low potential being one elk per square mile.

Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) - Riparian-wetland areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation, landform, or large woody debris is present to dissipate stream energy associated with high waterflows, thereby reducing erosion and improving water quality; filter sediment, capture bedload, and aid floodplain development; improve flood-water retention and ground-water recharge; develop root masses that stabilize streambanks against cutting action; develop diverse ponding and channel characteristics to provide habitat and the water depth, duration, and temperature necessary for fish production, waterfowl breeding, and other uses; and support greater biodiversity. The functioning condition of riparian-wetland areas is a result of interaction among geology, soil, water, and vegetation (Barrett et al., 1995).

Seral Stage - The developmental stages of an ecological succession. Seral stage is synonymous with successional stage. (See ecological status.)

Short-Term - Five years or less.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A

ELK DAMAGE MANAGEMENT

Historic Wildlife Damage Responsibility

The earliest account of elk damage was recorded as Nevada was becoming settled. Adolf Murie, *Elk of North America* (1951), cites a 1898 report of A.K. Fisher that: "Elk occur north in the Wild Bruneau Mountains. Last winter, I am told, seven were seen by cattlemen, and of these a small herd was making inroads on a haystack from which they were driven only with difficulty." The winter following release of elk from Yellowstone National Park into the Schell Creek Range of White Pine County (circa. 1934-35), the county paid \$500 to the Pescio Ranch to replace hay eaten by elk.

Since formation of the agency 49 years ago, Nevada Revised Statute 503.595—see Appendix A for a list of appropriate statutes—has required the Division of Wildlife to respond to and investigate owner/tenant reports of wildlife causing or about to cause damage to private land and property. Following the Division of Wildlife's investigation and in consideration of Wildlife Commission regulations, the Division of Wildlife may take necessary, desirable and practical action to alleviate damage or threatened damage to land or property.

Regulations allowing the Division of Wildlife to issue hazing and kill permits to landowners to control wildlife damage (including elk) have been in effect and employed since 1970 (NAC 503.710-740).

Following their adoption, the statutes and regulations listed above have been implemented to address wildlife damage, including damage caused by elk.

Elk Damage Compensation

Elk damage and compensation is addressed specifically in Nevada Revised Statute 502.250, 504.155-185 (adopted 1989) and in Nevada Administrative Code 504.350-440 (adopted 1990). Significant laws and regulations are summarized in the following.

- The Division of Wildlife is authorized to pay for elk damage, provide fencing material, issue hazing permits, trap and remove, hold special depredation hunts, kill and issue landowner kill permits, in instances where elk cause damage.

- The Division of Wildlife is required to collect sportsmen's fees and maintain a separate accounting of monies to be used to prevent and mitigate damage caused by elk or game animals not native to Nevada.
- Damage means any change in the quality and quantity of private property or a privately maintained improvement that reduces its value or intended function.
- A loss includes the cost of restoring property to its condition immediately before damage.
- The Division of Wildlife is authorized to pay for losses to stored crops, private property, privately-maintained improvements, and losses from grazing reductions caused by elk.
- The Division of Wildlife and claimant must inspect the damaged property within 10 days of notification of damage.
- The claimant and Division of Wildlife must enter into a cooperative agreement to address elk damage and to provide compensation for damage.
- Loss payments are limited to \$10,000 at any one site unless the Wildlife Commission agrees to a greater payment.
- A lack of agreement between the Division of Wildlife and a claimant may be appealed to a local three-person panel comprised of business, agriculture, and sportsmen's representatives. Any decision of the panel is final and binding.

Recognizing the concern of private property owners and the livestock industry for the potential of elk to cause damage, the Division of Wildlife cooperated in development of damage payment legislation during the 1989 Legislature. In support of the 1989 legislation, the Wildlife Commission and Division of Wildlife cooperated with agriculture and livestock interests, and sportsmen to develop regulations and programs to address the issues of elk damage. By the end of Fiscal Year 95, the Division of Wildlife had deposited \$294,535 into the **Elk Damage Account**. The Division of Wildlife had dispersed \$11,393 in damage for eight claims since the inception of the program through the first half of FY 95. A total of \$58,891 has been

expended for exclusionary materials and costs associated with actual fencing since the program's inception. The account is growing at an annual rate of approximately \$50,000, excluding interest earned. The regulatory provision for a claimant to appeal a disputed claim to a local review panel has yet to be employed.

Even with the establishment of an effective elk damage program, the following goals and strategies identify improvements that could be made in addressing elk damage and in providing information to the public about the Division of Wildlife's programs and responsibilities to address wildlife damage in general and elk damage, specifically.



Goal: To make damage compensation more effective and workable in addressing elk damage.

