



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ELY DISTRICT OFFICE
Star Route 5, Box 1
Ely, Nevada, 89301



M 2/5/90
IN REPLY REFER TO:

4400.6
(NV-046)

FEB 5 1990

Dear Participant:

Enclosed for your information are the Management Action Selection Reports for the Tippett, Sampson Creek, Geyser Ranch, Dry Farm, and Batterman Wash Allotments. The report is the final section of the allotment evaluation, and completes the monitoring evaluation process.

The Management Action Selection Report addresses the primary concerns received from involved interests, lists the options considered during the evaluation, and identifies the management actions selected. The report also describes the rationale as to why those actions were selected.

This report is provided for your information only, and will be followed at a later date by a proposed multiple-use decision. This decision will be issued to actually initiate the chosen actions on the ground, and will specify the procedures for protest and appeal. A copy of the decision will be provided to those individuals and/or organizations that have participated in the monitoring evaluation process.

Sincerely,

Gerald M. Smith, Manager
Schell Resource Area

FEB 5 1990

MANAGEMENT ACTION SELECTION REPORT

TIPPETT ALLOTMENT

SCHELL RESOURCE AREA

Intermountain Ranches, Inc., Permittee
 Lyman J Rosenlund, Permittee
 Hank Vogler, Permittee

A. INTRODUCTION

The Tippett Allotment evaluation was conducted in accordance with the direction set forth in Washington Office Instruction Memorandum No. 86-706, and is based on monitoring data collected between 1981 and 1988.

The allotment has three permittees with the following preference by kind of livestock:

Permittee	Sheep	Cattle	Total
Hank Vogler	4,800	5,950	10,750
Intermountain Ranches, Ltd	1,625	0	1,625
Lyman Rosenlund	<u>1,240</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,240</u>
Total Preference	7,665	5,950	13,615

A considerable amount of public comment was received pertaining to the allotment evaluations conducted in the Schell Resource Area. Copies of the comment letters pertaining specifically to this allotment can be found in Section VII of the allotment evaluation summary, located in the Ely District files. All allotment-specific comments were carefully considered for incorporation into the final evaluation. Errors and inconsistencies between text and tables were corrected. Several concerns were common to more than one allotment and often more than one individual. Some of the primary concerns are addressed as follows:

Numerous comments were received concerning the use of the Sneva and Hyder Crop Yield Index. The yield index is not used to "correct" utilization levels as suggested. The determination of whether or not allowable use levels were exceeded is based on actual utilization measured. The index is used to account for the affect of yearly climate variations on the calculation of appropriate stocking levels for all users. Since it is not feasible to adjust numbers of all grazing animals (livestock, wildlife, and wild horses) on a yearly basis to respond to annual fluctuations in precipitation, an average carrying capacity is determined based on a "normal" year. The affects

of precipitation on carrying capacity must be considered. After review of existing research on this subject, the Schell Resource Area chose the Sneva and Hyder model as the most appropriate for this region. Authority to use the yield index is provided in BLM Technical Reference #4400-7 and Instruction Memorandum No. NV-89-468 and has been supported by a recent court ruling by an Administrative Law Judge in Oregon.

Some concern was expressed over short term allowable use level objectives. The allowable use levels recommended in the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook were used in conjunction with existing research as guidelines to establish acceptable use levels. The use levels from the handbook were considered appropriate on most native ranges to maintain the present plant community under yearlong or fall/winter use. However, the literature suggests that more conservative utilization levels are necessary during critical spring growth, on sensitive areas, or to improve condition within acceptable timeframes on certain plant communities. The information also suggests that higher utilization levels are appropriate for seeded ranges and for native ranges under an intensive management system. Allowable use levels were developed for key species within individual use areas in each allotment taking into consideration these guidelines, monitoring observations, and site specific factors.

Several comments suggested that the Draft Nevada Wild Horse and Burro Habitat Evaluation Procedures be used in the allotment evaluations to establish objectives. These are draft procedures which have not yet been approved and are still being tested to determine if the procedures should be established in a final form and used statewide. Until such time as it is appropriate to incorporate these procedures, wild horse forage objectives are being based on ecological status (seral stages). Specific herd objectives for wild horses will be developed during preparation of Wild Horse Herd Management Area Plans.

