

BOB MILLER
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

11/9/93
M
CATHERINE BARCOMB
Executive Director



**COMMISSION FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES**

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Reno, Nevada

November 9, 1993

Bill Baker, Manager
Wells Resource Area
BLM-Elko District Office
3900 E. Idaho Street
Box 831
Elko, Nevada 89801

Dear Mr. Baker,

The Commissions Executive Director Catherine Barcomb and Commissioner Lappin, met with yourself and other representatives from the BLM on Tuesday, November 2, 1993, to discuss the issues of concern in the Wells Resource Area, particularly the appeal of the Interim Allotment Management Plan (AMP), the Amendment to the Resource Management Plan (RMP) affecting wild horses, and the Full Force and Effect Gather Plan for the Spruce-Pequop and Goshute Herd Management Areas. We explained that we would consult our legal counsel as to the appeal we had filed. November 4, 1993, we met with our legal counsel and then contacted yourself and State Office requesting that you file the appeal.

The Commission was then contacted November 5, 1993, by BLM State Office requesting again that we withdraw our appeal of the Interim Allotment Management Plan.

After discussion with our Attorney, we are requesting in writing, again that you file our appeal with IBLA. We feel:

1) the content and influence of the Interim AMP agreement influenced the decisions made in the amendment to the RMP;

2) the Interim AMP and the current intent to amend the RMP again for introduction of Elk influenced the decisions made for wild horses in the RMP;

3) the decisions were arbitrary and biased against wild horses;

Bill Baker, Manager
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4) and the decisions against horses in the RMP were done to reserve forage for livestock and the pending Elk decision;

We feel we are forced to appeal for the reasons stated above. Please follow through with our request, if our appeal is not filed immediately as we have formerly requested we will be forced to turn this over to our legal counsel for action. Please notify us in writing if this has or has not been done. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Barcomb". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

CATHERINE BARCOMB
Executive Director

11/9/93 Cathy



SIERRA CLUB

Toiyabe Chapter - Nevada and Eastern California
P.O. Box 8096, Reno, Nevada 89507

Nov. 9, 1993

Bill Baker, Manager
BLM/Wells RA
PO Box 831
Elko, NV 89801

Dear Manager Baker,

I appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and Letitia Gallegas of your staff regarding the proposed Spruce Allotment grazing actions in the Wells Resource Area. Although I did not receive answers to the questions I brought to the meeting, I am quite willing to defer BLM responses to the allotment evaluation (AE) process which is just beginning on this allotment. Please consider the questions part of the scoping for the AE.

You again requested that the Sierra Club and NRDC withdraw our appeals of the Spruce Allotment decisions. I explained that in your letter of 8/23/93, you stated that you were rescinding "authorization of the interim AMP and Spruce and Valley Mountain Rangeline and Allotment Agreement until such time as the appeals are resolved." Since withdrawing our appeals might constitute such a "resolution," we were concerned that our action would prompt a reversal of the rescision of BLM authorization of the faulty documents. You stated that this was not the intent of the statement.

If I am correct in my understanding of your position, then the Sierra Club and NRDC are willing to withdraw our appeals after we receive your written commitment to defer any decision on the interim AMP and rangeline agreement until the completion of the allotment evaluation process. Please also confirm that, in that process, actual use data since 1986 and all available monitoring data will be used to evaluate whether grazing numbers and practices are meeting land use plan and other federal requirements.

Please respond in writing as soon as possible and send a copy of your response to Johanna Wald, NRDC, 1350 New York, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide our input directly to you on the Spruce Allotment.

Sincerely,

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Rose Strickland, Chair
Public Lands Committee

11-2-93 Meeting

Bill Baker, Tom P., Brad Hines, C.B., Rose Strickland
Leticia

June 91

State Director, permittees, BLM, - decision was made
to go ahead w/amp

1 1/2 years in writing - 24 re-writes

issued interim AMP

since original in 87/88 was issued
he was directed that the CCC was
already followed

he was directed that to re-issue EA
which was supposed to amount to CCC
therefore the appeal didn't have to be
filed, also since original was rescinded

Spence^{A.} Evaluation - May 94

elk amendment to RMP is being worked on
^(resource area)
700[↓] elk now / Pilot Pack - herbivory (BBS WEIGHTS ALLOT.)

