G 6/11/82

Addendum to EA NV-020-0-38, Lava Beds Wild Horse/Burro Gathering Plan

This addendum will incorporate all of the realistic and viable public comments received on the draft EA NV-020-0-38. It will also analyze the results of the helicopter inventory of the wild horse/burro population conducted in August-September 1980 and the need to change the capture area boundaries.

I. Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives

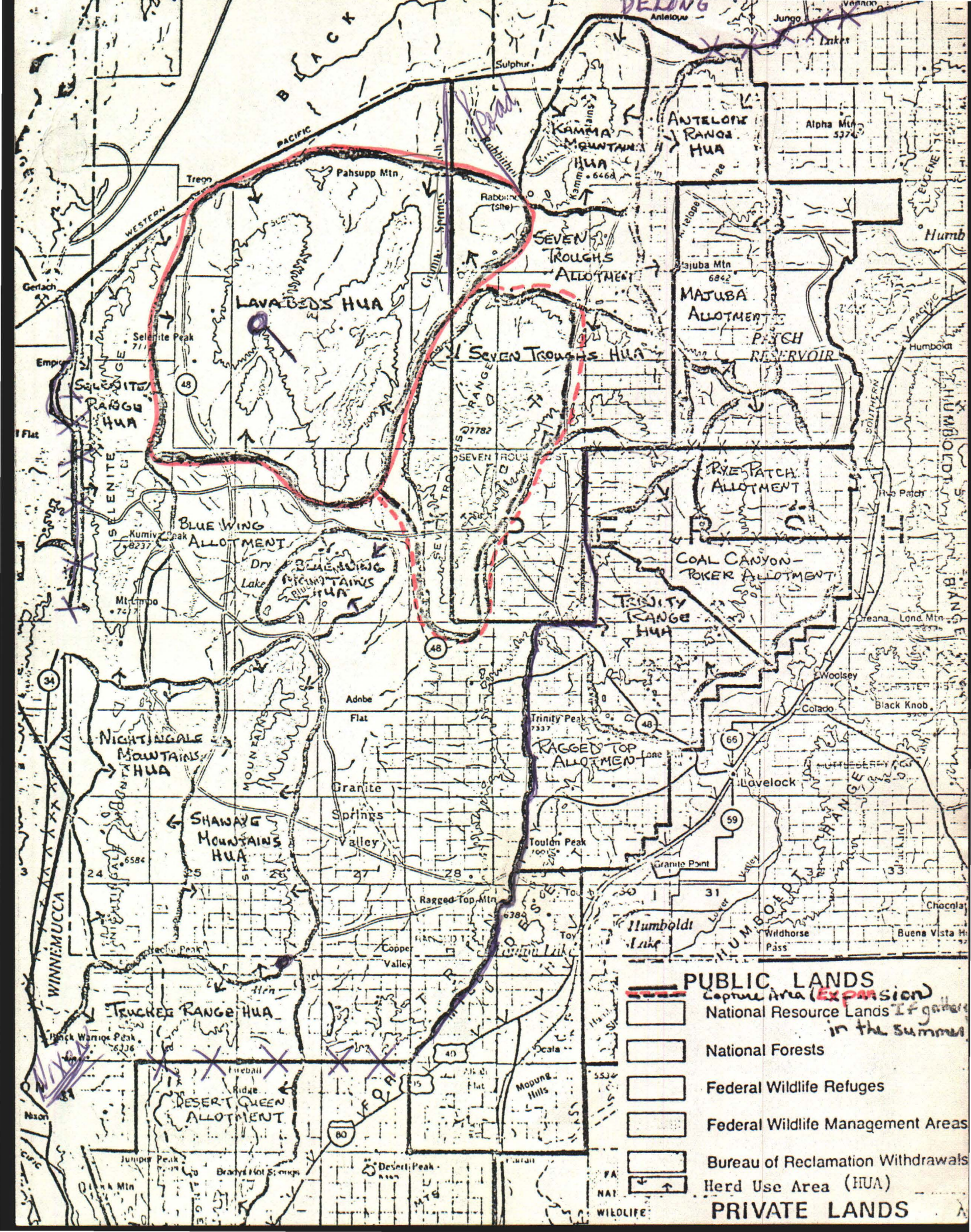
A. Background Data

Two aerial inventories have been conducted in the Lava Beds during 1980 (February and October). The February 27 inventory placed the total population at 789 wild horses and 38 wild burros. It was estimated that at the end of this year's foaling season the population would be 876 horses and 42 burros (based on 11%/year net increase). The October 2 inventory placed the population at 613 horses and 44 burros, which is approximately 263 horses short of the expected population. The Seven Troughs HUA, which borders the eastern side of the Lava Beds HUA, was also inventoried this year. This area has not been inventoried since the spring of 1977 and the population in 1980 was estimated to be 318 wild horses. The inventory, conducted in late September 1980 placed the population at 664 horses, 346 over the estimated number. An analysis of the information obtained from the inventories indicated that seasonal migration is occurring between the two HUAs. Therefore, the proposed capture area described in the draft EA will be expanded to include a portion of the Seven Troughs Range to insure that a significant amount of the year-round grazing pressure in the Lava Beds HUA will be reduced (see Figure 1).

