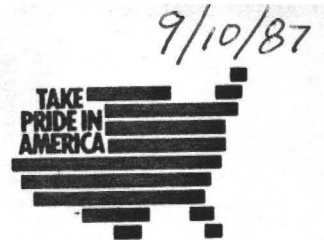




United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WINNEMUCCA DISTRICT OFFICE
705 East 4th Street
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445



IN REPLY REFER TO:

September 10, 1987

4700
(NV-023.5)

Wild Horse Organized Assistance
c/o Dawn Lappin
P.O. Box 555
Reno, NV 89504

Dear Ms. Lappin:

Enclosed is a copy of a draft Wild Horse and Burro Removal (Gathering) Plan for your review and comments.

If you wish to comment upon the draft, please submit your comments no later than 30 days after receipt of this letter.

Sincerely yours,

Frank C. Shields
District Manager

Enclosure

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Winnemucca District Office

Sonoma-Gerlach and Paradise-Denio Resource Areas

WILD HORSE/BURRO MANAGEMENT

BLACK ROCK RANGE - WARM SPRINGS CANYON

WILD HORSE AND BURRO REMOVAL (GATHERING) PLAN

I. Introduction

The intent of this removal (gathering) plan is to outline the methods and procedures to be used in removing approximately 1,085 excess wild horses and six excess burros from three Herd Management Areas (HMAs). The excess wild horses and burros would be removed from the Black Rock Range-East and West HMAs and from the Warm Springs Canyon HMA. Refer to the attached maps for specific locations and to II. C. for additional specifics. The removal operation is scheduled to begin about December 1, 1987, and be completed by January 15, 1988.

II. General Area Description-Background Data

A. Location and Land Status

All three of the HMAs are located approximately 90 air miles northwest of Winnemucca, Nevada. The Black Rock Range-East HMA is administered by the Paradise-Denio Resource Area (RA), the Black Rock Range-West and the Warm Springs Canyon HMAs are administered by the Sonoma-Gerlach RA. The Black Rock Range-East HMA is situated within the boundaries of the Paiute Meadows grazing allotment, and the Black Rock Range-West and Warm Springs Canyon HMAs are within the Soldier Meadows grazing allotment.

The Paiute Meadows grazing allotment is part of the Denio Planning Unit (PU) of the Paradise-Denio RA. The Soldier Meadows grazing allotment is part of the Buffalo Hills PU of the Sonoma-Gerlach RA.

The Black Rock Range-East HMA is roughly 55 miles long north to south and 21 miles wide east to west. The low country is dominated by shadscale-greasewood types. As elevation increases and soils change, these types give way to sagebrush-grass and aspen and mountain mahogany types.

The Black Rock Range-West HMA is approximately 42 miles long in a north-south direction and 6 miles wide in an east-west direction. The HMA contains approximately 55% sagebrush-bluegrass and 45% salt desert shrub vegetation types. These figures are for public lands only in the HMA.

The Warm Springs Canyon HMA is located in the northwest corner of the Buffalo Hills Planning Unit, bordered on the east by the Susanville District boundary fence, on the north by the Charles Sheldon Antelope Refuge, on the east by the Black Rock Range-West HMA, and on the south by the Calico Mountain HMA. The elevation ranges from 7,084 feet at Trough Mountain to 4,550 feet.

Land Status

	<u>Public (%)</u>	<u>Private (%)</u>	<u>Total</u>
Warm Springs Canyon HMA	82,305 (99%)	831 (1%)	83,136
Black Rock Range-East HMA	91,300 (96%)	3,894 (4%)	95,194
Black Rock Range-West HMA	92,543 (92%)	8,047 (8%)	100,590

B. Reference to Land Use Plans (LUPs)

The LUPs for the Sonoma-Gerlach and Paradise-Denio RAs were approved on July 9, 1982. The LUP (Management Framework Plan - Step III) decision was to manage for wild horses and burros in those HMAs where they existed prior to 1971 and to remove all wild horses and burros from the checkerboard Herd Areas (HAs).

The proposed removal of excess animals would occur in non-checkerboard HMAs.

C. Population and Removal Data

The proposed removals of excess wild horses and burros would occur in the following HMAs, and in the priority as listed in descending order.

Herd Management Area/Herd Area Name	Appropriate Management Level (AML) Horses/Burros	^{1/} 1987 Estimated Population Horses/Burros	Proposed Number to be Removed Horses/Burros
Black Rock Range - East and West (HMA)	59/0	585/0	526/0
	424/0	611/0	187/0
Warm Springs Canyon	294/10	666/16	372/6
TOTAL	<u>777/10</u>	<u>1,862/16</u>	<u>1,085/6</u>

After the HMA boundaries were established through the land-use planning process, a number of the horses moved outside the HMA boundary delineations. The attached maps which show the proposed removal areas reflect the extent of this movement.

^{1/} Population estimates based upon an aerial census conducted in July of 1986 using a B-1 helicopter.

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 was completed in 1982 for the Sonoma-Gerlach and Paradise-Denio Resource Areas. A major portion of these plans 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 (LUP) Decisions on June 30, 1982. The decisions received the State Director's concurrence on July 9,

1982. The MFP III (LUP) WH/B decision number 1.1 provides for the retention and management of wild horses/burros on noncheckerboard lands in the resource area. The decision stated that existing/current numbers (as of July 1, 1982) would 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.

None of the above five conditions are applicable to this proposed plan of removal, and the existing/current numbers (as of July 1, 1982) will be used as a starting point for monitoring purposes.

IV. Removal Plan and Methods

The excess wild horses and burros will be removed (gathered) by the use of a helicopter.

Prior to the pre-work conference, BLM personnel will inspect the condition of the animals, locate and record the major concentration of animals, note the condition of roads, presence of fences and other hazardous barriers and location of water sources being used by the animals.

