



IN REPLY REFER TO:

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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ely District Office
HC 33 Box 33500
Ely, Nevada 89301-9408



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4400 (NV-047)

APR 07 1995

Dear Affected Interest:

The Egan Resource Area has recently completed a fifth year re-evaluation of the Six Mile Allotment (0613). A copy of the re-evaluation, which includes my management action, is enclosed for your information.

If you have any questions, please contact Mark Lowrie of my staff at (702) 289-1888.

Sincerely,

Gene L. Drais, Manager
Egan Resource Area

1 Enclosure

1. Six Mile Allotment Re-Evaluation

Six Mile Allotment (0613) Fifth Year Re-Evaluation Summary

I. INTRODUCTION

A Final Multiple Use Decision (FMUD) on the Six Mile Allotment (0613) was issued on April 19, 1990. The FMUD reduced the existing cattle permit on the two crested wheatgrass seedings within the allotment from 432 AUMs to 287 AUMs of active preference, with a season of use from 4/15 to 10/31. This reduction in active preference was to be phased in over 5 years, with year 1 being the 1991 grazing year, commencing 3/1/91. The FMUD also retained the active preference for sheep at 922 AUMs; however, stipulated conditions require 380 AUMs sheep use to the east of Belmont Road during spring and 542 AUMs sheep use west of Belmont Road during winter. The FMUD also stated that full use of the 922 AUMs would be dependent on water hauling to certain locations in the allotment, in the absence of snow. Sheep season of use was set at 11/1 - 4/15.

A third year re-evaluation summary on the Six Mile Allotment was issued on March 26, 1993. The third year re-evaluation found that the adjustments to livestock grazing and the establishment of the wild horse appropriate management level (AML) as stated in the FMUD were still appropriate. The action of the third year re-evaluation was to implement the third year reduction to the cattle grazing preference inside the seeding, retain the sheep grazing preference on the native range, and retain the wild horse AML.

The following table illustrates the adjustments implemented by the Six Mile FMUD.

KIND	USE PERIOD	% F.R.	TOTAL AUMS	ACTIVE AUMS	SUSP.AUMS
Cattle	4/15-10/31	100%	432	287	145
Sheep	11/1-4/15	100%	922	922	<0>

The FMUD also established a wild horse appropriate management level of 135 AUMs, or 11 horses yearlong.

II. MANAGEMENT RE-EVALUATION

A. Purpose

The purpose of this fifth year re-evaluation is to analyze the changes in the grazing use on the Six Mile Allotment which were implemented as per the FMUD dated April 19, 1991 and the third year re-evaluation dated March 26, 1993. This re-evaluation is necessary to determine if the allotment objectives are being met under the changes in grazing use implemented by the grazing decision. If the objectives are now being met the 1991 decision may be modified. If the objectives are still not being met the 1991 decision will stand as issued.

B. Summary of Studies Data

For a summary of range studies completed between the issuing of the FMUD in 1991 and the issuing of the re-evaluation in 1993, see the third year re-evaluation summary. Since the issuing of the third year re-evaluation in March of 1993, key forage plant method utilization transects have been completed in the crested wheatgrass seeding in April of 1993 and July of 1994. Photographs were taken at utilization cage locations within the seeding on each of those dates. In native range, key forage plant method utilization transects have been completed in April of 1993, November of 1993, March of 1994, May of 1994, and March of 1995. Photographs were taken at some of the key area utilization cage locations to complement the transects in April of 1993, March of 1994, and March of 1995. Three observed apparent trend studies were recorded on the allotment in native range at key areas SM-2, SM-4, and SM-6 in March of 1995. Wild horse census was accomplished for the allotment in September of 1994.

Wild horse observations supplement the census data. An actual use grazing report was submitted for cattle grazing in the seeding during 1994. An actual use grazing report was submitted for sheep grazing in native range for the period November 18 through December 11, 1993.

