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**Report of Proposed Action of Interim Management Policy (IMP) for Lands  
Under Wilderness Review, H-8550-1**

State: Nevada

Notice Date: September 15, 2000

Field Office: Ely BLM Field Office  
HC 33, Box 33500  
Ely, NV 89301  
Phone # 775/289-1800

WSA Number: NV-050-156

WSA Name: Meadow Valley Range

Acreage: 185,744

Notification Period Begins: September 16, 2000

Notification Period Ends: September 23, 2000

Location within the WSA: T.10 South, R.66 East, Section 24

### Proposed Action

The Bureau of Land Management proposes to conduct a horse gather within the Meadow Valley Wilderness Study Area (WSA) the week of September 25, 2000. The gather has been identified as an emergency gather due to the lack of forage after an extremely dry season. The gather would be handled under a private contractor and be administered and evaluated at all times by BLM employees. It is the goal of the BLM to "zero out" this population of horses. This means there would be no horses left in this area after the gather. Approximately 90 horses would be removed.

A horse trap, two holding pens and a loading chute would be temporarily installed within the Meadow Valley WSA in Vigo Canyon, south of Carp, Nevada. The trap location is approximately 500 feet within the WSA. The trap would be located in an existing wash and was used in 1993 and 1996 (EA# NV-055-93-31/Meadow Valley Mountains Emergency Wild Horse Removal). The trap and holding facilities would be constructed of portable panels and will be round or oval in design. The dimensions of the trap are 55 feet by 25 feet, and there will be two 200 foot wings extending out from the trap. The wings consist of metal posts placed in the ground every 16 feet with jute barrier material hanging from the posts. The area of disturbance would be less than one acre. The horses would be herded into the trap by helicopter.

There is a two track way within 75 feet of the trap location. The way was not identified in the original WSA inventory done in 1979. The way also continues into the WSA and accesses two watering troughs in Hackberry Canyon. Both of these troughs are attached to a valid existing water right that existed prior to the designation of the WSA. The BLM and its contractors would travel on the two track way. Only the haul vehicles and trailers would travel from the existing two track way up the wash to the trap site to load the horses. All other vehicles would remain on the two track way. The gather is expected to last 2-3 days. The short term period of use during this proposed action and the natural erosional processes of the wash would quickly make this action substantially unnoticeable, thus minimizing impairment of wilderness values. There may be some impacts to the trap site due to loss of vegetation and compaction of soils, but

these would be temporary. The last gather was held in this site in 1996, and the vegetation (primarily rabbitbrush) has returned to the area. The existing way goes in and out of the wash along gravelly soils, thus compaction of the soils will be minimal.

In addition to the BLM's preferred option detailed above, one option outside the WSA has been considered: The horses could be herded a distance of up to eight miles to Lyman Crossing. This option was rejected because it was felt that the horses are under stress and this additional distance could kill or injure horses. Also, the location is not ideal from a topographic standpoint and would be a difficult area to trap the horses.

The BLM's Interim Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (H-8550-1), Chapter II, Part E, states that, "...the Bureau must still endeavor to make every effort not to allow populations within WSAs to degrade wilderness values, or vegetative cover as it existed on the date of the passage of FLPMA...". The BLM has determined that the horses in this area do not have enough forage to survive, thus, their presence within the WSA is damaging the vegetative cover.

The BLM has determined that the vegetation in the trap area will regenerate itself, as it has in previous years (see attached photo). There are no plans to use this trap site again, since the goal of this gather is to eliminate horse populations in this area.

