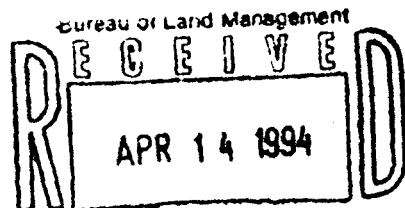


# WHOIA

WILD HORSE ORGANIZED ASSISTANCE  
P.O. BOX 555  
RENO, NEVADA 89504



... a note from

Dawn Y. Lappin

April 11, 1994

DISTRICT OFFICE  
WINNEMUCCA, NEVADA

Mr. Bud Cribley  
Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area  
Bureau of Land Management  
705 East 4th Street  
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

RE: Appeal - Notice of Full Force and Effect Multiple Use Decision  
Soldier Meadows Allotment - January 24, 1994

Dear Bud:

WHOIA has failed to reach agreement with the Nevada Bureau of Land Management concerning issues of our appeal of the Notice of Full Force and Effect Multiple Use Decision - Soldier Meadows Allotment - January 24, 1994. Therefore, we re-state previous errors of this decision in this formal appeal:

**Use of Full Force and Effect violates Federal Regulations and prevents affected interests the right for a petition for stay of action.**

Consistent with the Sonoma-Gerlach Management Framework Plan, the Resource Manager issued "Agreement for Implementation and Changes in Available Livestock Forage and Livestock Grazing Use Adjustments for Soldier Meadows Allotment" on March 13, 1989. This document set the objectives and schedule for adjustments to livestock and wild horses. According to this livestock agreement, an allotment evaluation and manager's decision were scheduled for 1991.

The Final Decision was issued January 24, 1994 at the time when the Winnemucca District was actively gathering wild horses from the Soldier Meadows Allotment. The Nevada State Director issued an instruction memorandum, November 1993, stating that full force and effect decisions must allow affected interests the 30 day comment period allowed by law to comment on documents prior to an

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Bud Cribley, Area Manager  
April 11, 1994  
Page 2

action taking place unless an emergency situation is established. This would allow for a request for a stay of the action or if necessary an injunction to be filed. The actions taken by the District is a violation of the Directors instructions as well as 43 CFR 4.21 (58 FR 4939, January 19, 1993) allowing appeals/petition for stay (suspension) of this decision.

**The Final Decision extends the current land use plan without amendment and violates Bureau of Land Management Policy.**

The Final Decision short and long term objectives for riparian habitat were extended beyond the five year schedule of the land use plan to the years 2001 and 2017, respectively.

The Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area Management Framework Plan III was completed in 1982. Range Management Decision Objective RM - 1 clearly states:

"5. At the end of the third and fifth year of grazing following the grazing decision make necessary use adjustments based upon monitoring results and other data then available..."

Bureau of Land Management national Instruction Memorandum No. 86-706 states:

"BLM policy is to issue decisions or enter into agreements within 5 years of publication of a Range Program Summary following completion of a grazing environmental impact statement (EIS)."

The allotment evaluations and manager decisions affecting livestock and wild horse management are necessary to implement the land use plan in absence of proper activity plans. It is apparent that the Humboldt County Coordinated Resource Management Planning processes and BLM activity planning processes did not meet the land use plan schedule. Therefore, it is reasonable expect management actions of the second Soldier Meadows allotment evaluation and manager's decision to achieve short term land use plan objectives.

Extending the land use plan objectives beyond 10 years of the current Management Framework Plan will require amending the land use plan.

**Carrying Capacity of the Soldier Meadows Allotment must be established and available forage allocated fairly to wild horses.**

The Final Decision establishes the allotments carrying capacity and appropriate management levels for the Calico Mountains, Warm Springs, East Black Rock Range and West Black Rock

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Bud Cribley, Area Manager  
April 11, 1994  
Page 3

Range Wild Horse Herd Management Areas. These appropriate management levels are to be in a thriving natural ecological balance with livestock to achieve the allotment specific objectives of the Soldier Meadows Allotment.

The Final Decision uses different procedures and criteria to determine appropriate management levels from the Notice of Final Full Force and Effect Multiple Use Decision - Buffalo Hills Allotment-February 9, 1993, Final Full Force and Effect Multiple Use Decision - Paiute Meadows Allotment-April 12, 1993 and Notice of Final Full Force and Effect Multiple Use Decision - Leadville Allotment- January 19, 1994. These decisions are for allotments that are adjacent to each other and common to one ecosystem.

The appropriate management levels for the East Black Rock Range and West Black Rock Range Wild Horse Herds were established in the Final Full Force and Effect Multiple Use Decision - Paiute Meadows Allotment - April 12, 1993 and this Final Decision, respectively. Procedures to establish the appropriate management level for the combined wild horse herds - Black Rock Range Wild Horse Herd - were not consistent.

The East Black Rock Range Wild Horse Herd appropriate management level was established upon the criteria of meeting 50 percent utilization of key forage species on wetland riparian habitat. The West Black Rock Range Wild Horse Herd appropriate management level was established upon the criteria of meeting 60 percent utilization of key forage species on wetland riparian habitat. These herds inhabit the Black Rock Range which have identical climate and habitat conditions. Establishing carrying capacities should have been consistent to properly manage an ecosystem and maintain equality between livestock and wild horses.

The allocation of the available forage was proportional to the ratio found in the land use plan. This allocation of forage between users is arbitrary.

The appropriate management level for the Calico Mountain Wild Horse Herd was established in the Final Decisions for Buffalo Hills Allotment, Leadville Allotment and Soldier Meadows Allotment. Soldier Meadows and Buffalo Hills Final Decisions used 60 percent utilization of key species of riparian habitat as the criteria. Leadville Allotment Final Decision use 50 percent utilization of key species of riparian habitat as a criteria. These criteria were not consistent.

Bud Cribley, Area Manager  
April 11, 1994  
Page 4

Allocation of available forage was proportional to the land use plan in the Leadville and Soldier Meadows Final Decision. Allocation of forage to wild horses in Buffalo Hills Final Decision is unknown. Allocation of forage to horses was arbitrary.

Carrying capacity computations and appropriate management levels were established by procedures that weight averaged use pattern mapping data. Calculations, based upon formula Example C of Appendix 2 of the "Rangeland Monitoring Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation (TR 4400-7)", did not fully consider riparian habitat. Example C assumes rangeland production is not uniform and utilization is uniform. The Soldier Meadows Allotment Reevaluation's use pattern mapping data supports its conclusion that livestock distribution problems are causing heavy and severe utilization of riparian habitats. The Final Decision's carrying capacity computations will not meet riparian short term objectives for this allotment.

The Final Decision require compliance to the National Environmental Protection Act.

The Final Decision acknowledges the existing 10-year or long term grazing permit. This grazing permit was issued without environmental assessment.

Implementation of the "Strategic Plan for the management of Wild Horses and Burros on Public Lands" required the restructuring of the herds based solely upon adoptability of captured horses. Age, production, sex and genetic trait data will be available during the capture of each horse herd. Herd composition criteria for the remaining herd should be part of the Final Decision. Restructuring wild horse herds were not assessed in an environmental impact statement or specific environmental assessment. Bureau of Land Management Policy must be consistent with applicable laws and regulations that protect wild horse herds.

Allocation of available forage of the allotment's carrying capacity require environmental analysis and consultation of affected interests. The Sonoma-Gerlach Final Grazing Environmental Impact Statement did not set the initial stocking levels for wild horses and livestock based upon composition and compatibility with multiple use. Monitoring data must be the basis for adjustment in ungulate populations to meet land use plan objectives.

