



GRANITE HMA  
Buffalo Hills HMA

1-21-99

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Winnemucca Field Office  
5100 East Winnemucca Boulevard  
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445  
702-623-1500

In Reply Refer To:  
(NV-022.17)  
(4160.1)

January 21, 1999

Certified Mail Number Z 551 576 081  
Return Receipt Requested

02-11-99 P12:59 IN

Commission for the Preservation  
Of Wild Horses  
Attn: Cathy Barcomb  
255 W. Moana, Suite 207A  
Reno, NV 89509

MAY be necessary  
mitigation for over use  
caused by live stock & wild  
horses - support action

Dear Cathy:

Please find enclosed the environmental assessment for the Granite Mountain Drift Fence Project. The purpose and need for this fence project is described in the environmental assessment.

43 CFR Sec. 4120.3-1(f) states:

Proposed range improvement projects shall be reviewed in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4371 et seq.). The decision document following the environmental analysis shall be considered the proposed decision under subpart 4160 of this part.

Therefore, the Decision Record following the environmental assessment is my proposed decision. Protest and appeal procedures follow:

Any applicant, permittee, lessee, or other affected interests may protest the proposed decisions under Sec. 43 CFR 4160.1, in person or in writing within 15 days after receipt of such decision to:

Colin P. Christensen  
AFM Renewable Resources  
5100 East Winnemucca Blvd.  
Winnemucca, NV 89445

The protest, if filed, should clearly and concisely state the reason(s) as to why the proposed decision is in error.

In the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice.

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal and petition for stay of the decision pending final determination on appeal under 43 CFR 4160.4, §4.21 and §4.470. The appeal and petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, noted above, within 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final.

The appeal shall state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error.

Should you wish to file a motion for stay, the appellant shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

As noted above the petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer.

Sincerely yours,



Colin P. Christensen  
Assistant Field Manager  
Division of Renewable Resources

Enclosure - Granite Mountain Drift Fence Environmental Assessment

CC:

Desert Bighorn Council	Z 551 571 486
Nevada Woolgrowers	Z 551 571 489
NDOW	Z 551 571 491
Craig Downer	Z 551 571 490
NRCS	Z 551 571 494
Public Resource Associates	Z 551 571 492
Nevada Cattleman's Association	Z 551 571 487
Washoe County Department of Community Development	Z 551 571 493
William Cowan	Z 551 571 591
USFWS	Z 551 571 488
Joel Turnbow	Z 551 571 592
Jackson Ranch	Z 551 571 593
Resource Concepts Incorporated	Z 551 571 594
Natural Resource Defense Council	Z 551 571 595
Sierra Club-Toiyabe Chapter	Z 551 571 596
Wild Horse Organized Assistance	Z 551 571 597
Friends of Nevada Wilderness	Z 551 571 598
Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses	Z 551 576 081

ACTIVITY:1020

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management

# EA FACE SHEET

OFFICE: Winnemucca (NV-020) FY & REPORT #: FY99-NV-020-06-18

ACTION: Granite Mountain Drift Fence NO. OF PAGES: 6

LOCATION: T.35N. R.22E. Sec. 34 & 35 SERIAL NO: --

<u>TEAM SIGNATURES</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>RESOURCE VALUES ASSIGNED</u>	<u>HOURS</u>
<u>Shane D. Finley</u>	<u>Rangeland Mgmt Specialist</u>	<u>Author/Range</u>	
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>Rangeland Mgmt Specialist</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>1 hr</u>
<u>Perry McHughan</u>	<u>Archaeologist</u>	<u>Cultural</u>	
<u>MOYERS, Mr</u>	<u>Outdoor Rec. Planner</u>	<u>Visual Resources</u>	
<u>T Seley</u>	<u>Wild Horse &amp; Burro Spec.</u>	<u>Wild Horses</u>	
<u>Alex Beeswax</u>	<u>wildlife Biologist</u>	<u>Wildlife</u>	

ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: [Signature] 25 January 99  
(Signature) (Date)

COMPLIANCE OFFICER: Shane D. Finley  
(Title or Name)

DISTRICT ~~MANAGER~~/ASSISTANT DISTRICT MANAGER, ~~NON~~RENEWABLE RESOURCES [Signature]  
(Signature)

1/25/99  
(Date)

# Environmental Assessment Granite Mountain Drift Fence

## I. Introduction/Overview

### Purpose and Need

The Buffalo Hills Allotment is located immediately north of Gerlach, Nevada. It consists of four pastures and is managed under a rest rotation grazing system. The main fork of Wagon Tire Creek is located in the Dolly Varden pasture with the south fork meandering between the Granite and Dolly Varden pastures. During 1993 and 1994 a section of the south fork of Wagon Tire Creek was used quite heavily by horses and livestock. Utilization limits had been exceeded both years even before livestock entered the pasture. The permittees have herded their livestock continually and removed them from this portion of the pasture in order to keep use levels down. Due to the high horse numbers this has not been very effective or efficient.