Utilization

A summary of utilization transects conducted on the native range of the allotment since the issuing of the third year re-evaluation follows:

April, 1993 - Transects read for 1992 grazing year
(March 1992 - February 1993)

Oryzopsis hymenoides (Orhy) - Indian ricegrass

52.0% (utilization summary for 17 key area transects
- average of transects)

Eurotia lanata (Eula) - winterfat

55.5% (utilization summary for 15 key area transects
- average of transects)

Sheep utilized the native range of the allotment in March of 1992 and in October and November of 1992. Sheep did not return back up north through the allotment in March of 1993 because of heavy snow in the area. Wild horses utilized the native range of the allotment yearlong. Cattle grazing is not authorized or licensed in the native range. However, some cattle utilization was noted in the southeast portion of the allotment, near the boundary with the U.S. Forest Service Treasure Hill Allotment. Cattle have a tendency to drift into the Six Mile Allotment past the unfenced boundary during the summer months.

As shown from the utilization summary above, overall use of the allotment was in the middle moderate range, slightly above the allowable use level of 50% yearlong for ricegrass and winterfat.

November, 1993 - Transects read for seasonal use in
local areas

Oryzopsis hymenoides (Orhy) - Indian ricegrass

44.3% (utilization summary for 3 key area transects
- average of transects)

Eurotia lanata (Eula) - winterfat

38.7% (utilization summary for 15 key area transects
- average of transects)

Range notes from the transects indicate wild horses favor grazing along the prominent east - west winterfat stringer meadows in the allotment.

March, May 1994 - Transects read for 1993 grazing year
(March 1993 - February 1994)

Oryzopsis hymenoides (Orhy) - Indian ricegrass

60.5% (utilization summary for 20 key area transects
- average of transects)

Eurotia lanata (Eula) - winterfat

55.5% (utilization summary for 15 key area transects
- average of transects)

As previously stated, sheep did not utilize the allotment in March of 1993. Sheep did utilize the native range of the allotment in November and December of 1993, and March of 1994. Wild horses utilized the native range of the allotment yearlong. Again, some unauthorized drift cattle use was noted in the southeast portion of the allotment.

As shown from the utilization summary above, overall grazing year use of the allotment was in the low heavy range, above the allowable use level of 50% yearlong for ricegrass and winterfat. An above average snowfall in the winter of 1992 - 1993 led to a good growing season for the 1993 grazing year.

March, 1995 - Transects read for 1994 grazing year
(March 1994 - February 1995)

Oryzopsis hymenoides (Orhy) - Indian ricegrass

38.6% (utilization summary for 8 key area transects
- average of transects)

Eurotia lanata (Eula) - winterfat

39.5% (utilization summary for 9 key area transects
- average of transects)

As shown above, overall grazing use of the allotment was in the high light range for 1994. This represents mainly wild horse use, as sheep did not graze the allotment during the grazing year. Less unauthorized cattle use was noted in the southeast of the allotment. Some unauthorized cattle use was also noted in the south central and south west portions of the allotment.

A summary of utilization transects conducted on the Six Mile Allotment seedings since the issuing of the third year re-evaluation follows. The seedings are allocated to cattle grazing only.

April, 1993 - Transects read for 1992 grazing year

West seeding - Agropyron cristatum (Agcr) - crested wheatgrass - No use to slight use. Cattle did not graze the seeding during 1992. Wild horses did not get into the seeding much over the past grazing year.

East seeding - Agropyron cristatum (Agcr) - crested wheatgrass - 12.0% (slight, average of two key area transects). This use was made by wild horses only largely due to the seeding gates being left open on a few occasions during the past grazing year.

July, 1994 - Transects read for spring/summer cattle use from April to July, 1994.

West seeding - Agropyron cristatum (Agcr) - crested wheatgrass - 54.5% (average of 6 transects)

East seeding - Agropyron cristatum (Agcr) - crested wheatgrass - 57.0% (average of 4 transects)

Entire seeding - Agcr - 55.5% (average of 10 transects)

Due to Russell Ranches repairing the seeding fences in spring of 1994, there was no noticeable wild horse use in the Six Mile seeding during the 1994 grazing year.

Observed Apparent Trend

Observed apparent trend on the native range key area SM-2 (Black sagebrush/bunchgrass) was static in March of 1994.

Observed apparent trend on the native range key area SM-2 (Black sagebrush/bunchgrass) was also static in March of 1995.

Observed apparent trend on the native range key area SM-4 (Winterfat/bunchgrass) was also static in March of 1995.

Observed apparent trend on the native range key area SM-6 (Winterfat/bunchgrass) was also static in March of 1995.

