

4/4/85

4700
(NV-931.3)

APR 4 1985

Memorandum

To: District Manager, Winnemucca
From: State Director, Nevada
Subject: Little Owyhee/Snowstorm and Humboldt/West Humboldt/East
Range Herd Area Capture Plans

Returned herewith are the subject approved capture plans. You may proceed with removal of the excess animals as soon as contracting arrangements are completed.

Sgd. Edward F. Spang

2 Enclosures

- Encl. 1 - Little Owyhee/Snowstorm Gathering
- 2 - Humboldt/West Humboldt/East Gathering

M.Frei/pm
04-02-85

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

EA FACE SHEET

OFFICE: Winnemucca District Office FY & REPORT # _____

ACTION: Little Owyhee/Snowstorm Gathering NO. OF PAGES 8
(Project Name, Case Type, etc.)

LOCATION: Paradise/Denio R.A. SERIAL NO. N- NV-020-5-8

TEAM SIGNATURES	TITLE	RESOURCE VALUES ASSIGNED	HOURS
<u>Robert Smith</u>	Range Conservationist	Writer, Range/WH&B	5
<u>Carol Plummer</u>	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife	1
<u>Katherine E. Pedersen</u>	Archeologist	Cultural Resources	
<u>Dick Whub</u>	District WH&B Specialist	Wild Horse/Burro	
<u>Rick Clark</u>	Range Conservationist	Sensitive Plants	

ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Gerald L. Mark 22 Feb 85
(Signature) (Date)

COMPLIANCE OFFICER: Rob Smith
(Title or Name)

DISTRICT/AREA MANAGER: David G. Quinn
(Signature)

2-25-85
(Date)

Decision Record/FONSI
Implement Wild Horse Objective (Gathering Plan)
E.A. #NV-020-

Decision

Based upon the Environment Assessment (EA) and the Management Framework plan for the Paradise-Denio Resource area, a net beneficial impact to the total environment will result from implementing the purposed action, therefore, the proposed action is adopted in its entirety.

Rationale

This decision is consistent with the Paradise/Denio EIS, Management Framework Plan Decisions, District Standard Operating Procedures, and the Bullhead and Little Owyhee Allotment Coordinated Resource Management Plan.

FONSI


Based on the analysis of the attached EA, I conclude that this action will result in no significant impacts to the environment, and therefore conclude that no EIS is necessary.



David B. Griggs
Area Manager

2-25-85

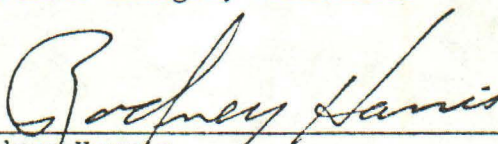
Date



Frank C. Shields
District Manager, Winnemucca

3/5/85

Date



Rodney Harris
District Manager, Elko

3/12/85

Date

Environmental Assessment for Implementation of the
Little Owyhee and Bullhead Coordinated Resource Management Plan,
Wild Horse and Burro Management Objective
E.A. #NV-020-

I. Description of the Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

A. Purpose and Need

The Little Owyhee and Bullhead Coordinated Resource Management and Planning (CRMP) Plan was approved and signed on February 12, 1982, and July 23, 1982, respectively. The group, composed of area livestock operators, the Cooperative Extension Service, the Nevada Department of Wildlife, local mining interests, representatives of national environmental and wild horse and burro groups, and the BLM, initiated the planning process in January, 1981, because a high level of interest was shown locally in resolving management conflicts among a wide range of resource values.

Issues considered by the CRMP group were wild horse and burro numbers, cattle and sheep grazing, wildlife habitat, watershed values, mining, and monitoring. In the completed plans, the proposed initial management level of wild horses is 250 horses (200 in the Little Owyhee HUA, and 50 in the Snowstorm HUA).

The purpose and need for this Environmental Assessment (EA) is to determine the environmental impacts of removing approximately 966 wild horses to implement the Wild Horse and Burro Management Objective of the Little Owyhee and Bullhead CRMP.

B. Background Data

1. Location and Description of Area-Reference to Land Use and CRMP Plan

The area to be considered for the proposed wild horse gathering consists of parts of the Little Owyhee and Bullhead Allotment. Both are located in the Paradise Denio Resource Area of the Winnemucca District and in the Elko Resource Area of the Elko District, administered by Winnemucca.

For the purpose of analysis, the Little Owyhee and Bullhead Allotment, which encompass the Little Owyhee and Snowstorm HUA respectively, will be considered one area. Objective #5 for the Bullhead and objective #3 for the Little Owyhee CRMP basically states:

An initial base level herd of 200 wild horses has been established for the Little Owyhee HUA and 50

wild horses for the Bullhead HUA. These numbers are considered compatible with livestock operations, wildlife demand and resources available. Numbers of livestock and wild horses will be monitored and adjustments made proportionately.

The MFP III decision for wild horses and burros (WH/B) 1.1 deals with non-checkerboard land and item #2 covers the area under analysis. It states:

WHB 1.1

DISTRICT MANAGER'S DECISION - WILD HORSE AND BURRO PROGRAM - NON-CHECKERBOARD LANDS

Establish wild horse and burro numbers by herd use area using the following criteria:

Existing/current WH&B numbers (as of July 1, 1982) will be used as a starting point for monitoring purposes except where one of the following conditions exist:

1. Numbers are established by adequate and supportable resource data.
2. Numbers are established through the CRMP process as documented in CRMP recommendations and agreed to by the District Manager.
3. Numbers are established by formal signed agreement between affected interests.
4. Numbers are established through previously developed interim capture/management plans. Plans are still supportable by parties consulted in the original plan. EAs (EARs) were prepared and are still valid.
5. Numbers are established by court order.

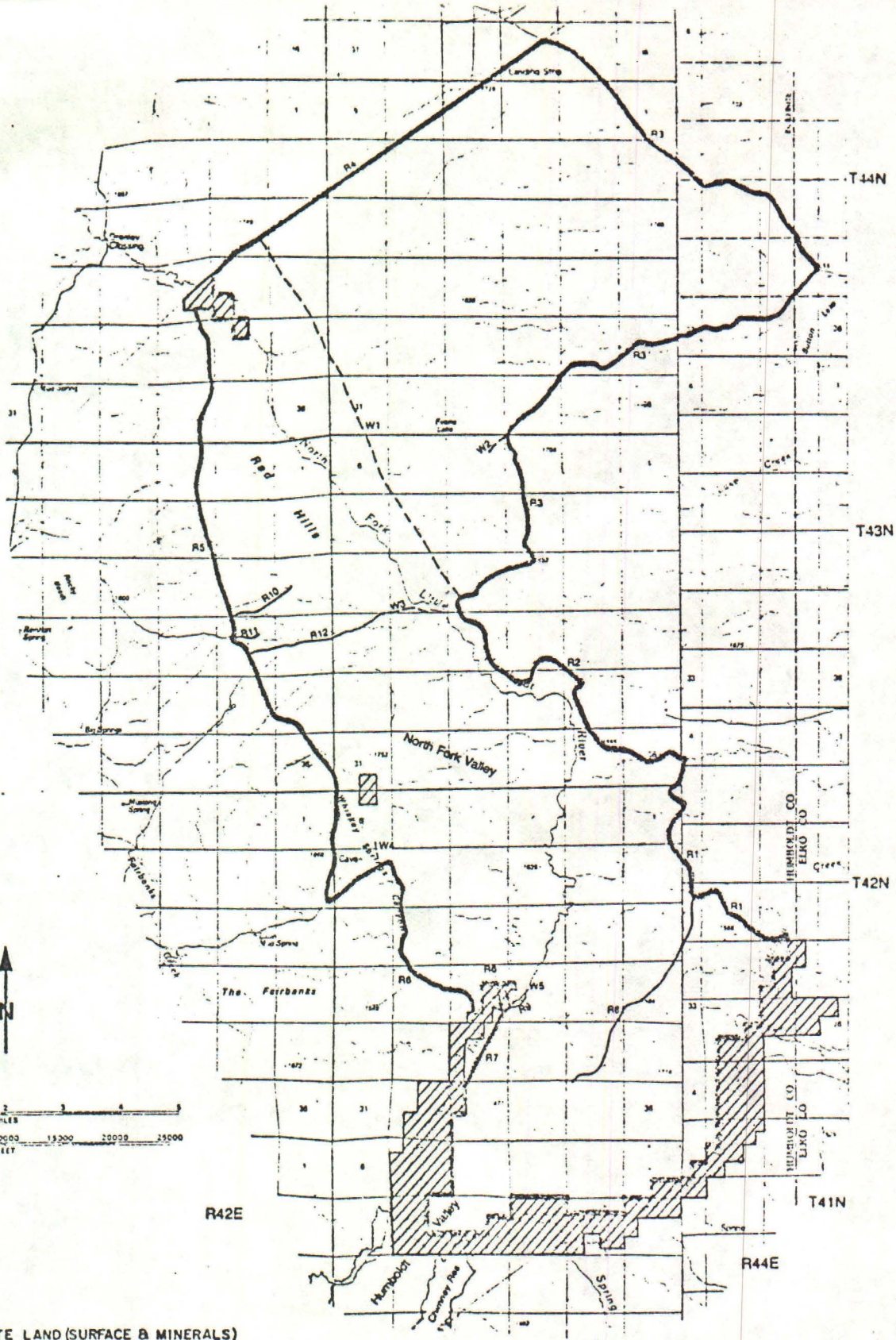
The District Manager has approved and signed both CRM plans and MFP III.

2. Population Data

The two HUAs were inventoried with a Bell B-2 helicopter during September, 1984. The results are as follows:

Little Owyhee HUA - 833 wild horses
Snowstorm HUA - 234 wild horses

These numbers are approximate and may vary slightly due to immigration and emigration.



- PRIVATE LAND (SURFACE & MINERALS)
- W. S. A. BOUNDARY
- ROAD
- WAY



NV-020-827 NORTH FORK LITTLE HUMBOLDT RIVER
 Enclosure 1-5

C. Proposed Action

The proposed action is to remove approximately 633 wild horses from the Little Owyhee HUA and 134 wild horses from the Snowstorms HUA. This will leave approximately 200 wild horses in the Little Owyhee and 50 in the Snowstorms HUA.

If the proposed action takes place as scheduled, it would begin around July 1, 1985, and be completed in approximately two months.