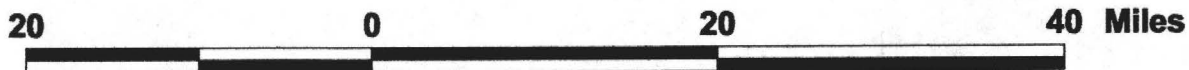
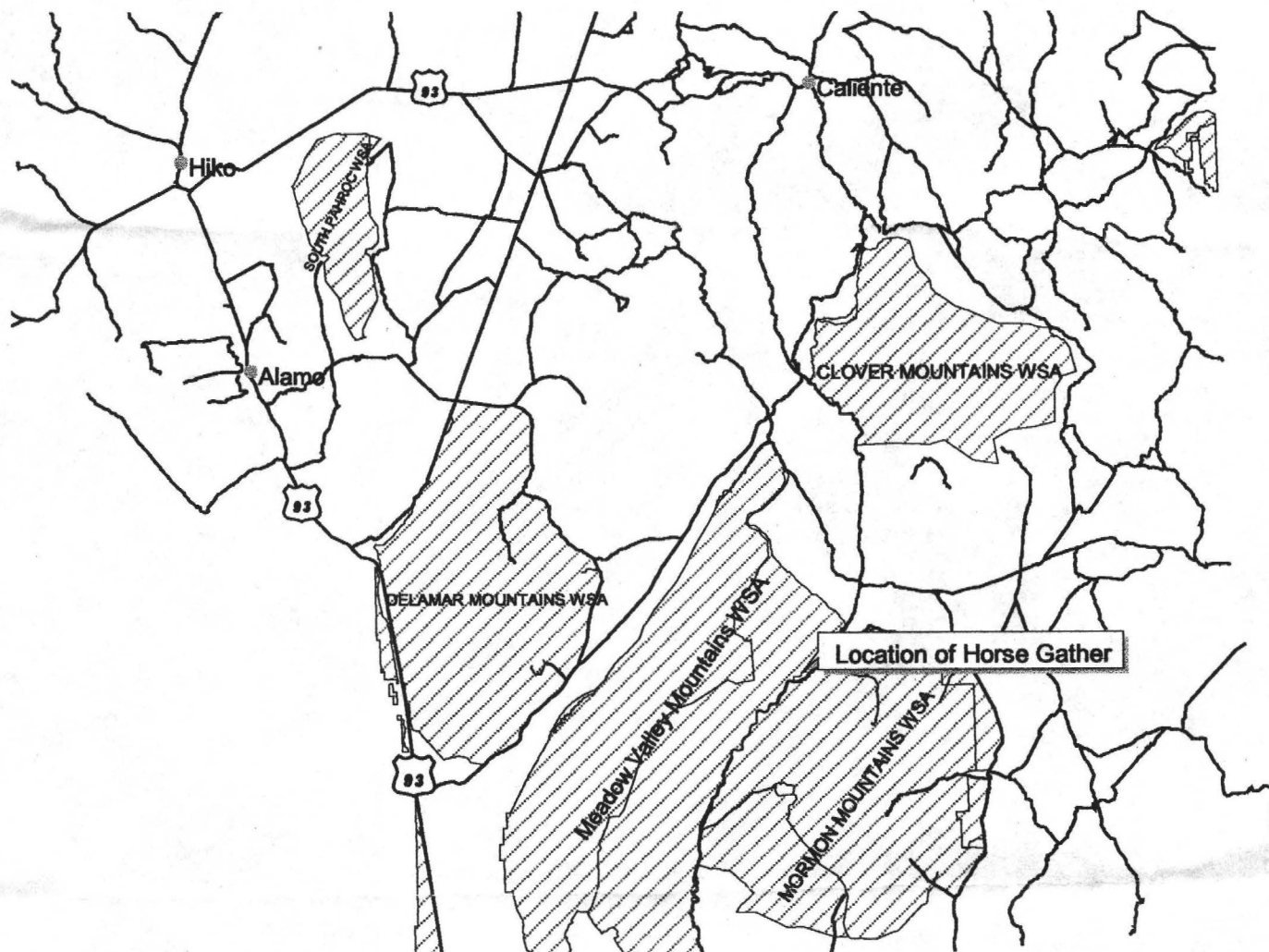
All comments are to be sent directly to the Field Manager, Gene A. Kolkman, for consideration and use in evaluating and processing the proposed action. All comments must be received by September 23, 2000.

