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5-26-95
m.s.
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4403.3 (NV-047)

MAY 26 1995

(SEE ATTACHED LIST)

Dear Participant:

Enclosed for your information is the Management Action Selection Report (MASR) for the Monte Cristo Allotment. This report is included with the Proposed Multiple Use Decision.

The Management Action Selection Report is the final section of the allotment evaluation and completes the monitoring evaluation process. It 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.

The MASR identifies selected changes in management required to meet or make progress towards allotment specific objectives. The MASR also addresses changes to wild horse management to be included in the Proposed Multiple Use Decision for the allotment.

The MASR is provided for your information only. The Proposed Multiple Use Decision initiates the chosen actions on-the-ground and specifies the procedures for protest and appeal.

Sincerely,



Gene L. Drais, Manager
Egan Resource Area

3 Enclosures

1. Management Action Selection Report ~~w/appendices~~ (8 pp)
2. Proposed Multiple Use Decision w/appendice (10 pp) (1 map)
3. Address List

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NOTICE OF PROPOSED MULTIPLE USE DECISION
FOR THE MONTE CRISTO ALLOTMENT

MAY 26 1995

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for the Egan Resource Area were issued in September, 1984 and February, 1987, respectively. The Egan Rangeland Program Summary was issued in May of 1988. These documents guide the management of public lands within the Monte Cristo Allotment. The Egan Resource Area Record of Decision, dated February 1987, states in pertinent part:

"Monitoring studies will be used to determine if adjustments in livestock numbers are necessary...All vegetation will be managed for those successional stages which would best meet the objective of this proposed plan..." (short term objectives) "Future adjustments in livestock use will be based on data provided through the rangeland monitoring program." (long term objective)

"Implementation [of the range management program] will take place through coordination, consultation, and cooperation. Coordinated resource management and planning is an advisory process that brings together all interests concerned with the management of resources in a given local area (landowners, land management agencies, wildlife groups, wild horse groups, and conservation organizations) and is the recommended public process through which consultation and coordination will take place. Grazing adjustments, if required, will be based upon a combination of reliable vegetation monitoring studies, consultation and coordination, and inventory.

Range management actions for livestock use and wild horse numbers will be based upon data obtained through the monitoring program and will consider recommendations made through the coordinated resource management and planning process. Actions could include, but will not be limited to, change in seasons-of-use, change in livestock numbers, correction of livestock distribution problems, alteration of the number of wild horses, development of range improvements, and taking site-specific measures to achieve improvements in wildlife habitat."

Monitoring data has been collected for this allotment periodically since 1976. In accordance with Bureau policy and regulations, this data has been analyzed and evaluated in order to determine progress in meeting management objectives for the Monte Cristo Allotment. Input was received from the permittee via Intermountain Range Consultants, Nevada Division of Wildlife, the Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses, and the N-4 grazing board via Resource Concepts, Inc. See Appendix I for the land use plan objectives covering livestock, wild horses, and wildlife. These objectives are in conformance with and formulated to accomplish the Egan Resource Management Plan multiple use objectives as they relate to all grazing use on the Monte Cristo Allotment.

BASED UPON THE EVALUATION OF MONITORING DATA FOR THE MONTE CRISTO ALLOTMENT, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM DISTRICT STAFF, AND INPUT RECEIVED THROUGH CONSULTATION, COORDINATION, AND COOPERATION FROM THE PERMITTEE AND PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS, THE PROPOSED DECISION IS AS FOLLOWS:

The analysis of monitoring data has revealed that the multiple use objectives for the Monte Cristo Allotment are not being met due to the existing grazing use by cattle and wild horses. This analysis also shows that the existing management of wildlife does not contribute to the failure in meeting these multiple use objectives. Therefore, this decision proposes changes in livestock and wild horse use, but not wildlife use. This decision also establishes the appropriate management level for wild horses for that portion of the Monte Cristo Herd Management Area (HMA) within the Monte Cristo Allotment.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT DECISION

In accordance with 43 CFR 4110.3, 4110.3-2(b) and (c), and 4130.6-1(a), the existing authorized livestock active use shall be changed, over five years, from 1,129 AUMs active preference to 586 AUMs active preference, with 543 AUMs placed in suspended non-use. Year one will be the 1996 grazing year. Active preference for the permittee will be as follows:

From (Existing permit):

<u>Number</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Period of Use</u>	<u>%Federal</u>	<u>AUMs</u>	
				<u>Active</u>	<u>Susp</u>
325	Cattle	05/16 - 05/31	100	171	0
237	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	958	0
Total.....				1,129	0

