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# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

### WINNEMUCCA DISTRICT OFFICE

705 East 4th Street

Winnemucca, Nevada 89445



*Blue Wing/  
Seven Troughs*

~~August 14, 1987~~

IN REPLY REFER TO:

4700

(NV-023.5)

Commission for the Preservation  
of Wild Horses  
c/o Terri Jay, Executive Director  
625 Fairview, Suite 111  
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Ms. Jay:

Enclosed for your records is a copy of the approved Blue Wing-Seven Troughs Wild Horse and Burro Removal Plan.

All comments and suggestions received for the draft removal plan have been incorporated into this final plan.

Based upon public comments/suggestions, and a shift in state-wide funding priorities, the following changes were made to the final plan:

I. Introduction

The draft plan proposed removing 653 excess wild horses. The final plan proposes to remove 1,777 excess wild horses and 23 excess burros. (Additional funds were received after the draft plan was written.)

II. A. General Area Description-Background Data

This section was expanded due to the increased numbers of animals and to additional areas from which they are to be removed.

II. C. Population Data

This section was also expanded to reflect the proposal as outlined in the final plan.

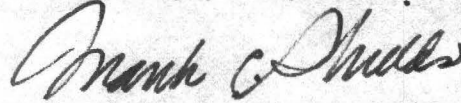
IV. Removal Plan and Methods

A. Trapping and Care of Animals

4. A stipulation was added requiring the floor of the loading chute be covered with non-skid material.

Thank you for your interest in the Winnemucca District's Wild Horse & Burro program.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Frank C. Shields".

Frank C. Shields  
District Manager

Enclosure:

Blue Wing-Seven Troughs Wild Horse and Burro Removal Plan

8/25/87

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Winnemucca District Office

Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area

WILD HORSE/BURRO MANAGEMENT

BLUE WING-SEVEN TROUGHS CRMP AREA

BLUE WING WILD HORSE AND BURRO REMOVAL PLAN

## I. Introduction

The intent of this removal (gathering) plan is to outline the methods and procedures to be used in removing approximately 1,777 wild horses and 23 burros from six Herd Management Areas (HMAs) and four Herd Areas (HAs) from the Blue Wing Planning Unit. Refer to the attached maps for specific locations and to II. C. for additional specifics. The removal operation is scheduled to begin about September 1, 1987, and be completed by November 15, 1987.

## II. General Area Description-Background Data

### A. Location and Land Status

The southern end of the planning area is located approximately 40 air miles northeast of Reno, Nevada. The area is approximately 75 miles long and 45 miles wide (see Figure 1). Elevations range from 4,000 - 8,300 feet in the planning area.

All six of the HMAs and three of the HAs are located within the Blue Wing/Seven Troughs Coordinated Resource Management and Planning (CRMP) area. The other (Trinity Range) HA is located in the near vicinity of the Seven Troughs and Kamma Mountains HMA and lies within the checkerboard land ownership pattern.

The vegetation in the area is characterized by juniper-sagebrush types in the higher elevations, to sagebrush-grass types at moderate elevations, to shadscale-shrub and greasewood types in the valley bottoms.

The area to be considered for the wild horse and burro gathering consists of all or part of seven separate allotments: Blue Wing, Rye Patch, Coal-Canyon-Poker, Ragged Top, Seven Troughs, Majuba and Desert Queen. The allotments are located in the Blue Wing Planning Unit of the Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area in the Winnemucca District.

Land Status in the CRMP area is as follows:

<u>Public Lands (%)</u>	<u>Private Land (%)</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>
1,279,299 Acres (85)	227,371 Acres (15)	1,506,670

There are nine mountain ranges within the boundary of the CRMP area: (1) Antelope Range, (2) Kamma Mountains, (3) Lava Beds, (4) Seven Troughs, (5) Selenite Range, (6) Blue Wing Mountains, (7) Nightingale Mountains, (8) Shawave Mountains, and (9) Truckee Range. The mountain ranges are typically separated by valley floors ranging from quite small (2-3 miles across) to extremely large (10-15 miles across). All of the Antelope Range and Truckee Range and a portion of the Nightingale and Shawave Mountains are in a checkerboard land pattern.

