

Fox-Lake Range

m 8-11-95

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Winnemucca District Office
705 East Fourth Street
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

In reply refer to:
4710.4 (NV026.8)
August 11, 1995

Memorandum

To: Sonoma-Gerlach Area Manager

From: Tom Seley, WH&B Specialist

Subject: August 1995 Census - Buffalo Hills/Fox & Lake Range/Granite Range

From August 2 through August 4, 1995 I conducted a wild horse census on the HMA's listed below. The purpose of the census was to determine the current population and location of wild horses in each HMA. A Bell 47G4A soloy conversion helicopter contracted from High Desert Helicopters of Fallon, Nevada was utilized to conduct the census. Shown below is the date and order that each HMA were flown, and the observers on board.

| | | |
|---------|---|---------------------------|
| June 26 | <u>Fox & Lake Range</u> HMA, NV-228 | Tom Seley |
| June 27 | Buffalo Hills HMA, NV-220 | Tom Seley, Nadine Jackson |
| June 28 | Granite Range HMA, NV-221 | Tom Seley |

The census areas were flown in a modified grid pattern, utilizing natural and man made barriers when possible to ensure that animals were not recorded twice. Animals were located by the pilot (Ron Crowe) and observers on board. The number of adults and foals, and their location were then recorded onto an HMA map. The attached maps depict the flight path, location of animals observed, and the number of adults over foals.

General weather conditions in the flight areas consisted of clear skies in the morning with a very light west breeze, and temperatures in the low 50's. During the afternoon, skies were clear with no winds and temperatures near 100.

The following table lists the number of wild horses in each HMA by allotment or pasture within the allotment. The column labeled % foals shows the observed reproductive rate (foals/adults), not the percentage of foals in the population.

| <u>HMA/Allotment</u> | <u>Horses</u> | | | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | <u>Adult</u> | <u>Foal</u> | <u>(% Foal)</u> | |
| Buffalo Hills HMA | | | | |
| Buffalo Hills | 343 | 38 | (11.1) | 381 |
| Coyote Allot. | 8 | 0 | (00.0) | 8 |
| Fox & Lake Range HMA | | | | |
| Pole Canyon | 31 | 9 | (29.0) | 40 |
| Rodeo Creek | <u>184</u> | <u>40</u> | <u>(21.7)</u> | <u>224</u> |
| Total | 215 | 49 | (22.8) | 264 |
| Pyramid Lake Res. | 84 | 17 | (20.2) | 101 |
| Granite Range HMA | | | | |
| Buffalo Hills | | | | |
| Dolly Varden Pasture | 394 | 63 | (16.0) | 457 |
| Granite Pasture | <u>176</u> | <u>41</u> | <u>(23.3)</u> | <u>217</u> |
| Total | 570 | 104 | (18.2) | 674 |

Buffalo Hills HMA

AML for the Buffalo Hills is 235 (75% of AML) to 314 wild horses. Current census population is 381 head, which exceeds AML by 21% (67 head). The lower end of the management range (75% of AML) is exceeded by 62% (146 head). By removing all horses that are 5 years and younger this November, it will be possible to drop below AML however it is unlikely that we can reach 75% of AML during this gather due to the age structure of horses within the HMA.

As illustrated on the census map, horses were distributed fairly evenly in the HMA, but the center of the area had few present. At this time horses are using the upper third of the slopes. Horses appeared to be in good condition and there were a few colts seen that appeared to be no more than 3 to 4 weeks old.

Fox & Lake Range HMA

AML for the Fox & Lake Range has not been established at this time. However it is anticipated that the AML in the Rodeo Creek portion of the HMA will be 153 (75% of AML) to 204, or 130 (75% of AML) to 173 wild horses. Current census population within Rodeo Creek is 224 head, which exceeds the anticipated AML by 10% (20 head), or 29% (51 head).

A removal of horses in 1996 would reduce the population below either of the two AML's shown above, but it would be unlikely that horses could be reduced to 75% of AML.