To - Native Range:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Period of Use</u>	<u>%Federal</u>	<u>AUMs</u>	
					<u>Active</u>	<u>Susp</u>
1	134	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	542	102
3	108	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	437	207
5	82	Cattle	09/01 - 10/31	100	332	312

To - Seeding:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Period of Use</u>	<u>%Federal</u>	<u>AUMS</u>	
					<u>Active</u>	<u>Susp</u>
1	101	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	408	77
3	82	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	332	153
5	62	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	254	231

This adjustment will be implemented in accordance with 43 CFR 4110.3-3(a) and (b), over a five (5) year period.

Prior to implementing adjustments scheduled for the third and fifth years, existing and future monitoring data will be evaluated to determine if the indicated adjustments are necessary and/or if any additional modifications in existing management will be necessary.

RATIONALE: The desired stocking level for the Monte Cristo Allotment is 586 AUMs for cattle. At this stocking level objectives are expected to be met. The prescribed adjustment in the stocking rate will initiate the accomplishment of multiple use objectives and improve ecological conditions of the native range. Adjudicating the seeding and controlling use will also maintain or improve vegetative conditions. This stocking level was determined through evaluation of utilization and actual use data, indicating that the allotment has been overstocked and allowable use levels exceeded. The stocking rate for the native pasture is based on 50% utilization on perennial grasses and winterfat. The stocking rate for the crested wheatgrass seeding is based on a proper use factor of 60%.

AUTHORITY: The authority for this decision is contained in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, which states in pertinent part:

4100.0-8: "The authorized officer shall manage livestock grazing on public lands under the principle of multiple use and sustained yield, and in accordance with applicable land use plans. Land use plans shall establish allowable resource uses (either singly or in combination), related levels of production or use to be maintained, areas of use, and resource condition goals and objectives to be obtained. The plans also set forth program constraints and general management practices needed to achieve management objectives. Livestock grazing activities and management actions approved by the authorized officer shall be in conformance with the land use plan as defined at 43 CFR 1601.0-5(b)."

4110.3: "The authorized officer shall periodically review the grazing preference specified in a grazing permit or grazing lease and may make changes in the grazing preference status. These changes shall be supported by monitoring, as evidenced by rangeland studies conducted over time, unless the change is either specified in an applicable land use plan or necessary to manage, maintain or improve rangeland productivity."

4110.3-2(b): "When monitoring shows active use is causing an unacceptable level or pattern of utilization or exceeds the livestock carrying capacity as determined through monitoring, the authorized officer shall reduce active use if necessary to maintain or improve rangeland productivity..."

4110.3-2(c): "Where active use is reduced it shall be held in suspension..."

4110.3-3(a): "Changes in active use in excess of 10 percent shall be implemented over a 5-year period..."

4110.3-3(b): "After consultation, coordination and cooperation, suspensions of preference shall be implemented through a documented agreement or decision. If data acceptable to the authorized officer are available, an initial reduction shall be taken on the effective date of the agreement or decision and the balance taken in the third and fifth years following the effective date..."

4120.3-1(c): "The authorized officer may require a permittee or lessee to maintain and/or modify range improvements on the public lands under 4130.6-2 of this title."

4130.6: "Livestock grazing permits and leases shall contain terms and conditions necessary to achieve the management objectives for the public lands and other lands under Bureau of Land Management administration."

4130.6-1(a): "The authorized officer shall specify the kind and number of livestock, the period(s) of use, the allotment(s) to be used, and the amount of use, in animal unit months, for every grazing permit or lease. The authorized livestock grazing use shall not exceed the livestock carrying capacity as determined through monitoring and adjusted as necessary under 4110.3, 4110.3-1 and 4110.3-2."

4130.6-2: "The authorized officer may specify in grazing permits and leases other terms and conditions which will assist in achieving management objectives, provide for proper range management or assist in the orderly administration of the public rangelands..."

PROTEST:

If you wish to protest this decision, in whole or in part, you are allowed fifteen (15) days from receipt of this notice within which to file a protest with the Egan Area Manager, HC 33 Box 33500, Ely, Nevada 89301-9408.

Subsequent to the protest period, a final decision will be issued, regardless of whether or not any protests were received. The final decision may be modified in light of pertinent information brought forth during the protest period.