The proposed action is to relocate a portion of the Granite Mountain Drift fence so that this fork of Wagon Tire Creek would be protected from both wild horses and livestock. Though the action is not specifically addressed in the Sonoma-Gerlach MFP, it is consistent with the objectives of the MFP and with Federal, State, and Local laws, regulations, and policy.

## II. Proposed Action and Alternatives

### A. Proposed Action

The proposed action is to construct 1½ miles of fence along the south fork of Wagon Tire Creek. The action would take place in T. 35N. R. 22E. Sections 34 & 35 (See attached map). The original fence would be left in place to form an enclosure and facilitate a more expeditious recovery of the riparian area. When recovery is completed the original fence may be removed to allow animals to water. If the enclosure is kept in place the permittees would be allowed to push livestock through it when gathering. The fence would be a four strand barbed wire fence built to antelope standards. The new fence would tie in with the existing fence about 1 mile southeast of Heward Reservoir and continue westerly until it met back up with the existing fence. Access to the site would be by existing roads, no new road construction would be needed.

This project would be implemented under a cooperative agreement. The Bureau would provide materials and remove the original fence when it was decided to do so and the permittees would construct and maintain the fence.

### B. No Action Alternative

Under the no action alternative the fence would not be constructed. The riparian vegetation and stream would continue to be impacted by wild horses and livestock.

### III. Affected Environment/Environmental Consequences

#### Proposed Action:

##### A. Vegetation

Reconstruction of the fence would occur in a variety of vegetation types, ranging from low sagebrush (*Artemisia arbuscula*) to snowberry (*Symphoricarpos spp.*). The dominant vegetation would be low sage and Sandberg bluegrass ((*Poa secunda*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*), and rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus spp.*). The fence would not be constructed in the riparian area, so disturbance to riparian vegetation would be minimal. Vegetation within the newly created exclosure would be protected from large ungulate herbivory until fully recovered and thus would be more vigorous. Riparian vegetation is characterized by willows (*Salix spp.*), rushes (*Juncus spp.*), and sedges (*Carex spp.*).

##### B. Water Resources

It is anticipated that there would be no adverse impacts to water quality. As a result of the exclosure water quality would be higher.

##### C. Wildlife

Several species of wildlife occur in habitat surrounding the proposed project. Mule deer, pronghorn antelope, chukar, sage grouse, quail, and several nongame species inhabit the area. Since the proposed fence would be built to antelope specifications, there should be a positive impact to wildlife from the improved condition of the riparian area. Wagon Tire Creek, at present, does not contain any fish populations.

##### D. Wild Horses

Wild horses could potentially be affected through implementation of these proposed actions. Horses would not be able to access water in this section of the creek if the fence were built. The next nearest water source would be Heward Reservoir on years of good precipitation and the main fork of Wagon Tire Creek in years with below normal precipitation. Heward Reservoir is about 100 yards above the stream and the main fork is about 1½ miles from the proposed project, so water would be available in the vicinity.

##### E. Cultural Resources

A class III cultural resource inventory, CR2-2751(N), of the proposed fence line was conducted in October 1997. The results of the inventory were negative. The report is on file in the Winnemucca Field Office, in the cultural files. No Native American consultation was undertaken because very little surface disturbance would occur, no archeological sites were recorded, and there are no ethnographic record of ceremonial or sacred sites in the area. No National Register properties would be impacted by the proposed project.

F. Threatened and Endangered Species

No on the ground search for sensitive plants was conducted, but the Nevada Threatened and Endangered Plant Map Book (Nevada State Museum, 1988) located in the Winnemucca Office shows that no sensitive plants are known to occur in the immediate vicinity of either proposed activity. No threatened or endangered wildlife species would be impacted through implementation of this proposed action.

G. Visual Resource Management

This project would be located in a Class II visual resource management area. The management objective for this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape. The proposed fence would meet Class II VRM objectives. A Visual Contrast Rating Worksheet was completed on November 30, 1995. See Attachment 1.