Implementation of the gathering plan will involve the construction of temporary traps with deflector wings, the movement of horses by a contracted helicopter and horse riders, the transportation of horses from the traps to temporary holding corrals, the holding of horses in the temporary corrals, and the transportation of horses to the Palomino Valley Wild Horse and Burro Placement Center, or other temporary holding facilities.

D. Alternatives

The Paradise-Denio Grazing Environmental Impact Statement analyzed four different alternatives to the proposed action: (1) no livestock grazing, (2) no action, (3) maximize livestock grazing, and (4) maximize wild horse and burro grazing. The alternatives outlined in the Paradise-Denio FEIS were discussed in detail. The analysis was subject to an extensive scoping process, public meetings, formal hearings, and protest periods. In an effort to avoid repetition, an analysis of these alternatives will not be reiterated in this document, but can be found in the Paradise-Denio Grazing EIS in the Winnemucca District files.

II. Affected Environment - Environmental Consequences - Mitigating Measures

An Environmental Assessment (EA NV-020-0-19) was prepared and approved which covered the Little Owyhee/Snowstorm HUAs with the same proposed action in 1980. With the exception of areas being considered for wilderness designation, the affected environment is the same as in EA NV-020-0-19.

A. Affected Environment

1. Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)

Wilderness Study Areas that partially or entirely overlap the HUAs are:

North Fork Little Humboldt River	NV-020-827 (Map Attached)
Little Humboldt River	NV-010-132 (Map Attached)

B. Environmental Consequences

The environmental consequences will be the same as discussed in EA NV-020-0-19, except for wilderness.

1. Wilderness

Neither the proposed action nor the alternatives would result in any significant adverse impacts on the WSAs, provided the mitigating measure discussed in Section IV is adhered to.

No permanent adverse impacts will occur to floodplains and wetlands, wilderness values, water resources, air quality, areas of critical environmental concern, paleontological resources, threatened or endangered plants or animal species, cultural resources, or visual resources.

C. Mitigating Measures

The mitigating measures listed in EA NV-020-0-19 will apply for this proposed action, in addition to the following:

All temporary trap sites located within the WSA boundaries will be placed on existing roads and ways, not to exceed 50' either side of the access route. Cross-country travel would be allowed so long as it does not cause impacts inconsistent with the requirements of the nonimpairment criteria outlined in the IMP.

Archaeological clearance will be done on all trap sites prior to their construction. If archaeological values are present, trap sites will be moved.

III. Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted

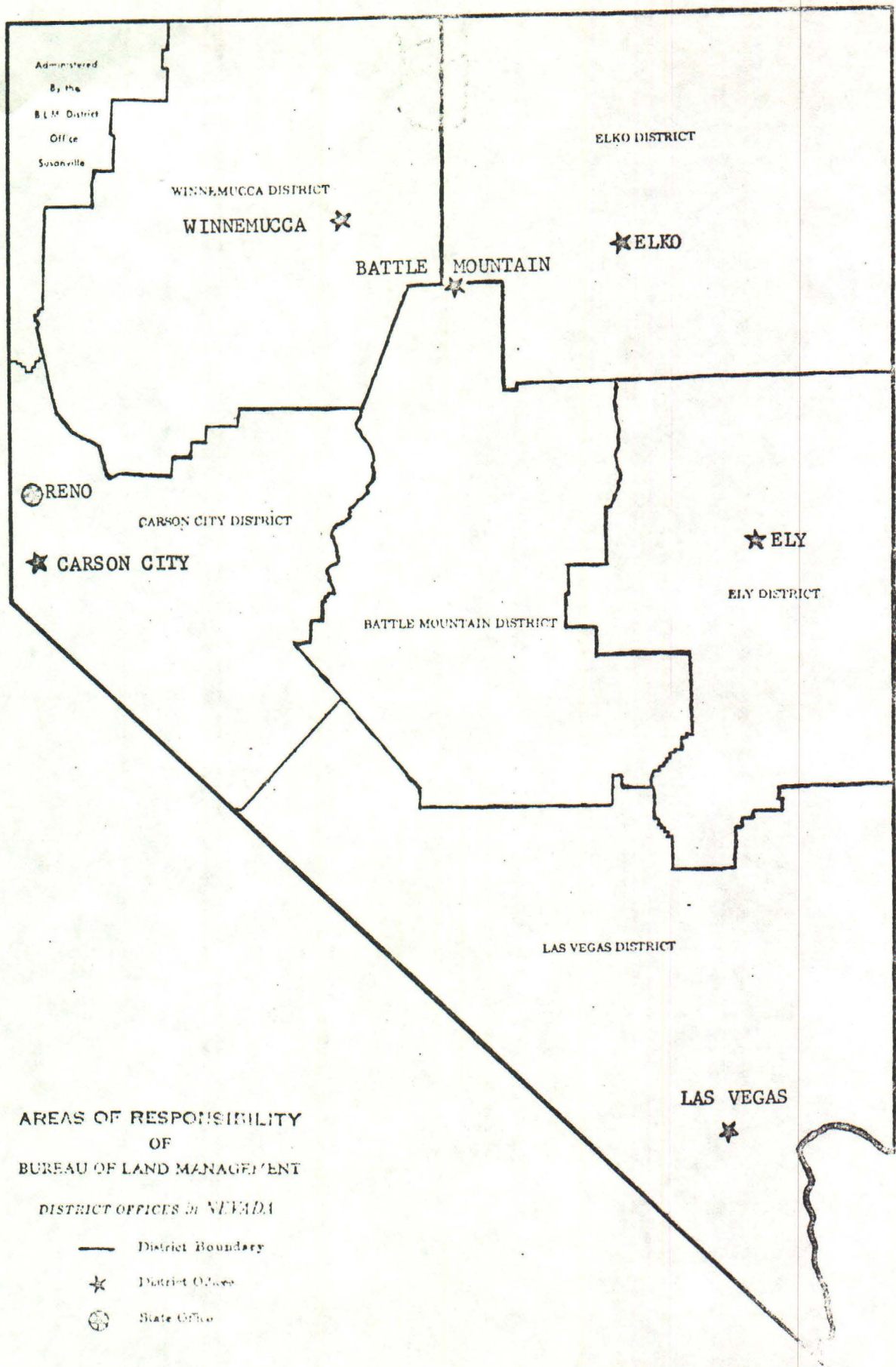
See attached list.

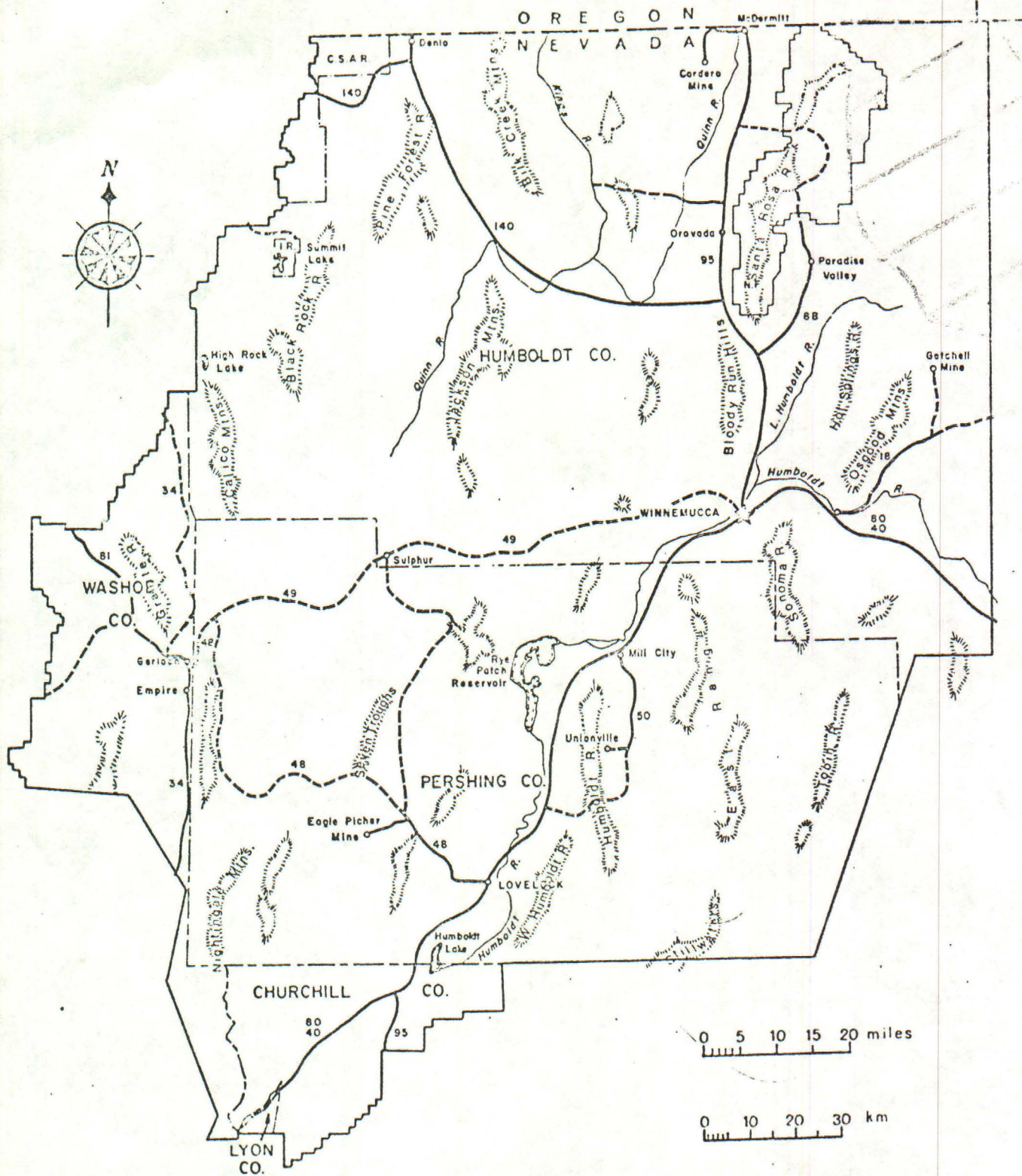
IV. Intensity of Public Interest

Nationwide, the wild horse program is very popular and there is much public sentiment to support keeping the present wild horse and burro numbers. Statewide and locally, the general attitude toward wild horses is very different. The ranchers consider the horses, if left uncontrolled, a definite threat to the existence of their livestock operations. The Nevada Department of Wildlife and wildlife enthusiasts can see the competition they place on forage and water needed for game species.