During the pre-work conference, BLM personnel will give the contractor a topographic map of the removal area that shows desirable temporary trap sites and existing fences. The contractor will be apprised of the condition of the animals, where they are concentrated, the condition of the roads, and the type of terrain at the removal area.

Before the Notice-to-Proceed is issued to the contractor, an assessment of the contractor's ability to perform will be made, and all of the equipment will be inspected.

A. Trapping and Care of Animals

1. The excess animals 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 and burros have been driven to within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of the trap, riders on horseback may then flank the animals and guide them into the trap. Once the animals are in the trap the gate will be closed by hand. Should an animal break back at the trap, it may be roped, if possible, by the riders. Roping will be done only

when necessary, with prior approval by the Contracting Officers Representative (COR). Under no circumstances shall animals be tied down more than one hour.

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

2. It is estimated that a minimum of six temporary trap and corral sites (see map) will be required to remove the 1,085 wild horses and six burros. Additional temporary trap sites may be necessary if the animals disperse once removal operations start. The removal operations will start on the east side of the Black Rock Range-East HMA, then continue on the west side of the Black Rock Range-West HMA, and finish in the Warm Springs Canyon HMA. All temporary trap locations will be selected by the COR.
3. All trap locations and holding facilities must be approved by the COR prior to construction. The contractor may also be required to change or move trap locations as determined by the COR. All traps and holding facilities not located on public land must have prior written approval of the landowner.
4. All traps, wings, and holding facilities shall be constructed, maintained, and operated to handle the animals in a safe and humane manner. Traps and holding facilities shall be constructed of portable panels, the top of which shall not be less than 72 inches high, and the bottom rail of which shall not be more than 12 inches from ground level. All traps and holding facilities shall be oval or round in design. All loading chute sides shall be fully covered with plywood or like material. The loading chute shall also be a minimum of six feet high. All runways shall be a minimum of 20 feet long and a minimum of six feet high and shall be covered with plywood or like material a minimum of one foot to five feet above ground level. Wings shall not be constructed out of barbed wire or other materials injurious to animals and must be approved by the COR. All crowding pens including the gates leading to the runways shall be covered with a material which prevents the animals from seeing out (plywood, burlap, etc.) and shall be covered a minimum of one foot to five feet above ground level. Floors of vehicles used for transporting the animals and the loading chute shall be covered and maintained with a non-skid surface such as sand, mineral soil or wood shavings to prevent injuries.
5. The contract helicopter shall be used in such a manner that bands or herds will remain together as much as possible.
6. The project helicopter actions may occasionally be observed by a Government-controlled helicopter. All actions of the Government helicopter will be coordinated with the contractor to prevent interference with the project helicopter and contract operations.

In the event an additional helicopter is not available to observe the project helicopter, other methods will be used to observe the removal operations such as using observers on horseback, in vehicles and placing stationary observers in strategic locations.

7. The rate of movement and distance the animals travel shall not exceed limitations set by the COR who will consider terrain, physical barriers, weather, condition of the animals, and other factors.
8. When excessive dust conditions occur within or adjacent to the trap or holding facility, the contractor shall be required to wet down the ground with water at such location as directed by the COR.
9. Alternate pens, within the holding facility, shall be furnished by the contractor to separate mares with small foals, sick and injured animals, and estray animals from the other horses. Where required by the COR, animals shall be sorted as to age, number, size, temperament, sex, and condition, when in the holding facility so as to minimize, to the extent possible, injury due to fighting and trampling.
10. Animals shall be transported to final destination from temporary holding facilities within 24 hours after capture unless prior approval is granted by the COR for unusual circumstances. Animals shall not be held in traps and/or temporary holding facilities on days when there is no work being conducted except as specified by the COR.
11. Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps and/or holding facilities shall be provided fresh clean water by the contractor, in an amount of a minimum of 10 gallons per animal per day. Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps or holding facilities shall be provided good quality hay at the rate of not less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day.
12. It is the responsibility of the contractor to provide security to prevent loss, injury, or death of captured animals until delivery to final destination.
13. The contractor shall restrain sick or injured animals so that they may be provided treatment by the COR. The COR will determine if injured or sick animals must be destroyed and provide for destruction of such animals. If the COR cannot determine the severity of the injury or illness, a veterinarian will be consulted before the animal is destroyed. The contractor shall dispose of the carcasses as directed by the COR.
14. 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.
15. 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. Refer to maps labeled High Rock Lake, High Rock Canyon (that portion situated in the Winnemucca District but administered by the Susanville BLM District), North Black Rock Range, Paiute Peak, and Black Rock Desert (North and South) for a delineation of the WSA boundaries.

B. Helicopter, Pilot, and Communications

1. The contractor must operate in compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 91. Pilots provided by the contractor shall comply with the Contractors Federal Aviation Certificates, applicable regulations of the State of Nevada, and shall follow what are recognized as safe flying practices.
2. When refueling, the helicopter shall remain a distance of at least a 1,000 feet or more from animals, vehicles (other than fuel truck), and personnel not involved in refueling.
3. The COR shall have the means to communicate with the pilot and be able to direct the use of the gather helicopter at all times.
4. The proper operation, service, and maintenance of all contractor furnished helicopters is the responsibility of the contractor. The BLM reserves the right to remove from service pilots and helicopters which, in the opinion of the contracting officer or COR, violate contract rules, are unsafe, or otherwise unsatisfactory. All such replacements must be approved in advance of operation by the contracting officer or his/her representatives.

