



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ELKO DISTRICT OFFICE
P.O. Box 831
Elko, Nevada 89801

G 3/14/80
IN REPLY REFER TO
4700(N-016)

MAR 14 1980

Dawn Lappin
WHOA!
Wild Horse Organized Assistance
P.O. Box 555
Reno, Nevada 89504


Dear Ms. Lappin:

In an effort to keep you advised of activities involving wild and free-roaming horses, I have attached a proposed gathering plan in the Owyhee Desert.

The Environmental Assessment, which has not yet been written, will be completed by mid-summer and mailed to interested individuals and organizations for comments. The final gathering plan on the number of horses to be removed if any, will be determined by the environmental assessment.

If you have any initial comments involving this proposal, I would appreciate hearing from you so that your thoughts may be included in our analysis. If you have any questions please contact me or Jesse Dingman at this office.

Sincerely yours,


RODNEY HARRIS
District Manager

Attachment



I. INTRODUCTION

The intent of this capture plan is to outline the methods and procedures to be used in removing wild horses from the Owyhee Desert and Snowstorm Mountains. The plan involves removal of about 1,083 horses on lands administered by the BLM beginning about October 15, 1980.

II. GENERAL AREA DESCRIPTION

The Owyhee Desert and Snowstorm Mountains are approximately 70 miles north of Battle Mountain, Nevada (see Figure 1). The subject area to be gathered (see Figure 2) includes the Fairbanks Field, Twin Valley Spring Field, Lake Creek Field and Bullhead Allotment (all administered by Winnemucca District) and the Owyhee, Little Humboldt and Rock Creek Allotments (all administered by Elko District).

A detailed wild horse inventory was conducted in the Owyhee, Little Humboldt, and Rock Creek Allotments (administered by Elko District) on January 31 and February 1, 1980. A total of 503 wild horses were counted as follows:

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Adult Horses</u>	<u>Colts</u>	<u>Total</u>
Owyhee	178	55	233
Little Humboldt	153	37	190
Rock Creek	72	8	80
	Grand Total		503

← 20 HORSES

A wild horse inventory was conducted in the Fairbanks Field, Twin Valley Spring Field, Lake Creek Field and Bullhead Allotment on June 30 and July 1, 1979. A total of 1,654 wild horses were counted as follows:

<u>Field or Allotment</u>	<u>Adult Horses</u>	<u>Colts</u>	<u>Total</u>
Fairbanks	217	46	263
Twin Valley Spring	349	103	452
Lake Creek	281	85	366
Bullhead	453	120	573
	Grand Total		1,654

On December 1, 1978, the Elko District received a claim of ownership of horses on public lands from Roaring Springs Associates for 20 horses in the Owyhee Allotment. No horses were found at the attempted gather. The Elko District has received a request from Nevada First Corporation to remove wild horses from their private lands, specifically in the Little Owyhee and Bullhead Allotments.

Area manager:

late 3/81

excess

The Winnemucca District conducted a wild horse gather in 1979 and removed 1,100 wild horses from Lake Creek, Twin Valley Spring, and Fairbanks Fields. 1142 gathered 800 left.

All of the available forage on the public lands in the allotments was adjudicated for cattle operations and wildlife. No AUM's were adjudicated for wild horses.

The horse gathering area encompasses all or part of 5 separate allotments. A list of permittees by allotment, field, active preference AUM's, and percent public land is as follows:

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Field</u>	<u>Active Pref. AUM's</u>	<u>%F.R.</u>	<u>Permittee</u>
Bullhead		12,050	100	Nevada VACA Inc.
Little Owyhee	✓ Fairbanks	3,714	100	✓ Nevada First Corp.
Little Owyhee	Antelope	41,168	100	Nevada VACA Inc.
	Capital			
	Calico			
	Rock Springs			
	✓ Lake Creek			
	✓ Twin Valley Spring			
Owyhee		30,225	98	Roaring Springs Associates
Little Humboldt		7,656	97	Hammond Ranches, Inc.
Rock Creek		48,700	78	Ellison Ranching Company
		143,513 AUMS	61573 = 95.5% F.R.	

NO TOTAL CARRY CAP GIVEN. →

III. JUSTIFICATION

The Bureau of Land Management is directed to protect, manage, and control wild free-roaming horses and burros as authorized by P.L. 92-195 Section 3, P.L. 94-579 Section 404 and P.L. 95-514 Section 14. This management includes maintaining an ecological balance on the public lands. Over the past years the increase in wild horse numbers and drought in conjunction with other grazing animals have depleted the range condition and adversely effected the ecological balance of the area. One of the allotment operators is applying for total non-use within one pasture of the Owyhee Allotment in 1980 due to decreased forage believed to be caused by the increased wild horse numbers. Twin Valley Spring Field and Lake Creek Field have been in non-use since 1974 and are scheduled for nonuse in 1980.