AML for the Pole Canyon Allotment should be established in 1996. The current census population within Pole Canyon is 40 horses. Due to the high degree of movement of horses between this allotment and the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation and capture of wild horses on reservation lands by tribal members, it is difficult to make any population interpretations for this part of the HMA.

Horses were concentrated primarily in the Bull Basin/Rodeo Creek drainage area, and south of Smith Creek at higher elevations. Approximately 50 head of horses were seen on the Rodeo Creek/Cottonwood and Johnson fires that burned in 1994. Horses appeared to be in good condition and there were a half dozen colts seen that appeared to be no more than 3 to 4 weeks old.

As shown on the census map, almost all of the horses seen on the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation were within 2 miles of the HMA. It is highly likely that many of these horses spend part of the year within the HMA, with the majority of animals moving between reservation lands and the Pole Canyon Allotment.

Granite Range HMA

AML for the Granite Range is 193 (75% of AML) to 258 wild horses, however management of horses in the HMA is on a pasture basis. The management level for horses in the Dolly Varden pasture is 136 (75% of AML) to 182 head, and 57 (75% of AML) to 76 head in the Granite Pasture. The current census population for the entire HMA is 674 horses which is 161% (416 head) above AML. By removing all horses that are 5 years and younger this November, the HMA will still exceed AML. Horses appeared to be in good to excellent condition and there were no extremely young foals seen.

As in past census flights, horses in the Dolly Varden pasture were concentrated in two general areas, Wagon Tire Mountain and, the area between Melody Mountain and the Middle Fork of Negro Creek. There were over 125 head of horses on Wagon Tire Mountain which is part of the headwater area for Wagon Tire Creek and Red Mountain Creek. Over 200 horses were seen from a distance in Rocky Basin, and initially there were no horses west of Rocky Basin. The distribution of horses on the census map indicates horses occupying a much larger area than observed as the helicopter moved into the area. Horses were recorded onto the census map as they were actually counted which could leave the reader with an impression of a much more uniform distribution of animals than was actually observed. Due to the extreme flightiness of horses in Rocky Basin, the census may have slightly over or under counted horses in this area.

Horse in the Granite pasture were heavily concentrated from Skull Meadow, south to the Tank in the same areas that they have been observed for many years. As in the past there were no cattle seen in the horse concentration area. There were approximately 40 California Bighorn Sheep seen from Granite Peak south to the Tank on August 3 while ferrying to

Gerlach. There was one group of 19 rams spotted and another group of 9 rams. Ewes and lambs were in smaller groups.

The following table shows the actual census and ferry time required by flight area to conduct the census.

| <u>Census Area</u> | <u>Ferry Hrs.</u> | <u>Census Hrs.</u> | <u>Total Hrs.</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Fallon - Gerlach | 1.10 | - | 1.10 |
| Buffalo Hills HMA* | 1.00 | 4.90 | 5.90 |
| Fox & Lake Range HMA* | .52 | 5.68 | 6.20 |
| Granite Range HMA | .70 | 5.20 | 5.90 |
| Gerlach - Fallon | <u>1.20</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>1.20</u> |
| Total | 4.52 | 15.78 | 20.30 |