C. Motorized Equipment

1. All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of animals.
2. Vehicles shall be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and operated so as to insure that captured animals are transported without undue risk, injury, or delay.
3. Only stocktrailers shall be allowed for transporting animals from traps to temporary holding facilities. Only Bobtail trucks, stocktrailers, or single deck trucks shall be used to haul animals from temporary holding facilities to final destination. Sides or stockracks of transporting vehicles shall be a minimum height of six feet six inches from vehicle floor. Single deck trucks with trailers 40 feet or longer shall have two partition gates to separate animals. Trailers less than 40 feet shall have at least one partition gate to separate the animals. The use of double deck trailers is unacceptable and shall not be allowed.
4. All vehicles used to transport animals to final destination shall be equipped with doors at the rear end of the vehicle. At least

one of these rear doors shall be capable of sliding either horizontally or vertically.

5. Floors of vehicles shall be covered and maintained with a nonskid surface such as sand, mineral soil, or wood shavings, to prevent the animals from slipping.
6. The number of animals to be loaded and transported in any vehicle shall be as directed by the COR and may include limitations on numbers according to age, size, sex, temperament, and animal condition.
7. The COR shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, distance to be transported, or other factors when planning for the movement of captured animals. The COR shall provide for any brand and/or inspection services required for the captured animals.
8. If the COR determines that dust conditions are such that the animals could be endangered during transportation, the contractor will be instructed to adjust speed. The maximum distance over which animals may have to be transported on dirt road is approximately 60 miles per load.

VI. Signatures

Lead responsibility:

Richard D. Wheeler, Wild Horse and Burro
Specialist

Date

Gerald L. Moritz, Environmental Coordinator

Date

Scott Billing, Area Manager
Paradise-Denio Resource Area

Date

Gerald P. Brandvold, Area Manager
Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area

Date

Submitted to State Director by:

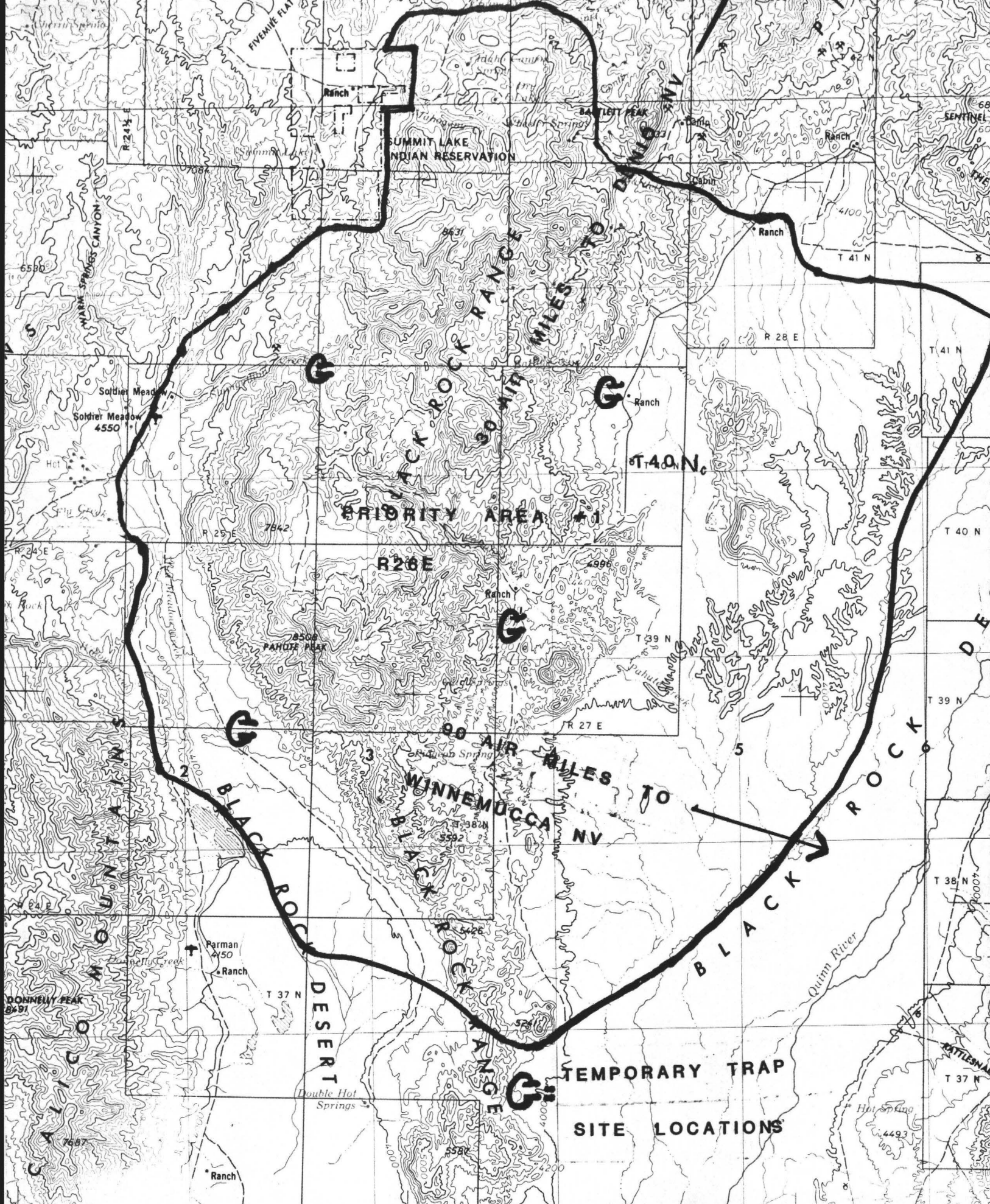
Frank C. Shields
District Manager, Winnemucca