WILD HORSE AND BURRO MANAGEMENT DECISION

It has been determined through monitoring that a thriving natural ecological balance will be achieved by maintaining wild horse numbers at the following appropriate management level:

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Herd Management Area</u>	<u># Animals</u>	<u>AUMs Yearlong</u>
Monte Cristo	Monte Cristo	7	85

This decision establishes a range of plus or minus 15% or six to eight wild horses yearlong within the Monte Cristo Allotment. The setting of wild horse numbers by allotment is part of a process that provides for an overall Herd Management Area (HMA) wild horse AML. Wild horse removals will occur on an HMA basis and numbers will be maintained at or near the total AML. Numbers within allotments may be higher or lower than the numbers identified above because of seasonal movements but the total AML for the HMA will be maintained.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4700.0-6(a), wild horse use on the Monte Cristo Allotment will be managed at 85 AUMs plus or minus 15%.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4720.1, in the future, all wild horses in excess of the appropriate management level of seven animals will be removed down to the lower limit of the range of six to eight animals yearlong and allow numbers to grow up to eight animals.

RATIONALE: The analysis and interpretation of available monitoring data indicates that the multiple use objectives for wild horses on the Monte Cristo Allotment are not being met. Therefore, a reduction in wild horses is necessary to establish and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance, to prevent further deterioration of the rangeland resource, and to meet the multiple use objectives for the allotment.

AUTHORITY: The authority for this decision is contained in Sec.3 (a) and (b) of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (P.L. 92-195) as amended and in Title 43 of the code of Federal Regulations, which states in pertinent parts:

4700.0-6(a): "Wild horses and burros shall be managed as self-sustaining populations of healthy animals in balance with other uses and the productive capacity of their habitat."

4700.0-6(d): "In administering the regulations, the authorized officer shall consult with the Federal and State wildlife agencies and all other affected interests, to involve them in planning for and management of wild horses and burros on the public lands."

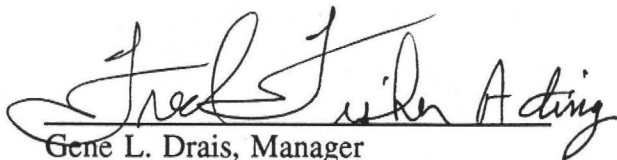
4710.1: "Management activities affecting wild horses and burros, including the establishment of herd management areas, shall be in accordance with approved land use plans prepared pursuant to Part 1600 of this title."

4710.3-1: "Herd management areas shall be established for the maintenance of wild horse and burro herds. In delineating each herd management area, the authorized officer shall consider the appropriate management level for the herd, the habitat requirements of the animals, the relationships with other uses of the public and adjacent private lands, and the constraints contained in 4710.4. The authorized officer shall prepare a herd management area plan, which may cover one or more herd management areas."

4710.4: "Management of wild horses and burros shall be undertaken with the objective of limiting the animals' distribution to herd areas. Management shall be at the minimum level necessary to attain the objectives identified in approved land use plans and herd management area plans."

4720.1: "Upon examination of current information and a determination by the authorized officer that an excess of wild horses or burros exists, the authorized officer shall remove the excess animals immediately..."

PROTEST: Although the 4700 regulations allow for an appeal with no mention of a protest, for the purpose of consistency with the livestock management portion of this decision, the entire multiple use decision is initially being sent as a "Proposed" decision. If you wish to protest this decision, in whole or in part, you are allowed (15) days from receipt of this notice within which to file a protest with the Egan Resource Area Manager, HC 33 Box 33500, Ely, Nevada 89301-9408. Subsequent to the protest period, a final decision will be issued, regardless of whether or not any protests were received. The final decision may be modified in light of pertinent information brought forth during the protest period.



Gene L. Drais, Manager
Egan Resource Area

CERTIFIED MAIL #

cc: Duckwater Cattle Company	P 313 265 406
Nevada Division of Wildlife, Region II	P 313 265 407
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	P 313 265 408
N-4 Grazing Board	P 313 265 409
Resource Concepts Inc.	P 313 265 410
The Sierra Club	P 313 265 411
Natural Resources Defense Council	P 313 265 412
The Wilderness Society	P 313 265 413
Nevada Farm Bureau	P 313 265 414
Intermountain Range Consultants	P 313 265 415
Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses	P 313 265 416
International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros	P 313 265 417
Animal Protection Institute	P 313 265 418
Wild Horse Organized Assistance	P 313 265 419