Strategy: Seek modification of existing statute and regulation to authorize the use of funds deposited in the elk damage payment account to pay for the cost of erecting exclusionary fencing to address elk damage.

Strategy: Seek modification of existing statute and regulation to authorize use of funds deposited in the elk damage payment account to pay for elk damage and exclusion of elk from ornamental vegetation and gardens.

Elk Damage Compensation Tag

Assembly Concurrent Resolution Number 46 asked, ". . . that in the development of management techniques to balance the interests of all affected persons and achieve and maintain elk population goals the Division of Wildlife . . . should give full consideration to the selective use of damage compensation tags." In consideration of the preceding information which outlines the elk damage management and compensation program currently in place, it is the Division of Wildlife's determination that the existing elk damage compensation program is adequate to fully address elk damage with some minor legislative modification and improved information sharing as recommended in the goals and strategies within this section of the ESMP. To overlay a damage compensation tag program on top of an already working damage compensation program might have the appearance of providing double payment or payment in excess of actual damage to some stakeholders. Most stakeholders making recommendations for the draft ESMP were not in favor of elk damage compensation tags, but the elk working group recommended the need for an incentive tag in the toolbox for future elk management.

However, the Division of Wildlife recognizes that, even with a workable and effective damage compensation program, there is a strong reluctance on the part of

some parties to accept the presence of elk. In the Division of Wildlife's experience, there remains a need to gain acceptance for the presence of elk in suitable habitat. The following goal and strategies are intended to address this need.



Goal: To provide landowner incentives for elk presence and use of private property.

Strategy: Establish an elk working group of affected parties to explore opportunities for developing incentives and partnerships including damage compensation tags for private landowners who provide habitat for elk.

Strategy: Encourage the elk working group to support legislation needed to promote incentives and partnerships as identified by the working group.

Strategy: Encourage the elk working group to identify opportunities for interaction and incentives for sportsman and landowner cooperation and team building.

Note: The elk working group has been established and has held several working sessions. Their recommendations for the legislature are pending.

Elk Damage Education and Extension

Elk damage may be avoided or minimized by implementing various goals and strategies to remove or lessen conflicts.



Goal: To improve understanding and communication between the Division of Wildlife and landowners, public land managers, sportsmen and the public.

Strategy: Whenever opportunities arise, meet with landowners, grazing industry representatives, sportsmen, the print and electronic media, and other interested parties to explain elk damage management, damage compensation and elk management opportunities in Nevada.

Strategy: Develop a handout-type publication that clearly explains the Division of Wildlife's and a landowner's roles and responsibilities for addressing elk damage and the Division of Wildlife's responsibility for providing compensation.

Strategy: Arrange formal, Division of Wildlife-sponsored workshops to explain elk damage management and elk damage compensation programs. Solicit public response in areas where elk occur or may be released in efforts to establish a population.

Strategy: Use a standard conversion of 2.1 elk per animal unit month in calculating the amount of forage consumed by elk in relation to damage claims on private land.

Strategy: With livestock interests, public land managers, and other interested parties, participate in rangeland monitoring of habitats occupied by elk to assist in determining elk utilization and impact.

Strategy: Inform the public of resolved and unresolved elk conflicts as they occur.

Strategy: Seek invitations to attend statewide and local meetings of the livestock industry and other affected interests to explain Division of Wildlife programs and progress in addressing elk damage.

Strategy: Provide opportunities for all affected interests to be involved and communicate ideas and concerns for damage as elk subplans are developed.

Managing Elk to Reduce Damage and Conflict



Goal: To manage elk to reduce the potential for damage and conflict.

Strategy: Implement existing regulation and programs as quickly and effectively as possible to cause the least inconvenience and provide the greatest relief to landowners.

Strategy: Employ scheduled and emergency hunting seasons designed to modify elk distribution and/or abundance in response to timing and location of damage.

Strategy: Adjust elk numbers where elk use results in undesirable alteration of rangeland vegetation composition or soil loss (permanent range damage).

Strategy: In cooperation with the landowner, seek private land access to accommodate hunting needed to achieve harvest objectives.

Strategy: Consider and evaluate the potential for damage as part of the process in planning for increases in elk distribution and abundance.

Strategy: Do not plan or manage for elk populations that exceed the Division of Wildlife's ability to address damage.



Goal: To manage habitat to reduce the potential for elk damage and conflict.

Strategy: Use water development or exclusion to alter elk seasonal distribution or to accommodate elk use of areas not currently being grazed.

Strategy: Where habitat restoration or enhancement may be accomplished without detriment to other species, advocate for and contribute to vegetative modification and water development projects that are beneficial to elk and other uses, or that reduce the potential for conflict with elk and other uses.

Strategy: Advocate and seek exclusionary fencing of private land agriculture to permanently reduce elk damage.