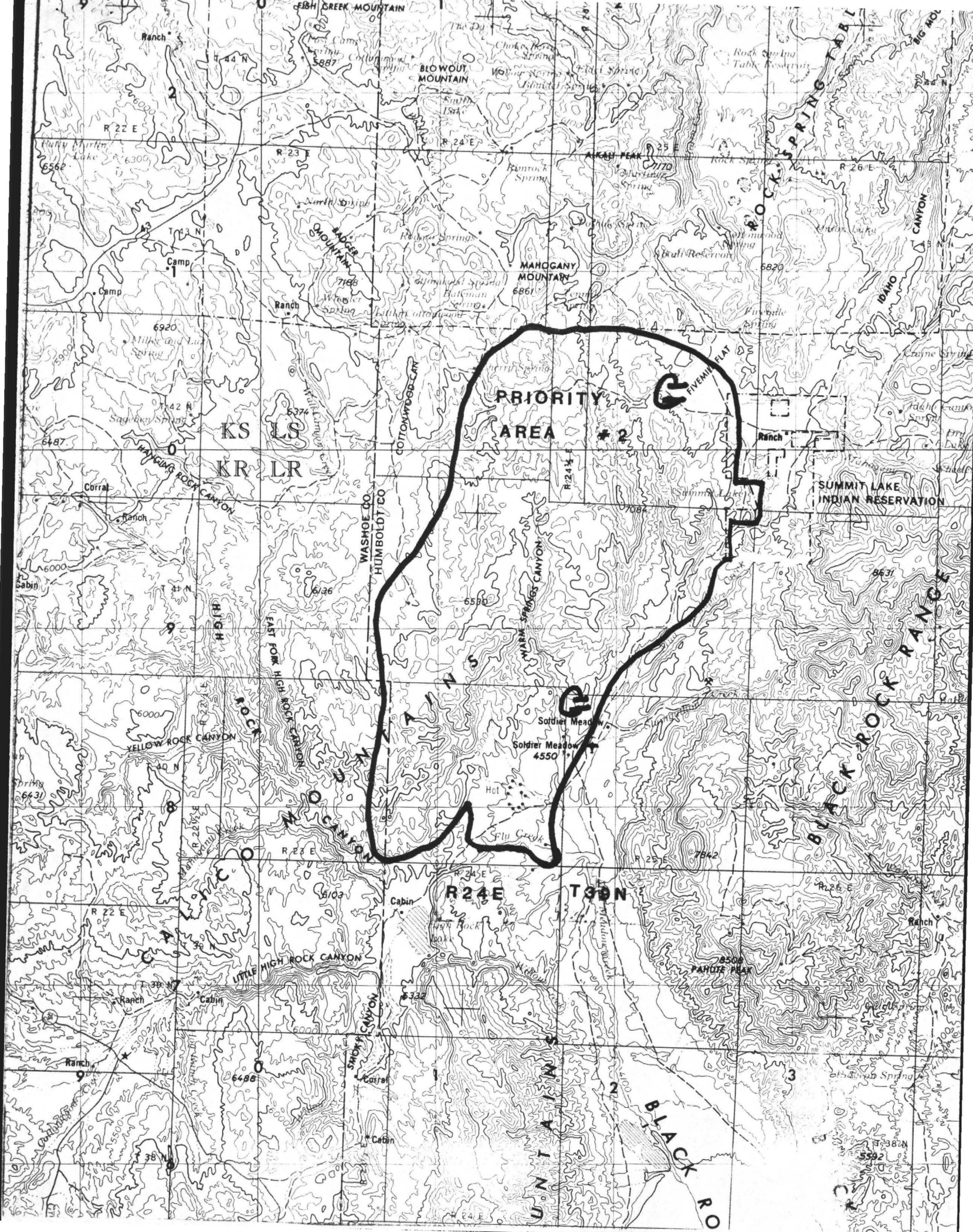
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Approved by:

Edward F. Spang
State Director, Nevada

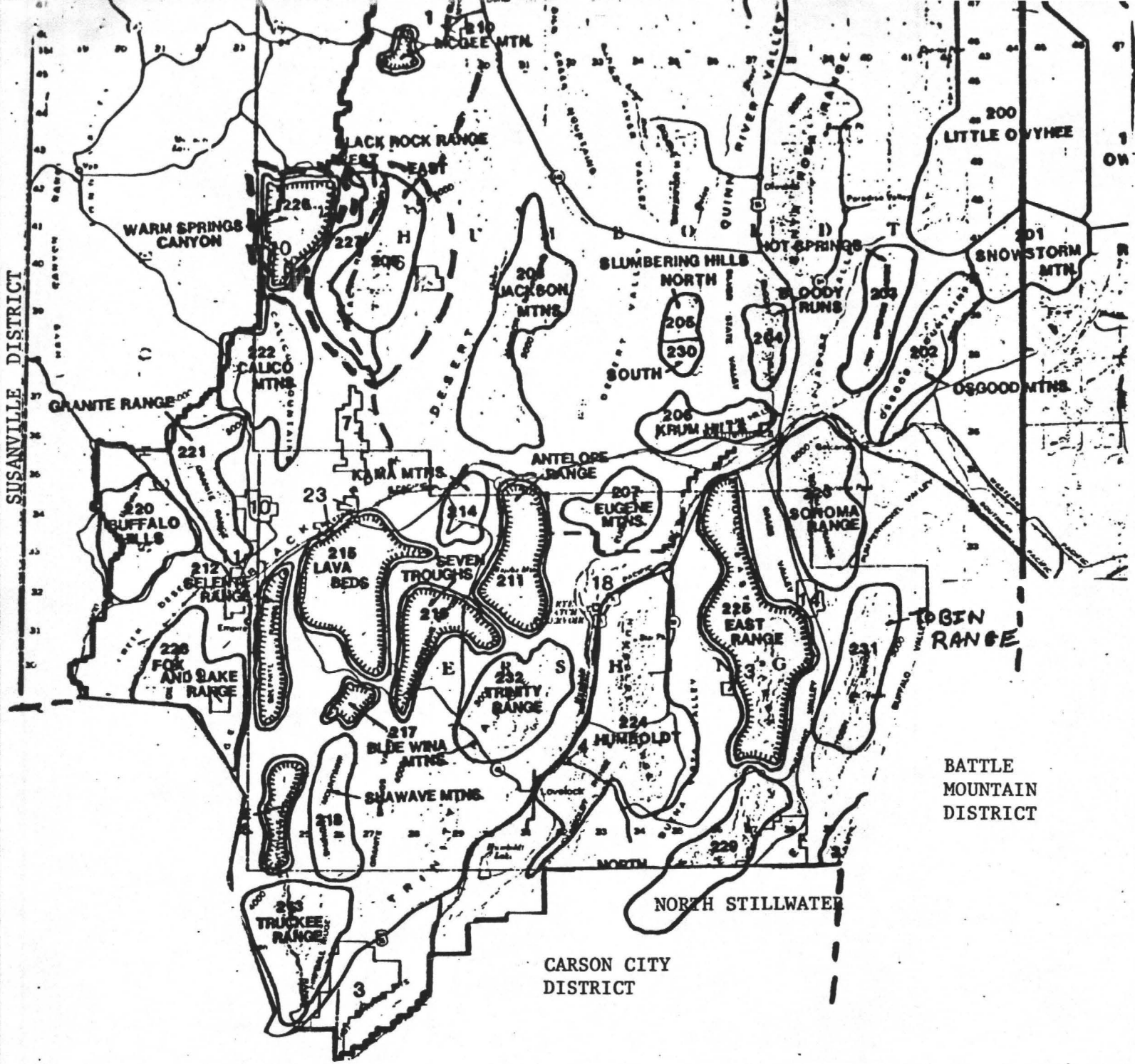
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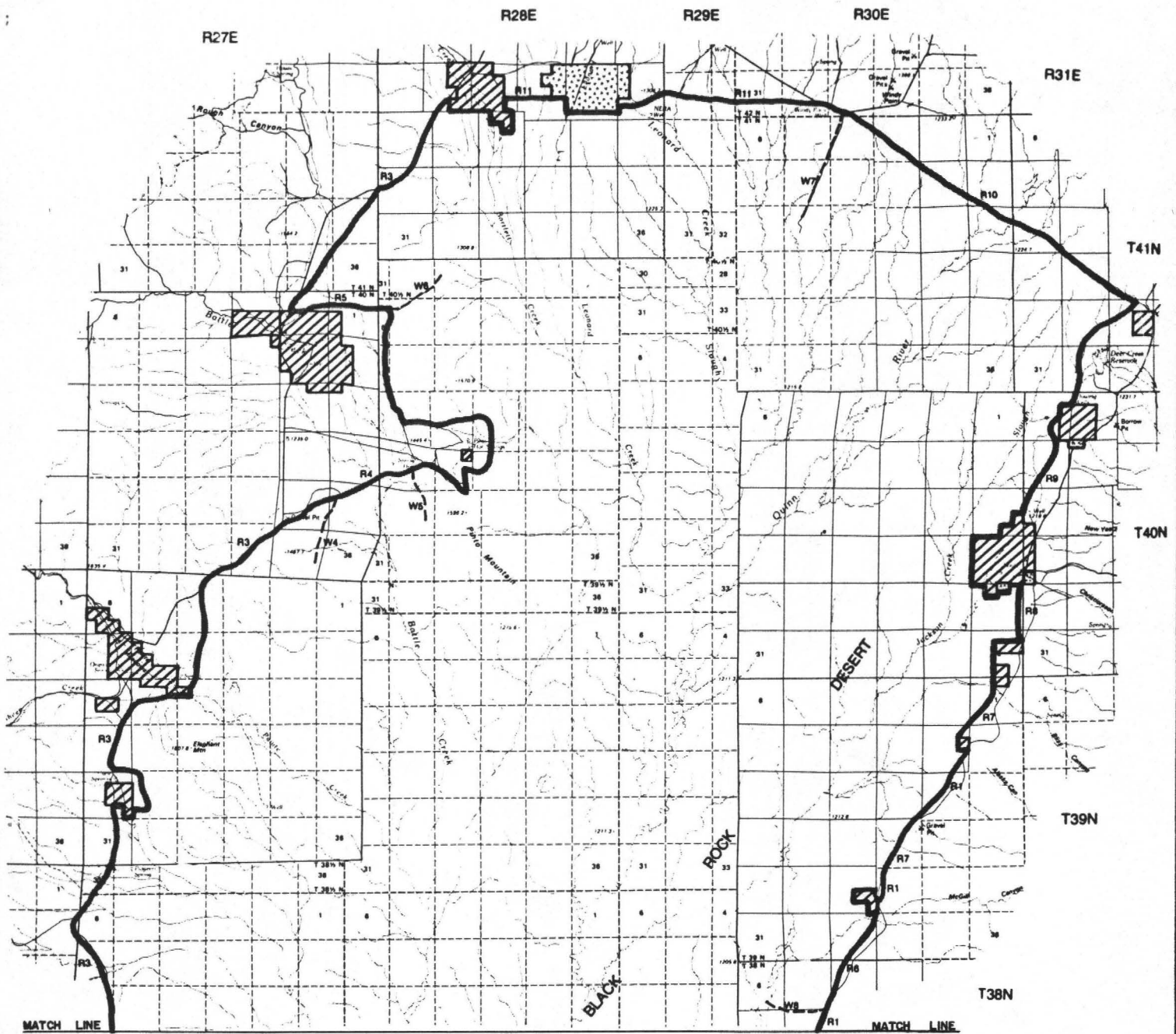
SUSANVILLE DISTRICT