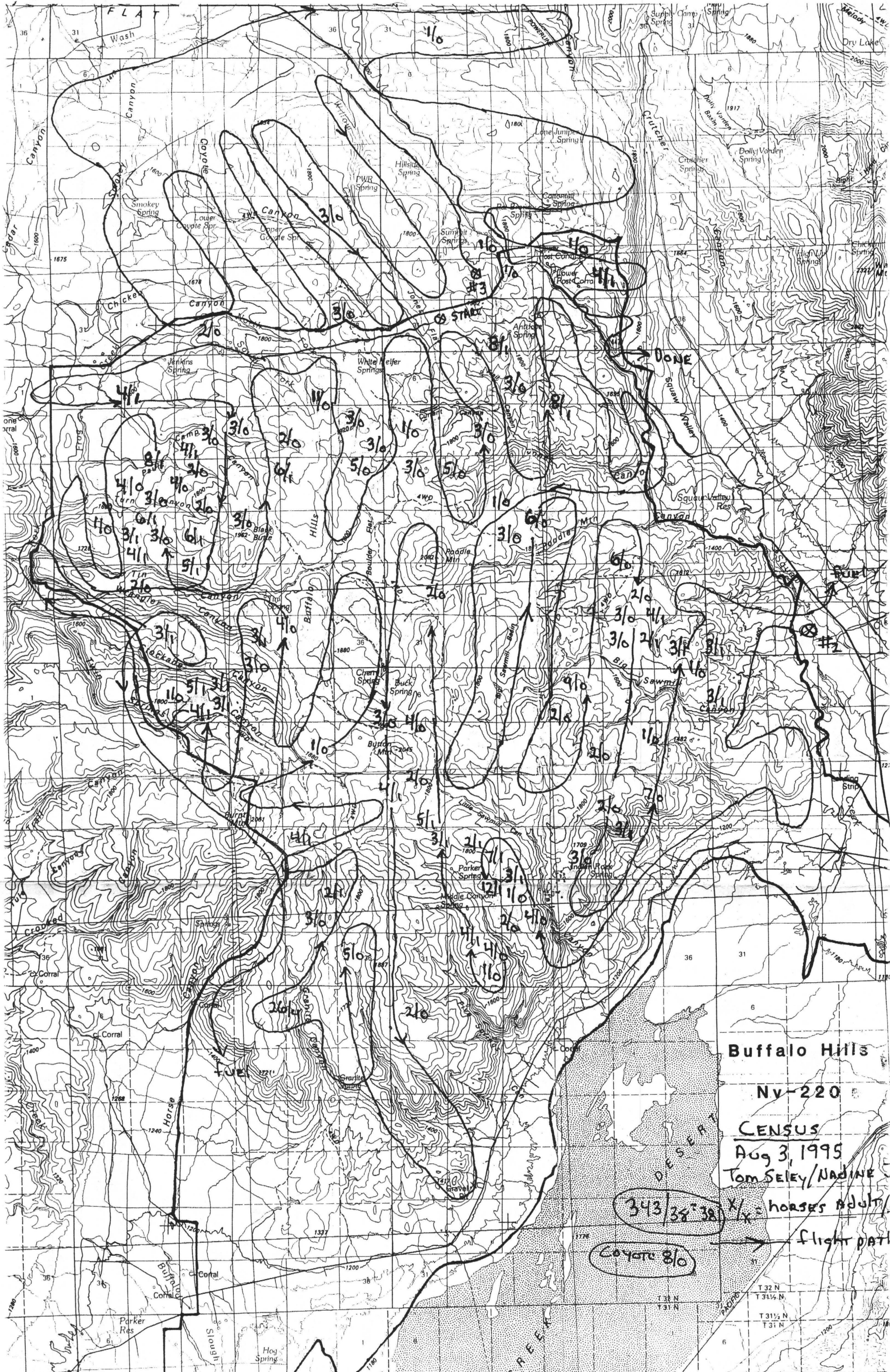
* Flight time for Coyote Allotment is included in Buffalo Hills flight hours, and Flight time on the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation is included with Fox & Lake flight hours.

Actual cost to conduct the census is shown below:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Flight time: | 20.3 hrs. @ 360.40/hr | = 7,316.12 |
| Per diem | 4 man nights @ 72.00/night | = 288.00 |
| Fuel truck mileage: | 562 miles @ .80/mile | = 449.60 |
| Extended availability - pilot: | 2 hrs. @ 35.00/hr | = 70.00 |
| Extended availability - driver: | 7 hrs @ 22.00/hr | = <u>154.00</u> |
| | Total | \$ 8,277.72 |

Charge code for the census was, NV-962-1060-00.