WFOA has worked long and hard with the Winnemucca District to promote good, sound, range management with appropriate stocking levels. We feel we have made every effort possible to

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Bud Cribley, Area Manager  
April 11, 1994  
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avoid an appeal including the most recent meeting with Mr. Bert Stanley, from the Regional Solicitors Office, as well as the Nevada State Director Billy Templeton. Failure to reach an agreement has forced us to finally appeal these documents.

If you would like to discuss these issues or if you have any questions, please feel free to call.

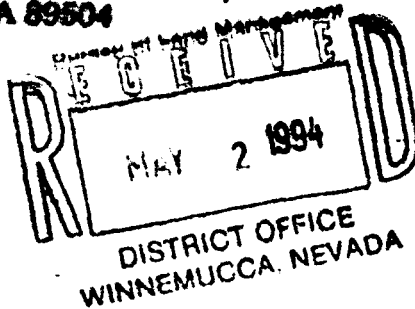
Sincerely,



DAWN Y. LAPPIN  
Director

W H O A

WILD HORSE ORGANIZED ASSISTANCE  
P.O. BOX 855  
RENO, NEVADA 89504



a note from

Dawn Y. Lappin

March 15, 1994

Interior Board of Land Appeals  
Office of Hearings and Appeals  
4015 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, Virginia 22203

**SUBJECT: Appeal of the Soldier Meadows Allotment Full Force and Effect Multiple Use Decision**

Dear Sirs,

I have enclosed a copy of the letter sent to the District and the Regional Solicitor on the Leadville Allotment. Within the 30 days allowed us I am informing you of our intent to file an appeal with you on this decision. Within 30 days from this notice I will be forwarding a copy of our reasons directly to you.

The reason for this delay is that our agency as well as the Nevada Department of Wildlife and Wayne Howle from the Attorney Generals Office will be meeting with Billy Templeton, BLM Nevada State Director and Mr. Stanley, Regional Solicitor, on March 31, 1994. This meeting is an attempt to discuss this appeal as well as other appeals that have been filed and determine if we can settle some of these issues. We no more enjoy filing appeals than you do in receiving them. We feel that unless some of the issues can be settled locally that we will be writing many, many more appeals. This is not what we want to do. Hopefully, the meeting on the 31st will recognize our concerns and decisions can be made to prevent further appeals. However, if we can't resolve the issues we will be forwarding our appeal reasons to you at that time.

We hope you will understand this delay and realize that we are going to every effort possible to resolve the conflicts prior to adding to your already overfull list of appeals. If there is something else we must file in the interim, please advise us of that.

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Interior Board of Land Appeals  
March 15, 1994  
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Thank you in advance for your time and interest.

Sincerely,

DL

DAWN Y. LAPPIN  
Director

cc: Billy Templeton, State Director



WILD HORSE ORGANIZED ASSISTANCE  
 P.O. BOX 555  
 RENO, NEVADA 89504

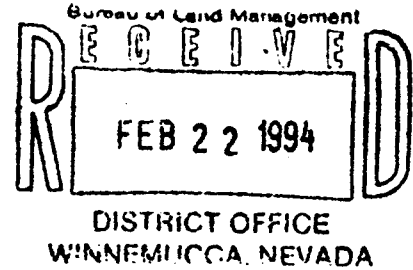


... a note from

Dawn Y. Lappin

February 16, 1994

Ron Wenker, District Manager  
 BLM-Winnemucca District Office  
 705 East 4th Street  
 Winnemucca, Nevada 89445



Subject: Appeal of the Soldier Meadows Allotment Full Force and Effect Multiple Use Decision.

Dear Mr. Wenker,

We have reviewed the above mentioned final multiple use decision. WHOA is formally notifying you of our intent to appeal this decision.

According to 43 CFR Secs. 4.411 and 4.413, we are filing with you our "Notice of Appeal", our appeal points will be filed with IBLA, the Solicitor, and your District within 30 days of this notice.

Sincerely,

DAWN Y. LAPPIN  
 Director

N2 94 16



Is your RETURN ADDRESS completed on the reverse side?

SENDER: 4100 70-0261

- Complete items 1 and/or 2 for additional services.
- Complete items 3, and 4a & b.
- Print your name and address on the reverse of this form so that we can return this card to you.
- Attach this form to the front of the mailpiece, or on the back if space does not permit.
- Write "Return Receipt Requested" on the mailpiece below the article number.
- The Return Receipt will show to whom the article was delivered and the date delivered.

I also wish to receive the following services (for an extra fee):

- 1.  Addressee's Address
- 2.  Restricted Delivery

Consult postmaster for fee.

3. Article Addressed to:

Mrs. Dawn Lappin  
Wild Horse Organ. Assist.  
P.O. Box 555  
Reno, NV 89505

4a. Article Number

P877068508

4b. Service Type

- Registered  Insured
- Certified  COD
- Express Mail  Return Receipt for Merchandise

7. Date of Delivery

2-2-94

5. Signature (Addressee)

6. Signature (Agent)

*Dawn Lappin*

8. Addressee's Address (Only if requested and fee is paid)

Thank you for using Return Receipt Service.

PS Form 3811, December 1991

U.S. GPO: 1992-323-402

DOMESTIC RETURN RECEIPT



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Winnemucca District Office  
705 East 4th Street  
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

IN REPLY REFER TO  
4160  
(NV-026.1)

CERTIFIED MAIL NO. P877068545  
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

JAN 24 1994

### NOTICE OF FULL FORCE AND EFFECT MULTIPLE USE DECISION SOLDIER MEADOWS ALLOTMENT

R.C. Roberts  
801 A Street  
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Mr. Roberts:

On December 10, 1993, the Soldier Meadows Re-evaluation and Proposed Full Force and Effect Multiple Use Decision was mailed to all affected interests. We received protests from the Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses, Wild Horse Organized Assistance, and the Nevada Division of Wildlife. Protest points are briefly summarized below along with my response to each point.

#### Commission/WHOA

1. The Proposed Decision extends the land use plan short term objectives in excess of 14 years. Range Management-Management Framework III Decision RM-1 set a five year schedule to accomplish wild horse herd management area plans, and other approved activity plans, to establish appropriate management levels to assure viable herds in balance with their habitat by 1987. Short term objectives of the Proposed Decision adjusts the land use plan short term objectives to the year 2001.

Response:

Based on the above protest point we have re-reviewed the Management Framework Plan (MFP) for the Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area, signed in 1982. Considering that document and the Bureau's procedures in writing MFP's, our response is that these documents only state goals for the management of the area they cover and do not establish specific short term or long term objectives. Objectives are developed in site specific documents that implement the goals of the MFP. The short term objectives you refer to were established in 1988 in the Livestock Agreement with the permittee. We look at the short term objectives in our re-evaluations and if our monitoring indicates we are not achieving these then we conclude that we will not be able to achieve our long term objectives, so adjustments must be made. A new decision is issued with the necessary changes and we continued to monitor to see if those changes allow us to meet our short term objectives. If we still are not meeting those short term objectives then further adjustments will be made. This is the process we are following and the reason we are issuing this decision to make adjustments to meet the short term objectives.