ELKO DISTRICT

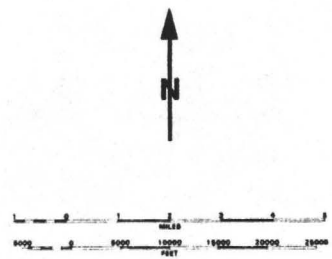


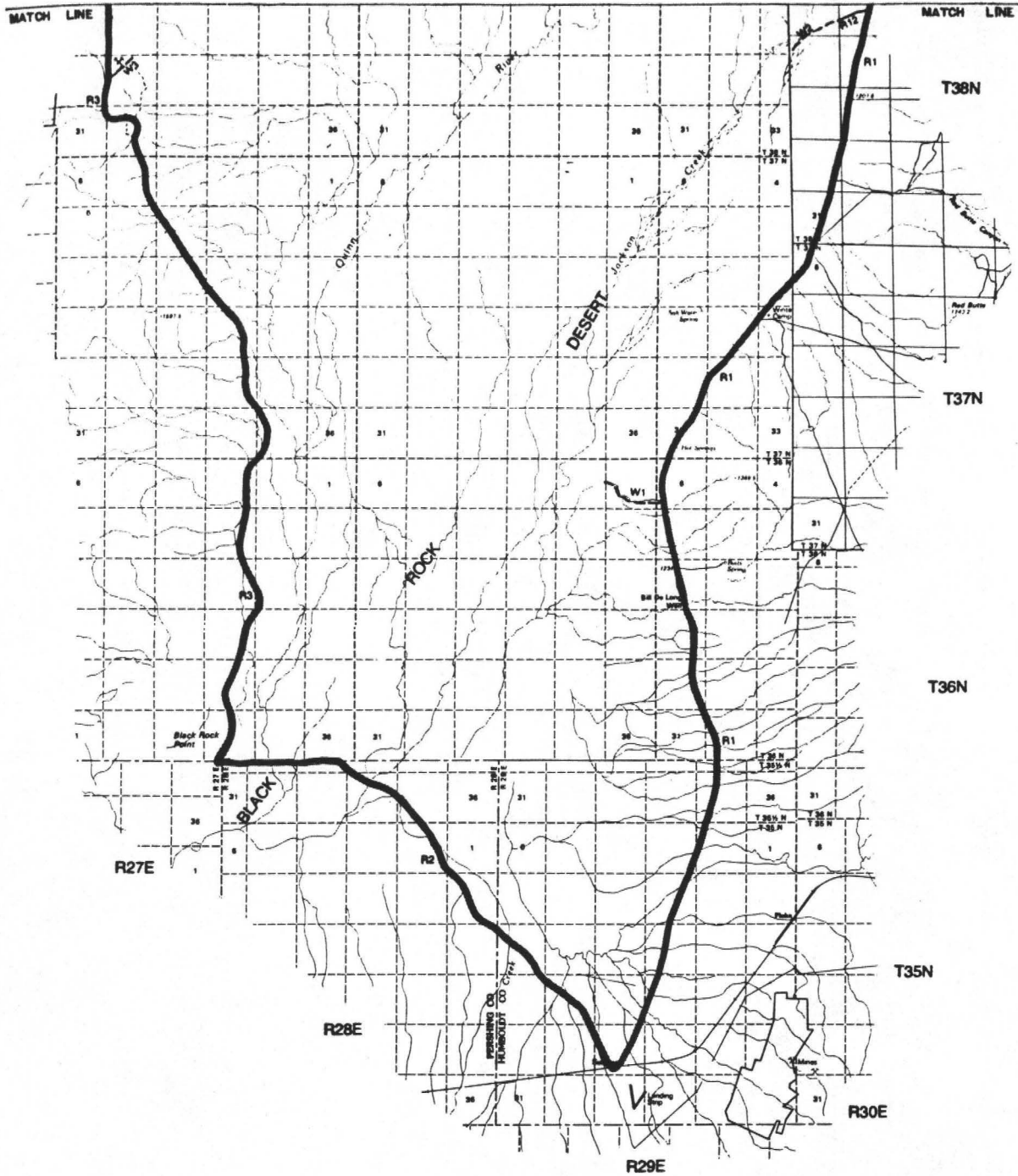
ATTACHMENT #2





-  = Wild Horse Herd Area Boundary
-  = Burro Herd Area Boundary and Wild Horse Herd Boundary
-  = Proposed Removal Area Boundary



