

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management

# EA FACE SHEET

OFFICE: Winnemucca District FY & REPORT # FY85  
 ACTION: Jackson Mountain Gathering Plan NO. OF PAGES \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Project Name, Case Type, etc.)  
 LOCATION: Denio Planning Unit SERIAL NO. N- NV-020-5-16

TEAM SIGNATURES:	TITLE	RESOURCE VALUES ASSIGNED	HOURS
<i>Robert Smith</i>	Range Conservationist	Writer/Range/WH&B	12
<i>Richard Wheeler</i>	District WH/B Specialist	Wild Horses/Burros	1
<i>Kathryn E. Pedersen</i>	Archeologist	Cultural Resources	1
<i>Dennis Tol</i>	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife /Sensitive Plants	1
<i>Lyn A. Clemon</i>	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness	1
<i>Richard A. Clark</i>	Range Conservationist	Sensitive Plants	1

ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: *Gerald L. Meitz* 26 March 85  
 (Signature) (Date)

COMPLIANCE OFFICER: ROBERT SMITH  
 (Title or Name)

DISTRICT/AREA MANAGER *David B. Giffin*  
 (Signature)

3-26-85  
 (Date)



Environmental Assessment (EA) For Implementation of the  
Jackson Mountain Wild Horse Removal  
NV-020-5-

I. Description of the Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

A. Background Data

1. Location and Description of Area

The Jackson Mountain Herd Use Area (HUA) is located within Humboldt County, Nevada. This area is being considered for a gathering and is broken down by grazing allotments involved, appropriate management level (AML), estimated population, and acreage (Table 1). The grazing allotments are located within the Denio Planning Unit of the Paradise-Denio Resource Area. The area is bordered on the west by the Black Rock Desert, on the east by Desert Valley, on the south by the Western Pacific Railway and on the north by State Highway 140 and the Quinn River. The HUA is approximately 40 miles long and 12 miles wide. Elevations range from a high of 8,910 feet at King Lear Peak to a low of 4,000 feet at Buckbrush Springs on the west side of the Jackson Mountains.

2. Population Data

The HUA estimated population of wild horses was estimated from a helicopter inventory performed in 1980.