APPENDIX I: Land Use Plan/Rangeland Program Summary Objectives

1. Land Use Plan (RMP) Objectives

- (a) Rangeland Management - All vegetation will be managed for those successional stages which would best meet the objective of this proposed plan. (Egan Resource Area Record of Decision, p. 3)
- (b) Wild Horses and Burros - Wild horses will be managed at a total of 96 animals within the Monte Cristo HMA. (Egan Resource Area Record of Decision, p. 6).*

* The 96 wild horses yearlong within the Monte Cristo HMA is no longer a valid Appropriate Management Level (AML). The Interior Board of Land Appeals June 7, 1989 decision (IBLA 88-591, 88-638, 88-648, 88-679) ruled in part: "An AML established purely for administrative reasons because it was the level of wild horse use at a particular point in time cannot be justified under the statute." The IBLA further ruled that the AML must be established through monitoring "in terms of the optimum number which results in a thriving natural ecological balance and avoids deterioration of the range."

- (c) Wildlife - Habitat will be managed for "reasonable numbers" of wildlife species as determined by NDOW. (Egan ROD, p. 6)
- Forage will be provided for "reasonable numbers" of big game as determined by NDOW. (Egan ROD, p. 8)
- (d) Watershed - Establish utilization limits to maintain watershed cover, plant vigor and soil fertility in consideration of plant phenology, physiology, terrain, water availability, wildlife needs, grazing system and aesthetic values. (Egan ROD, p. 44)

2. Rangeland Program Summary Objectives

- (a) "Provide forage for up to 372 AUMs of livestock use."
- (b) Maintain or improve the current ecological condition of the native range with utilization levels not to exceed Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook (NRMH) levels on key species. Allowable use levels for winterfat and perennial grass species are 50%.
- (c) Maintain the seeding in good or better condition.

- (d) "Initially manage rangeland habitat to support an appropriate anagement level (AML) of 2 horses in the Monte Cristo Allotment as part of the Monte Cristo HMA. Provide forage for up to 24 AUMs of wild horse use.*

* The AML of 2 wild horses within the Monte Cristo Allotment as identified in the Rangeland Program Summary is no longer a valid AML. See the asterisk note under 1.(b) on the previous page for the reason why.

- (e) "Manage rangeland habitat and forage condition to support reasonable numbers of wildlife, as follows: mule deer - 150 AUMs, Pronghorn antelope - 10 AUMs. "
- (f) "Maintain or improve mule deer yearlong habitat in good or better condition."
- (g) Protect sage grouse breeding complexes by maintaining the big sagebrush sites within 2 miles of active strutting grounds for mid to late seral stage with a minimum of 30% shrub composition by weight.
- (h) Protect Ferruginous hawk nest sites by limiting utilization to 50% on winterfat flats within 2 miles of nest sites.