The additional area is comprised of approximately 125,079 acres; 40,596 acres of public land in the Blue Wing Allotment and 82,796 acres of public land and 1,687 acres of private land in the Seven Troughs Allotment.

The Final Intensive Wilderness Recommendation from the State Director issued November 15, 1980, was for the release of Units 209 Razorback, 212 Lava Beds, and 235 North Lava Beds from further wilderness consideration.

318
59


BLACK
PACIFIC
WESTERN
Sulphur
Antelope
Jungo
Lakes
Alpha Mtn
5374
Trego
Pahsupp Mtn
Rabbithill Springs
Rabbithill (site)
KAMMA MOUNTAINS HUA
ANTELOPE RANGE HUA
SEVEN TROUGHS ALLOTMENT
MAJUBA ALLOTMENT
PATCH RESERVOIR
Majuba Mtn
6842
Gerlach
LAVA BEDS HUA
Selenite Peak
SELENITE RANGE HUA
SELENITE
SEVEN TROUGHS HUA
SEVEN TROUGHS RANGE
7782
SEVEN TROUGHS
RYE PATCH ALLOTMENT
Rye Patch
Humboldt
SOUTHERN
PACIFIC
BLUE WING ALLOTMENT
Kumiva Peak
8237
Dry Lake
BLUEWING MOUNTAINS HUA
COAL CANYON-POKER ALLOTMENT
Mt. Limbo
TRINITY RANGE HUA
Oreana
Long Mtn
Woolsey
Adobe Flat
Trinity Peak
7337
Colado
Black Knob
NIGHTINGALE MOUNTAINS HUA
RAGGED TOP ALLOTMENT
Granite Springs Valley
SHAWAVE MOUNTAINS HUA
Lovelock
Toulon Peak
Granite Point
Ragged Top Mtn.
6384
Humboldt Lake
Wildhorse Pass
Buena Vista
Chocolate
WINNEMUCCA
Copper Valley
TRUCKEE RANGE HUA
Black Warrior Peak
6336
Fireball Ridge
DESERT QUEEN ALLOTMENT
Mopung Hills
Juniper Peak
Brady's Hot Springs
Desert Peak
Nixon
WILDLIFE
PUBLIC LANDS
Capture Area (EXPANSION)
National Resource Lands
National Forests
Federal Wildlife Refuges
Federal Wildlife Management Areas
Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawals
Herd Use Area (HUA)
PRIVATE LANDS

The Interim Management Policy Procedures and Guidelines Regulations will apply to each of these areas until the time of their official release from the wilderness review process by the State Director following the 90-day public protest period, which is targeted for December 15, 1980.

If these areas are released by the State Director in January 1981, then they will be dropped from further wilderness consideration.

B. Proposed Action

Same as outlined in the draft EA.

C. Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Same as outlined in the draft EA.

II. Affected Environment

A. Climate and Air Quality

Same as described in the draft EA.

B. Geology, Topography, Minerals, and Alluvial Valleys

1. Geology

The northwestern and southern parts of the Seven Troughs Range are underlain by Triassic and Jurassic sedimentary rocks (Auld Lang Syne Group) that have been intruded and locally metamorphosed by Cretaceous granodiorite. The northeastern and central parts of the range are underlain by a thick sequence of rhyolitic and andesitic volcanic rocks of Tertiary age. The volcanic rocks that make up most of the east flank consist mainly of rhyolite flows that interfinger with and intrude into andesite rocks. Andesite is the dominant rock type to the south and west. High-angle normal faults with significant displacement have also created an impressive topographic relief for the Seven Troughs Range. The highest point in the range lies at an elevation of 7,782 feet.

2. Topography

Same as described in the draft EA.

3. Minerals

The mining history of the Seven Troughs Range dates back to the mid-1800's when gold was discovered in the east central part of the range. However, intensive development of this discovery did not take place until 1905. This development resulted with the formation of the Seven Troughs Mining District where notable gold production occurred until 1962. Tungsten deposits are located in the northwestern and southern parts of the range where sedimentary rocks consisting of shales and limestone are exposed.