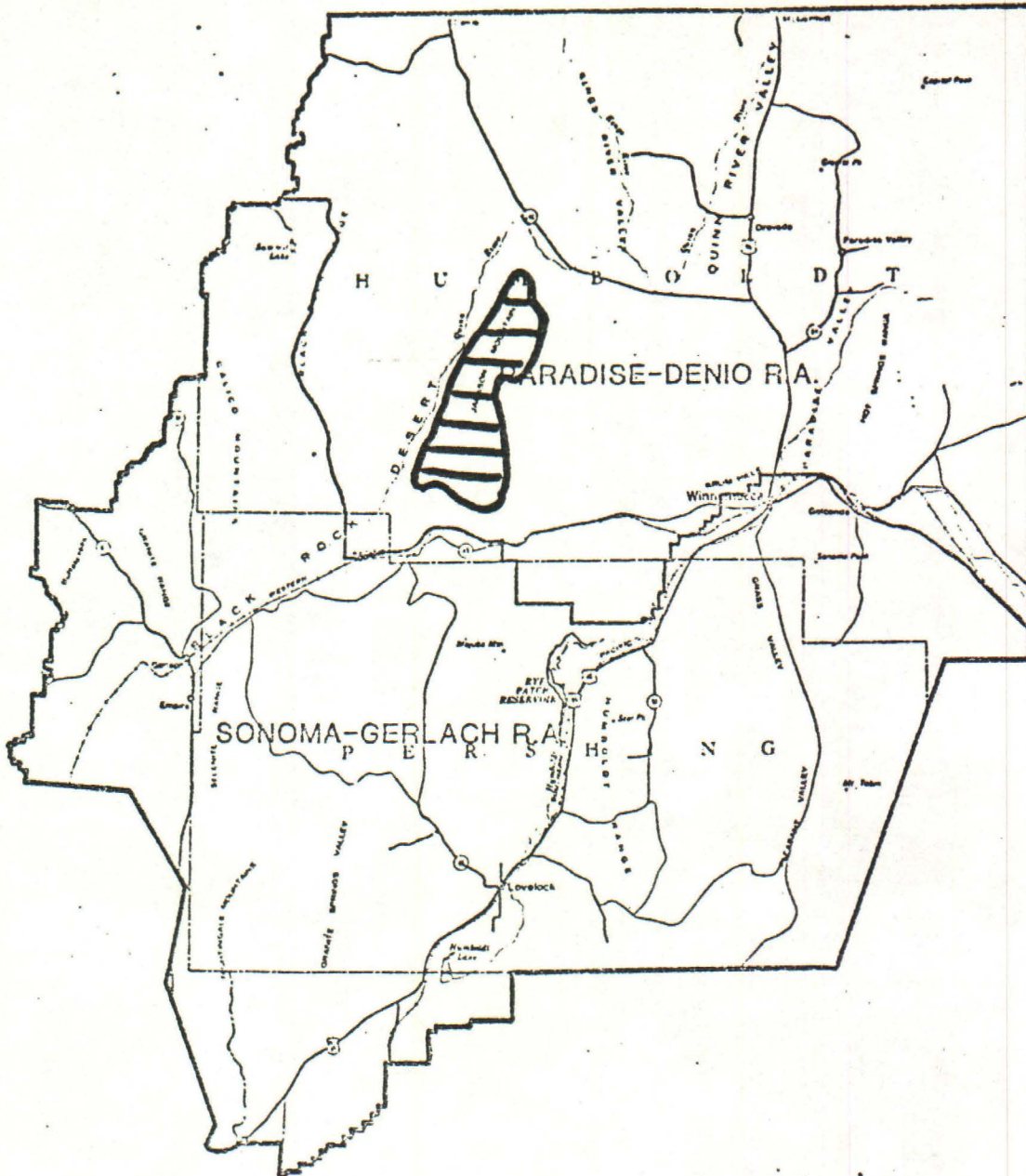
TABLE 1.

<u>Allotment/Herd Use Area</u>	<u>Population Numbers</u> <u>Wild Horses/Burros</u>		<u>Acres</u>	
	<u>AML</u>	<u>Estimated Population</u>	<u>Public</u>	<u>Private</u>
1. Jackson Mountain Allotment	-	-	485,207	11,620
Jackson Mountain HUA	160/ 0	208/ 0	-	-
2. Deer Creek Allotment	-	-	30,396	306
Jackson Mountain HUA	20/ 0	25/ 0	-	-
3. Happy Creek Allotment	-	-	95,566	897
Jackson Mountain HUA	35/ 0	47/ 0	-	-
4. Desert Valley Allotment	-	-	56,830	1,005
Jackson Mountain HUA	-	incidental numbers	-	-


Attachment 1 shows the location of the herd use areas within the district and Attachment 2 shows the relation of herd use areas to the allotments.

3. Reference to the Land Use Plan (LUP)

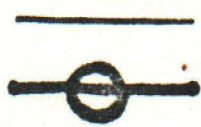
A Land Use Plan has recently been developed for the Paradise-Denio Resource Area. A major portion of this plan was the preparation and publication of a Grazing Environmental Impact