There were several comments pertaining to the continued use of Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) for wild horses. All evaluations have been revised to clearly state that the goal for each herd area is to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance between the public land resources and the animals using these resources. Recommended adjustments in the level of wild horse use will be based on analysis of monitoring data.

A few individuals questioned why suitability criteria were not included in the monitoring evaluations. Suitability criteria were developed to be used with "one-point-in-time" vegetative inventories which are not presently being used as the sole data source upon which adjustments are made. However, most of the suitability criteria are inherently applied during the implementation of certain portions of the monitoring program

such as use pattern mapping and allotment stratification for key area selection. Areas of no use on a use pattern map usually indicate areas that are unsuitable for use due to steepness of slope, distance from water, or insufficient forage production. Appropriate stocking levels are calculated based on those portions of the allotment which can be effectively utilized by grazing animals.

Conclusions of the evaluation were based upon data collected from the following sources:

Range, wildlife, and wild horse monitoring files compiled by the Schell Resource Area staff.

Input from the allotment permittees at meetings held at the Ely District Office on September 8, 1989, September 13, 1989, and September 27, 1989.

Input from Intermountain Ranches, Inc., permittee, through telephone conversations dated August 25, 1989 and August 31, 1989.

Input from Hank Vogler, permittee, through a telephone conversation dated August 11, 1989 and a letter dated May 17, 1989.

Input from the Nevada Department of Wildlife through consultation meetings in 1984; the Antelope Range field tour on August 31, 1988; and letters dated May 26, 1989, August 8, 1989, August 16, 1989 and August 21, 1989.

Input from Resource Concepts, Inc., range consultants, through a telephone conversation dated September 9, 1989 and letter dated September 22, 1989.

Input from the Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses through a letter dated July 28, 1989.

Input from the Animal Protection Institute of America through letter dated August 21, 1989.

Input from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service through a letter dated August 29, 1989.

Input from the Natural Resources Defense Council through a letter dated July 14, 1989.

Input from the Nevada State Grazing Board (N-4) through letters dated July 4, 1989.

Input from the Nevada Outdoor Recreation Association, Inc. through a letter dated July 4, 1989.

Input from the Wild Horse Organized Assistance through a letter dated July 28, 1989.

Input from the Sierra Club through letters dated July 30, 1989.

B. ANALYSIS OF MONITORING DATA

Based on the identified issues of the evaluation, four of the eight land use plan objectives for the allotment are not being achieved with current management practices. Therefore, additional management actions and/or adjustments to livestock and/or wild horses are necessary. Over-utilization of the key plant species selected for specific use areas on the allotment, poor distribution of livestock and wild horses, downward trend of range sites, and trampling of riparian areas are the primary problems that need to be corrected. In addition, there are conflicts between users over much of the allotment (i.e., livestock, wild horses, antelope, deer, raptors, and game birds).

Several range improvement projects have been implemented during the evaluation period providing control for livestock. Actual use records show a significant amount of nonuse applied for by Mr. Vogler. This amounted to 4,800 AUMS of sheep use annually for the past five years. Census and observations show a significant increase in the numbers of, and amount of use made by wild horses on the allotment. Livestock and wild horses contribute to the high use levels recorded on the Schell Creek Range, Antelope Range, and Spring Valley use areas where both livestock and wild horses graze. No wild horses are located on the rest of the allotment. Livestock, also, utilize the Antelope Valley and Kerns Mountain use areas. Rocky Mountain elk were transplanted onto the Goshute Indian Reservation adjacent to the Tippet Allotment in 1988 and 1989. Some of the elk (15 observed) have drifted onto the allotment at times. It has been determined that wildlife are not contributing to the problem at this time on the allotment.

Frequency and condition studies show a need for improvement at seven of the 17 key management areas of the allotment. These studies show a need to increase the percent composition of the native forbs and perennial grasses. The overall allotment trend is close to being static. The key grass forage species are generally located under the shrub canopy with few plants in the interspace between the shrubs.

Use pattern mapping shows levels of heavy to severe utilization. The fenced Henroid Seeding is rated in good condition. The unfenced chainings have received severe use, and are invaded with pinyon/juniper. Use pattern mapping during 1985 and 1986 showed that approximately 35,800 acres of the allotment are covered with dense pinyon/juniper with little to no forage in the understory. The range survey in 1946 rated these areas at from 10 to 16 acres/AUM. Therefore, there are 2,464 AUMS that are no longer available for livestock grazing because of the lack of forage understory in the dense stands of pinyon/juniper.

C. SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Option 1 - Implement an allotment management plan (AMP) for the Tippet Allotment.

Set levels of use for Antelope Valley, North Schell Bench, Henroid Seeding, and Spring Valley Bottom use areas.

Continue the collection of monitoring data and make any necessary adjustments to the allotment management plan.

D. SELECTED MANAGEMENT ACTION

The selected management action is as follows:

Reduce active livestock preference 8,222 AUMS, 60 percent, from 13,615 AUMS to 5,393 AUMS phased in over a 5-year period as follows:

Reduction in Year 1 = 2,740 AUMS

Reduction in Year 3 = 2,741 AUMS

Reduction in Year 5 = 2,741 AUMS

The livestock reduction will be placed into suspended nonuse as it is implemented.

Change the season of use on the Antelope Valley use area from 11/01 thru 06/30 to 11/01 thru 04/15.

Implement a series of deferred and rest-rotation grazing systems for the allotment for both sheep and cattle.

Manage the wild horses on the Tippet Allotment at 34 head (14 head on the Schell Creek Range and 20 head on the Antelope Range use areas) which has been determined to be the optimum level to maintain the thriving natural ecological balance in this portion of the Antelope Wild Horse Herd Management Area.

Based on the 1988 census remove 75 horses from the allotment. This equates to a 69 percent reduction from the 1988 level of 109 head of horses.

Based on a future census those wild horses above the 34 head will be considered excess animals, and will be removed in subsequent gathers.

Revise the Antelope Wild Horse Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP) to reflect current site-specific objectives and numbers of wild horses identified through the allotment evaluation process.

Rationale

The desired stocking level for the Tippet Allotment is 5,801 AUMS, and was calculated from actual use data and use pattern mapping completed in 1985 and 1986. Although some utilization data was collected at the key areas every year, the information from these two years was collected by use area for the entire allotment. The desired stocking level of 5,801 AUMS would meet site-specific allotment management objectives.

The total reduction (existing wild horse use plus active preference, minus the desired stocking level) for the Tippet Allotment will be 9,122 AUMS. This reduction will be made by use area, and will be proportionately divided between livestock and wild horses based on the actual use data collected by use areas in 1985 and 1986. This data is the most complete for both users. The percentage of actual use by use area for livestock and wild horses during these years was:

Schell Creek Range	Livestock	33%
	Wild Horses	67%
Antelope Range	Livestock	44%
	Wild Horses	56%
Antelope Valley	Livestock	100%
	Wild Horses	0%
Kern Mountain	Livestock	100%
	Wild Horses	0%

There are no wild horses in the Antelope Valley and Kern Mountain portions of the allotment. The total reduction from the present allotment evaluation data for livestock will be 8,222 AUMS, and for wild horses it will be 900 AUMS.

The reduction for livestock effective in Year 1 of 2,740 AUMS includes 2,464 AUMS from the previous adjudication that are no longer available due to the encroachment of pinyon and juniper trees. These sites were rated at from 10 to 16 acres/AUM at the time of the 1946 range survey adjudication. Use pattern mapping in 1985 and 1986 identified approximately 35,800 acres of rangeland that has little to no forage for livestock under the pinyon/juniper overstory.

Past livestock licensing was for the allotment as a whole and not by use area, which caused some areas to be overstocked and overutilized. Future livestock licensing will be based on the desired stocking level for each use area.

A change in the season of use and the rotation grazing systems will provide needed rest during the critical spring growing period. This should maintain or allow for an increase in the percent composition of native forbs and perennial grasses on specific sites throughout

the allotment. Also, the management practices are for the protection and improvement of critical habitat for sage grouse strutting/nesting/brooding grounds, deer fawning grounds, antelope kidding/wintering grounds, and hawk prey species, as well as, for numerous other animals that inhabit the area.