H. Cumulative Impacts

All resource values have been evaluated for cumulative impacts. There would be no direct cumulative impacts to resource values as a result of the proposed action, however an indirect impact could occur on the main fork of Wagon Tire Creek. If wild horse and livestock use in the proposed fence area shifts to the main fork of Wagon Tire Creek utilization limits may continue to be exceeded in this area.

I. Other Critical Elements of the Human Environment

Implementation of the proposed projects would not have any impact on floodplains, wetlands, air quality, areas of critical environmental concern, hazardous materials, paleontological resources, wild and scenic rivers, prime or unique farmlands, wilderness, noxious weeds or Native American Religious concerns.

**IV. Consultation, Coordination, Cooperation**

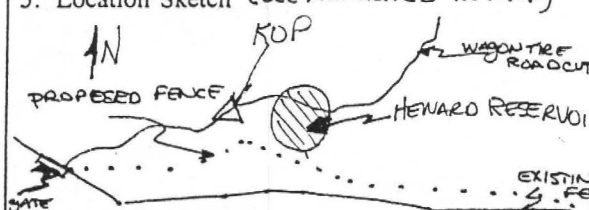
The specialists who have signed the face sheet of this document have reviewed and concur with the technical aspects of this environmental assessment, as concerns their respective specialties. The permittees and affected interests have been consulted, see CC on cover letter.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

VISUAL CONTRAST RATING WORKSHEET

Date 95.11.30  
District WINNEMUCCA  
Resource Area SONOMA - Gerlitzch  
Activity (program) 1020 RANGE

SECTION A. PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Name <u>Granite Mtn. Drift Fence</u>	4. Location Township <u>35N</u> Range <u>22E</u> Section <u>34 &amp; 35</u>	5. Location Sketch (SEE ATTACHED 7.5 MAP) 
2. Key Observation Point <u>CREST OF Hill between Heward Res. &amp; WAGON TIRE PASS.</u>		
3. VRM Class <u>II</u>		

SECTION B. CHARACTERISTIC LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

	1. LAND/WATER	2. VEGETATION	3. STRUCTURES
FORM	STEEP SLOPE TOWARD <sup>creek</sup> EAST Rolling terrain TOWARD SOUTH	SCATTERED JUNIPER, LOW SAGE (Simple forms)	—
LINE	undulating, sloping	Flowing, undulating	—
COLOR	dark grey to light tan on top of slopes	lt green to light tan	—
TEXTURE	Broken, patch, coarse	patch to smooth	—

SECTION C. PROPOSED ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

	1. LAND/WATER	2. VEGETATION	3. STRUCTURES
FORM	LINEAR - <del>vertical</del>	NO CONCERN - NO CHANGE	LINEAR
LINE	Angular - Flowing	NO CHANGE SEEN	vertical, horizontal, zigular
COLOR	metal grey main fence dk green stakes	—	DK. green
TEXTURE	subtle	—	subtle