V. Participating Staff and Signatures

The specialists who have signed the face sheet of this document have been involved in the development and review of the proposed project and concluded it would not significantly impact their resources.







U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Attention: Mr. Bob Hallock
4600 Kietzke Lane, Bldg C
Reno, NV 89502

American Bashkir Curley Register
c/o Mrs. Sammy Martin
P.O. Box 453
Ely, NV 89301

American Horse Protection Association
Mrs. William Blue
1904 T. St. NW
P.O. Box 53399
Washington, D.C. 20009

American Humane Association
9725 E. Hampton
Denver, CO 80231

Animal Protection Institute
P.O. Box 22505
Sacramento, CA 95822

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Winnemucca, NV 89445

SECO
Sans, Les/Eade, John
Lonecak Rt., P.O. Box 25A
King City, CA 93930

Charlie Amos
P.O. Box 448
Winnemucca, NV 89445

Fund for Animals
Richard Negus
140 W. 57th St.
New York, NY 10019

Humane Society of So. Nevada
P.O. Box 85118
Las Vegas, NV 89185-0118

Humane Society of the U.S.
President
2100 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros
Helen Raily
11790 Peedlar Lane
Reno, NV 89506

James McLevitt
Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Federal Building, RM E - 2727
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Donald Molde
1325 Airnotive Way
Suite 175 B
Reno, NV 89502

National Mustang Association
c/o June Sewing
Newcastle, UT 84756

National Wildhorse Association
P.O. Box 12188
Las Vegas, NV 89112

Nevada Cattlemen's Association
975 Fifth Street
Elko, NV 89801

Nevada Humane Society
c/o Mark McGuire
P.O. Box KIND
Sparks, NV 89431

Humboldt Co. Commissioners
County Court House
Winnemucca, NV 89445

Nevada Woolgrowers
President
P.O. Box 88
Ely, NV 89301

Save the Mustangs
669 Somerset Avenue
Rockwood, PA 15557

Wildhorse Organized Assistance
Dawn Lappin
P.O. Box 555
Reno, NV 89505

Local #1 CRMP Committee
c/o Ken Sakurada
Cooperative Extension Service
Humboldt County Fairgrounds
Winnemucca, NV 89445

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Winnemucca District Office

Wild Horse/Burro Management

4740

Paradise-Denio Resource Area

Little Owyhee - Bullhead CRMP Area
Little Owyhee/Snowstorm HUA
Gathering Plan

Little Owyhee/Snowstorm Mountains
Wild Horse Gathering Plan

I. Introduction

The intent of this gathering plan is to outline the methods and procedures to be used in removing wild horses from the Owyhee Desert and Snowstorm Mountains Herd Use Areas (HUA). The plan involves removal of about 966 horses over a period of two months on lands administered by the BLM. The field operation will begin about July 1, 1985. This will leave approximately 200 wild horses in the Little Owyhee and 50 wild horses in the Bullhead HUA.

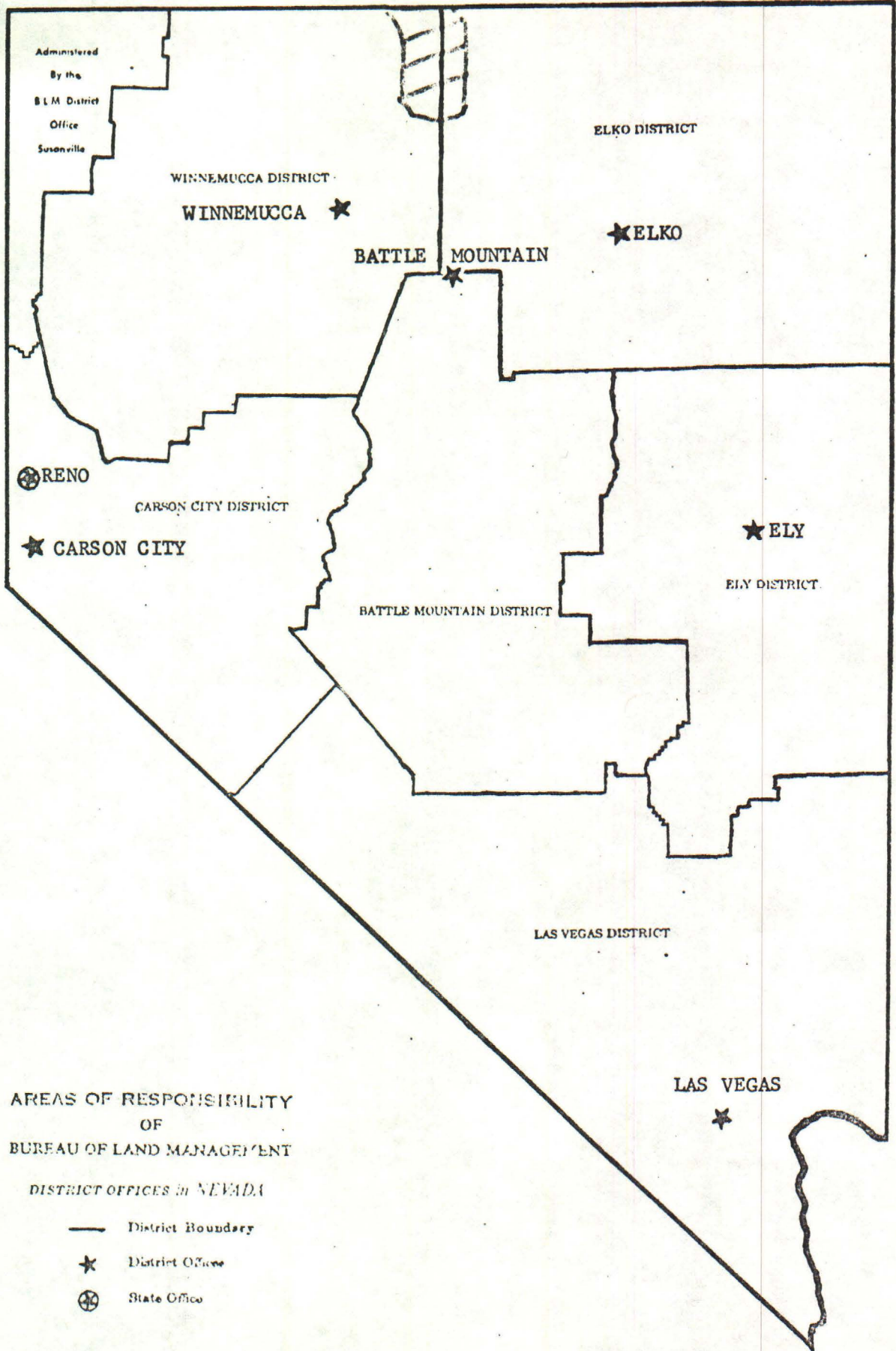
II. General Area Description

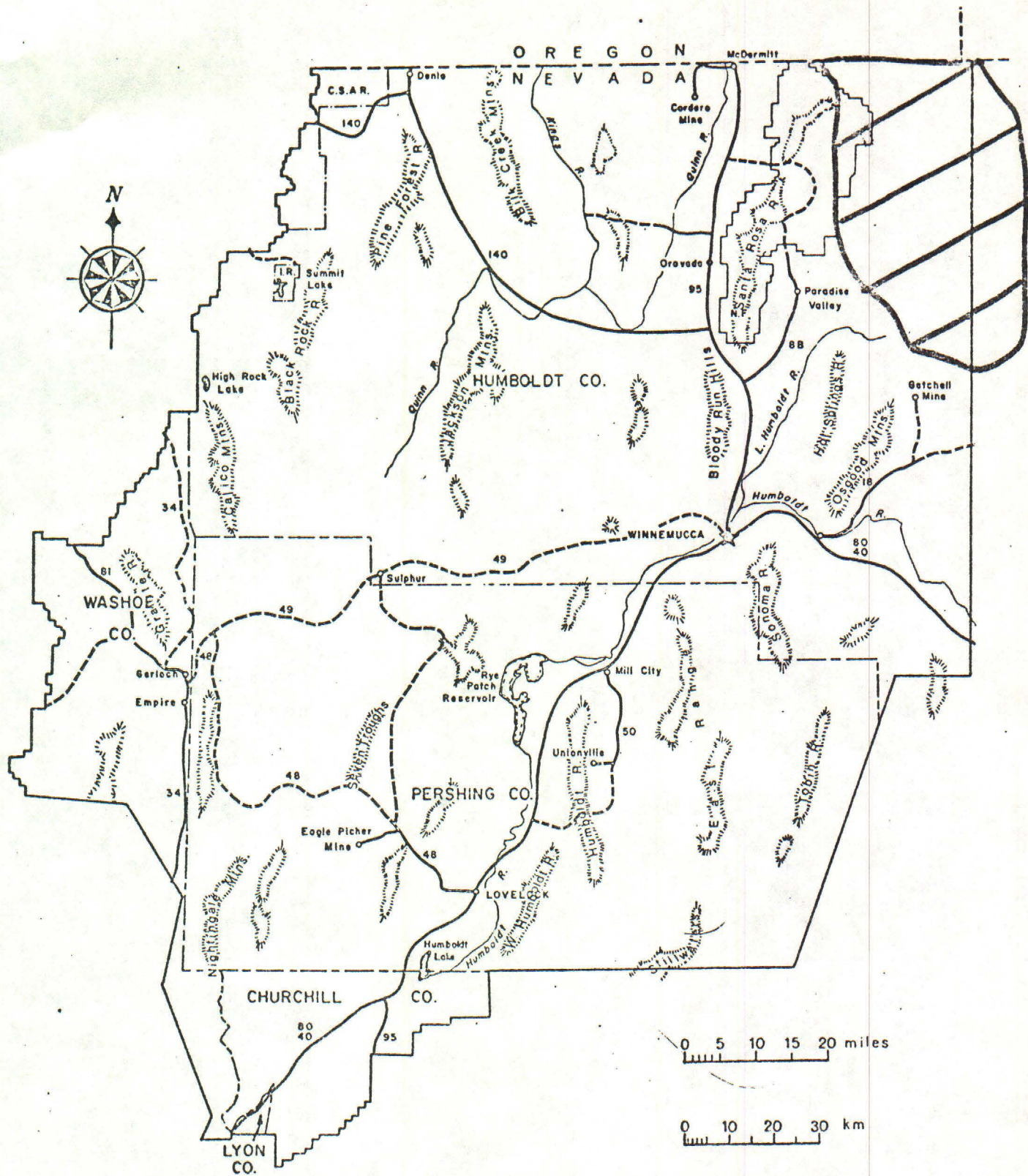
The Owyhee Desert and Snowstorm Mountains are located approximately 70 miles north of Battle Mountain, Nevada. The area to be gathered (see attachments 1, 2, and 3) includes the Little Owyhee Herd Use Area and the Snowstorm Mountains Herd Use Area (as administered by the Winnemucca District). This area consists of the Bullhead and Little Owyhee Allotment.

