

M 3/19/79

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

MemorandumDEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENTIN REPLY REFER TO:
4700
(N-027.8)

To : District Manager
: Chief, Division of Resource Management
: Sonoma-Gerlach Area Manager

FROM : Rodger T. Bryan, Natural Resource Specialist

Date: March 19, 1979

SUBJECT: Condition of Wild Horses in the Fox Range

On March 13, 1979, I flew the Fox Range and the north finger of the Lake Range via fixed wing aircraft, with the intent of getting approximate numbers of wild horses and to plot their locations on AMS maps to show winter use areas. While flying, I located 432 adult animals and 95 yearlings and colts. Of these 527 animals, 60% of these animals were concentrated in an area 10 miles long and 3 miles wide on the east side of the Fox Range between Coyote Creek and Trail Canyon in the lower foothills.

The majority of the wild horses located in this area of high concentration appeared to be in bad flesh and did not appear to have healthy winter coats. Most of the animals appeared to be lethargic and weak. They did not run at the approach of the airplane. They walked along slowly with their heads down, beneath the aircraft.

If the mountain range receives a considerable amount of inclement weather during the remainder of this month, and the animals are not allowed to move to higher elevations to utilize the available forage, a potential will exist for a major horse die-off to occur later this month or the first part of next month.

I recommend that a ground check be made of the area in question to evaluate the range condition and to make a decision as to whether or not an emergency program of supplemental feeding be initiated to try and prevent another major wild horse die-off from occurring this spring.

I also recommend that, while evaluating the range condition, serious consideration be given to closing the Fox Range to livestock grazing for an indefinite period of time, which would alleviate the overuse by both livestock and wild horses in competition for inadequate quantities of forage.

RMB