Soldier Meadows Final MUD  
January 24, 1994

In regards to the statement that the MFP set a five year time frame to develop activity plans, the MFP did not set any time frames for the development of these plans. The MFP states that subsequent to issuing a decision and establishing monitoring we would then "develop and implement (as time and funding permit) allotment management plans and activity plans for other uses". To date this resource area has not had the time nor the funding to complete the needed activity plans.

2. **The Proposed Decision adjusts the wild horse herd boundaries for the Black Rock West, Warm Springs and Black Rock East Wild Horse Management Areas. These herd areas are delineated in the Sonoma-Gerlach Unit Resource Analysis and Final Grazing Environmental Impact Statement. Any modification or adjustment to these boundaries must be supported by herd delineation data in an environmental analysis to amend the current land use plan.**

**Response:**

The proposed decision does not adjust the boundary between Black Rock East and West HMA's. The Soldier Meadows and Paiute Meadows Allotment Re-evaluations documented, from observations over the last ten years, wild horses moving between the two HMA's. The re-evaluations recommended that all the wild horses in the HMA's be managed as one herd, and that is what was carried forward in the proposed decision. For administrative purposes we will still track the mountain as two HMA's. Because this action does not officially change the HMA boundaries it is not considered a Land Use Plan adjustment so the current Land Use Plan does not need to be amended.

After reviewing the proposed boundary adjustment for the Black Rock West and Warm Springs HMA's it was decided to delete that from the Multiple Use Decision. It is more appropriate to deal with it as an adjustment to the Land Use Plan.

3. The Proposed Decision did not consider the allotment short term objective for upland wetland riparian habitat. Rangeland monitoring data found in Appendix 4 of the Final Soldier Meadows Allotment Re-evaluation consistently states "severe" utilization of this key habitat. Carrying capacity computations found in Appendix 6 presents no data to indicate the use of "severe" or 90 percent as the actual utilization or the allotment specific objective of 50 percent as the desire utilization level. Weight averaging of the use pattern mapping data further distracts from the allotment specific objective for wetland meadow habitats.

**Response:**

What Appendix 4 was stating was the range of levels of utilization that were recorded while conducting utilization transects. In conducting utilization transects we sample at least 10 points and record the levels of use on the key vegetation species. The points are then summarized and the average utilization for that area is recorded. That average is then used in our carrying capacity calculations. The purpose of us mentioning the range of utilization levels recorded on our transects was to give a complete picture of what was happening on the ground and not hide behind averages that may not show the full picture. None of the utilization transects showed an average utilization of 90% or "severe" which is why that use level did not show up in the carrying capacity calculations.

4. The Proposed Decision arbitrarily allocates available forage to wild horse and livestock. The land use plan ratio of initial stocking rates for livestock and wild horses were not at a thriving natural ecological balance in 1982. Data and analysis of the Final Environmental Impact Statement did not suggest or conclude that the existing conditions were protecting or restoring natural resources. Therefore, the allocation of available forage must be based upon monitoring data, wild horse herd population dynamics and forage preference of competing ungulates.

Response:

It was recognized in the MFP that the forage allocation made for livestock and wild horses/burros was only a starting point and that numbers would be adjusted to appropriate levels based on monitoring. The 1988 evaluation for this allotment documented that livestock numbers were too high so they were adjusted downward, but wild horses/burros numbers were not addressed. The re-evaluation for this allotment established the total carrying capacity for livestock and wild horses/burros based on monitoring data. The AUMs were then divided between livestock and wild horses/burros on a proportional basis (based on the ratio established in the MFP) in accordance with MFP decision Range 1.1 and Wild Horse/Burro 1.1. I felt this was the appropriate and most equitable way to divide the total carrying capacity between livestock and wild horses/burros. We will continue to monitor to determine if these new stocking rates are appropriate, and if not make future adjustments.

5. The Proposed Decision established an appropriate management level for the East Black Rock Wild Horse Herd of 31 horses. The Soldier Meadows Final Allotment Re-evaluation presents no data or analysis to support this appropriate management level.

Response:

This Proposed MUD did not establish an AML for the Black Rock Range - East or West HMA. The Soldier Meadows Proposed MUD and the Paiute Meadows Final MUD established an AML for the Black Rock Range HMA. The Black Rock Range HMA was established based on monitoring which documented wild horses move freely from one side of the mountain to the other. Each MUD established a carrying capacity for wild horses and livestock (see Commission/WHOA #4). These figures were combined to determine available forage for wild horses in the Black Rock Range HMA, an AML of 186 adult horse was the result. (refer to page 32 of the FMUD)

6. The Proposed Decision is to set a carrying capacity that will meet all allotment objectives and protect natural resources. The capture and release of unadoptable horses to levels above the carrying capacity will cause over utilization to key habitats. Delaying wild horse and livestock adjustments for a minimum of six years is contrary to existing federal regulations that prohibits management actions causing significant resource damage.

Response:

Wild horse numbers should be at or very near AML in the Calico Mountain and Warm Springs Canyon HMAs after the 1994 winter gather based on previous captures and the estimated herd age structure. The Black Rock Range HMA will not get to AML after the first gather. Livestock will not use the Summit Lake Pasture portion of the Black Rock Range HMA until range projects are constructed and riparian condition classes improve to 70%, therefore, for the short term there will only be wild

horses. Also, BLM will implement utilization and stubble height criteria that will insure important habitat is not over utilized by livestock.

7. **The Proposed Decision endorses the broad policy to leave unadoptable horses within the herd area. The sex and age composition of the surviving horses is critical to the longevity and genetic viability of the herd. Data collected in 1993 indicates the Warm Springs herd suffered over 50 percent mortality last winter. The recruitment rate for 1993 was only six percent. Depending upon the surviving herd's age composition, the Proposed Decision's re-structuring of this herd could jeopardize this herd within two or three years. Implementation of broad policy that effects the sex ratio and age structure of this herd requires an environmental assessment.**

**Response:**

The Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area as part of the BLM is required to follow current BLM policies, such as the "Strategic Plan for the Management of Wild Horses and Burros on Public Lands". Returning unadoptable animals due to age requirements (6 years and older) does not equate to undesirable animals remaining.

An EA (FY94 NV-020-4-09) completed on 1/19/94 states: "The social structure may be affected which could lead to a decreased foaling and recruitment rate for the first year following removal as bands reorganized. However, the recruitment rate may increase after this due to a stabilization of social structure, and improved body condition of mares through reduced competition for forage. By releasing horses six years of age and older, the base genetic makeup of the herds should remain intact within the HMAs". The Strategic Plan for the Management of Wild Horses and Burros on Public Lands documented that the basic gene pool of each herd will remain intact. Until wild horse numbers are stabilized for the long term, BLM can not accurately ascertain the effects on herd viability, genetics, sex ratios, and age structures in this EA.

8. **The Proposed Decision restructures the Calico Wild Horse Herd. This action was not assessed by any NEPA document that assesses genetic data, age structure data, or herd longevity to assure its viability.**

**Response:**

See the response to Commission/WHOA #7.

Division of Wildlife

1. **The Proposed Decision eliminates the riparian Short Term Objective #2:**

**The Proposed Decision eliminates the Fox Mountain Habitat Management Plan objective #8:**

**The Proposed Decision eliminates the Black Mountain Bighorn Sheep Reestablishment Operations Plan objective:**

Response:

Utilization objectives which are referred to were described on pages 2, 20, and 24 in the Proposed MUD. These utilization objectives were carried forward from the Final Re-evaluation. The format of the Final MUD is modified to make more clear the utilization objectives to the readers of this document.