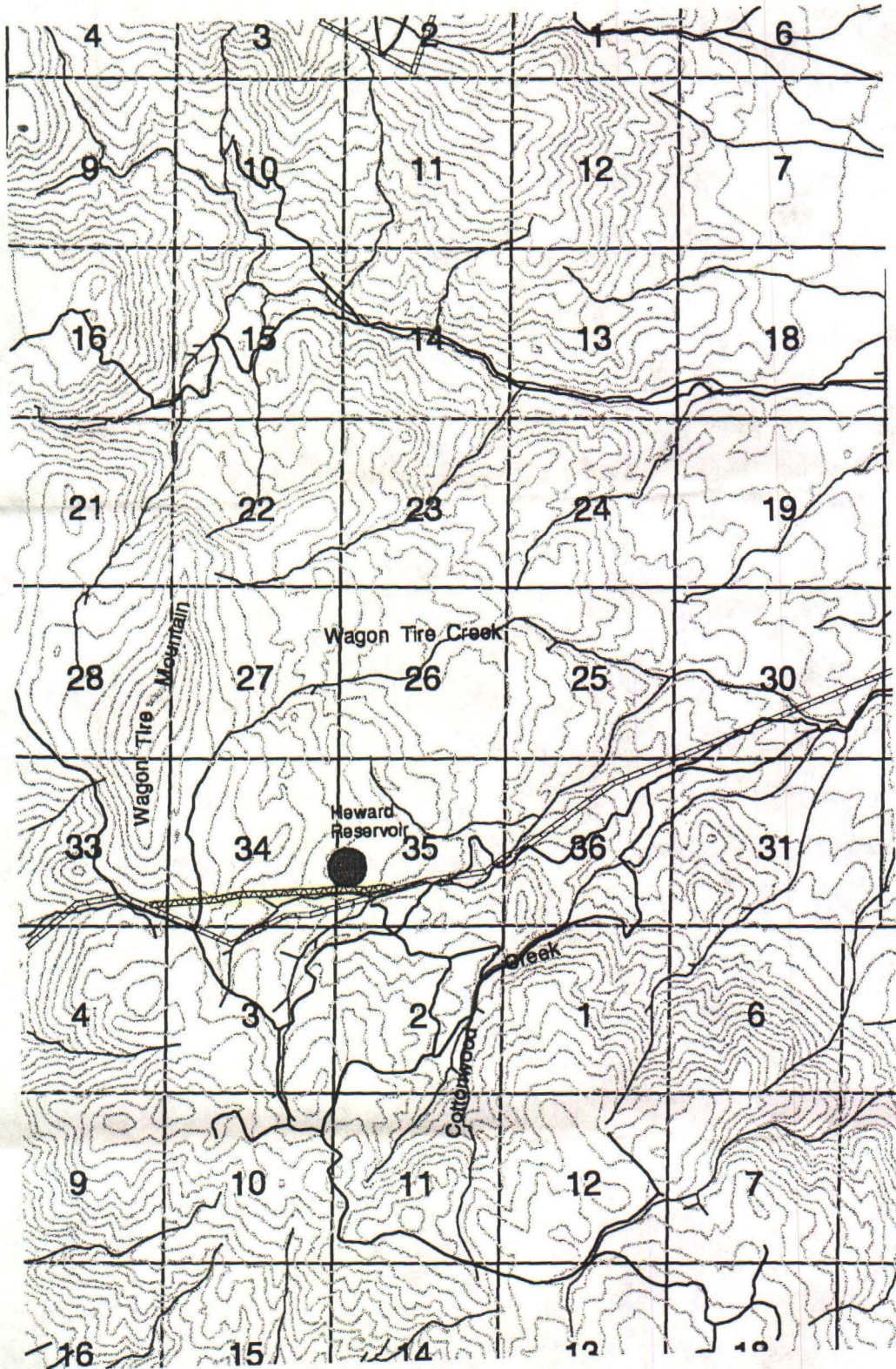
SECTION D. CONTRAST RATING  SHORT TERM  LONG TERM

DEGREE OF CONTRAST	FEATURES												2. Does project design meet visual resource management objectives? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (Explain on reverse side)		
	LAND/WATER BODY (1)				VEGETATION (2)				STRUCTURES (3)					3. Additional mitigating measures recommended <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (Explain on reverse side)	
	Strong	Moderate	Weak	None	Strong	Moderate	Weak	None	Strong	Moderate	Weak	None			
Form			✓					✓				✓		Evaluator's Names <u>DESNA Young</u>	Date <u>11.30.95</u>
Line			✓				✓				✓				
Color				✓			✓				✓				
Texture				✓			✓				✓				