Land status in the Trinity Range is 46,215 acres of private land (34%) and 89,712 acres of public land (66%).

## B. Reference to Land Use Plans (LUPs)

The LUP for the Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area was approved on July 9, 1982. The Blue Wing-Seven Troughs CRMP document was approved on July 24, 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 HAs.

## C. Population Data

The proposed removal would occur in the following HMAs and HAs, and in the priority as listed in descending order.

Herd Management Area/Herd Area Name	Appropriate Management Level (AML) Horses/Burros	<sup>1/</sup> 1987 Estimated Population Horses/Burros	Proposed Number to be Removed Horses/Burros
Antelope Range (HA)	0/0	422/4	422/4
Lava Beds (HMA)	} — 640/104 — —	1,731/122 — —	1,091/18
Seven Troughs (HMA)			
Kamma Mtns. (HMA)			
Selenite Range (HA)	0/0	36/1	36/1
Trinity Range (HA)	0/0	29/0	29/0
Truckee Range (HA)	0/0	122/0	122/0
Shawave Mtns. (HMA)	} — 237/39 — —	604/48 — —	77/0
Nightingale Mtns. (HMA)			
Blue Wing Mtns. (HMA)			
TOTAL	877/143	2,944/175	1,777/23

<sup>1/</sup> The population estimates were derived using the BLM 4730 manual technique of calibrating an index from removal data in conjunction with pre- and post-capture censuses, and an 11% per year rate of increase.

## 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 has recently been developed for the Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area. A major portion of this plan 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 Decisions on June 30, 1982. The decisions received the State Director's concurrence on July 9, 1982. The MFP III wild horse and burro (WH/B) decision number 1.3 addresses HAS that are in a checkerboard land pattern. It states:

"Remove wild horses and burros from the checkerboard Herd Areas (HA's) unless a cooperative agreement providing for the retention and protection of wild horses and burros is consummated with the affected private landowners."

The Bureau has not received any cooperative agreements to maintain wild horses or burros on private lands in the planning area.

The MFP III 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.

A CRMP plan was approved and signed for the Blue Wing-Seven Troughs area on July 24, 1984. The group recommended the appropriate management level of 877 horses and 143 burros for the CRMP area. This level was approved by the District Manager, and will be used as a starting point for monitoring purposes.

#### IV. Removal Plan and Methods

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. Wild horses will be rounded up through the use of a helicopter. The horses 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 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 horses are in the trap the gate will be closed by hand. Should a horse break back at the trap, it will 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 ten temporary trap and corral sites (see map) will be required to remove the 1,800 excess animals. Additional temporary trap sites may be necessary if the animals disperse once removal operations start. Since the largest concentration of wild horses is in the west one-half of the Subunit, removal operations will start at trap location #1, then move to location #2, etc.
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 stray 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.

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 40 miles per load.

VI. Signatures

Lead responsibility:

Richard D. Wheeler  
Richard D. Wheeler, Wild Horse and Burro  
Specialist

7/20/87  
Date

Gerald L. Moritz  
Gerald L. Moritz, Environmental Coordinator

22 July 87  
Date

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

7-23-87  
Date

Submitted to State Director by:

Frank C. Shields  
Frank C. Shields  
District Manager, Winnemucca

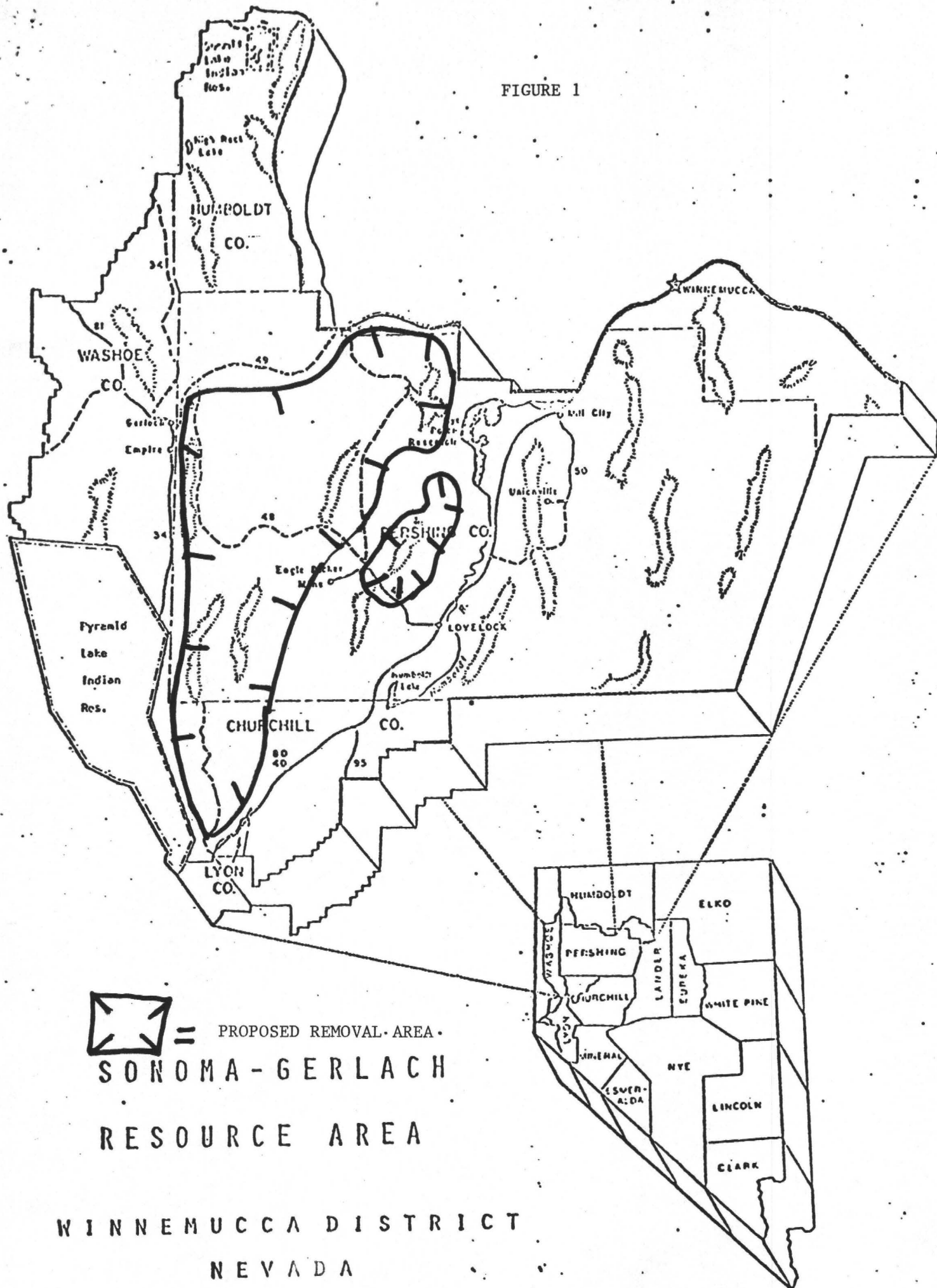
7/23/87  
Date

Approved by:

E. Spang  
Edward F. Spang  
State Director, Nevada

8/7/87  
Date

FIGURE 1



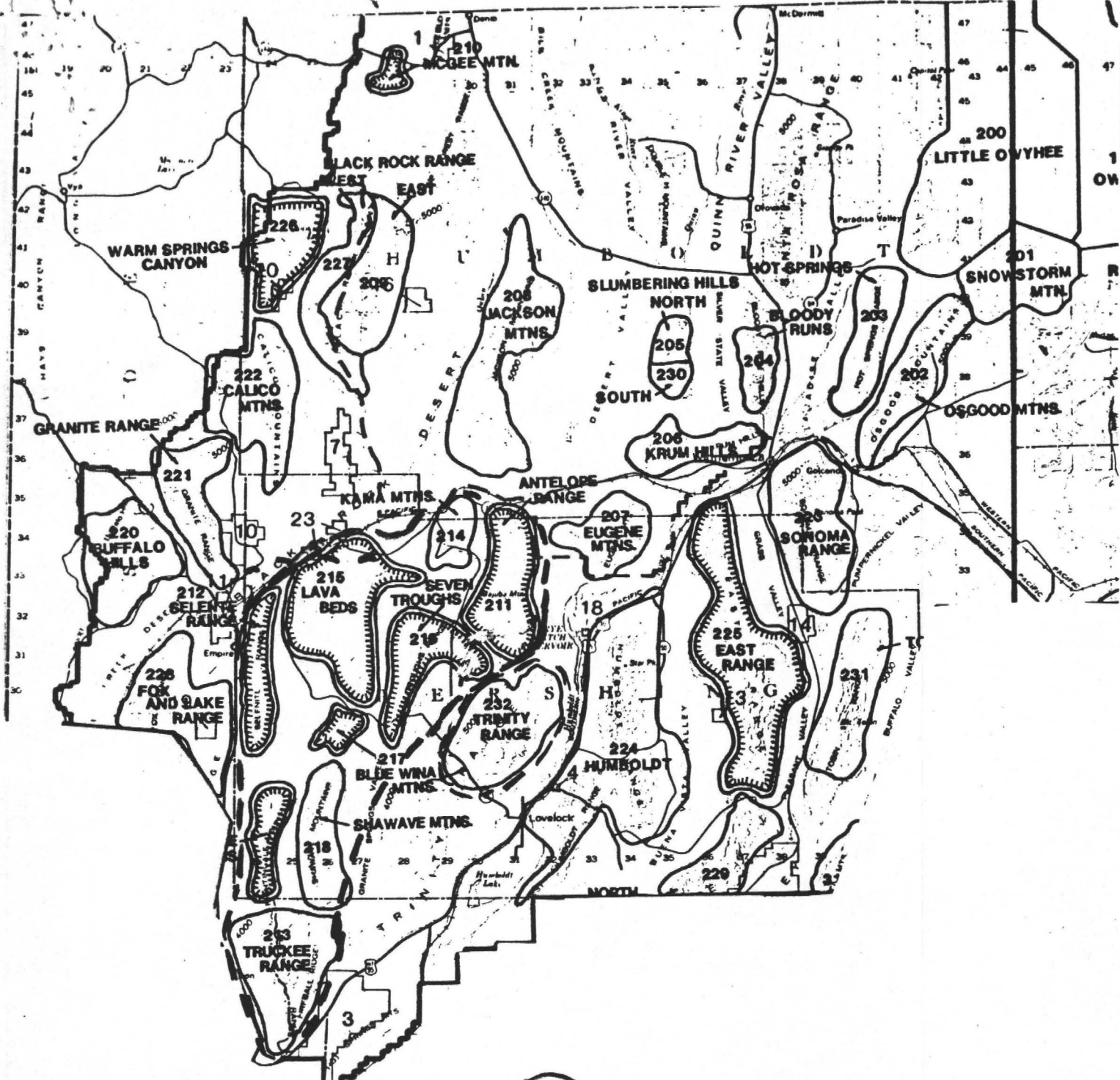
= PROPOSED REMOVAL AREA.