To avoid misunderstanding, the Fox Mtn HMP covers portions of the Calico, Soldier Meadows, and a small part of the Hot Springs Pastures; not the entire Soldier Meadows Allotment. The Proposed Decision used a 4 inch stubble height instead of utilization levels as a management action for Donnelly Creek. The interdisciplinary team felt using stubble height in this instance would be more effective to improve riparian vegetation and stream bank conditions along Donnelly Creek.

2. The Proposed Decisions's stream bank riparian short term and long term objectives extend the land use plan achievement schedule to the years 2001 and 2017, respectively.

Based on the above protest point we have re-reviewed the Management Framework Plan (MFP) for the Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area, signed in 1982. There is not a decision in the MFP establishing an "achievement schedule" with specific dates for accomplishment. The MFP establishes goals for us to work towards but does not set any specific time frames for accomplishment. The only document that does discuss time frames is the Sonoma-Gerlach Grazing Environmental Impact Statement which states that the "time necessary for changes in vegetation condition and production" is approximately 2024. Our goal of achievement of 2017 is well within that time frame.

3. Though projects may be dependent upon funding, Selective Management Actions of the Soldier Meadows Allotment Re-evaluation should have considered carrying capacity computations to meet all allotment specific objectives. The Proposed Decision should have implemented actions to meet our agreements.

Response:

The Final Re-evaluation identified pasture specific projects that are required to implement management for the allotment which includes projects identified in the various activity plans (pages 53 - 75). The evaluation of monitoring identified livestock distribution as the primary management action to improve resource conditions; not a carrying capacity problem. The Final MUD changed season of use in all the pastures, reduced the stocking levels in the Warm Springs, Calico, and Black Rock pastures, and implemented utilization criteria so that livestock will be moved when it is reached. Based on the changes in numbers, season of use, and utilization criteria we should be able to move towards accomplishing long term objectives without the completion of the range improvement projects proposed. Those projects proposed will only make achievement easier.

4. Desired Plant Community objectives must be consistent with land use plan and approved activity plans. The Proposed Decision's "Allotment Objectives for Uplands and Meadows" implement the concept of Desired Plant Community without considering wildlife management action for achievement. Achievement of these new objectives cannot assure that forage and cover will be provided for wildlife.

For example, Warm Springs Pasture Short Term Objective #6 maintains a percentage of species composition by weight. This objective can be met by severe utilization resulting in no residual cover for nesting birds or wintering mammals. The objective ignores a detailed list of key plant species and their allowable use levels found in the Fox Mountain Habitat Management Plan.

Response:

The DPC objectives in this decision describe the vegetative community that will best meet the goals and objectives from the MFP and activity Plans. The DPC objectives were developed considering all of the goals and objectives identified. An example is on pages 34 and 35 of the Final Re-evaluation. Wildlife habitat was analyzed and the limiting factors identified for mule deer were forage vigor, quality, and cover. The DPC objectives were then tailored to meet those mule deer needs. On the other hand ensuring adequate residual cover is a function of utilization objectives, not a DPC objective. We feel that the utilization objectives established in this decision will meet the needs identified in the protest point.

The plant species lists referred to are for the entire area of the HMP (802,870 acres). As key areas are selected for monitoring purposes the key plant species that occur in those areas will be identified and we will manage for those in accordance with this decision and all affected activity plans (including the Fox Mountain HMP).

5. The Proposed Decision establishes a carrying capacity by flawed assumptions without consideration of critical wildlife habitat. Appendix 6, Stocking Level Calculating and Procedures, of the Soldier Meadow Allotment Re-evaluation did not consider wetland riparian habitat objectives. Appendix 4, Utilization, of the Soldier Meadow Allotment Re-evaluation, repetitively documents severe utilization of riparian vegetation within wetland meadow habitats during all years of monitoring.

The Proposed Decision carrying capacity computation is based upon Example C of Appendix 2 of the "Rangeland Monitoring Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation (TR 4400-7)". Example C assumes rangeland production is not uniform and utilization is uniform. Utilization data confirms the conclusions of the Re-evaluation that livestock distribution problems are causing heavy and severe utilization of critical wildlife habitat; thus the Proposed Decision's use and rationale for Example C is flawed for a carrying capacity computation.

Response:

Appendix 4 was stating the range of levels of utilization that were recorded while conducting utilization transects. In conducting utilization transects we sample at least 10 points and record the levels of use on the key vegetation species. The points are then summarized and the average utilization for that area is recorded. That average is then used in our carrying capacity calculations. The purpose of us mentioning the range of utilization levels recorded on our transects was to give a complete picture of what was happening on the ground and not hide behind averages that may not show the full picture. None of the utilization transects showed an average utilization of 90% or "severe" which is why that use level did not show up in the carrying capacity calculations.

We agree with the conclusions that livestock distribution is a problem and that the technique described for calculating carrying capacity would not be the appropriate method for dealing with problems created by poor distribution. That is why we chose to modify the technique back in 1992 when we established the standard procedure for the resource area for calculating capacity in these allotment re-evaluations. The technique was modified by dropping out the slight and light utilization categories and only considering the moderate, heavy, and severe utilization categories. We felt this would cause the calculations to better emphasis the problems of poor distribution and over stocking. Using this modified technique for calculating carrying capacity and requiring the movement of livestock based on acceptable utilization limits we feel we will solve the problems identified in this re-evaluation.

6. Livestock management is required to meet short term utilization objectives for stream bank, wetland riparian and upland habitats. The Proposed Decision eliminated the wetland riparian short term utilization limitation of the land use plan. The Proposed Decision did not set utilization limits for mountain browse species essential to the welfare of big game species. Terms and conditions of any grazing authorization or permit under this decision, cannot quantify the annual utilization of key vegetational species critical to wildlife.

The Proposed Decision suggests continued management of wildlife habitat consistent with the land use plan and habitat management plans. Contrary to the Wildlife Management Decision, Livestock and Wild Horse Decisions do not recognize short term objectives for wildlife habitat. Wildlife habitats require significant protection to resolve resource conflicts and restore depleted wildlife populations.

Response:

Utilization objectives were stated for mountain browse species in the final re-evaluation. That objective was stated in the wild horse portion of the proposed MUD (see page 24) but was inadvertently omitted for the livestock section. We appreciate this being brought to our attention and it will be added in the final MUD.

\*\*\*\*\*

I have considered the proposed decision in light of these protest points and on the basis of monitoring data, the CCC process, interdisciplinary team recommendations, and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act my final decision is:

#### ALLOTMENT WIDE MULTIPLE USE OBJECTIVES

##### UTILIZATION OBJECTIVES

Riparian/Wet Meadows:

1. Do not exceed 30% utilization of current years growth on the key riparian trees and shrubs, which includes: Aspen (Populus tremuloides) and Willows (Salix spp.). For Mahogany, Summer Camp, Snow Creeks, and the hot springs associated with the Desert Dace grasses and grass-like plants will have a minimum stubble height of 6 inches. A 4 inch stubble height will apply for Coleman, Slumgullion, and Donnelly Creeks when the cows leave the pasture

Soldier Meadows Final MUD  
January 24, 1994



for the following: Nevada Bluegrass (Poa nevadensis), Sedges (Carex spp.), Rushes (Juncus spp.), Intermediate Wheatgrass (Agropyron intermedium), and Tufted Hairgrass (Deschampsia cespitosa).