OFFICIAL ALLOTMENT MAP

MONTE CRISTO
ALLOTMENT

TENNESSEE

R. 56 E.

LEGEND

R. 57 E.

FEDERAL RANGE ALLOTMENT

ALLOTMENT BOUNDARY

PRIVATE LAND

SCALE 1/2" = 1 MILE

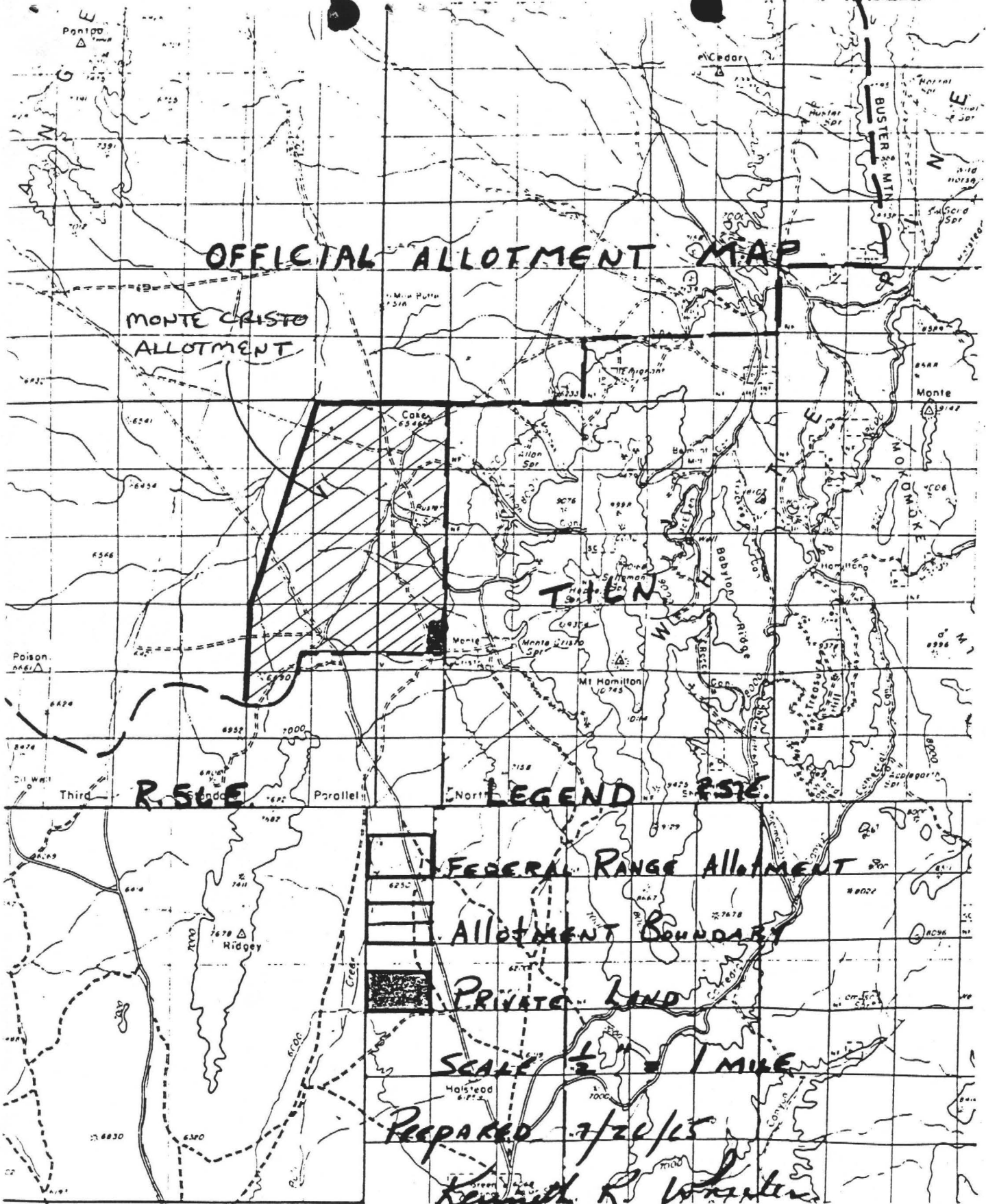
PREPARED 7/20/15

Kenneth R. Wharton

R. 56 E.

R. 57 E.

R. 58 E.



MAY 26 1995

**MANAGEMENT ACTION SELECTION REPORT
MONTE CRISTO ALLOTMENT
EGAN RESOURCE AREA**

Duckwater Cattle Company
(Alan Forsgren), Permittee

A. INTRODUCTION

The Monte Cristo Allotment evaluation was conducted in accordance with the direction set forth in Washington Office Instruction Memorandum No. 86-706 and is primarily based on monitoring data collected between 1990 and 1994.

A limited amount of public comment was received pertaining to this allotment evaluation. A copy of the comment letters pertaining specifically to this allotment can be found in the Monte Cristo Allotment evaluation file located in the Ely District Office. All allotment specific comments were considered for incorporation into the final evaluation. A copy of the final amended evaluation with several corrections incorporated (as indicated in the text below) will be placed in the allotment evaluation file. The primary concerns expressed on Monte Cristo are addressed as follows:

One comment suggested that a further reduction in actual cattle use from that presented by the evaluation is necessary in order for the BLM to make short term progress in the attainment of the land use planning objectives for the allotment. However, the stocking rate of 671 AUMs as presented by the evaluation (586 AUMs - cattle, 85 AUMs - wild horses) is appropriate for this allotment. For native range, raw utilization was measured as 55% in 1990, 54% in 1991, and 57% in 1992. These levels are only slightly above the proper use level of 50%. Also, although a major portion of the allotment is in a less than desirable ecological condition, there are relatively few undesirable species such as halogeton, Russian thistle, mustard, or cheatgrass invading the range sites. The potential for recovery of the native plant communities is good in this allotment. In areas where combined or overlapping grazing use occurs and the use cannot be separated, the stocking rate adjustments are proportioned based on animals using the area. This is in accordance with BLM Nevada policy as per 43 CFR 4110.3-2(b). Reductions or adjustments are made from active preference. This is according to regulation. The cattle season-of-use from 07/01 to 10/31 allows rest for forage plants during the critical growing period.