R. 22E.



T. 35N.



1:62500



Existing Fence

Proposed Fence

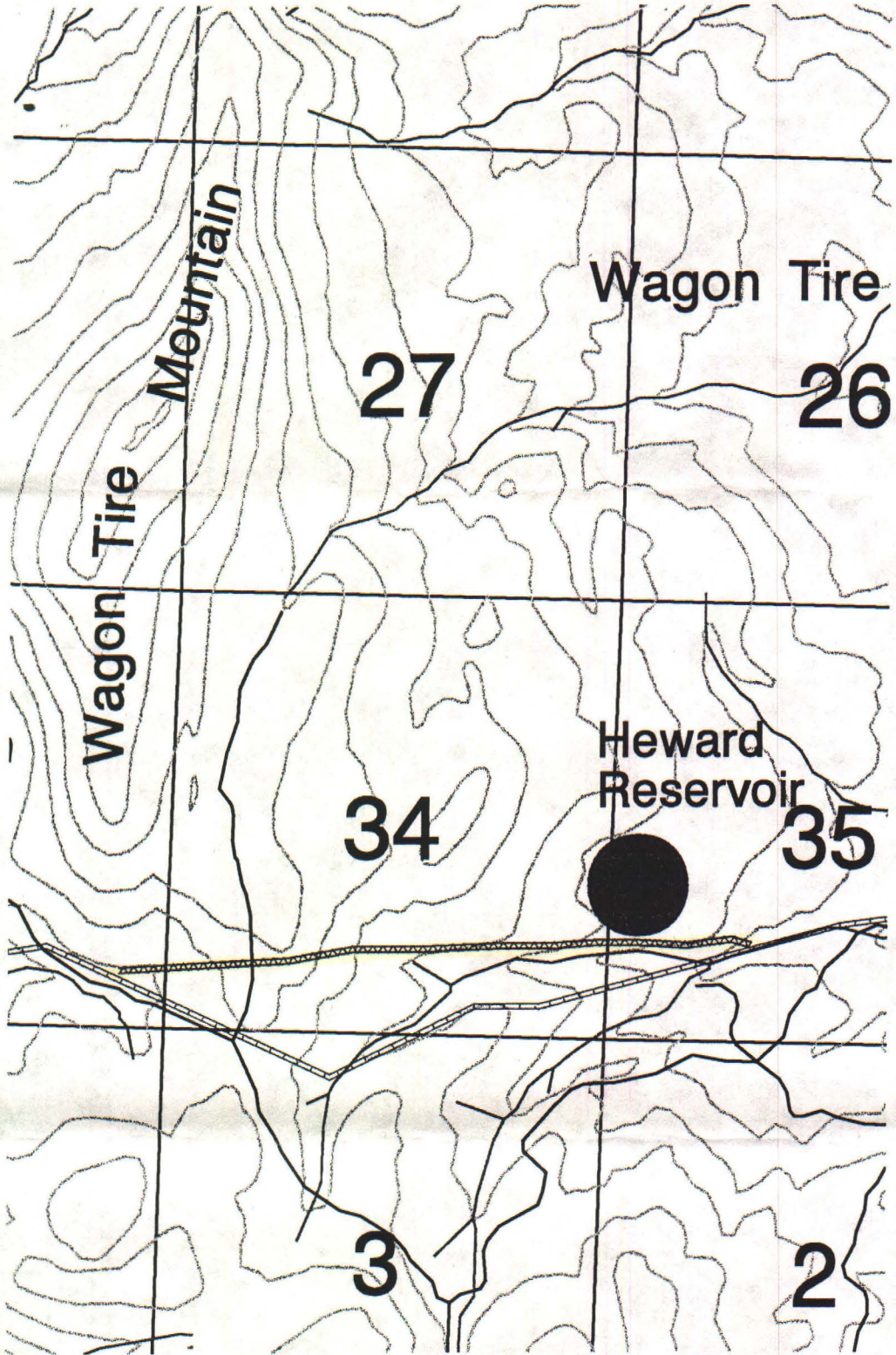
### Proposed Wagon Tire Fencing





R. 22E.



T. 35N.



1:24000

-  Existing Fence
-  Proposed Fence

Proposed Wagon Tire Fencing

**DECISION RECORD/FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**  
**Granite Mountain Drift Fence**

**Project Location:** T. 35N. R. 22E. Sections 34 and 35

**Decision**

The decision is to construct the portion of the Granite Mountain Drift fence as proposed in EA #NV-020-06-18

**Rationale**

Construction impacts to the environment and natural resources would be minor. Location of the proposed project would protect the riparian area from livestock and wild horse impacts.

The proposal is consistent with land use planning.

**Finding of No Significant Impact**

Based on the analysis in environmental assessment #NV-020-06-18 , I have determined that the actions would have no significant impacts, therefore, and Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary according to section 102 (2)(c) of NEPA.

The proposed project is in compliance with the Sonoma-Gerlach MFP. The proposed activity would not cause any undue or environmental degradation.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Colin P. Christensen  
Assistant Field Manager  
Division of Renewable Resources

1/25/99  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

2/9/99  
Granite  
Ref  
HMA

February 9, 1999

Mr. Colin P. Christensen  
AFM Renesable Resources  
5100 East Winnemucca Blvd.  
Winnemucca, NV 89445

Dear Pete:

Thank you for the notification on the Granite Mountain Drift Fence Project. WHOA supports the proposed action to construct the fence along the south fork of the Wagon Tire Creek. Though not particularly enamoured with fencing, in that case the protection of the riparian area is in the best interests of all grazing animals.

I would request one addition as the fence is being constructed, to add some strips (flagging) to forewarn horses of the newly constucted fence line.

Again, we appreciate the notification.

Most sincerely,

Dawn Y. Lappin (Mrs.)  
Director