



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ely District Office
Star Route 5, Box 1
Ely, Nevada 89301



IN REPLY REFER TO:

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(NV-043)

JUL 9 1990

Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses
Terri Jay, Executive Director
Stewart Facility
Capitol Complex
Carson City, NV 89710

Dear Ms. Jay:

We recently received letters from you concerning three separate subjects. The first letter, dated May 23, 1990, requested copies of all our Unit Resource Analysis (URA) maps for a wild horse reference library. Since you made similar requests to all Nevada BLM Districts, this matter has been referred to the Nevada State Office (NSO) to consolidate the handling of your requests. If you have questions regarding your request, contact either Milt Frei or Neil Talbot at NSO.

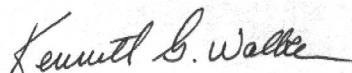
The second letter, dated May 24, 1990, was in regard to funding of projects in wild horse herd areas. We appreciate your interest in jointly funding wild horse projects in the Ely District. At the present time we do not have any wild horse project proposals, but we would like to consider joint project funding in the future. We are currently considering a proposal to conduct wild horse migration studies on three wild horse herd management areas (HMA's) in the Ely District, Shell Resource Area. Once this study proposal is firmed up, we plan to submit a grant application to you for funding from the Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses.

We received a similar letter from you about a year ago, regarding funding of projects within the Buck and Bald HMP (wildlife) area in the Egan Resource Area. We are looking into the projects proposed in the HMP to determine benefits to wild horses in the Buck and Bald Herd Management Area. We plan to submit grant proposals for those projects identified in the HMP that would be beneficial to the Buck and Bald Wild Horse Herd when developed.

The third subject is addressed in a letter dated June 27, 1990. In this letter you requested a copy of the report made by the Nevada Department of Wildlife biologist who flew with Bob Brown of my staff during the March 1990 census of the Antelope HMA. Your request is made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). I am enclosing a copy of this report for your information.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Ely District wild horse program.

Sincerely,



Kenneth G. Walker
District Manager

1 Enclosure

1. Helicopter Horse Survey Report (1 p)

Helicopter Horse Survey Report

On March 6, 1990 approximately 8.1 hours of helicopter time was spent surveying horses with Bob Brown, the B.L.M. Ely District Horse Specialist. The area surveyed was from the Nevada-Utah border north of the Goshute Indian Reservation to North Spring Valley in White Pine County. The area surveyed included the majority of the Antelope Horse Herd Unit of White Pine County.

Because of allotment evaluation work being conducted by the Bureau of Land Management and related controversy with livestock operators in the area, the Department of Wildlife was asked to send an experienced observer along on a horse survey to evaluate survey methods and techniques. The local game biologist in Ely was chosen for convenience and because of 9 years experience that has involved him in surveys of at least 250,000 mule deer, more than 10,000 antelope, over 3,000 elk and several hundred bighorn sheep.

Basically, the horse survey of 3/6/90 was conducted in a manner that would have been used by the Nevada Department of Wildlife if horses were under our jurisdiction. Given the weather, ground conditions (100% snow cover in much of the area), and the behavior of horses (horses always run and are quite obvious compared to elk that are often difficult to get running or bighorn sheep that hide in tree cover or in caves), it is estimated by this observer that 80-90% of horses in the area surveyed were observed and counted accurately.

In conclusion, being invited to attend this particular survey effort was both appreciated and educational. Observing the B.L.M.'s horse survey methods and techniques certainly increased my confidence level in their horse counts. The only reservations I would express are that pressures from horse groups have not made it possible for the B.L.M. to make horse population estimates even though it is well known that it is impossible to count 100% of the horses in an area and I think that without snow cover, horse counts could be as low as 70% of actual numbers in areas of heavy pinyon-juniper tree cover.

Prepared by: Larry T. Gilbertson
Larry T. Gilbertson
NDOW Biologist
March 26, 1990

RECEIVED

MAR 28 1990

Bureau of Land Management
Ely, Nevada