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

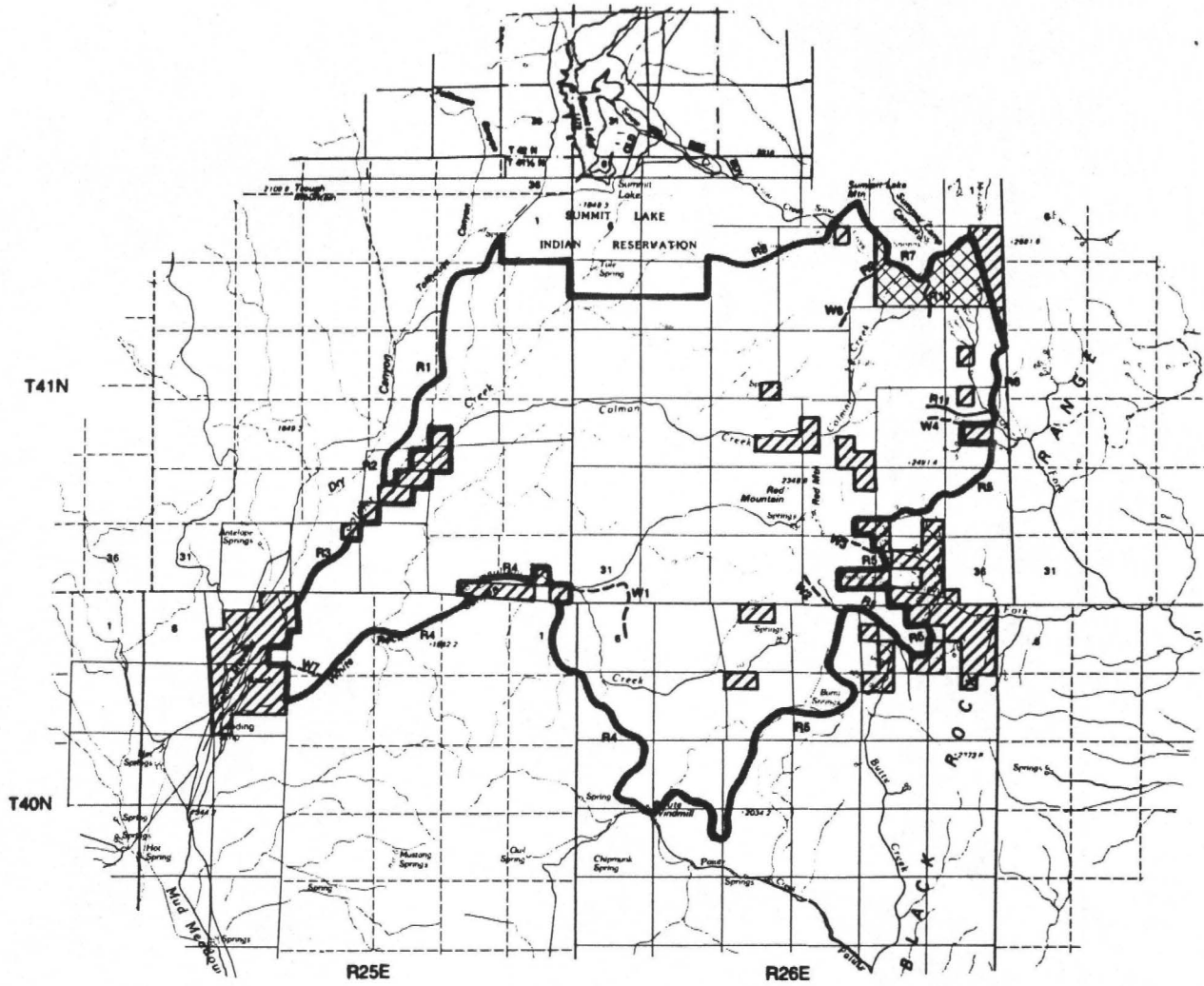









-  W.S.A. BOUNDARY
-  ROAD
-  WAY
-  MINE



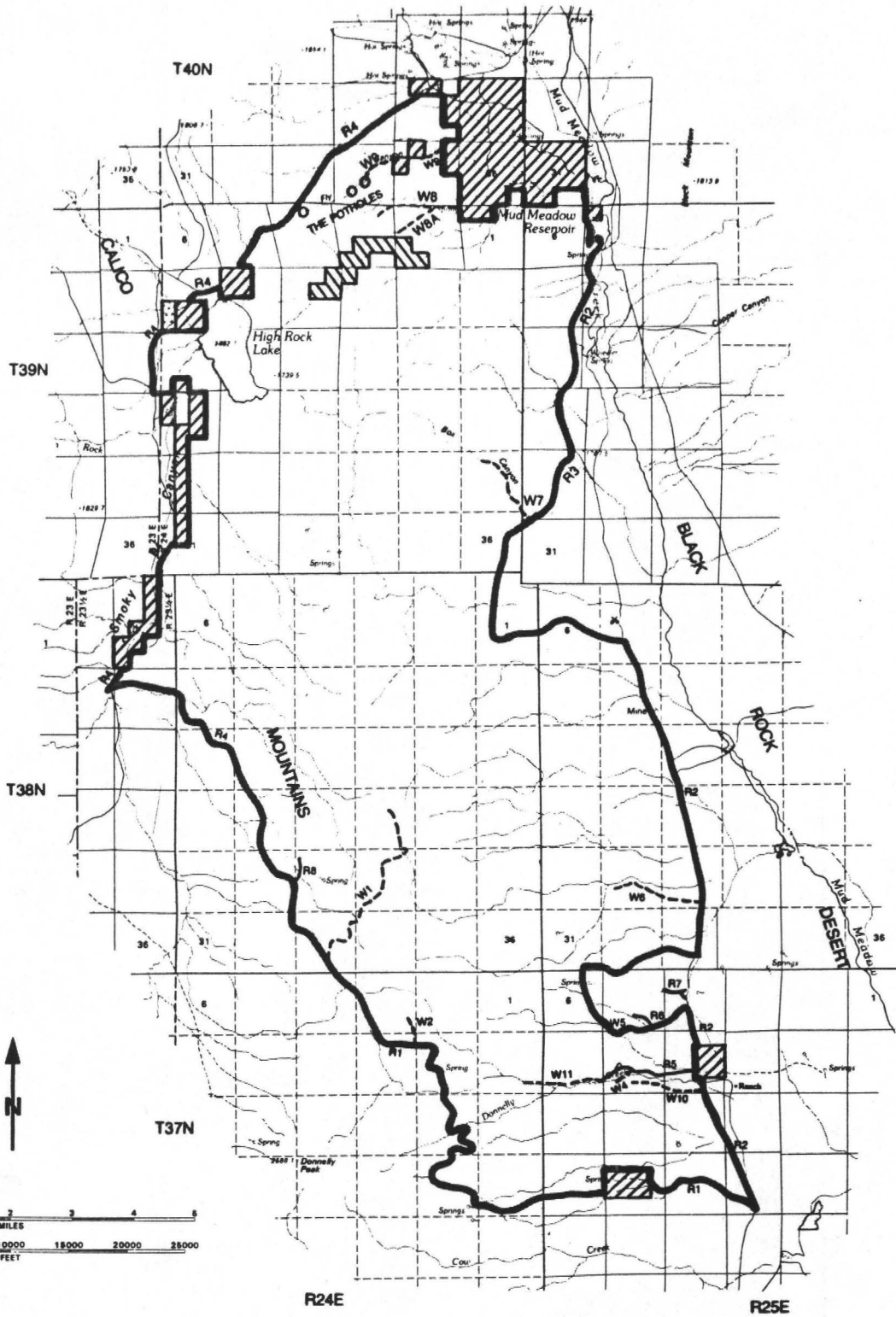
NV-020-620 BLACK ROCK DESERT - SOUTH










-  PORTION OF LAHONTAN CUTTHROAT TROUT INSTANT STUDY AREA WITHIN W.S.A.
-  PRIVATE LAND (SURFACE & MINERALS)
-  W.S.A. BOUNDARY
-  ROAD
-  WAY



NV-020-622 NORTH BLACK ROCK RANGE



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