4. Alluvial Valleys

Same as described in the draft EA.

C. Soils

Same as described in the draft EA.

D. Water

The northern three-fourths of the Seven Troughs Range contains numerous developed and undeveloped springs. These springs will contain water most of the year.

E. Vegetation

1. Terrestrial

The mid to higher elevations in the Seven Troughs Range are dominated by two major vegetative types; low sage-spiny hopsage and big sage-Sandberg bluegrass. The plants associated with these types are the same as those found in similar types in the Lava Beds HUA.

2. Aquatic

Same as described in the draft EA.

3. Condition and Trend Studies

The Nevada Department of Wildlife will be contacted prior to the establishment of the range studies program to ensure that areas critically important to wildlife can be monitored.

4. Sensitive Plants

Same as described in the draft EA.

F. Animals

1. Aquatic

Same as described in the draft EA.

2. Terrestrial (Wildlife, Domestic Livestock, Reptiles, and Amphibians)

Same as described in the draft EA.

3. Threatened or Endangered

Same as described in the draft EA.

G. Cultural Features

1. Preshistoric

Same as described in the draft EA.

2. Historic

There have not been any sites eligible for, nominated to, or listed on the National Register of Historic Places as of September 23, 1980.

H. Aesthetics/Visual Resources

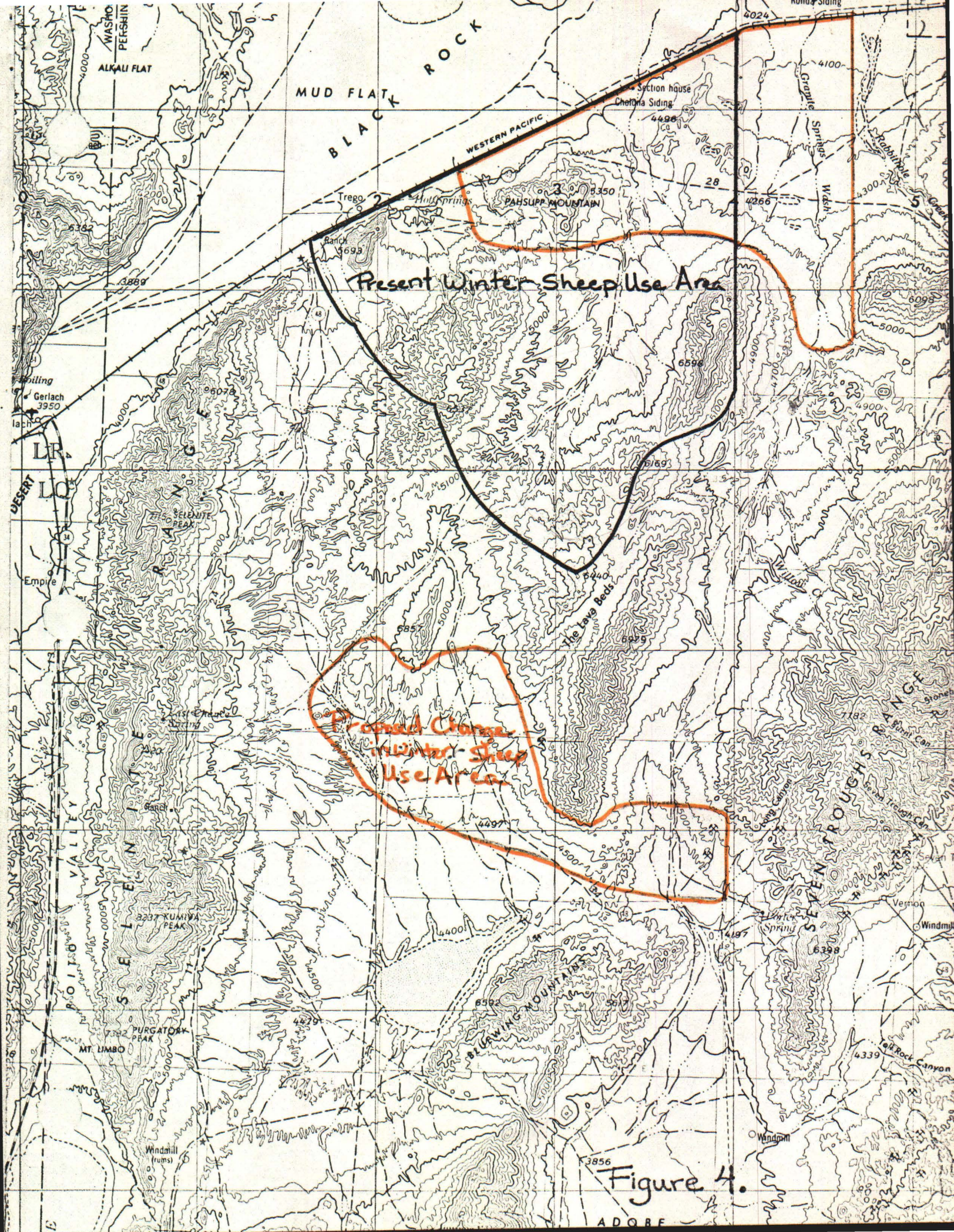
Since there will be no permanent structures or disturbances to the ground, a VRM contrast rating will not be required.