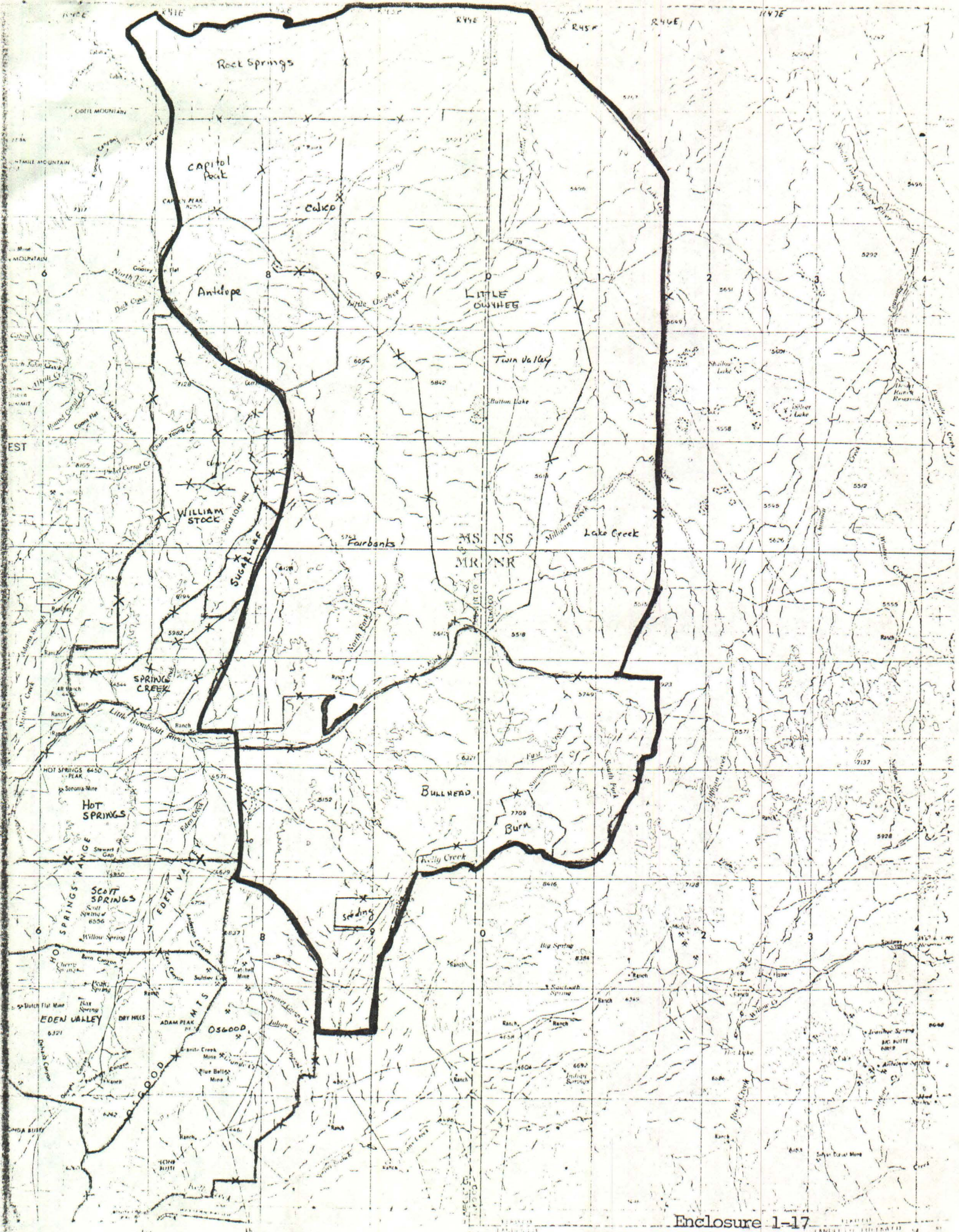
A wild horse inventory was conducted on these Herd Use Areas in the fall of 1984 using a Bell B-2 helicopter. The results are as follows:

<u>Little Owyhee HUA</u> <u>Little Owyhee Allotment</u>	<u>Number of Wild Horses</u>	
	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Foals</u>
Lake Creek	150	45
Twin Valley Spring	265	78
Fairbanks	162	49
Rock Spring	28	7
Capitol Peak	0	0
Calico	0	0
Antelope	44	5
<hr/>		
TOTALS	649	184
<hr/>		
<u>Snowstorm Mountains HUA</u>		
Bullhead Allotment	186	48
<hr/>		
GRAND TOTALS	835	232

* There is suspected fluctuations in these numbers due to immigration and emigration.







Root Springs

Capitol Peak

Calico

Antelope

LITTLE CUMING

Twin Valley

WILLIAM STOCK

Fairbanks

MS. NS
MR. NR

Lake Creek

SUGARLOAF

SPRING CREEK

BULLHEAD

Burn

HOT SPRINGS

SCOTT SPRINGS

Sedings

EDEN VALLEY

OSGOOD

The vegetation in the area is characteristic of the shadscale, bud sagebrush, low sagebrush and big sagebrush vegetative complexes. Elevation ranges from 4500 to 7500 feet, with drainages running primarily north and south.

Land status in the planning area is as follows:

<u>Public Land - %</u>	<u>Private Land - %</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>
711315 - 95%	38949 - 5%	750264

The eastern side of the area is in the Elko BLM District. The Winnemucca District administers all renewable resources within the entire area.

Previous gatherings in this area have removed a total of 2711 wild horses, broken down as follows:

1977 -	1065 wild horses
1981 -	192 wild horses
1983 -	768 wild horses
1984 -	686 wild horses

III. Justification

Section 14 of Public Law 95-514, the "Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978" states that the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture shall "determine appropriate management levels of wild free-roaming horses and burros on areas of public lands; and determine whether appropriate management levels should be achieved by the removal or destruction of excess animals, or other options (such as sterilization or natural controls on population levels)."

A land use plan has recently been developed for the Paradise-Denio Resource Area. A major portion of this plan was the preparation and publication of a Grazing Environmental Impact Statement which analyzed five different alternatives to manage public lands: (1) distribute available vegetation to livestock, wildlife, and wild horses/burros; (2) no action; (3) no livestock grazing; (4) maximize livestock; and (5) maximize wild horses/burros. The final analysis culminated with the issuance of the Winnemucca District Manager's Management Framework Plan (MFP) Step III Decisions on June 30, 1982. The decisions received the State Director's concurrence on July 9, 1982. The MFP III wild horse and burro (WH/B) decision number 1.1 addresses HUAs that are in non-checkerboard lands. It states:

WHB 1.1

DISTRICT MANAGER'S DECISION - WILD HORSE AND BURRO PROGRAM - NON-CHECKERBOARD LANDS

Establish wild horse and burro numbers by herd use area using the following criteria:

Existing/current WH&B numbers (as of July 1, 1982) will be used as a starting point for monitoring purposes except where one of the following conditions exist:

1. Numbers are established by adequate and supportable resource data.
2. Numbers are established through the CRMP process as documented in CRMP recommendations and agreed to by the District Manager.
3. Numbers are established by formal signed agreement between affected interests.
4. Numbers are established through previously developed interim capture/management plans. Plans are still supportable by parties consulted in the original plan. EAs (EARs) were prepared and are still valid.
5. Numbers are established by court order.

Paradise-Denio Resource Area

<u>Herd Use Area</u>	<u>Wild Horses/Burros</u>	CRMP Numbers
Owyhee-Bullhead	250/0	

A CRMP was approved and signed for the Little Owyhee Allotment on February 12, 1982, establishing an appropriate management level (AML) of 200 horses. The Bullhead Allotment CRMP was approved and signed on July 23, 1982, establishing an AML of 50 horses. This level was approved by the District Manager and will be used as a starting point for monitoring purposes.

IV. Capture Plan and Methods

Wild horses will be rounded up through the use of a helicopter. The horses will be directed toward temporary capture corrals by means of a helicopter. Wings (from 1/8 to 1/4 mile) will be constructed leading into the corral. When the horses have been driven to within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of the trap, riders on horseback will then flank the animals and guide them into the trap. Once the horses are in the trap the gate will be closed by hand. Should a horse break back at the trap, it will be roped, if possible, by the riders.

It is expected that the number of animals that are driven into the traps will vary from one to 35 horses at a time.

The capture corrals will generally be circular (100' in diameter) and constructed of approximately 90 to 100 portable panels (height 6' to 7'). Each trap will have in addition a small holding corral

(100' in diameter) adjoining the trap. This corral will also be circular and constructed from portable panels. The trap will be camouflaged with sagebrush.

Captured horses will be loaded into stock trailers to be transported from the traps to the holding facilities.

Wings constructed or meant for restraint will be made from portable panels (6' to 7' high), but other devices used to turn horses will be made from white rope or ribbon stretched on 6 1/2' steel fence posts. The fence posts will be spaced from 50' to 100' apart, depending upon the terrain.

The helicopter will carry a Bureau employee when necessary and, should the horses become unnecessarily stressed, the BLM employee will instruct the pilot to break off the pursuit so that the animals may rest and recover. All attempts will be made to move and keep bands together.

A Bureau of Land Management employee will make careful determination of boundary lines to serve as an outer limit within which attempts will be made to herd horses to a given trap. Topography, distance, and current condition of the horses are factors that will be considered in setting the limits to avoid undue stress on the horses while they are being herded. Each area will be flown prior to the start of trapping to locate any hazards to the horses while being herded (fences, cliffs, etc.).