The proposed capture area has historically provided important wildlife habitat and been subjected to heavy livestock and wild horse use. Observations over recent years by qualified Bureau of Land Management field personnel have resulted in growing concern about recurring water shortages and general range deterioration. One of the significant contributing factors is believed to be the result of steadily increasing and unmanaged wild horse populations which reside in the subject area on a yearlong basis.

IV. CAPTURE PLAN AND METHODS

The proposed gathering operation would be conducted within the described allotments (see Figure 2) to remove the following number of horses:

<u>Allotment/Field</u>	<u>Horses Present</u>	<u>Horses Removed</u>	<u>Horses Remaining</u>
Owyhee	233 ^E	133	100
✓ Little Humboldt	190 ^E	100	90
✓ Rock Creek	80 ^E	50	30
✓ Bullhead	573 ^W	300	273
✓ Lake Creek	366 ^W	200	166
✓ Twin Valley Spring	452 ^W	200	252
Fairbanks	263 ^W	100	163
Totals	2,157	1,083	1,074

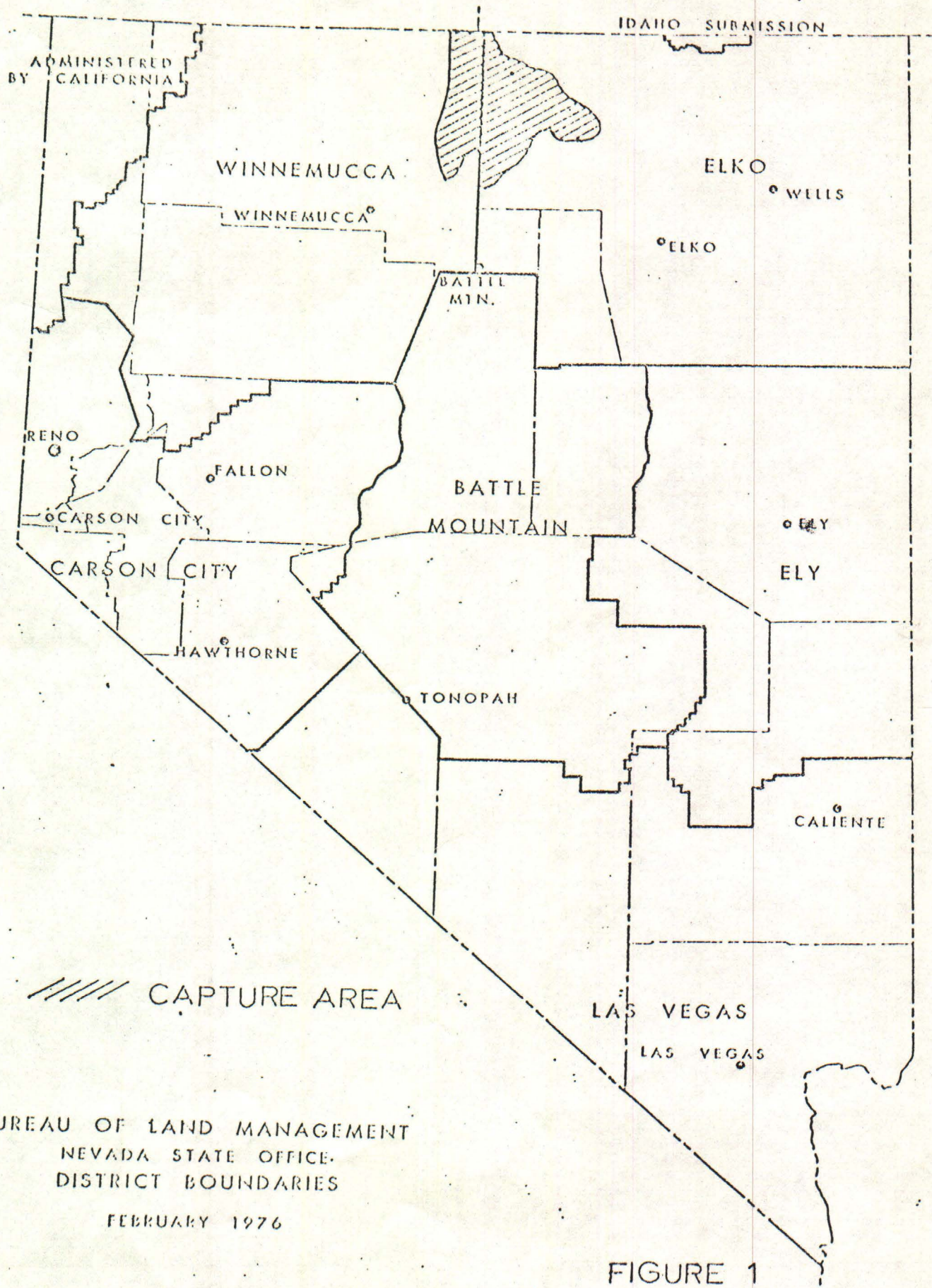
1142 (1979)
 25,884 Aums

12,888 Aums

A temporary trap with deflector wings encompassing less than one acre would be constructed. The use of a contracted helicopter and horse riders would be necessary to drive and direct horses in an efficient and careful manner. Hazards such as cliffs and fences would be scouted in advance and existing roads and trails would be used. Horses would be truck hauled to temporary holding facilities in Palomino Valley, Nevada, or an alternate location, for processing, then shipped to distribution centers in the midwest for adoption. Horses that might be held at the trap site in excess of 24 hours would have food and water provided. Inadvertently collected horses which are branded or privately owned would be treated under Nevada estray laws.