Another concern was that wild horse numbers for the allotment should be adjusted from the Resource Management Plan objective of 96 wild horses for the entire Monte Cristo Herd and the Rangeland

Program Summary objective of 2 wild horses for the Monte Cristo Allotment. These objectives are tied to the Monte Cristo Wild Horse Management Plan (HMAP) developed in 1977. This plan recommended appropriate wild horse numbers for the herd area based upon a minimal record of range monitoring and based upon a different utilization standard than is used currently. In June of 1989, the Interior Board of Land Appeals (I.B.L.A.) essentially ruled the HMAP invalid by stating, "An AML (appropriate management level) established purely for administrative reasons because it was the level of wild horse use at a particular point in time cannot be justified under the statute." The I.B.L.A. further ruled that the AML must be established through monitoring "in terms of the optimum number which results in a thriving natural ecological balance and avoids deterioration of the range."

The conclusion of the wild horse and burro objective III. B. 1. (b) in the evaluation will be changed from Not Met to read as follows:

"No Met or Not Met determination can be made. As stated in the last paragraph on page four, the objective of managing for a total of 96 wild horses within the Monte Cristo HMA is no longer a valid objective. As also stated on page four, actual wild horse numbers will be determined by this evaluation based upon monitoring data in order to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance and prevent deterioration of the range."

Another concern dealt with the wild horse actual use for the allotment. As stated in the evaluation, the wild horse actual use was determined from the census data, numerous wild horse sightings in and immediately nearby the allotment, and the professional judgement of resource specialists in the Ely District BLM. A formula was not used to determine this use. The sighting of 60 wild horses on May 15, 1991 which was reported on page 9 of the evaluation will also be included with the other wild horse sightings listed on page 10 of the evaluation.

Another comment questioned the "fair" rating of the crested wheatgrass seeding and how that rating was determined. The comment also questioned how the seeding will be maintained.

In response, the SCS Double Sampling Method was used to determine the production values of crested wheatgrass and Wyoming big sagebrush. The Egan Rangeland Program Summary (RPS - May 1988) states on page 180, "Good or better condition for seedings means that 50 percent or more of the vegetation, by dry weight, is the seeded species." Regarding seeding maintenance, given the sage grouse objectives for this allotment and the lower priority of seeding maintenance compared to other district projects, maintenance is unlikely. The Bureau would entertain the possibility of treatment if the permittee would fund and conduct

the project.

An additional comment related to vegetation condition questioned the Conclusions section of the evaluation on page 16, specifically the ecological condition objective III. B. 1. (a). The objective is Not Met as stated in the evaluation; however, the two ecological condition studies from pages 13 and 14 of the evaluation will not be averaged to determine the grass component percent as is implied in the wording of the conclusion. The first three sentences of the "Rationale" section will be changed to read as follows:

The existing vegetation at key area MC1 is in mid seral (fair) ecological condition. The successional stage which would best meet the land use plan objectives for this allotment is late seral (good) ecological condition. Perennial grasses should compose approximately 55% of PNC at this site.

An additional comment concerned the choice of Snowball Ranch as a weather station, and the use of the Sneva Crop Yield Index. A thorough research of weather stations revealed that the Snowball Ranch station presents the most complete precipitation data with only one observer reporting data for 24 years. The Eureka station has not been used for any of the allotment evaluations completed in the Egan Resource Area to date. For the years 1975 to 1993, there are 11 months of incomplete data, four years in which no total was listed for the year, and one year in which the total was partially estimated. Regarding the Sneva Crop Yield Index, the index is used to account for the affect of yearly climatic variations on annual forage yield, and therefore calculation of appropriate stocking levels. The effects of precipitation on carrying capacity must be considered. 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 an Administrative Law Judge in Oregon.

The Stocking Rate Adjustments section on page 19 of the evaluation will be corrected to read as follows:

3. Stocking Rate Adjustments

a. Demand	1,417 AUMs
Less adjudication to seeding	<u>254 AUMs</u>
Adjusted demand	1,163 AUMs
Stocking level	<u>417 AUMs</u>
Reduction	746 AUMs

Additional comments expressed confusion over how raw utilization percentages were determined and how proper stocking levels were determined. In response, a third paragraph will be added to page 19 of the evaluation, above the Utilization/Stocking Rate Calculations - Native Range section, which states:

The raw utilization for the evaluation years was based on use of the key species Indian ricegrass. Each year, several transects read in key areas of the allotment were averaged to determine the raw yearlong use for the allotment.