2. The utilization levels for wet meadows (not identified above), grass and grass-like species is 50%. If the utilization level is exceeding the 50% level by February 28 the carrying capacity will be evaluated to determine if a downward adjustment is required. The evaluation will include livestock and wild horse actual use, along with wildlife and climatic factors.

**Upland Grass/Dry Meadows:**

1. Livestock and wild horse utilization levels is 50% at the end of the livestock use period (except for the Black Rock Pasture).
2. For the Black Rock Pasture, combined utilization shall not exceed 60% by February 28 or the start of the new growing season.
3. By February 28, or the start of the new grazing season, utilization shall not exceed 60% (utilization on these species from 50 to 60% will occur during the dormant season and should not have a detrimental impact to plant health and vigor).
4. The utilization level by wild horses, once the AML is reached, shall not exceed 20% by July 15 (seed dissemination) in livestock rested pastures.
5. For the Black Rock Pasture, once AML is reached, utilization level by wild horses shall not exceed 30% by December 31.

**Upland Browse:**

1. Livestock utilization levels for shall not exceed 50% by the end of the livestock grazing use period.

**WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES**

1. Improve or maintain Mahogany Creek to Class A water standards.
2. Improve or maintain the water quality of the following streams to the State criteria set for livestock drinking water, cold water aquatic life, water contact recreation (wading), and wildlife propagation:

Summer Camp Creek  
Snow Creek  
Donnelly Creek  
Slumgullion Creek  
Soldiers Creek

3. Maintain water quality standards for Desert Dace habitat in the springs where they occur to the following:

temperature - 32-38°C/90-100°F  
nitrates - 90 mg/L  
turbidity - 50 NTU  
pH - 6.5-9.0  
D.O. - 5.0 mg/L

## VEGETATION OBJECTIVES

### A. Riparian Objectives:

1. Improve the riparian condition class on six (6) miles of Mahogany Creek to 70% (from 1992 baseline data of 68%) within the short term (2001) and maintain excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
2. Improve the riparian condition class on 2 miles of Summer Camp Creek to 70% (from 1990 baseline data of 60%) within the short term (by 2001) and maintain excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
3. Improve the riparian condition class on 3 miles of Snow Creek to 70% (from 1990 baseline data of 60%) within the short term (by 2001) and maintain excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
4. Improve the riparian condition class on 8 miles of Donnelly Creek to 62% (from baseline 1989 data of 52%) within the short term (by 2001) and achieve excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
5. Improve the riparian condition class on 8 miles of Coleman Creek to 66% (from baseline 1991 data of 44%) within the short term (by 2001) and achieve excellent riparian stream habitat condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
6. Improve the riparian condition class on 8 miles of Slumgullion Creek to 63% (from baseline 1990 data of 48%) within the short term (by 2001) and achieve excellent riparian stream habitat condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.

### B. Sage Grouse:

Protect known sage grouse strutting and nesting habitat and improve brooding habitat by: (WL-1.11)

1. Following NDOW's guidelines for Vegetal Control Programs in Sage Grouse Habitat in Nevada.
2. Maintain sagebrush canopy at 30% in sage grouse nesting areas where sagebrush does not exceed three (3) feet in height.

### C. Desired Plant Community Objectives for Uplands and Meadows:

**RATIONALE:** The limiting factor for wildlife is forage vigor, quality, and cover, therefore, the objectives need to be vegetative ones. Livestock and wild horse objectives are for a sustainable yield of forage, which desired plant communities would account for.

Objectives for this allotment were based on ecological status inventory data. The seral stage of each vegetative community and its potential was considered in conjunction with the wildlife, wild horse, and livestock use to develop desired plant community objectives. Short term objectives will be used to determine the progress each community is making toward its desired stage. Key areas for all pastures will be established by an interdisciplinary team in key Ecological Sites.

Summit Lake Pasture

Objective 1

Short Term

Increase the composition by weight the overall percentage of the following perennial grasses: AGSP, FEID, STH2, ELCI2, POA++, STCO4, and SIHY from 28% to 35% on Ecological Site 023XY007 (Loamy 14-16") in Site Write-up Area (SWA) U044 by the year 2001. The aggregate of ELCI2, POA++, SIHY, and STCO4 can only make up 10% of the total composition.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY007 (Loamy 14-16") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	28%	45%	60%
Forbs	7%	10%	10%
Shrubs	65%	45%	30%

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 2

Short Term

Maintain or increase perennial grasses at 45% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") in SWA U044 by the year 2001. These perennial grasses are FEID, AGSP, STH2, POA++, SIHY, and ELCI2 with the aggregate of the latter three making up no more than 10% of the total composition.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	45%	55%	65%
Forbs	11%	10%	10%
Shrubs	44%	35%	25%

This objective should be accomplished by the year 2017.

Objective 3

Short Term

Increase FEID and AGSP each from 2% to 6% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna) in SWA U044 by the year 2001. Maintain PUTR2 above 10% and CELE3 at 22% composition by weight.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna) manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	23%	30%	40%
Forbs	Trace	8%	10%
Shrubs	77%	62% *	50%

\* At least 25% must be CELE3 and 10% PUTR2.

This objective should be accomplished by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 4

Short Term

Maintain the existing plant community with 61% perennial grasses, 22% forbs, and 17% shrubs in Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U044 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U044 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	61	65	80
Forbs	22	22	20
Shrubs	17	13	0

Decrease the percent composition by weight of JUBA by increasing the percent composition by weight of PONE3 and HOBR.

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

Objective 5

Short Term

Maintain the existing plant community with 89% perennial grasses, 11% forbs, and 0% shrubs in Ecological Site 023XY025 (wet meadows) in SWA U202 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023X025 (wet meadows) in SWA U202 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	89	85	80
Forbs	11	15	20
Shrubs	0	0	0

Decrease the percent composition by weight of Carex by increasing the percent composition by weight of DECE.

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

**Rationale:** The Summit Lake Pasture has been identified as yearlong bighorn sheep range (BRBY-2, BRBY-4), mule deer summer range (BRDS-8), as well as a sage grouse strutting ground and brood use area. It is also used yearlong by wild horses and by cattle for 3 months. By achieving these objectives the vegetative communities would be meeting the needs of the mentioned wildlife, wild horses, and livestock.

Warm Springs Pasture

Objective 1

Short Term

Increase perennial grasses from 34% to 41% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") in SWA U125 by the year 2001. These perennial grasses are: AGSP, STH2, POA++, SIHY, and FEID.

Long Term

Increase FEID from a trace to 7% composition by weight while managing for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight.

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial grasses	34%	50%	65%
Forbs	8%	10%	10%
Shrubs	56%	40%	25%

This objective should be completed by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 2

Short Term

Maintain the following perennial grasses: STH2, SIHY, and POA++ at 46% composition by weight through the year 2001 on Ecological Site 023XY031 (Claypan 10-14") in SWA U174. Also try to get AGSP established on the site.