In general, trap sites will be located to cause as little damage to the natural resources of the area as possible. Sites will be located close to existing roads when possible, and all sites will be cleared by a qualified Bureau employee.

As the horses are captured at the trap sites they will be loaded onto gooseneck trailers or stock trucks and shipped to Palomino Valley or to temporary holding corrals in the area.

Branded or privately-owned animals whose owners are known will be impounded by BLM, and if not redeemed by payment of trespass and capture fees, will be sold at public auction. If owners are not known, the private animals will be turned over to the State for processing under Nevada estray laws.

The area adjacent to each trap site will be thoroughly worked by the helicopter until the authorized officer determines the trap should be moved to another location.

Captured horses that are obviously lame, deformed, or sick will be humanely disposed of at the trap site.

Any horses that have been moved to the temporary holding corrals will be shipped, as transportation is available, to the Bureau's Palomino Valley corral facility.

The sole responsibility of the gathering crew is to capture the wild horses/burros in the safest and most humane manner. The district authorized office will make the determination as to which horses will be shipped to the Palomino Valley corral facility and which horses will be released for study purposes or humanely destroyed at the trap site.

Any transportation of captured animals will be subject to the following humane procedures as outlined in CFR section 4740.2(b) (1-5) and 4740.2(c):

- (1) All such transportation shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of horses and burros.
 - (2) Vehicles shall be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and carefully operated so as to insure that captured animals are transported without undue risk of injury.
 - (3) Vehicles shall be inspected and approved by an authorized officer prior to use.
 - (4) Where necessary and practical, animals shall be sorted as to age, size, temperment, sex, and condition when transporting them so as to minimize, to the extent possible, injury due to fighting and trampling.
 - (5) The authorized officer shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, and distance to be transported when planning for the movement of captured animals.
- (c) The transportation of wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be under humane conditions. Unless otherwise approved by the authorized officer, transportation shall be limited, in sequence, to a maximum of 24 hours followed by a minimum of five hours of on-the-ground rest with adequate feed and water.

V. Stipulations for Gathering

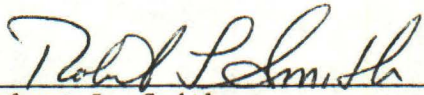
1. Archeological clearance will be done on all trap sites prior to their construction. If archeological values are present, trap sites will be moved. Traps will not be placed near any of the identified historic sites. The Nevada Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology will be notified before any action is taken.
2. All corral panels will be from 72" to 84" high in order to prevent horses from jumping out of traps.

3. Brutality to horses in any form will not be tolerated. Any employee who mistreats any horse will be dismissed immediately from the roundup operation.
4. The helicopter shall be under the direct supervision of a duly authorized BLM employee. He must be able to communicate with the pilot and be able to direct the use of the helicopter so as to observe the effects on the well being of the animals.
5. Only experienced horseback riders will be used in the gathering operations.
6. All saddle horses will be properly shod and over three years in age. All saddles and tack will be in good repair.
7. Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) samples will be taken at the holding facilities at Palomino Valley.
8. Only experienced drivers will be used to transport the horses to the holding facilities.
9. The helicopter will have radio communication with the Authorized Officer or his designated representative at all times.
10. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nevada Department of Wildlife will be notified before any action is taken.
11. Disturbed ground around each trap site will be rehabilitated in such a manner that is determined feasible by the District Specialist.
12. A qualified Bureau employee will clear all sites prior to construction, to insure that a trap will not significantly impact any Federal or State listed or proposed threatened or endangered sensitive plant species. If significant disturbance is anticipated, the trap site will be moved.
13. A veterinarian will be on call at all times during the roundup operation. The veterinarian will never be more than 100 miles from the roundup operation. In an emergency, the veterinarian could be helicoptered in, arriving in one to one and a half hours.
14. Every effort will be made to locate a trap near existing horse trails so that once the animals are started towards the capture area they will be able to pick a natural route and proceed at their own pace.
15. Allowances are made for high temperatures so that horses are not driven long distances in hot conditions.

16. Captured animals shall not be held in traps or temporary holding facilities more than 24 hours prior to transportation to Palomino Valley. Horses held for 10 hours or more in the traps and/or holding facilities will be provided fresh clean water and good quality hay.
17. Roping will be done only when necessary. Under no circumstances will horses be tied down for more than one hour.
18. Wildlife and domestic livestock will not be disturbed or harrassed during any part of the operation.
19. All activities within WSAs will be in compliance with the Interim Management Policy. Traps within the WSA will be placed on roads or ways and allowed to extend no more than 50 feet on either side of the road or way. Cross-country travel would be allowed so long as it does not cause impacts inconsistent with the requirements of the nonimpairment criteria outlined in the IMP.

VI. Signatures


Lead Responsibility:



Robert L. Smith
Range Conservationist

2/12/85

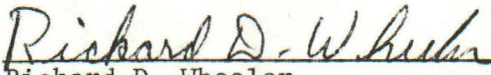
Date



Gerald L. Moritz
Environmental Coordinator

22 Feb 85

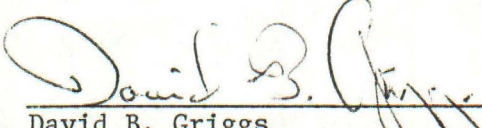
Date



Richard D. Wheeler
District Wild Horse/Burro Specialist

2-25-85

Date

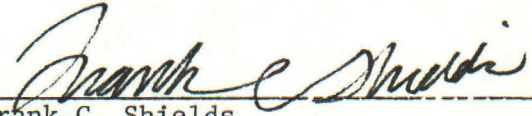


David B. Griggs
Paradise-Denio Resource Area Manager

2-25-85

Date

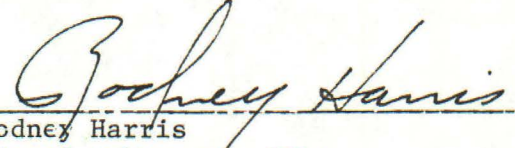
Submitted to State Director by:



Frank C. Shields
District Manager, Winnemucca

3/5/85

Date

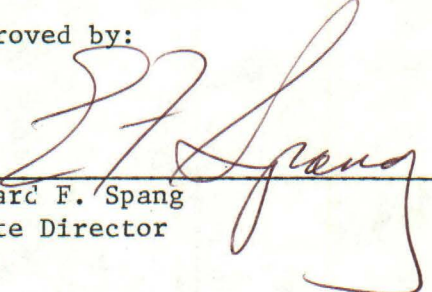


Rodney Harris
District Manager, Elko

3/12/85

Date

Approved by:



Edward F. Spang
State Director

4/9/85

Date

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

EA FACE SHEET

OFFICE: Winnemucca District Office FY & REPORT # FY 85
Humboldts/West Humboldts/East Range
 ACTION: HUA Horse Gathering Plan NO. OF PAGES 5
 (Project Name, Case Type, etc.)
 LOCATION: Sonoma Planning Unit SERIAL NO. NV-020-5-12

<u>TEAM SIGNATURES:</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>RESOURCE VALUES ASSIGNED</u>	<u>HOURS</u>
<i>Karen C. Bryan</i>	Natural Resource Specialist	Author/Range/WH&B	10
<i>Dick Wilbur</i>	District WH&B Specialist	WH&B	1
<i>Peggy Mackenzie</i>	Area Archeologist	Cultural Resources	1
<i>Bob Lenson</i>	Range Conservationist	Sensitive Plants	1
<i>Lynn A. Clemon</i>	Outdoor Rec. Planner	Wilderness/VRM	1
<i>Kenneth G. Detweiler</i>	Area Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife	1

ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: *Gerald L. Mond* 12 March 85
 (Signature) (Date)

COMPLIANCE OFFICER: *Sonoma Herack Resource Area*
Wild Horse & Burro Specialist
 (Title or Name)

DISTRICT/AREA MANAGER *Gerald Brundage*
 (Signature)

Jan 17, 1985
 (Date)

Environmental Assessment
Humboldts/West Humboldts/East Range Herd Use Area (HUA) Gathering Plan
No. NV-020-5-12

I. Description of the Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

A. Background Data

1. Location/Description of Area

The area to be considered for the proposed wild horse gathering consists of all or part of thirteen (13) allotments (see Figure #1). The allotments are located in the Sonoma Planning Unit of the Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area in the Winnemucca District.

The HUA has an estimated population of 750-800 wild horses. Generally speaking, the horses are evenly distributed throughout the HUA, depending on the season of use and the availability of water.

The area is comprised of approximately 652,397 (65%) acres of public land and 354,151 (35%) acres of private land. The majority of the HUA is in a checkerboard land pattern.

2. Forage Requirements for the HUA

The total estimated carrying capacity for the HUA is 18,906 Animal Unit Months (AUMs). The AUM demand for the HUA is listed below:

<u>Species</u>	<u>AUM Demand</u>
Livestock	21,660
Wild Horses	9,000
Wildlife	494
Total	<u>31,154</u>

Subtracting the forage demand from the total estimated carrying capacity, the net result would be an over obligation of 12,248 AUMs, or 65%.

B. Purpose and Need

The Winnemucca District Office has received written requests from nine (9) private land owners, who have holdings in the HUA, to remove the wild horses that are consuming forage on their property. Section 4 of Public Law 92-195 states:

"If wild free-roaming horses or burros stray from public land onto privately owned lands, the owners of such land may inform the nearest Federal marshall or agent of the Secretary, who shall arrange to have the animals removed."