ORIGINALLY amendment was just for HMA terminology
RMP

* nothing else will take a reduction to introduce elk

Spruce Allotment

Conversion ratios: 9 to 1?

no manual conversion rate (policy)

⇒ no conversion w/out current data

hold off on decision until the AE is completed

critical winter base habitat

WOOD HILLS ALLOTMENT - Demand

Questions for Bill Baker/Wells RA re: Spruce Allotment
11/2/93

1. justification for proposed sheep to cattle conversion ratio:

- what is BLM manual direction?
- why isn't the 1:5 or 20% ratio being considered by BLM?
- since this allotment is physically suited to winter sheep use, why is a change to cattle use being considered?
- how much of this allotment is suitable/unsuitable for cattle use?
- without monitoring data, how can BLM justify any conversion factor other than the standard 1:5 ratio?

2. carrying capacity of the Spruce Allotment

- what are the actual use data since 1986? why weren't these data included in the interim AMP? Doesn't the BLM actually know how many cattle and sheep have used public lands in this allotment since 1986?
- what are the livestock utilization data since 1986?
- how old are the last carrying capacity estimates?
- how can the BLM base stocking levels/conversion ratios in 1993 on ancient data?
- when is the first allotment evaluation ever planned for the Spruce Allotment?
- are the proposed extensive range improvements, including 11,000 acres of crested wheatgrass seedings, intended to sustain an artificial level of livestock use on this allotment?
- are stocking levels or the conversion ratio based on range improvements which have yet been constructed?
- what stocking levels do available monitoring data support?
- why set an "interim" stocking level number now and change it when the Allotment Evaluation is scheduled?
- how can BLM predict improvements in range condition and trend from various alternatives in the EA without knowing the actual carrying capacity of the allotment?

3. evaluation of whether current grazing numbers/practices are in compliance with land use plan, rules, and regulations

- why is BLM proposing to go to a new mgt. system when it hasn't evaluated whether current system is satisfactory? If livestock management is currently unsatisfactory, why does BLM believe that a

change from sheep to cattle and a new grazing management plan will be any more successful?

- is there a history of trespass on this allotment? non-maintenance of range improvements?

- Isn't the no action alternative in the EA illegal, since BLM has never authorized a conversion from sheep to cattle, never done a NEPA sufficient analysis on the conversion, and has no approved management plan for livestock grazing in the Spruce Allotment?

4. what is the justification for the proposed extensive range improvements?

- why is BLM considering range improvements which will destroy wildlife habitat; i.e., sagegrouse?

- why isn't BLM considering prohibiting livestock use on desert shrubs after 4/1 without environmentally and economically unsound "range improvements?"

- why isn't BLM proposing the elimination of livestock grazing which is destroying deer winter range in the Boone Springs area until the bitterbrush recover from livestock damage?

- why is BLM proposing new water developments when current water developments have degraded or totally destroyed riparian areas?

- how would riparian areas currently in satisfactory condition be protected in the proposed management changes?

5. why is BLM proposing a change in grazing management which will degrade new riparian areas and will not restore and rehabilitate existing degraded riparian areas?

- are existing riparian areas in fully functioning condition? If not, why not? What actions is the BLM proposing to restore 75% of riparian areas in this allotment to fully functioning condition by 1997?

6. why is BLM proposing a change in grazing management which will continue to degrade antelope habitat?

- what is the current assessment of vegetative diversity? On what data is this based? How will proposed changes affect existing poor vegetative diversity? What is the rationale for the estimates of sheep or cattle impacts on biodiversity?

- how will conflicts between cattle and antelope for spring forage be resolved?

- how will conflicts between antelope and proposed new fencing (dividing the allotment into manageable units) be resolved?

7. what is the rationale for BLM concluding that sheep use in the Goshute Mountains will not prevent big horn sheep reintroductions by NDOW?

8. why isn't BLM proposing an alternative in the EA which will

EA refers to decision of AMP
↑ Bill Baker
in future years when forage
isn't there what happens w/ h's
are you going to continue to remove
his or ADJUST STOCKING
RATE?
YIELD on some
of our points
ask what you're going to
do in AMP
are you going to
limit his to
forage
will not
with draw
direct consultation