Long Term

Increase AGSP to 5% composition by weight, as it's potential on the site is 20 to 50% composition by weight. Establish a desired plant community consisting of the following vegetation:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	46%	55%	65%
Forbs	12%	12%	10%
Shrubs	42%	33%	25%

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 3

Short Term

Increase AGSP from 9% to 13% and STH2 from 8% to 12% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY039 (Loamy Slope 10-14") in SWA U125 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Manage for a desired plant community consisting of the following percent composition by weight within Ecological Site 023XY039 (Loamy Slope 10-14"):

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	35%	50%	65%
Forbs	6%	10%	10%
Shrubs	52%	40%	25%

This objective should be reached by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 4

Short Term

Increase AGSP, FEID, and STH2 collectively, from 27% to 36% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY066 (Ashy Loam 12-14") in SWA U162 by the year 2001 while maintaining PUTR2 above 20% composition by weight.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY066 (Ashy Loam 12-14") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	33%	43% *	60%
Forbs	2%	8%	10%
Shrubs	65%	49% **	30%

\* Must be at least 20 % FEID.  
\*\* Must be at least 20% PUTR2.

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

**Objective 5**

**Short Term**

Maintain or increase FEID at 12% and increase AGSP from 2% to 5% composition by weight. Maintain PUTR2 at 9% composition; increase CELE3 from 3% to 6% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna) in SWA U161 by the year 2001.

**Long Term**

Manage for the following percent composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna):

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	35%	40% *	40%
Forbs	3%	10%	10%
Shrubs	54%	50% **	50%

\* Must be at least 15% FEID, 10% AGSP.

\*\* Must be at least 9% CELE3, and 9% PUTR2.

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

**Objective 6**

**Short Term**

Maintain PONE3 at 12% and increase composition by weight for forbs from 8% to 11% with LUPINE making up no more than 5% composition by weight of the forbs in SWA U199 on Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) by the year 2001.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023xy013 (dry meadows) in SWA U199 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	92	85	80
Forbs	8	15	20
Shrubs	0	0	0

Increase composition by weight PONE3 from 12% to 15% in SWA U199 on Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) by the year 2017.

Rationale: This Warm Springs Pasture has been identified as pronghorn yearlong (BRPY-7) and summer range (BRPS-1, BRPS-8); mule deer yearlong (BRDY-3) and winter range (BRDW-4); and as a sage grouse brood use area. It is also used yearlong by wild horses/burros and by cows for three months a year.

Calico Pasture

Objective 1

Short Term

Increase STTH2 from 9% to 12% composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY079 (Gravelly Claypan 8-10") in SWA U063 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 027XY079 (Gravelly Claypan 8-10") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	25%	32%	45%
Forbs	8%	8%	5%
Shrubs	67%	60%	50%

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 2

Short Term

Increase AGSP from 2% to 5% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY037 (Clay Slope 8-12") in SWA U109 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY037 (Clay Slope 8-12"):

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	26%	36%	70%
Forbs	25%	22%	10%
Shrubs	42%	42%	20%

Perennial grasses may include: AGSP- must be at least 8%, STTH2, POA++, SIHY, FEID. This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 3

Short Term

Increase FEID from 2% to 6% composition by weight while trying to establish AGSP on Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") in SWA U042 by the year 2001.

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Long Term

Manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	34%	46%	65%
Forbs	28%	20%	10%
Shrubs	38%	34%	25%

Perennial grasses include FEID, AGSP, POA++, STH2, SIHY and other perennial grasses. This objective should be accomplished by 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

**Rationale:** The Calico Pasture has been identified as pronghorn antelope winter range (BRPW-1). Wild horses use this pasture yearlong and cows use it for one month (April 1 - April 30) for two years and then rest it for two years.

Soldier Meadows Pasture

Objective 1

Short Term

Increase composition by weight of AGSP from 31% to 36% on Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") in SWA U159 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	35	44	65
Forbs	7	10	10
Shrubs	58	46	25

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer and antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 2

Short Term

Increase FEID and STH2 collectively from 12% to 18% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY017 (claypan 14-16") in SWA U229 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY017 (claypan 14-16") in SWA U229 manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	23	35	65
Forbs	8	10	10
Shrubs	69	55	25

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017.

Objective 3

Short Term

Increase the composition by weight STH2 from 1% to 6% on Ecological Site 024XY005 (loamy 8-10") in SWA U181 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 024XY005 (loamy 8-10") in SWA 181 manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing*	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	7	17	55
Forbs	3	5	5
Shrubs	87	78	40

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

\* The remaining 3% is comprised of BRTE.

Objective 4

Short Term

Maintain or increase by weight the perennial grasses at 40% or higher on Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") in SWA U117 by 2001. The perennial grasses include AGSP and SIHY.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") in SWA U117 manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing*	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	40	45	65
Forbs	7	10	10
Shrubs	48	45	25

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

\* The remaining 5% is comprised of BRTE.

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Objective 5

Short Term

Increase by weight the following perennial grasses: SIHY, STTH2, and POA++ collectively from 12% to 18% on Ecological Site 023XY037 (clay slope 8-12") in SWA U187 by 2001. Also try to establish AGSP on the site from the adjacent range sites.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY037 (clay slope 8-12") manage for the following Desired Plant Community while trying to establish AGSP on the site:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	12	25	70
Forbs	2	7	10
Shrubs	86	68	20

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

Objective 6

Short Term

Increase by weight the perennial grasses from 5% to 8% and increase ARSPS5 from 4% to 10% on Ecological Site 024XY025 (loamy slope 5-8") in SWA U114 manage for the following Desired Plant Community:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing*	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	5	10	20
Forbs	Trace	5	5
Shrubs	92	85	75

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

\* The remaining 3% is comprised of BRTE.

Objective 7

Short Term

Maintain the existing plant community with 61% perennial grasses, 22% forbs, and 17% shrubs in Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U201 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U201 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	61	65	80
Forbs	22	22	20
Shrubs	17	13	0

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Increase the percent by weight of the perennial grasses by 4%, while maintaining or decreasing the percent JUBA at 24%.

**Rationale:** The Soldier Meadows Pasture has been identified as pronghorn yearlong (BRPY-5) and winter (BRPW-6, BRPW-7); mule deer summer (BRDS-7, BRDS-5) and winter (BRDW-4); and bighorn sheep yearlong (BRBY-1, BRBY-2). It is also used yearlong by wild horses and burros and cows for one month a year (April 1- April 30).

**Black Rock Pasture**

**Objective 1**

**Short Term**

Increase ORHY, SIHY, and STSP3 from a trace to 3% composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY018 (Gravelly Loam 4-8") in SWA U005 by the year 2001.

**Long Term**

Manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY018 (Gravelly Loam 4-8").

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	Trace	9%	25%
Forbs	Trace	3%	5%
Shrubs	100%	88%	70%

The perennial grasses may include ORHY, POSE, SIHY, and STSP3. This objective should be achieved by 2017.

**Objective 2**

**Short Term**

Increase ORHY from 6% to 9% composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY016 (Sodic Dunes) in SWA U004.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023XY016 (Sodic Dunes) manage for a plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	16%	20%	35%
Forbs	Trace	3%	5%
Shrubs	84%	77%	65%

Perennial grasses may include : ORHY- must be at least 12% composition, DISP3, ELCI2, and SIHY. This objective should be accomplished by the year 2017.

**Rationale:** The Black Rock Pasture has been identified as yearlong pronghorn antelope range (BRPY-5). It is used as a winter pasture by cattle (Jan. 1 - March 30) and it has wild horse use.

Hot Springs Pasture

Resource objectives, including livestock will be established in the Desert Dace Habitat Management Plan. These objectives will be incorporated into the re-evaluation/AMP.

Conduct a re-evaluation in 2001 analyzing resource objectives. If BLM identifies significant resource problems sooner, then a re-evaluation will be completed at that time.