# WINNEMUCCA DISTRICT

 HERD USE AREA

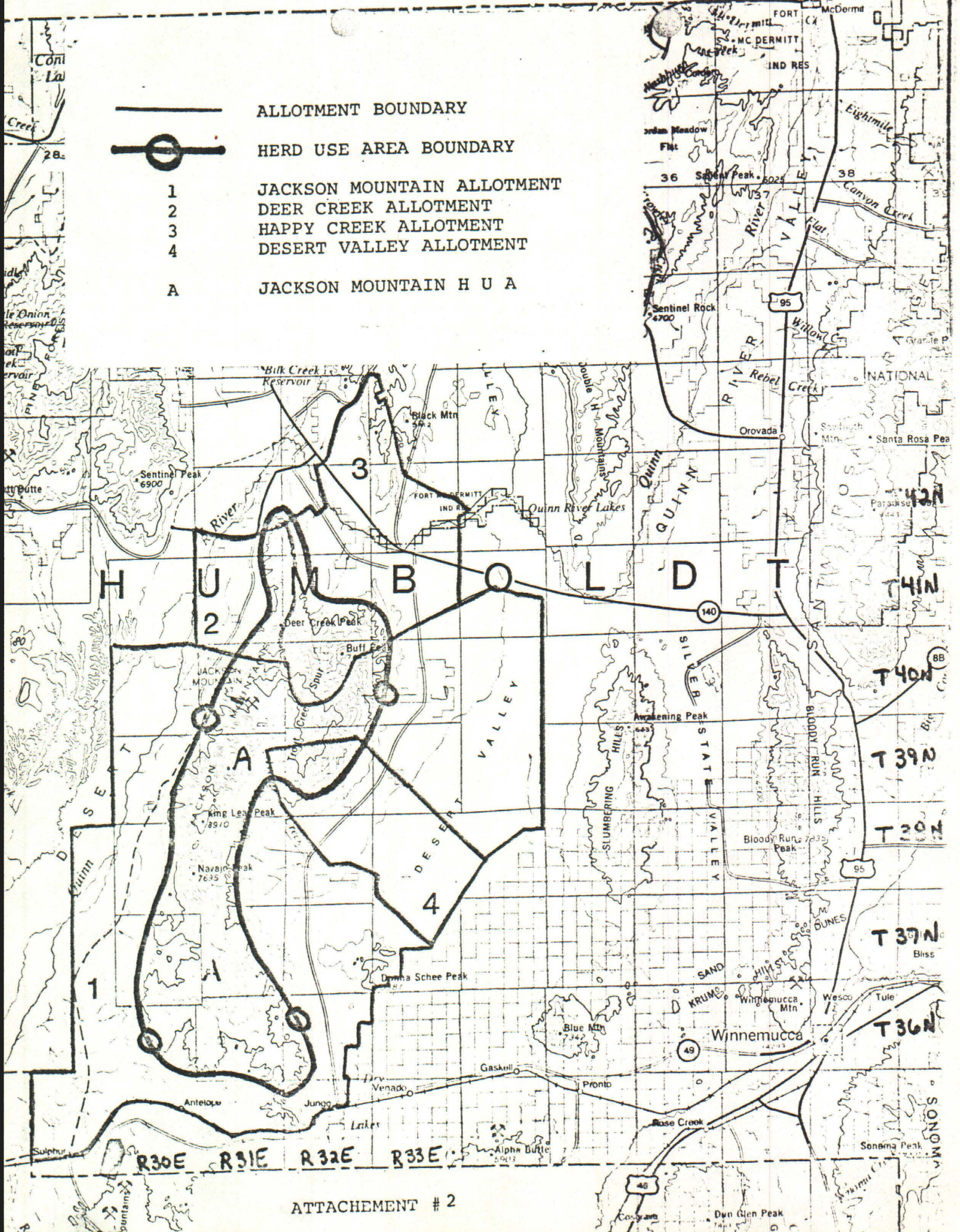




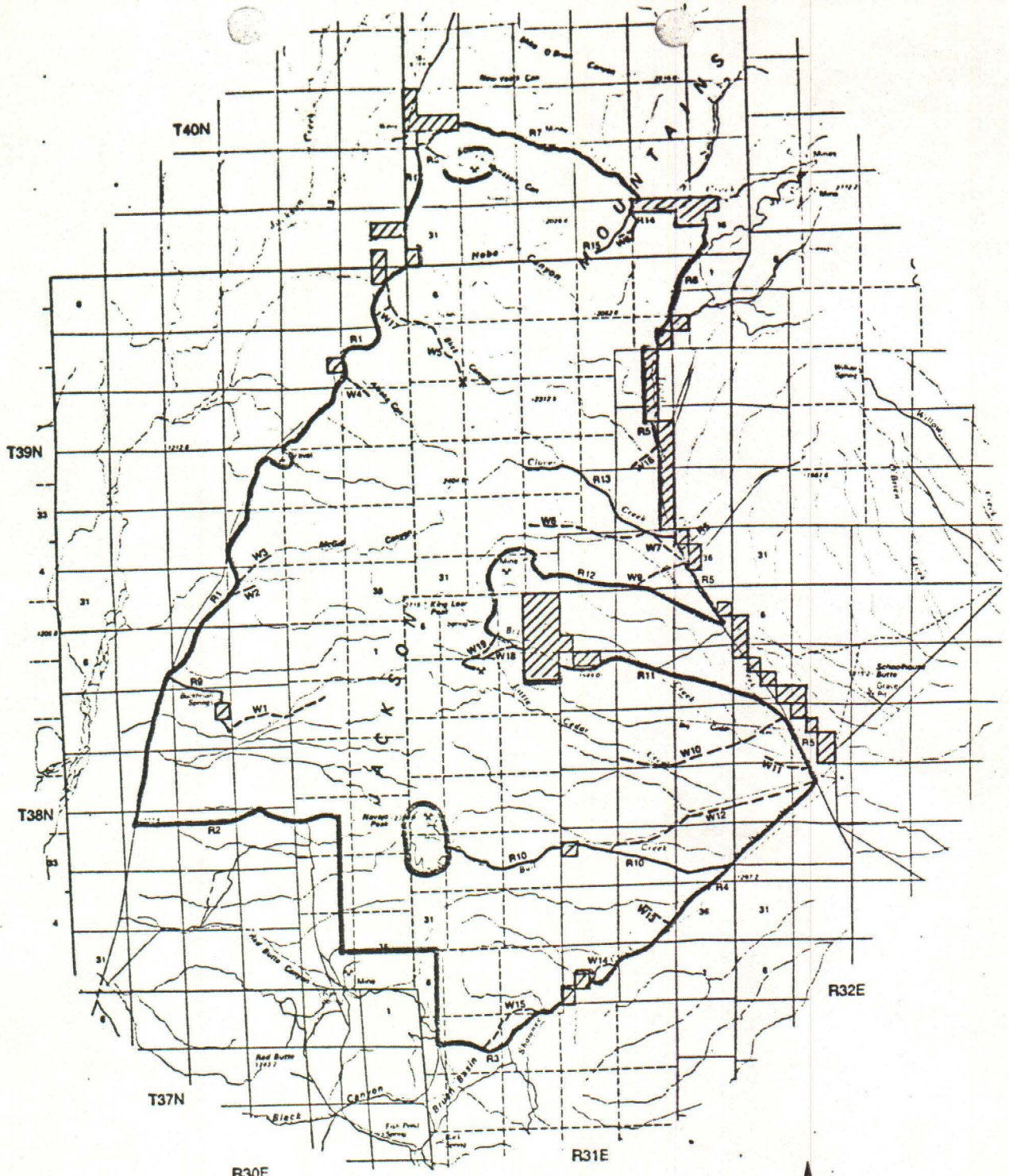
ALLOTMENT BOUNDARY








HERD USE AREA BOUNDARY

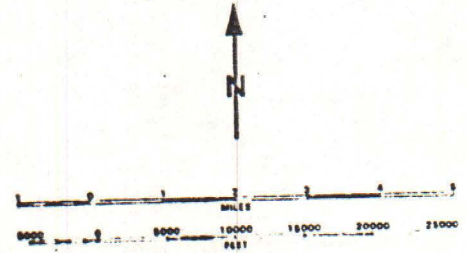
- 1 JACKSON MOUNTAIN ALLOTMENT
- 2 DEER CREEK ALLOTMENT
- 3 HAPPY CREEK ALLOTMENT
- 4 DESERT VALLEY ALLOTMENT
- A JACKSON MOUNTAIN H U A





