



United States Department of the Interior

4700 (NV-013)

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
ELKO DISTRICT OFFICE

3900 E. Idaho Street  
P.O. Box 831  
Elko, Nevada 89801

IN REPLY REFER TO: 6/3/87

JUN 3 1987

WHOA  
Wild Horse Organized Assistance  
P.O. Box 555  
Reno, Nevada 89504

Dear Ms. Lappin:

The following data is presented, in response to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act dated May 27, 1987.

ELKO DISTRICT

ITEM NO. 1

<u>Resource Area</u>	<u>Herd Area</u>	<u>Herd Management Area</u>	<u>AML</u>	<u>Allotments within Herd Areas</u>	<u>Livestock AUMs</u>
Elko	Little Humboldt	Little Humboldt	107	Little Humboldt	7,656
	Rock Creek	Rock Creek	119	Rock Creek	48,997
	Owyhee	Owyhee	57	Owyhee	30,225
	Diamond Hills	Diamond Hills	50	Browne	1,307
				Red Rock	7,503
Wells	Spruce-Pequop	Spruce-Pequop	64-80	Spruce	35,565
				Big Springs	18,272
				Chase Spring	2,586
				Spruce	35,565
	Maverick/Medicine	Maverick/Medicine	195-244	Maverick/Ruby No. 9	2,780
				Odgers	1,596
				Bald Mtn.	1,173
				West Cherry Crk.	2,661
				North Butte Valley	1,645
				Cherry Creek	Cherry Creek
			Currie	4,687	
			No. Butte Valley	1,645	

TYPE-ERASE

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ITEM NO. 1 (Continued)

<u>Resource Area</u>	<u>Herd Area</u>	<u>Herd Management Area</u>	<u>AML</u>	<u>Allotments within Herd Areas</u>	<u>Livestoc AUMs</u>
Wells Continued	Antelope Valley	Antelope Valley	131-164	Spruce	35,565
				Currie	4,687
				Antelope Valley	5,072
				Boone Springs	3,199
				Ferber Flat	2,735
				Bad Lands	2,647
	Goshute	Goshute	96-120	West White Horse	670
				Spruce	35,565
				Big Springs	18,272
				Utah/Nevada No. 1	13,766
				Lead Hills	7,930
				White Horse	7,500
	Toano	Toano	20	Leppy Hills	3,476
				Pilot	5,127
				Pilot	5,127
				Leppy Hills	3,476

ITEM NO. 2

<u>Resource Area</u>	<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Herd Management Area</u>	<u>AML</u>	<u>Wild Horse AUMs</u>
Elko	Little Humboldt	Little Humboldt	107	1,284
	Rock Creek	Rock Creek	119	1,428
	Owyhee	Owyhee	57	684
	Browne	Diamond Hills	25	300
	Red Rock	diamond Hills	25	300
Wells	Spruce	Antelope Valley	---	2,028
		Goshute		
		Maverick/Medicine		
	Big Springs	Spruce/Pequop	---	1,560
		Spruce/Pequop		
		Goshute		
	Chase Spring	Toano	---	120
		Spruce/Pequop		
		Maverick/Medicine		
	Maverick/Ruby No.9	Maverick/Medicine	---	780
		Maverick/Medicine		
	Odgers	Maverick/Medicine	---	240
		Maverick/Medicine		
Bald Mtn.	Maverick/Medicine	---	360	
	Maverick/Medicine			
West Cherry Crk.	Maverick/Medicine	---	600	
	Cherry Creek			
North Butte Valley	Maverick/Medicine	---	480	
	Cherry Creek			
Currie	Antelope Valley	---	720	
	Cherry Creek			

ITEM NO. 2 (Continued)

<u>Resource Area</u>	<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Herd Management Area</u>	<u>AML</u>	<u>Wild Horse AUMs</u>
Wells	Antelope Valley	Antelope Valley	---	480
Continued	Boone Springs	Antelope Valley	---	60
	Ferber Flat	Antelope Valley	---	480
	Bad Lands	Antelope Valley	---	Incidental use
	West White Horse	Antelope Valley	---	Incidental use
	Utah/Nevada No. 1	Goshute	---	60
	Lead Hills	Goshute	---	60
	White Horse	Goshute	---	60
	Leppy Hills	Goshute	---	288
		Toano		
	Pilot	Goshute	---	540
		Toano		

There is no AML shown by allotment in the Wells Area. The allotments are, for the most part, not fenced and horses move around between allotments. In the Wells Range Program Summary (RPS) we have shown wild horse AUMs by allotment but these are only estimates. Wild horse use within these allotments varies every year depending on weather, water distribution, and forage availability.