Conduct a re-evaluation in 2017 to determine if long term desired plant community objectives have been achieved.

CARRYING CAPACITY

The combined carrying capacity for livestock and wild horses/burros to achieve these objectives are:

Livestock	12,168 AUMs
Wild Horse and Burros	<u>5,034 AUMs</u>
	17,202 AUMs

The carrying capacity between livestock and wild horses/burros is based on the LUP ratios in accordance with MFP Decisions - Range 1.1 and Wild Horse and Burro 1.1. An exception was made on the Soldier Meadows Allotment southern end of the Black Rock Range Herd Management Area (HMA) where winter habitat is the limiting factor for the wild horses.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT DECISION

Based upon the evaluation of monitoring data for the Soldier Meadow Allotment, consultation with the permittee, and other affected interests it is my decision to change the livestock management:

From:

1. Grazing Preference (AUMs)
  - a. Total Preference 16,070
  - b. Suspended Preference 4,017
  - c. Active Preference 12,053
  - d. Not Scheduled 2,913
  - e. Exchange of Use 0
  - f. Scheduled Use 9,140
2. Season of Use
 

01/10 - 05/20 (winter)
05/21 - 10/30 (summer)
3. Number and Class of Livestock
 

1500, cow/calf (winter)
500, cow/calf (summer)
4. Percent Federal Range 100%

To:

1. Grazing Preference (AUMs)
  - a. Total Preference 16,070
  - b. Suspended Preference 3,902
  - c. Active Preference 12,168
  - d. Not Scheduled 4,481
  - e. Exchange of Use 0
  - f. Scheduled Use 7,687
2. Number of Livestock and Season of Use by pasture

Pasture	Lvt Num	Season	AUMs
Black Rk	500	1/01 - 3/31	1480
Calico	1117	4/01 - 4/30	1102
Soldier M	1117	4/01 - 4/30	1102
Summit LK	1117	7/15 - 10/14	3379
Warm Spr.	1117	7/15 - 10/14	3379
Hot Spr.	1117	11/16- 12/31	1726

The carrying capacity was determined on a pasture basis. The livestock AUMs associated with the rest pasture will not be allocated to any user (livestock, wild horse/burros, or wildlife) during the rest year in order to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance in the allotment. Therefore, on any given year approximately 7,687 AUMs will be used by livestock. The livestock stocking rate per pasture will not exceed the pastures' livestock carrying capacity.

3. Class of Livestock cow/calf
4. Percent Federal Range 100%

#### GRAZING SYSTEM

From:

	Black Rock	Calico	Soldier M.	Warm Spring	Summit Lake
yr 1	11/16-4/15	4/16-6/15	rested	6/16-11/15	rested
yr 2	11/16-4/15	4/16-6/15	rested	6/16-11/15	rested
yr 3	11/16-4/15	rested	4/16-6/15	rested	6/16-11/15
yr 4	11/16-4/15	rested	4/16-6/15	rested	6/16-11/15

To:

	Black Rock	Calico	Soldier M.	Warm Spring	Summit Lake	Hot Springs
yr 1	1/1-3/31	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	rested	11/16-12/31
yr 2	1/1-3/31	rested	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	11/16-12/31
yr 3	1/1-3/31	rested	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	11/16-12/31
yr 4	1/1-3/31	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	rested	11/16-12/31
yr 5	1/1-3/31	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	rested	11/16-12/31
yr 6	1/1-3/31	rested	4/1-4/3	rested	7/15-10/14	11/16-12/31

The grazing system was changed from a two year deferred/rest rotation system under a four year cycle with five pastures (refer to existing system map overlay) to a two year deferred/rest rotation system with six pastures under a four year cycle (refer to proposed system map overlay). By restricting livestock grazing, the grazing system allows for the key species to meet physiological requirements and assures that spawning of LCT will not be impacted by livestock grazing. Riding and herding is required for all pastures and in particular the Summit Lake Pasture.

Late Winter-January 1 to March 31: Livestock will graze the Black Rock Pasture.

Spring-April 1 to April 30: The two spring pastures are the Calico and Soldier Meadows Pastures. The Calico Pasture will be used for two consecutive years and then rested for two years while the Soldier Meadows Pasture is grazed.

Summer-July 15 to October 14: The two summer pastures are Summit Lake and Warm Springs. Livestock will graze each of the pastures on a two year alternate cycle. When the Summit Lake Pasture is grazed for two consecutive years the Warm Springs Pasture is rested for two consecutive years.

The Summit Lake Pasture will be divided into three separate use areas by the proposed riparian pasture fences; Idaho Canyon-north, Stanley Camp-middle (riparian), and Coleman Creek-south.

Livestock grazing in the Stanley Camp use area will not be allowed until riparian vegetation and stream bank conditions meet the objectives set in this re-evaluation. When the LCT Recovery Plan is approved, BLM will adopt those objectives. In the interim cattle will be allowed to trail through the pasture for three (3) days or less. The proposed trailing route runs along the ridge above the various creeks headwaters. The intent is to move groups of cows, 300 to 400 head at a time, over the three day period and not take three entire days to move the herd from one sub-pasture to the other. At times the entire herd may be moved instead of the smaller groups.

Based on the above, when cattle graze in Summit Lake Pasture, they will start in the Coleman Creek use area and graze for four (4) weeks, move north into the Stanley Camp use area for two (2) weeks, then move into the Idaho Canyon use area to graze for six (6) to eight (8) weeks. When the proposed AMP is completed the Stanley Camp use area will be grazed late (between 7/15-10/14) until the next re-evaluation. The re-evaluation will analyze if the season of use should be modified. The time frames for livestock movements are estimated. The livestock will be moved from one sub-pasture to the next as the utilization levels on key riparian plants approaches use criteria (see pg. 8).

The Stanley Camp use area fence will provide controlled livestock grazing for Summer Camp and Snow Creeks for two (2) out of four (4) years. Under the proposed system the Summit Lake Pasture will be grazed for three (3) months for two (2) years then rested for two (2) years for a total use period of six (6) months out of forty-eight (48) months. The riparian pasture will be grazed a total of one (1) month out of forty-eight (48) months. There will be no authorized grazing within the Mahogany Creek Enclosure.

Late Fall/Early Winter-November 16 to December 31: Cattle will graze the Hot Springs Pasture.

An interim plan will not be developed to cover the next six years -- which is two gather cycles, except for the Warm Springs Pasture. Livestock use periods will be coordinated with the Wall Canyon Allotment (Surprise Resource Area). This will be done on an annual basis until an AMP is written combining the two allotments (see page 45 of the Final Re-evaluation).

Rationale: Closely regulated livestock management will allow achievement of allotment multiple use objectives. Proposed range projects and changing the grazing dates in the Summit Lake and Hot Springs Pastures are designed to enhance riparian vegetation and LCT/Desert Dace habitat. This grazing system also meets the upland and meadow complexes vegetation requirements in the other pastures.

#### LIVESTOCK DECISION ACTIONS

##### 1) Livestock Management

Require permittee to herd livestock so the short term utilization objectives for stream bank riparian, wetland riparian, and upland habitats are achieved.

For adjacent pastures, where utilization or residual vegetation heights have not been exceeded, the gates could be opened a week before the move dates. This would allow cattle to drift into the new pasture. Within a week after the move date the remaining cows would be moved and the gate shut.