Gene A. Kolkman, acting  
Gene A. Kolkman  
Field Office Manager

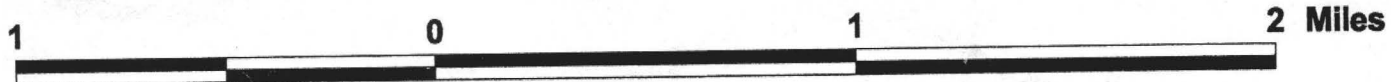
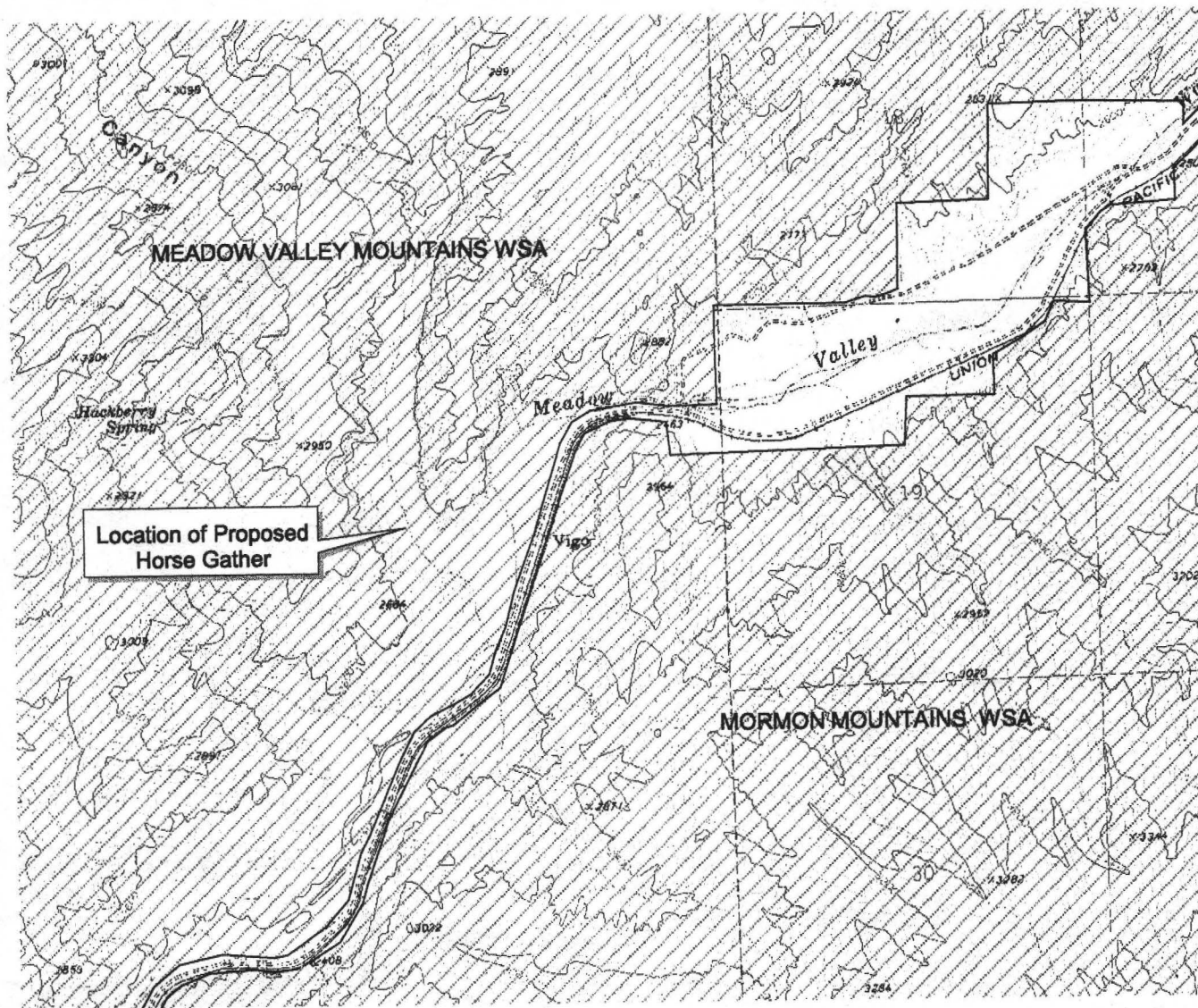
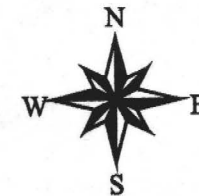
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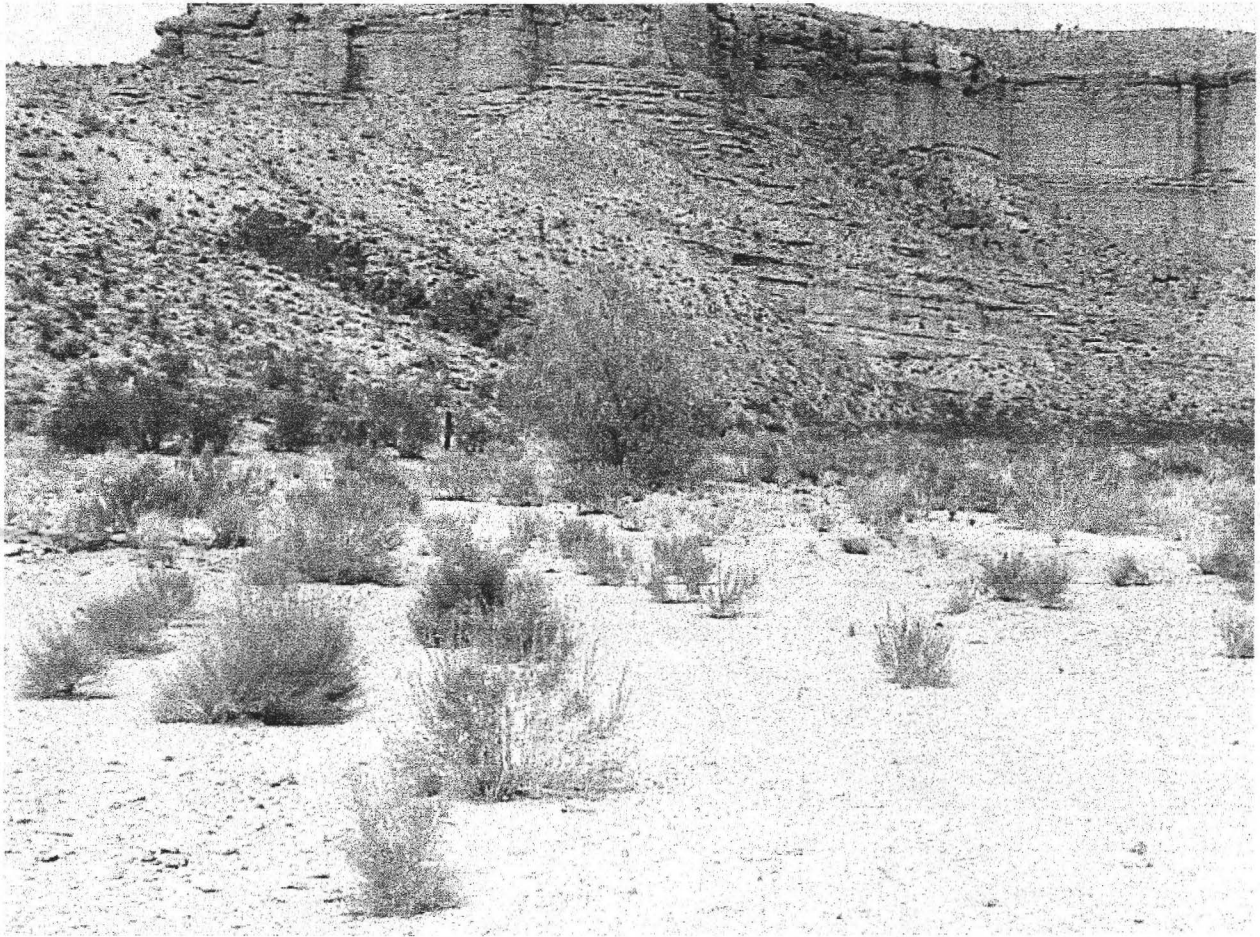
# Location of Proposed Action Meadow Valley Mountains WSA



# Location of Proposed Horse Gather



Meadow Valley Mountains WSA Horse Gather Site



Looking up Vigo Wash at the proposed horse gather site. This area was used in 1993 and 1996.