Another concern questioned the location of utilization cages and the key areas of the allotment. As stated in the evaluation, there are two utilization cages within the seeding. Cage MC2 is located approximately 0.4 miles northwest from the main road through the seeding. It is not near water. Cage MC3 is located midway between two troughs in the east half of the seeding. It is approximately 0.2 miles from each trough. Both cage locations are representative of typical utilization levels when the seeding is grazed. Also as stated in the evaluation, there are three cages located in native range. None of these cages are near water. They are located near two-track roads since accessibility is a requirement for the cage locations. Two of the cages are located in Wyoming big sagebrush/perennial grass range and one is located in a winterfat bottom. All three key areas are commonly grazed by both wild horses and cattle and are representative of typical resource conditions on the allotment.

An additional comment addressed the sage grouse objectives for the allotment in relation to the need to treat the sagebrush within the seeding.

In response, there is one documented strutting ground in the south portion of the allotment. The crested wheatgrass seeding is entirely within a two mile radius of this strutting ground. The Egan Resource Area Record of Decision (ROD) states on page 30 that "Alteration of sagebrush areas..... will be in accordance with procedures specified in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Bureau of Land Management relating to the Western States Sage Grouse Guidelines. The Memorandum states that vegetation control programs of any kind shall be prohibited within a breeding complex. The memorandum also states that a breeding complex shall be considered as all lands within a two mile radius of a strutting ground.

Another concern questioned why mule deer are not causing resource damage in the allotment when in fact they are using more AUMs than cattle during some years of the evaluation. In response, mule deer are not contributing to the non-attainment of objectives because they are utilizing the east portion of the allotment, away from the key areas commonly grazed by livestock and wild horses, in pinyon-juniper/bitterbrush/perennial grass range.

The conclusion to the wildlife objective III. B. 2. (e) on page 17 of the evaluation is Met as stated in the evaluation. However, the second sentence will be corrected to read, "Mule

deer habitat is rated as high fair according to the wildlife study conducted in 1989." The evaluation mistakenly stated the rating as good.

Conclusions of the evaluation were based on data collection and comments from the following sources:

1. Range, wildlife, and wild horse monitoring studies files compiled by the Egan Resource Area and Division of Resources.
2. Input from the Nevada Division of Wildlife, Region II, in a letter dated 10/05/1994.
3. Input from Resource Concepts, Inc. in a letter dated 10/06/1994.
4. Input from Intermountain Range Consultants on behalf of Duckwater Cattle Co. (Alan Forsgren), the permittee on the allotment.
5. Input from the permittee, Alan Forsgren, during several field tours of the allotment during the evaluation period.
6. Input from the Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses in a letter dated 09/21/94.

B. ANALYSIS OF MONITORING DATA

Based on analysis of monitoring studies, seven of the twelve land use plan objectives for this allotment are not being met with current management practices. One of the objectives is no longer appropriate. Therefore, additional management actions and/or adjustments in use are necessary. The major resource problems on this allotment are the over-utilization of key forage species on native range by cattle and wild horses and the over-utilization of the crested wheatgrass seeding by cattle. Wild horses foraging in the seeding were a problem before locks were installed on three of the seeding gates during the summer of 1993. Wild horses were able to enter the seeding because the seeding gates were repeatedly left open by unknown travelers in the area. The carrying capacity and ecological condition of the range have declined. The situation has been aggravated by drought during the evaluation years.

C. SELECTED MANAGEMENT ACTION

The selected management action is as follows:

Monte Cristo Allotment

1. Reduce the adjudicated active preference for livestock from 1,129 AUMs to 586 AUMs as indicated by monitoring studies. 543

AUMs will be placed in suspended non-use.

2. Of the 586 AUMs active preference, 332 AUMs will be authorized in the native range and 254 AUMs authorized in the crested wheatgrass seeding.

3. The season of use will be summer/fall from 07/01 to 10/31.

4. Establish a wild horse AML of 85 AUMs (7 wild horses yearlong plus or minus 15% or 6 to 8 wild horses) as indicated by monitoring studies.

Rationale

Rangeland monitoring studies and other existing information support the conclusion that cattle and wild horses are overutilizing the key forage species on native range and cattle are overutilizing the crested wheatgrass in the seeding. The main cause of resource deterioration is excess animal numbers. Wildlife populations have not been identified as a contributor to the problem. The selected management actions of adjusting grazing use and establishing an Appropriate Management Level for wild horses would enhance the condition of both the native range and the seeding, allowing for improved production, vigor, cover, and seedling frequency of forage plants. Authorizing range rest during the spring and early summer critical growing period would also remedy the overutilization. The selected management actions would also provide for a sustained yield of forage, improve the biodiversity of ecosystems, and allow for the attainment of allotment objectives.