Wild Horse Census

A summary of wild horse census data compiled since the issuing of the third year re-evaluation summary follows:

Six Mile Allotment Wild Horse Census

1994 (September) - 23 wild horses (276 AUMs)*

* A total of 697 wild horses were counted during the census (581 adults and 116 foals). The majority of the wild horses (662) were counted in the Monte Cristo Herd Management Area (HMA) or United States Forest Service (USFS) Monte Cristo Wild Horse Territory, with 35 counted outside the boundaries. There were 535 animals counted on BLM administered lands inside the HMA and 9 outside the HMA; 127 animals were on USFS lands inside the territory and 26 outside.

In addition to the census data, the following information is provided regarding wild horse utilization of the allotment:

- > On April 21, 1993, 67 wild horses were observed on the allotment by Mark Lowrie, Egan Resource Area Range Conservationist. Forty two of the wild horses were grazing the range south and east of the Monte Cristo Butte.
- > On April 25, 1994, 37 wild horses were observed on the allotment by Joe Stratton, Egan Resource Area Wild Horse and Burro Specialist.
- > On May 4, 1994, 39 wild horses were observed on the allotment, by Mark Lowrie.
- > On June 8, 1994, 26 wild horses were observed on the allotment, by Joe Stratton. Ten of the wild horses were grazing the range east of the Monte Cristo Butte. Three additional wild horses were in the Monte Cristo Allotment near the south boundary of the Six Mile Allotment.

Actual Use Reports

An actual grazing use report for cattle grazing was submitted for the Six Mile Seeding for the period April 1 through July 10, 1994. The seeding was not utilized by cattle in 1993. Actual grazing use was reported as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Turned in</u>	<u>Taken out</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
4/01/94	88 (C)		
4/12/94	12 (C)		32
7/10/94		100 (C)	<u>296</u>
Total AUMs.....			328

An actual grazing use report for sheep grazing was submitted for the Six Mile Allotment native range for the period November 18 through December 11, 1993. Actual grazing use was reported as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Turned in</u>	<u>Taken out</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
11/18/93	2,300 (S)		
11/30/93		2,300 (S)	197
12/01/93	2,300 (S)		
12/11/93		2,300 (S)	166

As previously stated, sheep did not graze the allotment in March of 1993 due to heavy snow. No actual use was reported for March of 1994. Licensed use for the period March 7 through April 1, 1994 was as follows:

<u>Livestock</u>	<u>Begin</u>	<u>End</u>	<u>AUMS</u>
2,250 sheep	3/07/94	4/01/94	385

Riparian Areas

There are no public riparian areas or mesic meadows located on the Six Mile Allotment; thus, no riparian monitoring has been completed for the allotment. The only sources of water for wildlife, wild horses, or livestock in the allotment are on private ground, or water is hauled for sheep.

C. Conclusions

The new monitoring data supports the Final Multiple Use Decision (April, 1991). Land use plan objectives are still not being met in native range, due to locally heavy overutilization by sheep and wild horses. Site specific heavy use by sheep can be corrected by better herding and distribution (more intensive management), as stated in the FMUD. In the Six Mile Seeding,

measured utilization was only one half of one percent (0.5%) above the allowable use level for the summer of 1994. Actual use in the seeding for that period was 328 AUMs, or only 7 AUMs below the third year phase in rate of 335 AUMs. If the seeding had not been rested for three years, measured utilization of the available forage would have been much greater. The decision to implement the fifth year reduction in cattle preference will thus stand, from 335 AUMs with 97 AUMs suspended to 287 AUMs with 145 AUMs suspended.

D. Technical Recommendations

> Follow through with the reduction in cattle preference for the two crested wheatgrass seedings, as outlined in the FMUD.

> Sheep active preference will be maintained at 922 AUMs, as outlined in the FMUD. Full use of the 922 AUMs is dependent upon those herding and water hauling stipulations as stated in the FMUD.

> Remove excess wild horses to achieve the appropriate management level of 11 head yearlong. Reductions in wild horse numbers will continue to be pursued as funding allows, in order to attain and maintain a thriving ecological balance.

E. Management Action

The original decision is still sufficient to meet the objectives identified in the Management Action Selection Report. The adjustments to livestock grazing and the establishment of the Wild Horse AML as stated in the FMUD are still appropriate. Therefore the action of this re-evaluation is to implement the fifth year reduction to the cattle grazing preference, retain the sheep grazing preference, and retain the wild horse AML.