SONOMA-GERLACH

RESOURCE AREA

WINNEMUCCA DISTRICT

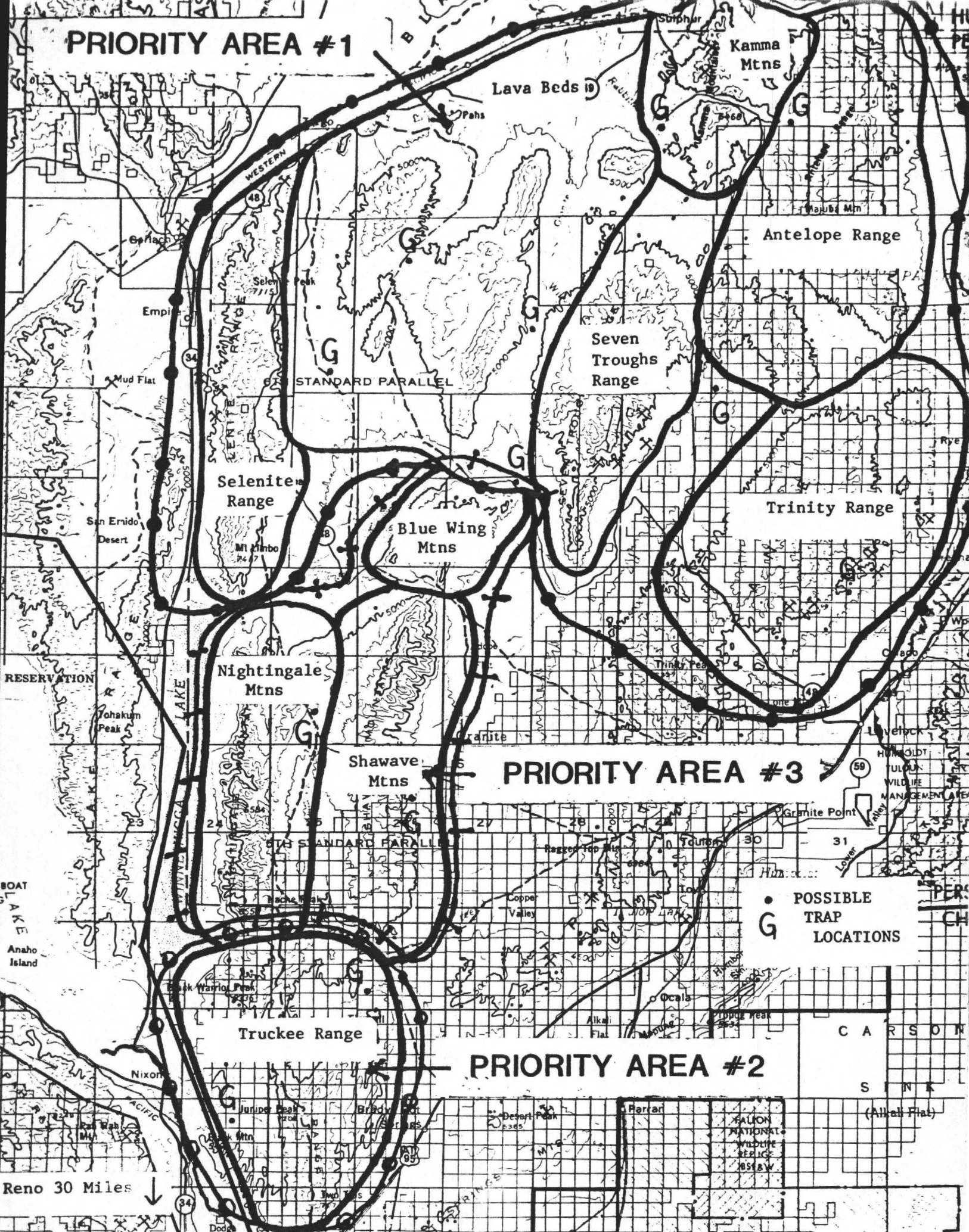
NEVADA



-  WILD HORSE HERD AREAS
-  WILD HORSE AND BURRO HERD AREAS
-  PROPOSED REMOVAL AREA BOUNDARY



# PRIORITY AREA #1



# PRIORITY AREA #3

# PRIORITY AREA #2

● POSSIBLE TRAP LOCATIONS  
G TRAP LOCATIONS

Reno 30 Miles

SALON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
1851&W

(Alkali Flat)