E. GRAZING ADJUSTMENTS

Authorized use effective in Year 1 will be as follows:

Use Area	No. Kind	Period of Use	%Federal	AUMs	
				Active	Susp
<u>Hank Vogler</u>					
Antelope Valley	450 Cattle	11/01 to 04/15	100	2,475	623
Spring Valley	100 Cattle	04/16 to 10/31	100	650	164
Kern Mountains	350 Cattle	04/16 to 10/31	64	1,456	367
Kern Mountains, Antelope Range, Antelope Vly	1,669 Sheep	03/01 to 02/28	100	4,006	1,009
			Total	8,587	2,163
<u>Intermountain Ranches, Inc.</u>					
Spring Valley	925 Sheep	04/16 to 06/30	100	463	118
Antelope Range	925 Sheep	07/01 to 08/31	100	370	94
So. Schellbourne	925 Sheep	09/01 to 11/15	100	462	118
			Total	1,295	330
<u>Lyman Rosenlund</u>					
Schell Crk Rng	993 Sheep	05/01 to 09/30	100	993	247
			Total	993	247

Authorized use effective in Year 3 will be as follows:

Use Area	No.	Kind	Period of Use	%Federal	AUMs	
					Active	Susp
<u>Hank Vogler</u>						
Antelope Valley	339	Cattle	11/01 to 04/15	100	1,851	1,247
Spring Valley	74	Cattle	04/16 to 10/31	100	486	328
Kern Mountains	260	Cattle	04/16 to 10/31	64	1,089	734
Kern Mountains, Antelope Range, Antelope Vly	1,250	Sheep	03/01 to 02/28	100	3,000	2,015
				Total	6,426	4,324
<u>Intermountain Ranches, Inc.</u>						
Spring Valley	692	Sheep	04/16 to 06/30	100	346	235
Antelope Range	679	Sheep	07/01 to 08/31	100	277	187
So. Schellbourne	692	Sheep	09/01 to 11/15	100	346	234
				Total	969	656
<u>Lyman Rosenlund</u>						
Schell Crk Rng	739	Sheep	05/01 to 09/30	100	739	501
				Total	739	501

Authorized use effective in Year 5 will be as follows:

Use Area	No. Kind	Period of Use	%Federal	AUMs	
				Active	Susp
<u>Hank Vogler</u>					
Antelope Valley	225 Cattle	11/01 to 04/15	100	1,227	1,871
Spring Valley	49 Cattle	04/16 to 10/31	100	322	492
Kern Mountains	172 Cattle	04/16 to 10/31	64	722	1,101
Kern Mountains, Antelope Range, Antelope Valley	826 Sheep	03/01 to 02/28	100	1,982	3,033
			Total	4,253	6,497
<u>Intermountain Ranches, Inc.</u>					
Spring Valley	458 Sheep	04/16 to 06/30	100	229	353
Antelope Range	451 Sheep	07/01 to 08/31	100	184	280
So. Schellbourne	458 Sheep	09/01 to 11/15	100	229	351
			Total	642	983
<u>Lyman Rosenlund</u>					
Schell Crk Rng	498 Sheep	05/01 to 09/30	100	498	742
			Total	498	742

The following terms and conditions will be made part of the grazing permits:

1. Actual use report will be submitted within fifteen days after completing the annual grazing use.
2. A deferred-rotation grazing system will be implemented for the Schell Creek Range use area. Sheep use will be by herding. In even calendar years use will be rotated starting from the north end of the area and ending at the south end. In odd years the order will be reversed.
3. A rest-rotation grazing system will be implemented for the Spring Valley use area. Cattle use will be rotated between five pastures and sheep use between seven pastures. There is one crested wheat seeding and the other pastures are of native sagebrush/grass types. Each pasture will be on a three year rest cycle.

4. A deferred-rotation grazing system will be implemented for the Antelope Range use area. Sheep use made on this area will be by herding. In even calendar years use will be rotated starting from the north end of the area and ending at the south end. In odd years the order will be reversed.

5. A deferred-rotation grazing system will be implemented for the Antelope Valley use area. Use made on this area will be rotated between the existing north and south pastures. In even calendar years use will be made starting in the north pasture followed by use in the south pasture. In odd years the order of use will be reversed.

6. A rest-rotational grazing system will be implemented for the Kern Mountain use area. The area consists of three pastures that will be used on a three year rest cycle.

F. FUTURE MONITORING AND GRAZING ADJUSTMENTS

The Schell Resource Area will continue to monitor all existing studies and establish additional studies as identified in Section VI of the Allotment Evaluation. This monitoring data will continue to be collected in the future to provide the necessary information for subsequent evaluations in the third and fifth years following the decision. These re-evaluations are necessary to determine if the allotment specific objectives are being met under the new grazing management strategies. In addition, these subsequent evaluations will determine if the phased in adjustments are still necessary or if additional adjustments are required to meet the established allotment specific objectives.