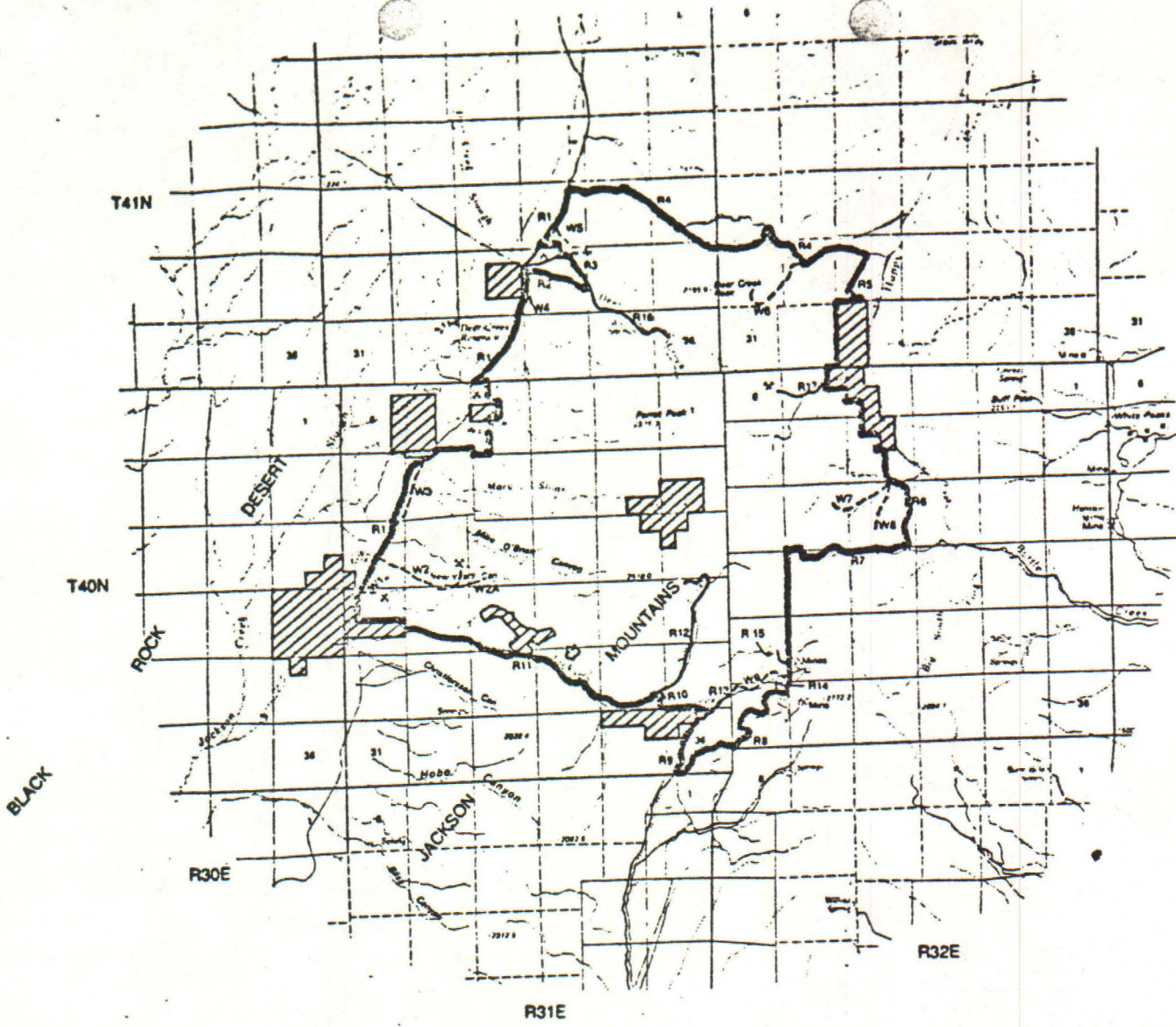


-  PRIVATE LAND(SURFACE & MINERALS)
-  PRIVATE SURFACE(PUBLIC MINERALS)
-  W.S.A. BOUNDARY
-  ROAD
-  WAY
-  PROSPECT
-  MINE










NV-020-603 SOUTH JACKSON MTS.





BLACK



-  PRIVATE LAND (SURFACE & MINERALS)
-  PRIVATE SURFACE (PUBLIC MINERALS)
-  W.S.A. BOUNDARY
-  ROAD
-  WAY
-  MINE
-  GRAVEL PIT



NV-020-606 NORTH JACKSON MTS.



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 number 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.

At the present time, the above criteria do not exist, so July 1, 1982, numbers will be the appropriate management levels (AML) and will be the approximate herd size after the gathering.

B. Purpose and Need

The existing wild horse and burro population in the Jackson Mountain HUA exceeds the AML. This action is being taken to reduce the Wild Horse & Burro population to the AML. This action is in conformance with the MFP.

C. Proposed Action

The proposed action is to remove approximately 65 wild horses from the Jackson Mountain HUA. The number of horses will be reduced to the appropriate management level, as set forth in Table 1. The



proposed action would tentatively take place between July 1, 1985, and September 30, 1985, and take approximately two weeks to complete.

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 EIS 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

### A. Affected Environment

#### 1. Vegetation

The Jackson Mountains support a wide range of vegetative complexes and species. Beginning in the lower elevations and continuing up in elevation, the ecological successional stages are dominated by the greasewood, shadscale-budsage, shadscale-big sagebrush, big sagebrush-grass, low sagebrush-grass, and grass vegetative complexes. There are a variety of species within each of the different complexes. The usual