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

A cultural resources investigation by an archeologist or district archeological technician will be made prior to any trap construction. If a significant find was discovered, an alternate site would be selected.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
 NEVADA STATE OFFICE
 DISTRICT BOUNDARIES
 FEBRUARY 1976

FIGURE 1

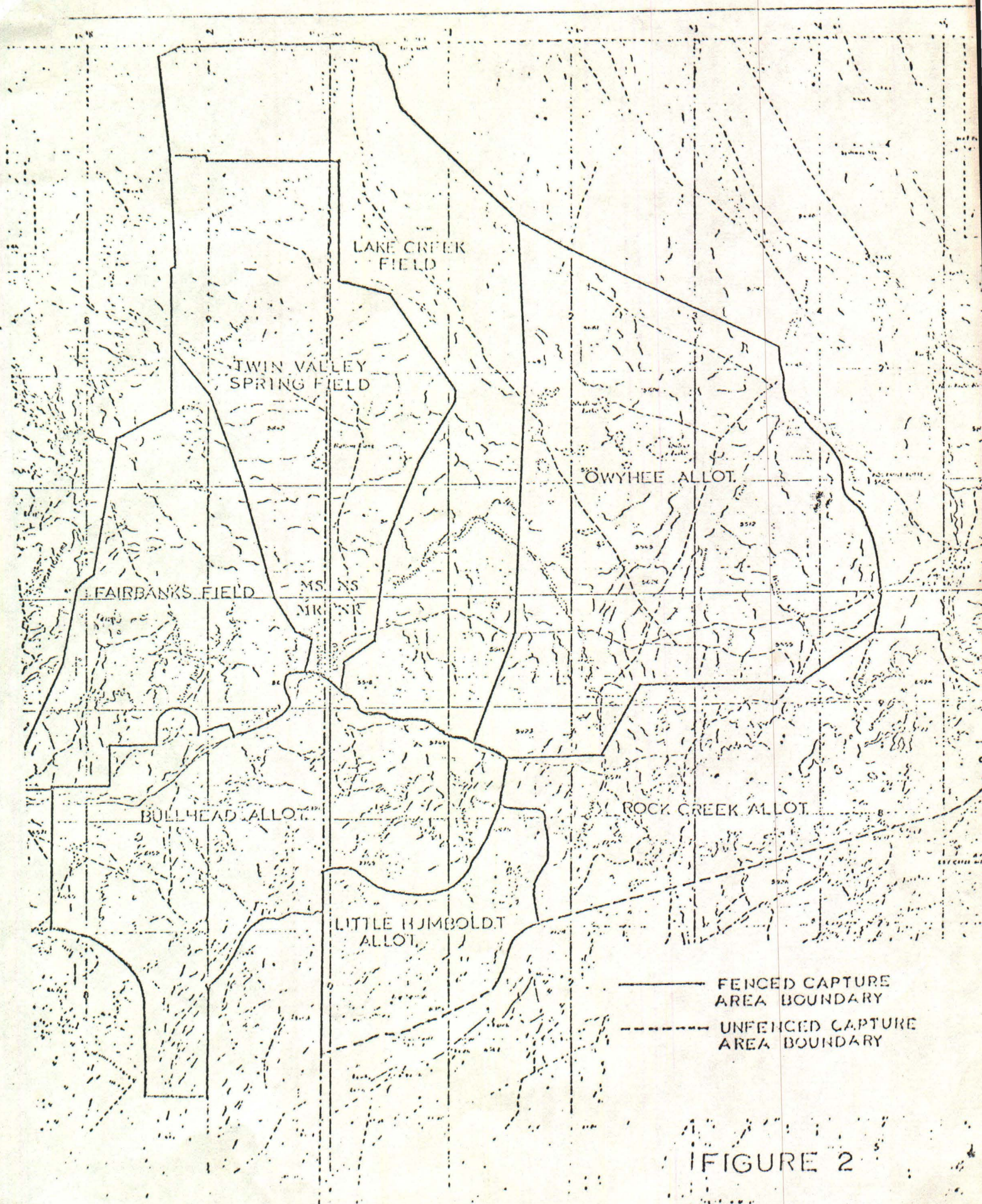


FIGURE 2

horses not be removed from herd areas

Some #