I. Recreation Resources (Existing and Potential)

Same as described in the draft EA.

J-M. (Social Aspects, Economics, ACEC's, Land Uses)

Same as described in the draft EA.


Present Winter Sheep Use Area
Proposed Change in Winter Sheep Use Area
MUD FLAT
BLACK ROCK
ALKALI FLAT
WESTERN PACIFIC
Section house
Cholona Siding
Trego
Hot Springs
PAHSUPP MOUNTAIN
Granite Springs
Rabbithole Wash
Gerlach
3950
Empire
SELENITE PEAK
SELENITE RANGE
DESERT
The Lava Beds
Willow Creek
Last Chance
Ranch
KUMIVA PEAK
PURGATORY PEAK
MT. LIMBO
SELENITE VALLEY
BELAWING MOUNTAIN
Vernon
Windmill
Water Spring
Windmill (ruins)
Wendell
Salt Rock Canyon
ADOBE
Figure 4.

III. Analysis of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

A. Proposed Action

1. Anticipated Impacts

If sufficient snow accumulation is not available to satisfy the daily water requirement of the domestic livestock in the proposed area of winter sheep use (see Figure 4), the operator will have to haul additional water to satisfy the needs of the livestock. The economic impact on the sheep operator is not possible to discuss at this time as it is not possible to determine the amount of water to be hauled.

Changing the area of winter sheep use will have the same effect on the vegetation and soil resource in the majority of the HUA as described in the draft EA. The area's delineated in Figure 4, as the proposed winter sheep use area, are a considerable distance away from any reliable water source, and therefore support a significant amount of usable vegetation.

By obtaining improved distribution, the range will be more uniformly grazed thus relieving the pressure on the vegetative and soil resources. Habitat recovery will be greatly enhanced by the implementation of this action.

A sufficient number of wild horses and burros would reamin to ensure the maintenance of a viable and productive herd; until such time as a decision is reached through the Bureau Planning System that will determine the optimum number of animals to be maintained in the area.

2. Possible Mitigating Measures

Same as described in the draft EA.

3. Adverse Impacts That Cannot Be Avoided

Studies conducted on salt-desert winter sheep ranges indicated a cost per head per month for a 10-mile haul of water to be 7 to 14 cents (Hutchings, Selar S. Drive the water to the sheep. Nat. Wool Grower, 36(4): 10-11, 48. 1946). Using the 1979 gasoline price index, this figure would now be 33 to 66 cents/head/month. Winter bands of 2,800 to 3,000 head would require a 1,000 gallon tank plus ten 100-gallon troughs. If the operator does not own this equipment or a truck of sufficient size to transport it, he would have to make arrangements to rent or buy it.

B-G. Alternatives I, II, III, IV, V, and VI

1-3. Anticipated Impacts, Possible Mitigating Measures, Adverse Impacts That Cannot Be Avoided

Same as described in the draft EA.

IV. Relationship Between Short-term Use and Long-term Productivity

Same as described in the draft EA.

V. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

Same as described in the draft EA.

VI. Persons, Groups, and Government Agencies Consulted

Same as described in the draft EA.

VII. Public Interest and/or Controversy

See attached letters.

VIII. Summary Conclusion

Same as described in the draft EA.

Addendum to Lava Beds
WH/B Capture Plan

If priorities for horse gathering within the state shift there may be a need to use the water trapping method in the Lava Beds area. This method does not actively drive horses into a trap and therefore water trapping can be done during the foaling season. This method uses an enclosure constructed around a water source, as the horses enter the enclosure to drink the gates are closed and the horses are trapped. The horses would then be loaded and the trap would be made ready for another band. This method of trapping causes the least amount of stress and physical strain and is not detrimental to the health of foals and pregnant females. At the end of the foaling season the horses can then be gathered with the use of a helicopter if numbers have not been attained.

1. What is the reason for the shortage of 263 horses at the Oct 2 count?

2. If horses from Lava Beds are using TT - then your round gray in Lava would not be a problem.

3. Is the rise in TT separated: horse/cow?

4.