vegetation associated with the Northern Desert biome is here and also unusual (for this area) vegetation in the higher elevations. For example, Elymus ambiguus. Hitchcock's (second edition) Manual of Grasses lists the states of Montana, Colorado, and Utah. In the Jackson Mountains, this species occurs on open slopes at about 5,200 feet elevation. Fairly accessible locations to observe this species are the open slopes west of Deer Creek Peak.

The allotments contain very steep terrain, in some instances, steep enough to impede or restrict movements of livestock, e.g., King Lear and Parrot Peaks.

#### 2. Sensitive Plants

The sensitive plant Astragalus pterocarpus is found within the HUA in the following areas:



T. 38 N., R. 30 E., Sec. 17 SW1/4; Sec. 19 SE1/4;  
T. 37 N., R. 30 E., Sec. 27 SE1/4.

### 3. Livestock Operations

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Operator</u>	<u>Type of Livestock</u>	<u>Active Preference (AUMs)</u>
Jackson Mountain	DeLong Ranches, Inc.	Cattle	12,266
Deer Creek	Jack Nuffer	Cattle	754
Happy Creek	Jule DeLong	Cattle	3,724
Desert Valley	Laura McKernan	Cattle	1,596

### 4. Wild Horses

Wild horses in the Jackson Mountain area are divided between two areas. The greatest number appear to concentrate in the southern half of the area from King Lear Peak south. The smaller group is on the north end of the range in the Parrot Peak, Deer Creek Peak, and Happy Creek area. Table 1 shows estimated numbers of horses within each allotment.

### 5. Wildlife

The median and higher elevations of the Jackson Mountains area constitute winter and summer range for approximately 300 mule deer. There is yearlong antelope habitat for approximately 30 antelope within the four allotments. Jackson Mountain has the potential for 144 bighorn sheep, and during 1983, 13 bighorn sheep were reintroduced into that area.

