IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

4700
(NV-03480)

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CARSON CITY DISTRICT OFFICE
1535 Hot Springs Rd., Ste. 300
Carson City, Nevada 89701

3/17/89

Dear Interested Party:

After reviewing commments on the proposed exclosures for Rose Spring and Hole-in-the-Wall Spring, it became apparent that there was a misunderstanding to the extent of excluding wild horses from the springs. The exclosures are designed to protect only the sources allowing water to flow both inside and outside of the exclosures for the benefit of all animals. Therefore, the proposed projects will proceed as planned.

We appreciate your comments.

Sincerely yours,

James M. Phillips
Acting Area Manager
Lahontan Resource Area

m 3-17-89

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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CARSON CITY DISTRICT OFFICE
1535 Hot Springs Rd., Ste. 300
Carson City, Nevada 89701

4700
(NV-03480)

MAR 17 1989

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed are copies of draft Environmental Assessments (EAs) for two proposed spring source protection exclosures.

Please review these documents and submit your comments to this office by April 20, 1989, to be considered in the final EAs.

Sincerely yours,

James M. Phillips
Area Manager
Lahontan Resource Area

Enclosures(2)

1. Rose Spring Source Protection EA, 4pp.
2. Hole-in-the-Wall Spring Source Protection EA, 4pp.

HOLE-IN-THE-WALL SPRING SOURCE PROTECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
EA # NV-030-99019

I. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The purpose of this project is to protect a spring from trampling and severe utilization of riparian vegetation by wild horses and cattle. The proposed action is to construct a protective fence (1200' in length) around Hole-In-The-Wall Spring - T. 24 N., R. 38 E., Sec. 24, SW1/4SE1/4. The proposed fence is designed to allow wildlife entry.

There are two issues relevant to this project: (1) whether or not this project impairs wilderness qualities within the Augusta Mountains WSA; and, (2) riparian and watershed protection.

There is an existing maintained road outside of the WSA which borders the spring providing excellent access to the spring. Maintenance access every five years would be by vehicle. The fencing materials would consist of wood posts, rails and wire. The post holes will be either hand-dug or dug by hand held gasoline powered augers. The size of the protective exclosure would be approximately 1/2 acre.

The other alternative is no spring source protection.

II. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The spring is located in the Augusta Mountains at an elevation of 4000 feet. Vegetation of the immediate area includes: salt cedar, greasewood, cheat grass and rabbitbrush. Vegetation of the surrounding area includes: needle and thread grass, indian rice grass, bottle brush squirrel tail, blue grass, low sage, shadescale, rabbitbrush and greasewood. Reclamation potential of the area by revegetation is good, however, reclamation of the area will not be required since this exclosure will allow re-establishment of natural vegetation.

Existing uses of the area include wild horses and cattle as well as utilization as wildlife habitat.

Wilderness characteristics of the Augusta Mountains WSA have been described in detail in the Winnemucca Wilderness Recommendations Final EIS 1987 and may be summarized as follows:

> The entire 89,372 acres in the Augusta Mountains WSA are recommended non-suitable for wilderness designation. The WSA is 17 miles long, and ranges from 2 to 13 miles wide. The southern portion of the area is a desert piedmont which is uniformly hilly, with shallow washes and gullies. The northern half of the area includes Cain Mountain (limestone monolith) and deeply cut drainages. Elevations range from 3,500 feet on the southern and western boundaries to 8,400 feet on Cain Mountain. Boundary roads along with 11 cherry stemmed roads provide good access to the WSA. The desert piedmont supports low sagebrush and rabbit brush. A dense stand of pinyon-

juniper woodland covers the higher elevations from 6,000 to 8,000 feet. The WSA was determined to be primarily natural. A few range improvements, including developed springs, a well, corrals, 2 fencelines, a cabin, about 4 miles of vehicle ways and 17 miles of cherry stem roads are the most significant manmade intrusions. These intrusions are almost entirely in the desert piedmont areas. The Augusta Mountain Range itself is virtually free of intrusions. Outside sights and sounds include several small mining areas, occasional vehicular traffic along the boundary, minor ranching activities and low flying military aircraft. Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are considered outstanding. The landscape throughout the Augusta Mountain Range provides excellent vegetative and topographic screening, with poor screening throughout the desert piedmont areas. The entire WSA is currently subject to periodic and extensive military flights which detract from opportunities for solitude. The WSA is extremely scenic. Wild horses, mule deer, valley quail, chuckar and a wide diversity of smaller wildlife are found in the area.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Proposed Action