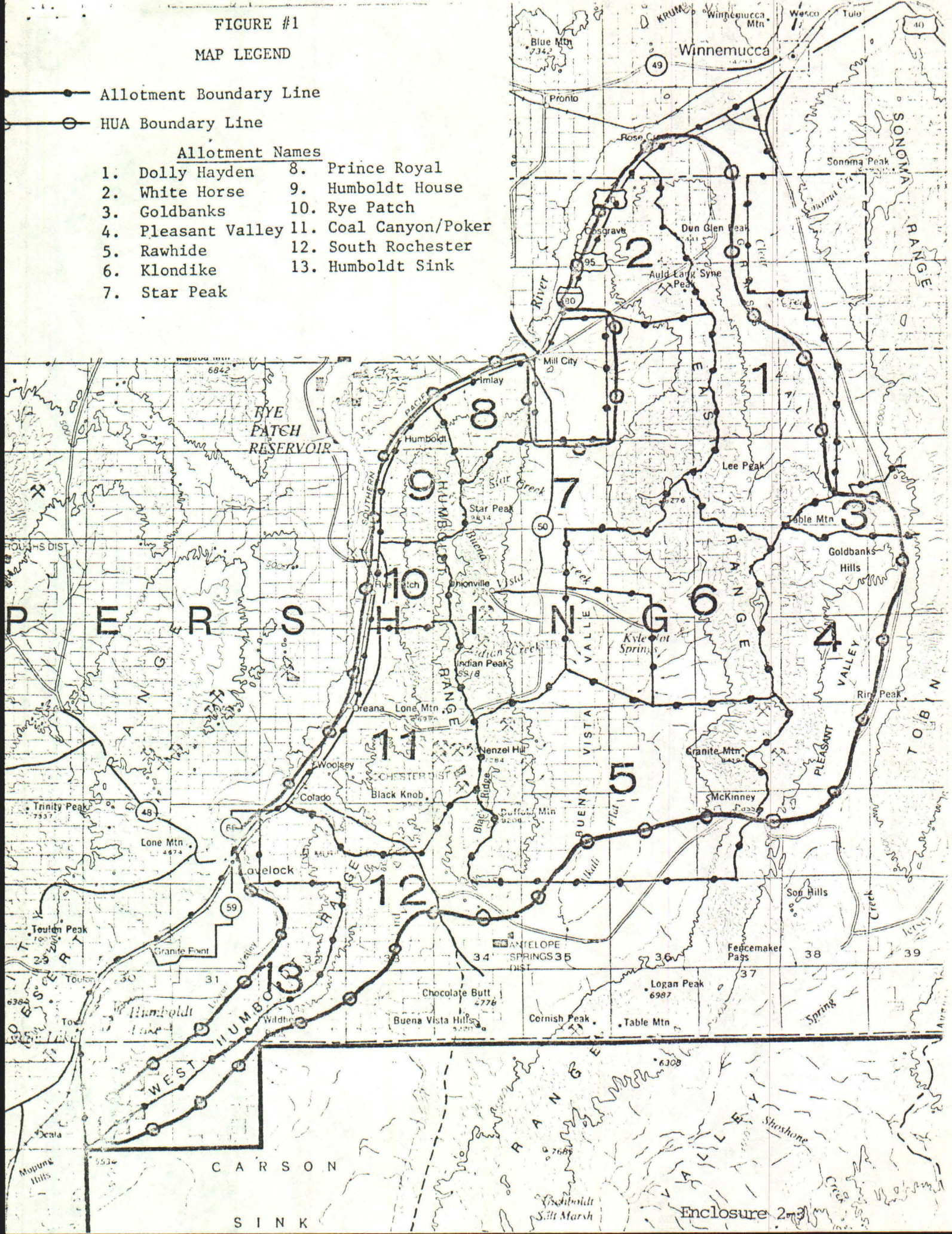
FIGURE #1
MAP LEGEND

—●— Allotment Boundary Line

—○— HUA Boundary Line

Allotment Names

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Dolly Hayden | 8. Prince Royal |
| 2. White Horse | 9. Humboldt House |
| 3. Goldbanks | 10. Rye Patch |
| 4. Pleasant Valley | 11. Coal Canyon/Poker |
| 5. Rawhide | 12. South Rochester |
| 6. Klondike | 13. Humboldt Sink |
| 7. Star Peak | |



Section 14 of Public Law 95-514, the "Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978," states that the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture shall "determine appropriate management levels of wild free-roaming horses and burros on areas of public lands; and determine whether appropriate management levels should be achieved by the removal or destruction of excess animals, or other options (such as sterilization, or natural controls on population levels)."

The wild horse population level proposed within this environmental assessment is based on the district's current land use planning process which culminated with the issuance of the Winnemucca District Manager's Management Framework Plan (MFP) Step III Decision's on June 30, 1982. The decisions received the State Director's concurrence on July 9, 1982. The MFP III Wild Horse and Burro decision 1.3 addresses HUAs that are in a checkerboard land pattern. It states:

"Remove wild horses and burros from the checkerboard Herd Use Areas (HUAs) unless a cooperative agreement providing for the retention and protection of wild horses and burros is consummated with the affected private landowner(s). Cooperative agreements have not been obtained on the following areas and wild horses should be removed.

<u>Herd Use Areas</u>	<u>Present Est. Numbers of Horses & Burros To Be Removed</u>
1. Sonoma	366
2. Humboldt	416
3. Trinity	300
4. East Range	350
5. Antelope	251/23
6. Truckee	83
Totals	<u>1,766/23</u>

The MFP III is located in the Winnemucca District files.

C. Proposed Action

The proposed action is to gather all of the wild horses from the Humboldts/West Humboldts/East Range HUA. If the proposed gathering takes place as scheduled, it will involve the removal of approximately 750-800 horses.

Implementation of the gathering plan will involve the construction of temporary traps with deflector wings, the movement of horses by a contracted helicopter and horse riders, the transportation of horses from the traps to temporary holding corrals, the holding of horses in the temporary corrals, and the transportation of horses to the Palomino Valley Wild Horse and Burro Placement Center.

D. Alternatives

The Sonoma-Gerlach grazing Environmental Impact Statement analyzed four different alternatives to the proposed action: 1). No Livestock Grazing, 2). No Action, 3). Maximize Livestock Grazing, and 4). Maximize Wild Horse and Burro Grazing. The alternatives outlined in the Sonoma-Gerlach FEIS were discussed in detail. The analysis was subject to an extensive scoping process, public meetings, formal hearings, and protest periods. In an effort to avoid repetition, an analysis of these alternatives will not be reiterated in this document, but can be found in the Sonoma-Gerlach grazing EIS in the Winnemucca District office files.

II. Affected Environment/Environmental Consequences/Mitigating Measures

The description of the affected environment, the anticipated impacts of the proposed action on the environment, and the possible mitigating measures of the proposed action will be the same as those discussed in the Humboldt and West Humboldt Ranges Gathering Plan Environmental Assessment No. NV-020-9-21, and the East Range Horse Gathering Environmental Assessment No. NV-020-7-46, located in the Winnemucca District Office files.

III. Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted

A letter was sent to the following groups and individuals describing the circumstances that led to the formulation of the proposed action.

American Horse Protection Association, Washington, D.C.

American Humane Association, Denver, CO

Animal Protection Institute, Sacramento, CA

National Mustang Association, Newcastle, UT

Fund for Animals, New York, NY and Phoenix, AZ

International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros,
Reno, NV

U.S. Humane Society, Washington, D.C.

National Wild Horse Association, Las Vegas, NV

Wild Horse Organized Assistance, Reno, NV

Save the Mustangs, Rockwood, PA

American Bashkir Curley Register, Ely, NV

Humane Society of So. Nevada, Las Vegas, NV

Nevada Humane Society, Sparks, NV

Nevada Woolgrowers, Ely, NV

Nevada Cattlemen's Association, Elko, NV

Nevada State Clearing House, Carson City, NV

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reno, NV

Pershing County Commissioners, Lovelock, NV

Pershing County Sportsmen Association, Lovelock, NV

Donald Molde, Sparks, NV

Lovelock CRMP Committee, Lovelock, NV

Rye Patch Ranch, Lovelock, NV

Abigah Duncan, Lovelock, NV

Star Sheep Company, Imlay, NV

Jim and Mike Burke, Winnemucca, NV

William Casey, Winnemucca, NV

Mack Hedges, Imlay, NV
John Darrah, Winnemucca, NV
Humboldt Valley Ranches, Winnemucca, NV
Dr. Paul Knoop, Reno, NV
Cecil Martin, Winnemucca, NV
Robert T. Monroe, Lovelock, NV
Paris Brothers, Winnemucca, NV
Roaring Springs Associates, Golconda, NV
Safford and Safford, Lovelock, NV
Jim Shontz, Lovelock, NV
Don Sims, Deeth, NV
Spring Valley Cattle Company, Lovelock, NV
Eugene Thacker, Imlay, NV
Robert C. Vesco, Winnemucca, NV
Bingo G. Wesner, Lovelock, NV

IV. Intensity of Public Interest

Nationwide, the wild horse program is very popular and there is much public sentiment to support keeping the present wild horse/burro numbers. Statewide and locally, the general attitude toward wild horses is very different. The ranchers consider the horses, if left uncontrolled, a definite threat to the existence of their livestock operations. The Nevada Department of Wildlife and wildlife enthusiasts can see the competition they place on forage and water needed for game species.

The MFP III decision to remove wild horses/burros from HUAs in a checkerboard land pattern was protested by one group (Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club) at the state level, but no one protested the decision at the national level.

V. Participating Staff and Signatures

The specialists who have signed the face sheet of this document have been involved in the development and review of the proposed project and concluded it would not significantly impact their resources.

Decision Record/Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
No. NV-020-5-12

Decision Record

Based on the Environmental Assessment (EA) and the Management Framework Plan for the Sonoma/Gerlach Resource Area, a net beneficial impact to the total environment would result from implementing the proposed action; therefore the proposed action is adopted in its entirety.

The mitigating measures identified in the EA will be adopted as stipulations.

FONSI

The EA adequately analyzes the Environmental Impacts of the proposed action. Since no significant impacts are expected as a result of implementing the decision an EIS is not required.

Gerald P. Brandvold
Gerald P. Brandvold, Area Manager

Jan 17, 1985
Date

Robert L. Meyer - Acting
Frank C. Shields
District Manager

3/12/85
Date

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Winnemucca District Office

WILD HORSE/BURRO MANAGEMENT

4740

Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area

Humboldts/West Humboldts/East Range

GATHERING PLAN

I. Introduction

The intent of this gathering plan is to outline the methods and procedures to be used in removing approximately 750-800 wild horses from the Humboldts/West Humboldts/East Range Herd Use Area (HUA). The capture operation is tentatively scheduled to begin in the summer of 1985, and be completed in thirty days.

II. General Area Description-Background Data

The HUA is located between Winnemucca and Lovelock, NV, southeast of Interstate 80 (See Figure #1). The mountain ranges within the HUA have a north-south orientation. Elevations range from 4,000 feet in Buena Vista Valley to 9,834 feet at Star Peak in the Humboldt Range.

The vegetation in the HUA is characterized by juniper-sagebrush types intermingled with mountain browse types at the higher elevations, to sagebrush-grass types at the moderate elevations, to shadscale-scrub and greasewood types in the valley bottoms.