The information presented above is found in the Wells and Elko Draft and Final RMP/EISs and in the Wells RPS. The Draft and Final RMP/EISs have to be read together in order to have the advantage of all the tables and background information.

I hope this response answers your questions. If you need further information, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely yours,

*Merle Hood*  
 for RODNEY HARRIS  
 District Manager

6/18/87



# United States Department of the Interior

IN REPLY REFER TO:

4700 (NV-013)

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT ELKO DISTRICT OFFICE

3900 E. Idaho Street  
P.O. Box 831  
Elko, Nevada 89801

JUN 18 1987

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

Dear Ms. Jay:

Thank you for your comments on the Draft Capture Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Little Humboldt, Rock Creek, and Spruce/Pequop Herd Management Areas. The Capture Plan and EA are being revised to address your concerns and you will receive a copy of the final document.

I will take this opportunity to address some of your comments.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

#### I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The herd management area names used are the same as in the Elko and Wells RMPs. They have never been changed. The Little Humboldt and Rock Creek Herd Management Areas are in the Elko Resource Area and the Spruce-Pequop Area is in the Wells Resource Area. The FEIS for both Resource Areas must be read with the Draft RMPs and EIS's to take advantage of all the tables and backup data.

- A. Census was conducted March of 1987. The census was conducted by the Elko District Wild Horse Specialist using the total count method according to NSO Manual supplement procedures.
- B. Proposed action. Hazards are scouted by use of aerial survey, vehicle survey and maps. A post-census will be used to make sure the AML is left. Horses will be released back in the herd management area if the post-census shows less than AML.

The statement on trap sites will be changed in the final draft. The BLM will select areas for possible trap sites and these areas will be shown on maps attached to the final document. There is nothing in I.M. 86-546 concerning removal or non-removal of traps and corrals from the gathering area.

If horses are back within the herd area boundaries at time of capture their numbers still exceed the AML, and gathering will continue until AML is reached. Driving horses back into the herd management areas is temporary at best and since the herd area boundaries are not fenced, the horses will simply move back out of the herd area as they desire.

C. Stipulations

1. The stipulation on roping states that it can only be done when allowed by the COR. This is not a routine practice, but is used on problem horses and in areas of complete removal. Very seldom are horses tied down. They are usually led to the trap immediately after they are roped.
3. The reference is to ground miles and is generally flat to rolling hills. Since the gather is slated for late October, temperatures are cooler and colts are bigger.
7. Horses that are 5 to 6 years old or older, particularly studs, will be used for this purpose. They are generally not as adoptable as younger horses. The collars will remain on until the horse dies. The information gained will be primarily herd movements and distribution patterns. This is only being done in the Little Owyhee and Bullhead herd areas.

D. Alternatives

2. As a practical matter, gathering large numbers of horses is not feasible with only wranglers on horseback. It has only been with the use of helicopters that BLM has been able to gather significant numbers of horses. This is not to say that mounted wranglers are not useful in conjunction with the helicopter and occasionally rope a spilled horse when authorized by the COR.
3. As a portion of total AUMs, I would agree that wild horse AUMs at the current level over the AML is not a threat to livestock. However, if we limit livestock people to their licensed use, it is only fair that we limit wild horse use to AML pending monitoring. The licensed livestock use in the allotments involved is 113,076 AUMs not 305,000.
4. There are no domestic horses licensed in any of the herd areas.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

- A. Horses in traps or temporary holding corrals are seldom kept longer than 24 hours. The usual procedure is that horses captured one day are shipped to Palomino Valley the next morning. The stipulation states that they will not be held longer than 72 hours without permission of the COR.

## WILD HORSE CAPTURE PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

Horses become excess when they exceed the AML. The AML is determined through the RMP/EIS process. 43 CFR 4710.1 states that management activities affecting wild horses shall be in accordance with land use plans (RMP/EIS) prepared pursuant to part 1600 of 43 CFR. There is nothing in the CFR prohibiting the gathering of excess horses prior to preparation of a herd management plan.