Construction of the protective fence may allow continued flow of the spring and would improve water quality, protect the spring head from erosion, and allow for re-establishment of riparian vegetation. The only vegetation that would be disturbed during fence construction would be that which is displaced while digging post holes and that which is compacted as a result of gaining access to the site.

The project would add an artificial man-made structure to the WSA, however, the project is on the WSA boundary. The proposed project will not change the area significantly with respect to its visual resources nor should it affect the WSA's suitability for preservation as wilderness. The project meets the nonimpairment criteria of the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP). The District Archaeologist determined that there would not be a conflict with cultural resources.

B. No Action

Under this alternative, wild horses and cattle will continue to utilize the spring area, resulting in continued severe trampling of the spring source, continued poor water quality, depletion of riparian vegetation, and a continued hazard of erosion downslope from the spring head.

Under this alternative, the WSA's suitability for preservation as wilderness will not change.

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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CARSON CITY DISTRICT OFFICE
1535 Hot Springs Rd., Ste. 300
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Interested Party:

After reviewing commments on the proposed exclosures for Rose Spring and Hole-in-the-Wall Spring, it became apparent that there was a misunderstanding to the extent of excluding wild horses from the springs. The exclosures are designed to protect only the sources allowing water to flow both inside and outside of the exclosures for the benefit of all animals. Therefore, the proposed projects will proceed as planned.

We appreciate your comments.

Sincerely yours,

James M. Phillips
Area Manager
Lahontan Resource Area

IV. CONSULTATION/COORDINATION

A. Public Involvement

Copies of the Proposed Action Summary Notice will be sent to those persons/groups listed in the IMP Mailing List and this EA will be sent to those persons listed in Instruction Memorandum number NV-85-345, change 2 and the permittee (Jerry Kelly). Copies of this Environmental Assessment will be sent to those persons/groups on the IMP Mailing List upon request.

B. Participating Staff

Prepared by:

[signature] 23 Jan 89
Lahontan Area Wild horse and Burro Specialist — Date

Reviewed by:

[signature] 30 Jan 89
District Wildlife Biologist — Date

Timothy B. Remmenga 1-30-89
District Wild Horse and Burro Specialist — Date

Jerry F. Knight 1/23/89
Wilderness/Recreation Specialist — Date

Bi W. Haloff 1/23/89
District Archeologist — Date

P.J. Anderson 1/23/89
District Staff Range Specialist — Date

Paul Leemi 1/24/89
Environmental Coordinator — Date

ROSE SPRING SOURCE PROTECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

#NV 030-89018

I. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The purpose of this project is to protect a spring from trampling and severe utilization of riparian vegetation by wild horses. The proposed action is to construct a protective fence (600' in circumference) around Rose Spring - T. 24 N., R. 40 E., Sec. 6, SW1/4SW1/4. The proposed fence is designed to allow wildlife entry.

There are two issues relevant to this project: (1) whether or not this project impairs wilderness qualities within the Augusta Mountains WSA; and, (2) riparian and watershed protection.

There is no existing access established to the spring. Maintenance access every five years would be by foot or on horseback. The fencing materials would consist of wood posts and rails. The posts holes would be either hand-dug or dug by hand held gasoline powered augers. The size of the protective exclosure would be approximately 1/2 acre. Construction materials will be brought in by a helicopter. Construction personal will gain access via helicopters, horses or by foot.

The other alternative is no spring source protection.

II. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The spring is located in the Augusta Mountains at an elevation of 6000 feet on a mountain side slope. Vegetation of the immediate area includes: wild roses, rabbitbrush, pinyon pine and juniper. Vegetation of the surrounding area includes: blue grass and Wyoming big sage. Reclamation potential of the area by revegetation is good, however, reclamation of the area will not be required since this exclosure will allow re-establishment of natural vegetation.