Upland game birds found in the area include chukar, mourning dove, sage grouse, and valley quail.

Aquatic habitat having the potential to support a sport fishery include Jackson, Trout, Bottle, and Happy Creeks.

### 6. Wilderness

The Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) boundaries that partially or entirely overlap the herd use areas are:

Attachment 3 - South Jackson Mountains - NV-020-603  
Attachment 4 - North Jackson Mountains - NV-020-606

### 7. Cultural Resources

Currently, only about 0.1% of the Denio Planning Unit has been systematically inventoried. In attempting to predict areas of high site density, water is the most obvious factor to consider. Lithic procurement areas are often very extensive and very dense sites. The Jackson Mountain HUA has permanent waters and lithic procurement areas. There are also several known sites that have significant cultural value.

For more information on the Affected Environment, refer to the Denio Planning Unit URA Step III and the Paradise-Denio Grazing EIS under Affected Environment.



## B. Environmental Consequences

### 1. Vegetation

The proposed action would reduce the demand and competition for forage between livestock, wild horses, and wildlife. In the long term, vegetative ground cover, species composition, plant vigor, and density will increase. This change would likely occur in the vegetation types at the higher elevations, including big sagebrush-grass, low sagebrush-grass, and grass types. Pockets of browse species and wet meadows also have been overgrazed and will improve. The proposed action will have a short-term negative effect on vegetation within the trap area only.

### 2. Sensitive Plants

The reduction in number of grazing animals will reduce the grazing and trampling pressures associated with use by these animals. The mitigating measures provide stipulations that will protect sensitive plants from damage during the gathering operation, provided they are adhered to.

### 3. Livestock Operations

In the long term, the reduction in grazing pressure would benefit the livestock operator as the vegetation improves. Potentially, this could increase production and the amount of available forage.

### 4. Wild Horses

The proposed action would leave approximately 215 horses within the HUA. This reduction would improve the health and vigor of the animals to remain due to the reduced competition for forage. The action will cause some stress and possible injury to the horses, resulting in their destruction (an average of 1% of the total captured).

### 5. Wildlife

The overall impacts of the proposed action would be beneficial to wildlife in general. There would be a general improvement of vegetation quality and habitat condition. Aquatic habitat will remain the same, no change is foreseen.

### 6. Wilderness

The Wilderness Study Areas would not be adversely impacted provided the mitigating measures are adhered to. There will be no unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands and their resources.

### 7. Cultural Resources

Under the proposed action, trampling and grazing-related erosion would continue to adversely affect cultural resource sites, but



at reduced rates from present. Mitigating measures provide protection to cultural values if they are 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.

For more information on the Environmental Consequences, refer to the Paradise-Denio Grazing EIS under Environmental Consequences.

C. Mitigating Measures

1. Vegetation

The gathering plan provides stipulations to protect the vegetation. No additional mitigating measures are necessary.

2. Sensitive Plants

No activities will be allowed in areas where known sensitive plants exist. If any threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants are discovered in a work area, all work will stop and move out of the area. The gathering plan also provides stipulations to protect sensitive plants.

3. Livestock Operations

No mitigating measures are necessary.

4. Wild Horses

The gathering plan provides stipulations that protect wild horses. No additional mitigating measures are necessary.

5. Wildlife

The gathering plan provides stipulations that protect wildlife. No additional mitigating measures are necessary.

6. Wilderness

The WSAs that partially or entirely overlap the HUA are being managed under the Interim Management Policy (IMP) and Guidelines For Land Under Wilderness Review until such time as Congress acts on their designation. No new roads will be constructed, ways will not be bladed, and only on existing, established roads will blading be allowed. If traps are constructed within the WSA, they will be constructed as to prevent any permanent damage that would require rehabilitation. They will be placed on ways and roads and be allowed to overlap no more than 50 feet on either side of the way or road.