NV-020-007 HIGH ROCK LAKE

T39N

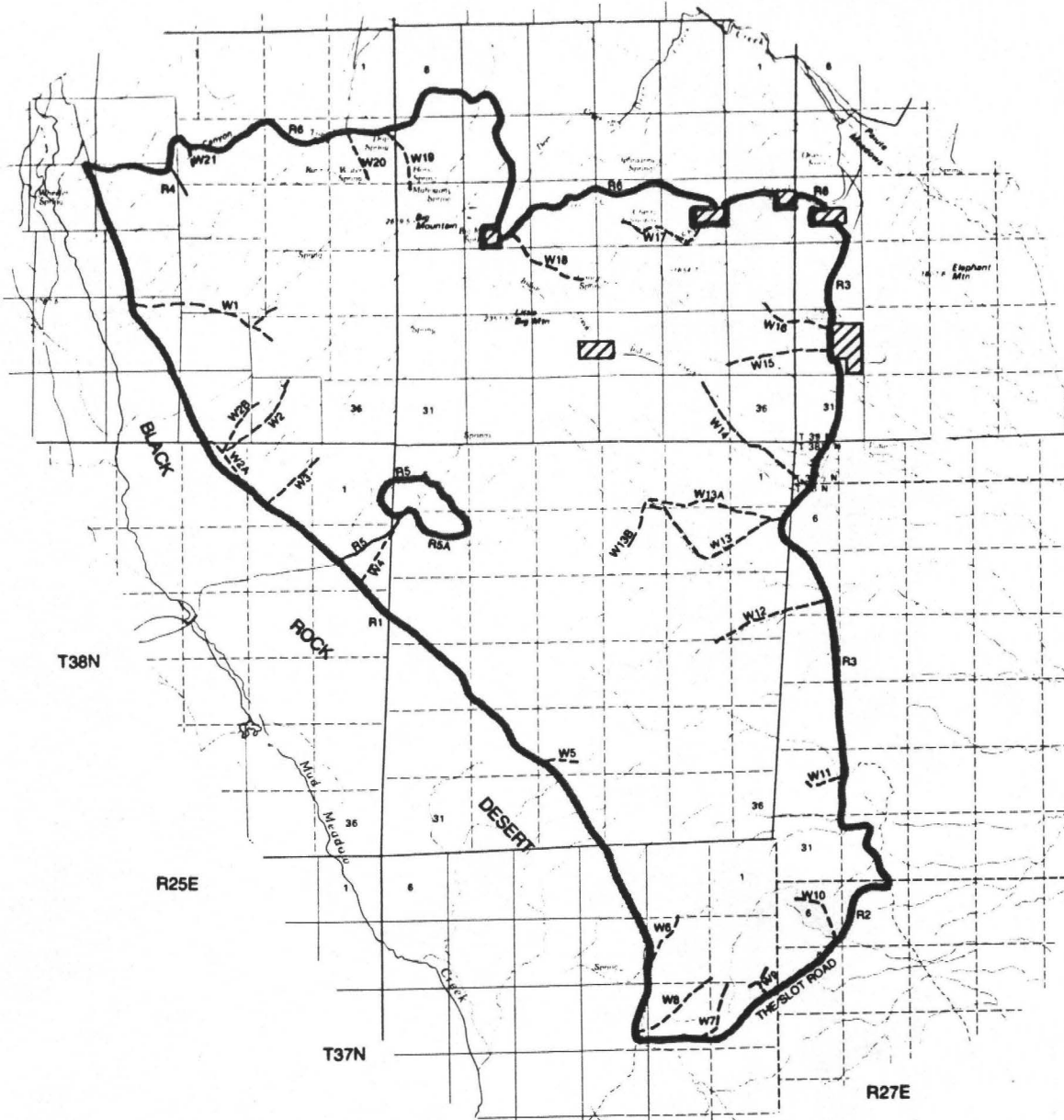
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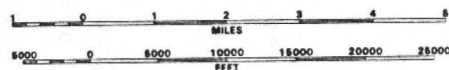
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R26E

R27E



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



NV-020-621 PAHUTE PEAK (SOUTH BLACK ROCK)



30' R 22 E 29 3115' R 25 E 32 33 119°00' E
 GERLACH 28 MI.

LEGEND

Approximate distances in miles between stars

ROADS

Scale: 1:250,000

0 5 10 15