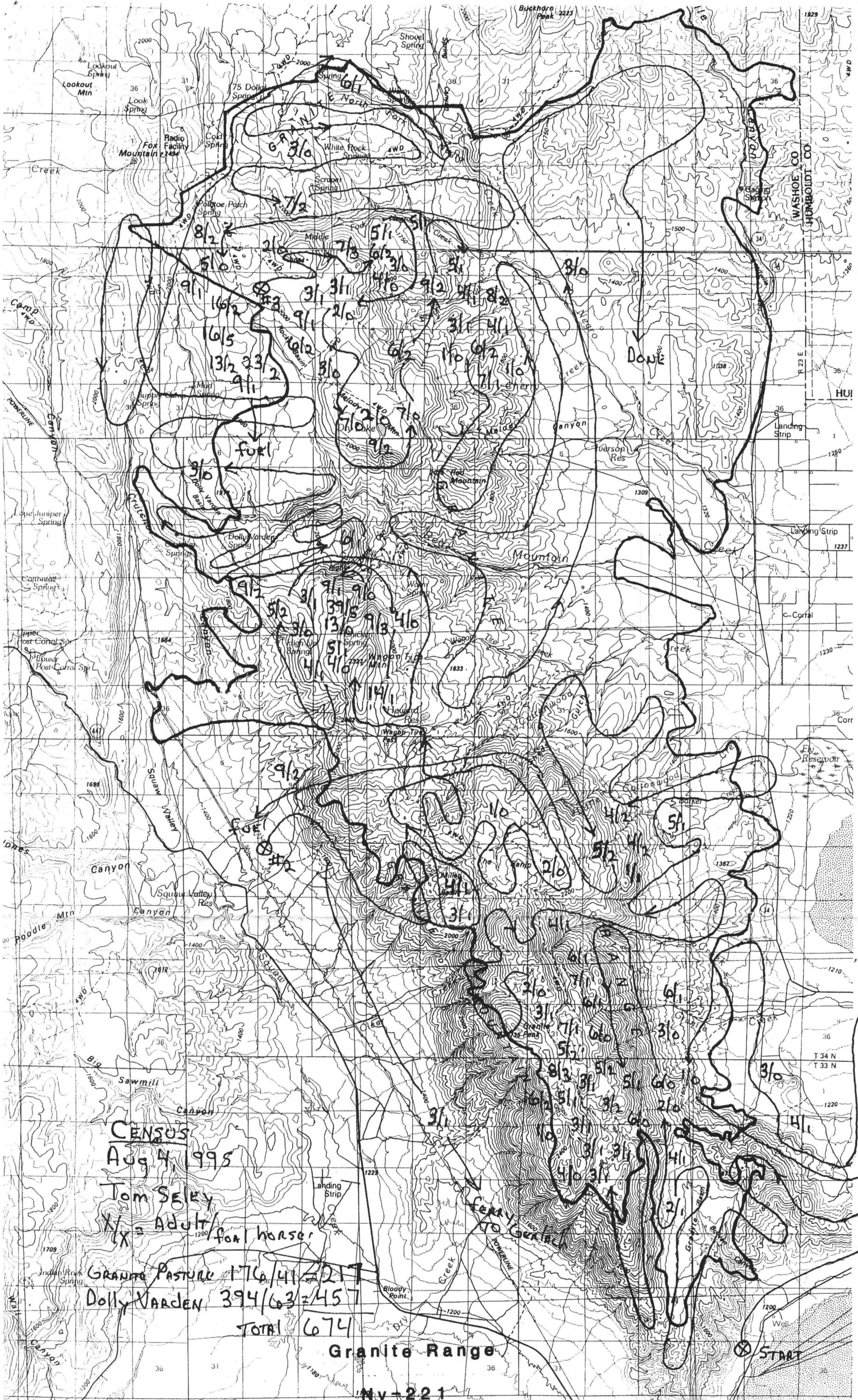
T. Selby



Buffalo Hills
 NV-220
CENSUS
 Aug 3, 1995
 Tom Seley/NADINE

343/35-38 X/x = horses adult/flight path
 Coyote 8/0

T 32 N
 T 31 1/2 N
 T 31 N
 T 31 1/4 N
 T 31 N



CENSUS
Aug 4, 1995
Tom Seley
 X/X = Adult/
 for horses

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| GRANITE PASTURE | 176/41 = 217 |
| DOLLY VARDEN | 394/63 = 457 |
| TOTAL | 674 |

Granite Range

Nv-221

START