The Monte Cristo Allotment will be reevaluated during the third and fifth year of the scheduled five year phase-in of the proper stocking level, to determine the effects of the management actions upon the allotment objectives and if additional actions may be required.

D. GRAZING ADJUSTMENTS

In accordance with 43 CFR 4110.3, 4110.3-2(b) and (c), and 4130.6-1(a), the existing authorized livestock active use shall be changed, over five years, to 586 AUMs cattle use, with 543 AUMs placed in suspended non-use. Year one will be the 1996 grazing year. Changes are as follows:

	<u>AUMs</u>		<u>Active Preference</u>
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Suspended</u>	
From:	1,129	0	1,129
To:	1,129	543	586

The new active preference and grazing schedule will be as follows:

From (Existing permit):

Number	Kind	Period of Use	%Federal	AUMs	
				Active	Susp
325	Cattle	05/16 - 05/31	100	171	0
237	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	958	0
Total.....				1,129	0

To - Native range

Year	Number	Kind	Period of Use	%Federal	AUMs	
					Active	Susp
1	134	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	542	102
3	108	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	437	207
5	82	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	332	312

To - Seeding

Year	Number	Kind	Period of Use	%Federal	AUMs	
					Active	Susp
1	101	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	408	77
3	82	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	332	153
5	62	Cattle	07/01 - 10/31	100	254	231

E. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The following terms and conditions will be incorporated into the grazing permit.

1. When cattle are authorized to graze the seeding, all seeding gates will be kept closed. All seeding gates will also be kept closed when cattle are authorized to graze the adjoining native range.
2. Salt and supplements will not be allowed within 1/2 mile of stock waters, nor in winterfat vegetation.

F. LONG TERM SOLUTIONS

The following long term solutions should be implemented. Any projects recommended will be initiated when time, funding, and manpower allows.

- (a) Authorize improvement of the well and stock tank east of the seeding and/or develop an additional pipeline and troughs from the well in order to better distribute livestock use if National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) considerations are in compliance.
- (b) Implement a vegetation conversion project in the dense Pinyon-Juniper range via a prescribed burn, chaining only, or

chaining and seeding. This would benefit mule deer and other wildlife, cattle, and wild horses.

(c) Construct an east/west fence in cooperation with Duckwater Cattle Company dividing the Monte Cristo Allotment from the Green Springs Use Area of the Duckwater Allotment to the south. This would facilitate better control of livestock grazing.

G. FUTURE MONITORING

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

m.j.
5/25/1995
J. Fisher 5/25/95

NOTICE OF PROPOSED MULTIPLE USE DECISION
FOR THE MONTE CRISTO ALLOTMENT

MAY 26 1995

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Duckwater Cattle Co. c/o Alan Forsgren Duckwater, NV 89314	P 313 265 406
Nevada Div. of Wildlife Region II 1375 Mountain City Hwy. Elko, NV 89801	P 313 265 407
N-4 Grazing Board c/o Bill Davidson P.O. Box 1077 McGill, NV 89318	P 313 265 408
Resource Concepts, Inc. 340 N. Minnesota St. Carson City, NV 89703	P 313 265 409
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Reno Field Station 4600 Kietzke Lane, Bldg. C - 125 Reno, NV 89502	P 313 265 410
Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter - Nevada & Eastern California P.O. Box 8096 Reno, NV 89507	P 313 265 411
Natural Resources Defense Council 71 Stevenson St. San Francisco, CA 94105	P 313 265 412
The Wilderness Society 116 New Montgomery St., Suite 526 San Francisco, CA 94105	P 313 265 413

Nevada Farm Bureau
1300 Marietta Way
Sparks, NV 89431

P 313 265 414

International Society for the Protection of Mustangs & Burros
6212 E. Sweetwater Ave.
Scottsdale, AZ 85254

P 313 265 415

Animal Protection Institute of America
2831 Fruitridge Road
P.O. Box 22505
Sacramento, CA 95822

P 313 265 416

Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses & Burros
Cathy Barcomb, Executive Director
255 West Moana, Suite 207A
Reno, NV 89509

P 313 265 417

Wild Horse Organized Assistance
P.O. Box 555
Reno, NV 89504

P 313 265 418

Intermountain Range Consultants
ATTN: Bob Schweigert
P. O. Box 1033
Winnemucca, NV 89445

P 313 265 419