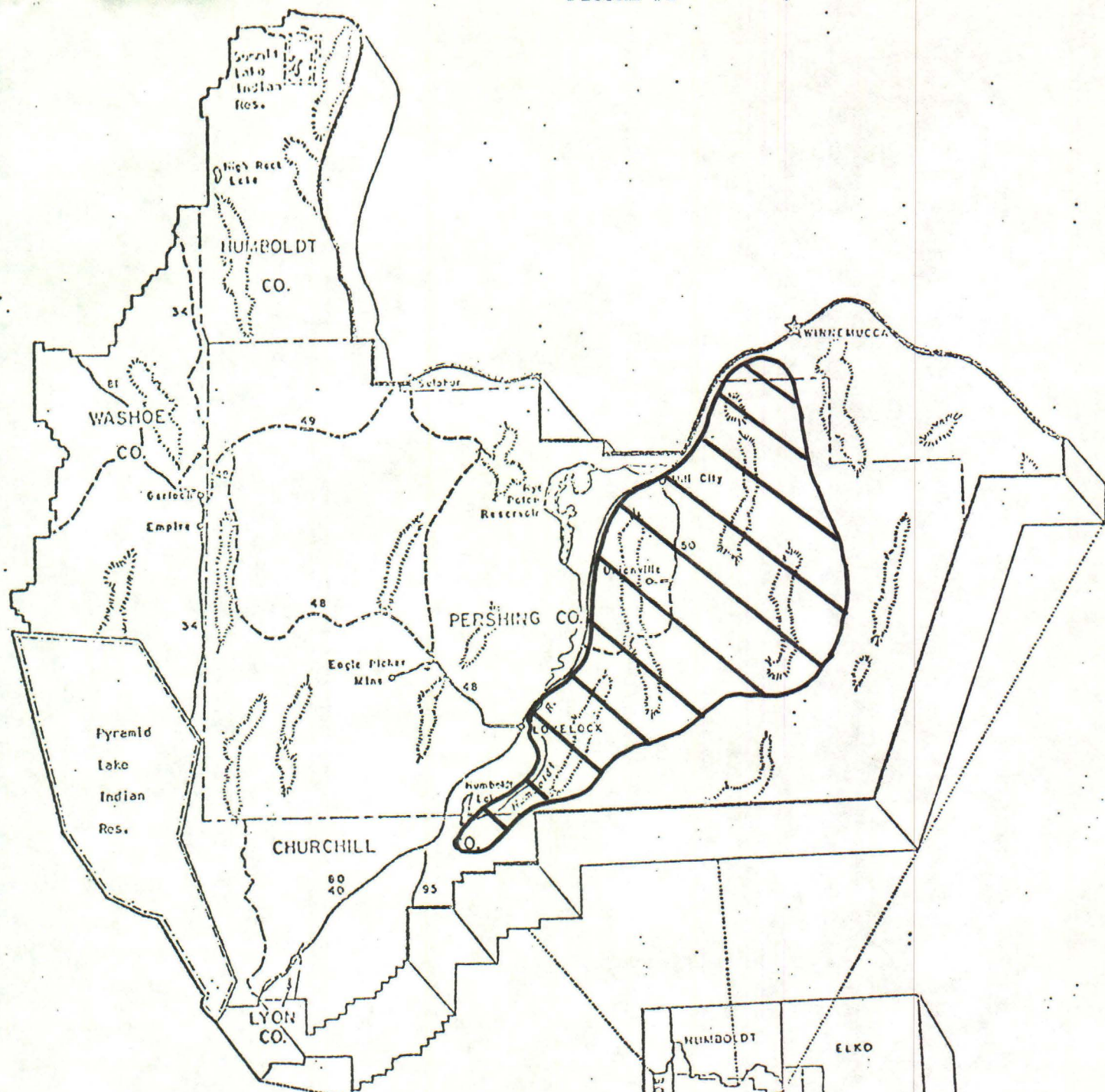
Land status in the planning area is as follows:

<u>Public Land (%)</u>	<u>Private Land (%)</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>
652,397 (65%)	354,151 (35%)	1,006,548

The HUA encompasses all or part of thirteen separate allotments (see Figure #2). A list of permittees, allotments, and percentage of private land follows:

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>% Private Land</u>	<u>Permittee</u>
1. Dolly Hayden	46	William Casey*
2. White Horse	35.7	William Casey*
3. Goldbanks	5.5	J.F. and M.J. Burke* Roaring Springs Associates
4. Pleasant Valley	5.3	Siard Ranches* Paris Brothers* Robert Vesco John Darrah
5. Rawhide	22.8	Paris Brothers John Darrah Star Sheep Company* Spring Valley Cattle Co.
6. Klondike	18.5	Coyote Creek Ranch
7. Star Peak	50.4	Eugene Thacker Paul Knoop Star Sheep Company*

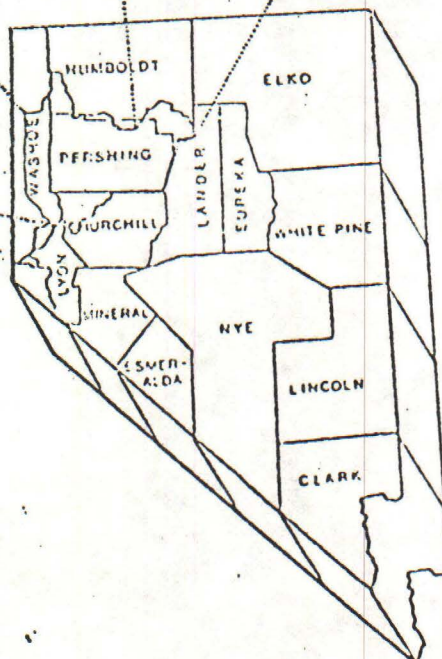
FIGURE #1



PROPOSED CAPTURE AREA

SONOMA-GERLACH
RESOURCE AREA

WINNEMUCCA DISTRICT
NEVADA



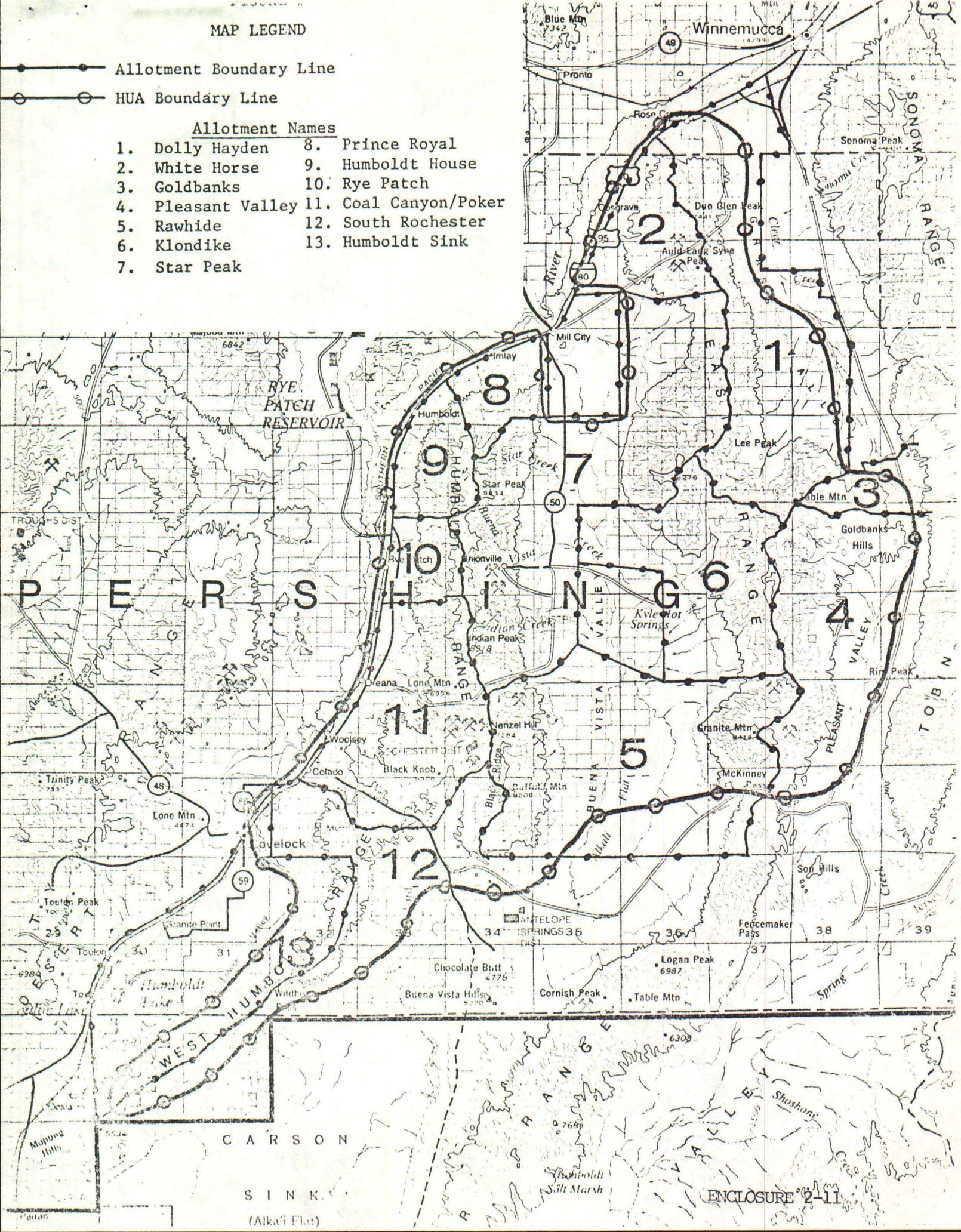
MAP LEGEND

●—● Allotment Boundary Line

○—○ HUA Boundary Line

Allotment Names

- | | |
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| 1. Dolly Hayden | 8. Prince Royal |
| 2. White Horse | 9. Humboldt House |
| 3. Goldbanks | 10. Rye Patch |
| 4. Pleasant Valley | 11. Coal Canyon/Poker |
| 5. Rawhide | 12. South Rochester |
| 6. Klondike | 13. Humboldt Sink |
| 7. Star Peak | |



ENCLOSURE 2-11

8. Prince Royal	47	Star Sheep Company*
9. Humboldt House	51	Jim Shontz Star Sheep Company*
10. Rye Patch	41	Rye Patch Ranch* Star Sheep Company*
11. Coal Canyon/Poker	48	Abigah Duncan* Star Sheep Company*
12. South Rochester	47	Paris Brothers* Star Sheep Company* Safford and Safford* Don Sims Spring Valley Cattle Co.
13. Humboldt Sink	48	Robert Monroe Safford and Safford*

*These eight permittees have written letters to the Winnemucca Office requesting the BLM to remove wild horses from their leased private or owned private lands. In addition to the permittees, the Southern Pacific Land Company has requested the BLM to remove horses from their private lands.