The gathering plan provides stipulations to protect wilderness.



## 7. Cultural Resources

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

The gathering plan provides stipulations to protect cultural resources.

### III. Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted

American Bashkir Purely Register, Ely, NV  
American Horse Protection Association, Washington, D.C.  
American Humane Association, Denver, CO  
Animal Protection Institute, Sacramento, CA  
Buffalo Hills CRMP Committee c/o J. Conlan, Fallon, NV  
B. G. Bunyard, Cedarville, CA  
W. B. Ceresola, Wadsworth, NV  
Fred Chez, Gerlach, NV  
Wesley L. Cook, Cedarville, CA  
DeLong Ranches, Inc., c/o Bill DeLong, Winnemucca, NV  
John DeLong, Winnemucca, NV  
Tim DeLong Cattle Company, Winnemucca, NV  
Dufurrena Sheep Company c/o Alex T. Dufurrena, Denio, NV  
John Espil, Susanville, CA  
Fish Springs Ranch, Ltd., c/o Carl W. Rimbey, Reno, NV  
Fund For Animals, New York, NY, and Phoenix, AZ  
Happy Creek Ranch, Inc., c/o Jule DeLong, Winnemucca, NV  
Humane Society of the U.S., Washington, D.C.  
Humane Society of So. Nevada, Las Vegas, NV  
International Society For the Protection of Mustangs and Burros, Reno, NV  
Andrew F. and C. G. Jackson, Gerlach, NV  
Mrs. Laura McKernan, Winnemucca, NV  
Donald Molde, Sparks, NV  
National Mustang Association, Newcastle, UT  
National Wild Horse Association, Las Vegas, NV  
Nevada Cattlemen's Association, Elko, NV  
Nevada Humane Society, Sparks, NV  
Nevada State Clearinghouse, Carson City, NV  
Nevada Woolgrowers, Ely, NV  
Jack Nuffer, Winnemucca, NV  
Guiseppi Selmi, Gerlach, NV  
Save The Mustangs, Rockwood, PA  
Soldier Meadows Ranch c/o Kenneth H. Earp, Hayward, CA  
Soldier Meadows Ranch c/o Willis J. Bland, Orovada, NV  
William Spoo, Gerlach, NV  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reno, NV  
Vella Fairfax Estate, Vella L. Torvick, Executriz, Fallon, NV  
Wild Horse Organized Assistance, Reno, 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.

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)  
Wild Horse and Burro Gathering  
EA NV-020-5-

Decision Record

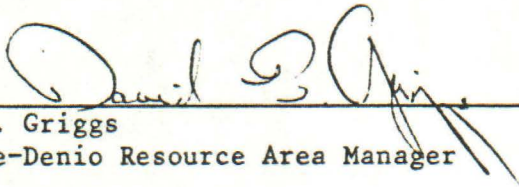
Based upon the Environmental Assessment (EA) and the Management Framework Plan for the Paradise-Denio Resource Area, a net beneficial impact to the total environment will result from implementing the proposed action. Therefore, the proposed action is adopted in its entirety.

Rationale

This decision is consistent with the Paradise-Denio Grazing Environmental Impact Statement, Management Framework Plan, and District Standard Operating Procedures.

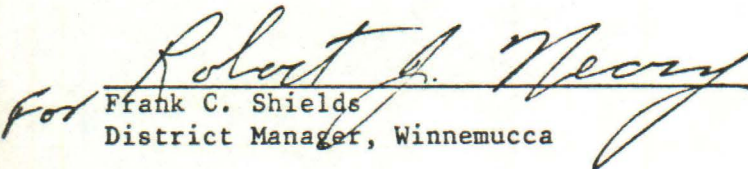
FONSI

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



David B. Griggs  
Paradise-Denio Resource Area Manager

3-26-85  
Date

*For* 

Frank C. Shields  
District Manager, Winnemucca

3/26/85  
Date