Moving horses back into the herd management area is ineffective since the boundaries are not fenced and horses are free to move back out of the herd management area as they desire.

Until monitoring indicates either an increase or decrease, the AML is the number to be managed. To allow the number of horses to continue to increase above the AML is the equivalent of granting an increase in use with no data to back it up. We would not do this for livestock and we should not do it for horses.

There will be a pre- and post-census flight to assure that horses are not removed below the AML.

In most cases the trap and the holding facilities are all in the same place. This works well and does eliminate some handling and stress. However, in some areas where roads are limited and large truck travel is impossible, it is necessary to have the trap and holding facilities separate in order that horses do not have to be run as far before capture.

Concerning branded and claimed animals, Instruction Memo NV-85-416 states that under procedures for processing privately owned animals, the BLM authorized officer Will determine, after consultation with the District Brand Inspector, if unbranded animals are wild and free-roaming horses.

Horses that are branded and not claimed are sold at public auction to satisfy damages and trespass. This is in accordance with 43 CFR 4150.4-5.

In regard to the contractors briefing, contractors that come to a show me trip or call prior to bidding are briefed on potential problems. However, the formal briefing is made to the successful bidder prior to undertaking the job.

Specific limitations would involve: Where gathering will take place within the capture area, location of trap sites, weather conditions etc.

The motorized equipment sections list specifications that motorized equipment must meet. The equipment is checked at the pre-work conference.

#### D. Trapping and Care

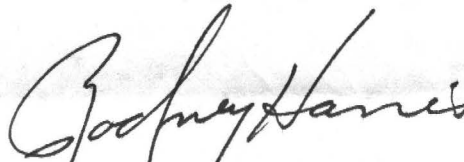
Roping is only used when authorized by the COR for problem horses or in cases of complete removal. The use of mounted wranglers to gather large numbers of horses is not feasible or economical.

The COR is the authorized officer who makes the determination whether dust in corrals is excessive. Since the gathering operation is slated for late October, dust is not likely to be a problem.

The contractor is not paid for horses killed during capture or transportation if the death resulted from his negligence.

As stated previously, the final draft of the gathering plan and EAR will incorporate your comments, as appropriate, and you will receive a copy of the final document. Thank you again for your comments.

Sincerely yours,

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

RODNEY HARRIS  
District Manager

5/27/87

May 27, 1987

WILD HORSE CAPTURE PLAN  
Little Humbolt - Rock Creek- Spruce/Pequop

Introduction (para 3)

"None of the herd use areas are presently covered by a herd management plan."

43 CFR 4710.4 states the authorized officer shall prepare a herd management plan. It appears the regulations under 43 CFR are fairly consistent in their priority, it lists the land use planning process, inventorying and monitoring, management areas, and herd management plans. Under Subpart 4720 Removals "...upon examination of current information..." which we understand to mean the aforementioned regulations. Even the BLMs Program Guidance states HMAPs are to be prepared for all herd management areas, following approval of the Land Use Plan. (1-28 (G)

(para. 3)

"...and to gather horses which are outside of designated herd use areas."

Please refer to rather lengthy questions in Draft EA II Description 1-5.

(para 4)

"Gathering efforts will be concentrated to remove all horses (wild-?) from these allotments and to leave the AML within the herd management area boundaries."

Then what other factors besides numbers are involved with horses outside herd use areas? Domestic horses or livestock pressure within the HMA or water?

The Table in my comments on the Draft EA II Description, is repeated here in that IF the horses in the herd area listed are those in the Elko FEIS (330 in four herd use areas), then the 306 listed as numbers to be managed is short (24) and the the numbers to be gathered are over (24). Will you do a pre-census and post census flights?

Time and Method of Capture

"Traps will need a holding area for horses prior to transfer to the temporary holding facilities."

Are you saying that horses will be loaded at the trap site, unloaded at the temporary holding, loaded for final destination and then unloaded? Why? Are you not risking more injury and death in addition to the stress? The past two gatherings I attended didn't have temporary facilities at all, the horses were shipped directly from the trap..some stayed over night until trucks became available. In fact they lepped about 10 colts because their mares had been shipped before them. Why can't the separation corrals be adjacent to the trap site?

"Trap sites will be selected by the contractor and approved by the COR."

See Instruction Memorandum 86-546.