During the summer of 1977, winter and summer of 1980, summer and winter of 1981, and the summer of 1982, 2,267 wild horses have been removed from the HUA during Bureau conducted or authorized gatherings.

An aerial inventory was conducted in a portion of the HUA in June 1981 with PA-18 Super Cub, with the remainder inventoried in October 1982 with a Bell Jet Ranger. The results of the census are listed below.

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Foals</u>	<u>Total</u>
Dolly Hayden	35	3	38
White Horse	6	1	7
Gold Banks	3	0	3
Pleasant Valley	122	18	140
Rawhide	69	16	85
Klondike	20	3	23
Star Peak	137	0	137
Prince Royal	30	0	30
Humboldt House	23	0	23
Rye Patch	27	0	27
Coal Canyon/Poker	84	16	100
South Rochester	75	7	82
Humboldt Sink	10	1	11
Total	641	65	706

Two foaling seasons have occurred since the census. Therefore, it is estimated that currently there are more than 706 horses inhabiting the HUA.

Since 1971 the Winnemucca Office has received four affidavits and claims of ownership of domestic horses on public lands, of which two are still pending.

The HUA presently supports a small to moderate population of chukar partridge, sage grouse, and mule deer.

III. Justification

The Winnemucca District Office has received written requests from nine (9) private land owners, who have holdings in the HUA, to remove the wild horses that are consuming forage on their property. Section 4 of Public Law 92-195 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to remove wild horses that stray from public lands onto private lands.

Section 14 of Public Law 95-514, the "Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978," states that the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture shall "determine appropriate management levels of wild free-roaming horses and burros on areas of public lands; and determine whether appropriate management levels should be achieved by the removal or destruction of excess animals, or other options (such as sterilization or natural controls on population levels)."

A new land use plan has recently been developed for the Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area. A major portion of this plan was the preparation and publication of a Grazing Environmental Impact Statement which analyzed five different alternatives for action: (1). Distribute available vegetation to livestock, wildlife, and wild horses/burros; (2) No action; (3) No livestock grazing, (4) Maximize livestock; and (5) Maximize Wild Horses/Burros. The final analysis culminated with the issuance of the Winnemucca District Manager's Management Framework Plan (MFP) Step III Decisions on June 30, 1982. The decisions received the State Director's concurrence on July 9, 1982. The MFP III wild horse and burro (WH/B) decision number 1.3 addresses HUAs that are in a checkerboard land pattern. It states:

Remove wild horses and burros from the checkerboard Herd Use Areas (HUAs) unless a cooperative agreement providing for the retention and protection of wild horses and burros is consummated with the affected private landowners(s)."
Cooperative agreements have not been obtained on the following areas and wild horses should be removed.

<u>Herd Use Areas</u>	<u>Present Est. Numbers of Horses & Burros To Be Removed</u>
1. Sonoma	316
2. Humboldt	416
3. Trinity	300
4. East Range	350
5. Antelope	251/23
6. Truckee	83
Totals	<u>1,766/23</u>

IV. Capture Plan and Methods

Wild horses will be rounded up through the use of a helicopter. The horses will be directed toward temporary capture corrals by means of a helicopter. Wings (from 1/8 to 1/4 mile) will be constructed leading into the corral. When the horses have been driven to within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of the trap, riders on horseback will then flank the animals and guide them into the trap. Once the horses are in the trap the gate will be closed by hand. Should a horse break back at the trap, it will be roped, if possible, by the riders.

It is expected that the number of animals that are driven into the traps will vary from one to 35 horses at a time.

The capture corrals will generally be circular (100' in diameter) and constructed of approximately 90 to 100 portable panels (height 6' to 7'). Each trap will have in addition a small holding corral (100' in diameter) adjoining the trap. This corral will also be circular and constructed from portable panels. The trap will be camouflaged with sagebrush or juniper.

Captured horses will be loaded into stock trailers to be transported from the traps to the holding facilities.

Wings constructed or meant for restraint will be made from portable panels (6' to 7' high), but other devices used to turn horses will be made from white rope or ribbon stretched on 6 1/2' steel fence posts. The fence posts will be spaced from 50' to 100' apart, depending upon the terrain.

The helicopter will carry a Bureau employee when necessary and, should the horses become unnecessarily stressed, the BLM employee will instruct the pilot to break off the pursuit so that the animals may rest and recover. All attempts will be made to move and keep bands together.

A Bureau of Land Management employee will make careful determination of boundary lines to serve as an outer limit within which attempts will be made to herd horses to a given trap. Topography, distance, and current condition of the horses are factors that will be considered in setting the limits to avoid undue stress on the horses while they are being herded. Each area will be flown prior to the start of trapping to locate any hazards to the horses while being herded (fences, cliffs, etc.).

More than one trap site will be needed in the capture area. Each site will be located after the habits of the horses in that area are determined. In general, all sites will be located to cause as little damage to the natural resources of the area as possible. Sites will be located close to existing roads when possible, and all sites will be approved by a qualified Bureau employee.

As the horses are captured at the trap sites they will be loaded onto gooseneck trailers or stock trucks and shipped to Palomino Valley or to temporary holding corrals in the area.

Branded or privately-owned animals whose owners are known will be impounded by BLM, and if not redeemed by payment of trespass and capture fees, will be sold at public auction. If owners are not known, the private animals will be turned over to the State for processing under Nevada estray laws.

The area adjacent to each trap site will be thoroughly worked by the helicopter until the authorized officer determines the trap should be moved to another location.

Captured horses that are obviously lame, deformed, or sick will be humanely disposed of at the trap site. If an animal has to be destroyed the carcasses will be placed in as inconspicuous a location as possible to minimize the visual impact. The carcasses will not be placed in the bottoms of drainages and will be scattered so as not to concentrate them in one area.

Any horses that have been moved to the temporary holding corrals will be shipped by single deck trucks only, as transportation is available, to the Bureau's Palomino Valley corral facility.

The sole responsibility of the gathering crew is to capture the wild horses/burros in the safest and most humane manner. The district authorized officer will make the determination as to which horses will be shipped to the Palomino Valley corral facility and which horses will be released for study purposes or humanely destroyed at the trap site by a qualified Bureau employee.

Any transportation of captured animals will be subject to the following humane procedures as outlined in CFR section 4740.2(b) (1-5) and 4740.2(c):

- (1) All such transportation shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of horses and burros.
- (2) Vehicles shall be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and carefully operated so as to insure that captured animals are transported without undue risk of injury.
- (3) Vehicles shall be inspected and approved by an authorized officer prior to use.
- (4) Where necessary and practical, animals shall be sorted as to age, size, temperament, sex, and condition when transporting them so as to minimize, to the extent possible, injury due to fighting and trampling.

- (5) The authorized officer shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, and distance to be transported when planning for the movement of captured animals.
- (c) The transportation of wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be under humane conditions. Unless otherwise approved by the authorized officer, transportation shall be limited, in sequence, to a maximum of 24 hours followed by a minimum of five hours of on-the-ground rest with adequate feed and water.

V. Stipulations For Gathering

1. Archeological clearance will be done on all trap sites prior to their construction. If archeological values are present, trap sites will be moved. Traps will not be placed near any of the identified historic sites. The Nevada Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology will be notified before any action is taken.
2. All corral panels will be from 72" to 84" high in order to prevent horses from jumping out of traps.
3. Brutality to horses in any form will not be tolerated. Any person who mistreats any horse will be dismissed immediately from the roundup operation.
4. The helicopter shall be under the direct supervision of a duly authorized BLM employee. He must be able to communicate with the pilot and be able to direct the use of the helicopter so as to observe the effects on the well being of the animals.
5. Only experienced horseback riders will be used in the gathering operations.
6. All saddle horses will be properly shod and over three years in age. All saddles and tack will be in good repair.
7. Only experienced drivers will be used to transport the horses to the holding facilities.
8. The helicopter will have radio communication with the Authorized Officer or his designated representative at all times.
9. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nevada Department of Wildlife will be notified before any action is taken.
10. Disturbed ground around each trap site will be rehabilitated in such a manner that is determined feasible by the District Specialist.

11. A qualified Bureau employee will clear all sites prior to construction, to insure that a trap will not significantly impact any Federal or State listed or proposed threatened or endangered sensitive plant species. If significant disturbance is anticipated, the trap site will be moved.
12. A veterinarian will be on call at all times during the roundup operation. The veterinarian will never be more than 100 miles from the roundup operation. In an emergency, the veterinarian could be helicoptered in, arriving in one to one and a half hours.
13. Every effort will be made to locate a trap near existing horse trails so that once the animals are started towards the capture area they will be able to pick a natural route and proceed at their own pace.
14. Allowances are made for high temperatures so that horses are not driven long distances in hot conditions.
15. Captured animals shall not be held in traps or temporary holding facilities more than 24 hours prior to transportation to Palomino Valley. Horses held for 10 hours or more in the traps and/or holding facilities will be provided fresh clean water and good quality hay.
16. Roping will be done only at the direction of the authorized officer. Under no circumstances will horses be tied down for more than one hour.

VI. Signatures

Lead responsibility:

Rodger T. Bryan
Rodger T. Bryan
Natural Resource Specialist

January 4, 1985
Date

Reviewed by:

Gerald L. Moritz
Gerald L. Moritz
Environmental Coordinator

12 March 85
Date

Richard D. Wheeler
Richard D. Wheeler
District Wild Horse/Burro Specialist

1-4-85
Date

Gerald P. Brandvold
Gerald P. Brandvold
Sonoma-Geolach Resource Area Manager

1-17-85
Date

Submitted to State Director by:

Robert C. Shields - Acting
Frank C. Shields
District Manager, Winnemucca

3/12/85
Date

Approved by:

Edward F. Spang
Edward F. Spang
State Director

4/4/85
Date