Existing uses of the area include wild horses as well as utilization as wildlife habitat.

Wilderness characteristics of the Augusta Mountains WSA have been described in detail in the Winnemucca Wilderness Recommendations Final EIS 1987 and may be summarized as follows:

> The entire 89,372 acres in the Augusta Mountains WSA are recommended non-suitable for wilderness designation. The WSA is 17 miles long, and ranges from 2 to 13 miles wide. The southern portion of the area is a desert piedmont which is uniformly hilly, with shallow washes and gullies. The northern half of the area includes Cain Mountain (limestone monolith) and deeply cut drainages. Elevations range from 3,500 feet on the southern and western boundaries to 8,400 feet on Cain Mountain. Boundary roads along with 11 cherry stem roads provide good access to the WSA. The desert piedmont supports low sagebrush and rabbit brush. A dense stand of pinyon-

juniper woodland covers the higher elevations from 6,000 to 8,000 feet. The WSA was determined to be primarily natural. A few range improvements, including developed springs, a well, corrals, 2 fence lines, a cabin, about 4 miles of vehicle ways and 17 miles of cherry stem roads are the most significant manmade intrusions. These intrusions are almost entirely in the desert piedmont areas. The Augusta Mountain Range itself is virtually free of intrusions. Outside sights and sounds include several small mining areas, occasional vehicular traffic along the boundary, minor ranching activities and low flying military aircraft. Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are considered outstanding. The landscape throughout the Augusta Mountain Range provides excellent vegetative and topographic screening, with poor screening throughout the desert piedmont areas. The entire WSA is currently subject to periodic and extensive military flights which detract from opportunities for solitude. The WSA is extremely scenic. Wild horses, mule deer, valley quail, chuckar and a wide diversity of smaller wildlife are found in the area.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Proposed Action

Construction of the protective fence would ensure continued flow of the spring, improve water quality, protect the spring head from erosion, and allow for re-establishment of riparian vegetation. The only vegetation that would be disturbed during fence construction would be that which is displaced while digging post holes and which is compacted as a result of hiking while gaining access to the site.

The project would add an artificial man-made structure to the WSA. The proposed project will not change the area significantly with respect to its visual resources nor should it affect the WSA's suitability for preservation as wilderness. The project meets the non-impairment criteria of the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP). The District Archaeologist determined that there would not be a conflict with cultural resources.

B. No Action

Under this alternative, wild horses will continue to utilize the spring area, resulting in continued severe trampling of the spring source, continued poor water quality, depletion of riparian vegetation, and a continued hazard of erosion down slope from the spring head.

Under this alternative, the WSA's suitability for preservation as wilderness will not change.

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A. Public Involvement

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B. Participating Staff

Prepared by:

John Artl — 23 Jan 89
Lahontan Area Wild horse and Burro Specialist — Date

Reviewed by:

William A Bateman — 24 Jan 89
District Wildlife Biologist — Date

Timothy B. Remmert — 1-30-89
District Wild Horse and Burro Specialist — Date

Jerry J. Knight — 1/23/89
Wilderness/Recreation Specialist — Date

Ric W. Hatoff — 1/23/89
District Archeologist — Date

P.G. Anderson — 1/24/89
District Staff Range Specialist — Date

Paul Loomis — 1/26/89
Environmental Coordinator — Date

6-23-89

WHOA
Wild Horse Organized Assistance, INc.
Post Office Box 555
Reno, Nevada 89504
702-851-4817

June 23, 1989

Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior
Carson City District
1535 Hot Springs Road, suite 300
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Mr. Phillips:

Thank you very much for your notice pertaining to the protection exclosures around Rose Spring and Holein-the-Wall Spring. I apologize for being late commenting, but I do want the District to understand that we support the protection of riparian values.

The EA appears to mitigate any wilderness intrusion by the non-vehicular mode of transporting. Surely the degraded springs would be a greater impairment of the wilderness qualities.

Although the EA does not state it, I assume water will be made down from the spring head. Please advise, if this is not the case.

Most sincerely,

Dawn Y. Lappin (Mrs.)
Director

cc. Board