If livestock have to be moved due to utilization or residual height requirements, all livestock shall be removed from that area within a week or less and kept out of that area for the remaining grazing period.

Trailing will be allowed for no longer than three days across any pasture that is not scheduled to be used during that time period-- for example: crossing the Hot Spring Pasture when moving from the Calico Pasture to the Summit Lake Pasture.

Livestock will not graze the Summit Lake Pastures until range projects are completed. In addition, livestock will not graze the Stanley Camp sub-pasture until vegetation and stream bank conditions meet the criteria described in the Re-evaluation or those adopted by BLM from the approved LCT Recovery Plan.

Actual use billing will be considered once an AMP is written. the operator will have to submit accurate livestock numbers and dates along with submitting the information within specified time frames.



If monitoring indicates that utilization levels cannot be kept at the recommended stubble heights and browse utilization along the creeks during the combined use periods (livestock and wild horses), after the AML is reached, then the streams, or geographic area, will be excluded from livestock and wild horses.

- 2) Write an AMP by FY 95 incorporating the Wall Canyon Allotment into the Soldier Meadows Allotment.

#### TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The below mentioned terms and conditions will be incorporated into the term permit (which will expire in 2001 to correspond with the next re-evaluation) and their annual authorization via the grazing bill:

Grazing use will be in accordance with this grazing decision.

Salt and/or mineral blocks shall not be placed within one quarter (1/4) mile of springs, streams, meadows, riparian zones, or aspen stands. The area immediate to the Desert Dace habitat blocks shall not be placed within 1/2 mile of those springs.

The permittee is required to perform normal maintenance on the range projects which have been assigned maintenance responsibility.

Livestock will be moved as the key riparian species approach the 6 inch stubble height level and 30% utilization levels for Summer Camp, Mahogany, and Snow Creeks; and the Desert Dace spring complexes and 4 inches for Coleman, Slumgullian, and Donnelly Creeks.

Livestock and wild horse utilization levels for wet meadows grass and grass-like species will not exceed 50% by the end of the livestock use period. If use exceeds 50% before the end of the livestock use period then the livestock will be moved within the pasture or removed from the pasture.

Livestock and wild horse utilization levels for grass, grass-like and upland browse species is 50% at the end of the livestock use period (except for the Black Rock Pasture). If use exceeds 50% before the end of the livestock use period then the livestock will be moved within the pasture or removed from the pasture.

For the Black Rock Pasture, combined utilization shall not exceed 60% by February 28 or the start of the new growing season. If use exceeds 60% before the end of the livestock use period then the livestock will be moved within the pasture or removed from the pasture.

When livestock use the Stanley Camp use area a herder and BLM resource specialist shall be present. If a herder is not present or a BLM resource specialist is not available, the livestock can not be turned out; or if during the grazing period neither are no longer available then the livestock shall be removed.

## AUTHORITY

The authority for this decision is contained in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations; pertinent citations are cited:

- 4100.0-8 **Land use plans** - The authorized officer shall manage livestock grazing on public lands under the principle of multiple use and sustained yield, and in accordance with applicable land use plans. Land use plans shall establish allowable resources uses (either singly or in combination), related levels of production or use to be maintained, areas of use, and resource condition goals and objectives to be obtained. The plans also set forth program constraints and general management practices needed to achieve management objectives. Livestock grazing activities and management actions approved by the authorized officer shall be in conformance with the land use plan as defined at 43 CRF 1601.0-5(b).
- 4110.3 **Changes in grazing preference status** - The authorized officer shall periodically review the grazing preference specified in a grazing permit or grazing lease and may make changes in the grazing preference status. These changes shall be supported by monitoring, as evidenced by rangeland studies conducted over time, unless the change is either specified in an applicable land use plan or necessary to manage, maintain or improve rangeland productivity.
- 4120.3-1(a) **Conditions for range improvements** - Range improvements shall be installed, use, maintained, and/or modified on the public lands, or removed from these lands, in a manner consistent with multiple-use management.
- 4130.6-1(a) **Mandatory terms and conditions** - The authorized officer shall specify the kind and number of livestock, the period(s) of use, the allotment(s) to be used, and the amount of use, in animal unit months, for every grazing permit or lease. The authorized shall not exceed the livestock carrying capacity as determined through monitoring and adjusted as necessary.
- 4130.6-2 **Other terms and conditions** - The authorized officer may specify in grazing permits or leases other terms and conditions which will assist in achieving management objectives, provide for proper range management or assist in the orderly administration of the public rangelands ....
- 4130.6-3 **Modification** - Following careful and considered consultation, cooperation and coordination with the lessees, permittees, and other affected interests, the authorized officer may modify terms and conditions of the lease or permit if monitoring data show that present grazing use is not meeting the land use plan or management objectives.

N2 94 16

WILD HORSE/BURRO MANAGEMENT DECISION

Based on the evaluation of the monitoring data for the Soldier Meadows Allotment, consultations with the permittee, and affected interests my decision for wild horses and burros is:

WILD HORSE/BURRO APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT LEVELS

The following wild horse and burro AMLs are based on monitoring and should result in a thriving natural ecological balance for the three herd management areas:

<u>Herd Management Area</u>	<u>Wild Horse/Burro Number-AML</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
Black Rock Range*	186	2232
Warm Springs Canyon	199**	2389
Calico Mountains***	<u>65</u>	<u>780</u>
Grand Totals	450	5401

\* The number of horses to be managed north and south of Slumgullion will be based on the ratio shown on page 49 of the Soldier Meadows Allotment Final Re-evaluation. Due to combining the calculated carrying capacities for wild horses from the Soldier Meadows and Paiute Meadow Allotments, there are 749 AUMs for wild horses in the Soldier Meadows Allotment that were not obligated. These AUMs will not be obligated to any other users to insure continued resource improvement. Due to a error in the Paiute Meadows FMUD, this HMA was incorrectly identified as the Black Rock Mountain HMA - it is the "Black Rock Range HMA".

\*\* The breakdown between wild horses and burros is: 175 wild horses  
24 burros

\*\*\* Only 30% of the Calico Mountains HMA is contained within the Soldier Meadows Allotment. The number of horses is for the Soldier Meadows Allotment portion of the HMA.

Once AML is reached - which should take two gather cycles - in about six years, the wild horse and burro population will be maintained within the following ranges in order to ensure that the carrying capacity is not exceeded. These ranges are based on gathering horses every three years. If gathering schedules change, these ranges may change.

Wild Horse/Burro		
<u>Herd Management Area</u>	<u>75% of AML to AML</u>	<u>AUMS</u>
Warm Springs Canyon	149 to 199	1788 to 2389
Calico Mountains	<u>49 to 65</u>	<u>588 to 780</u>
Grand Totals	198 to 264	2376 to 3169
	<u>65% of AML to AML</u>	<u>AUMS</u>
Black Rock Range*	121 to 186	1452 to 2232

\* The 35% rate is the customary range used in wild horse and burros planning documents and activity plans for the Paradise-Denio Resource Area.

Rationale: During the evaluation period wild horse and burro numbers have exceeded the initial stocking level of 10,140 AUMs (in 1991 by almost 7,000 AUMs). Wild horses and burros have made disproportionate use of the forage resource during the evaluation period, especially in the west side of the Black Rock Range and Calico Mountains HMAs. Wild horses have adversely impacted the headwaters of Coleman, Snow, and Summer Camp Creeks by overgrazing the vegetation and trampling the spring areas. Wild horses have damaged water projects in the Warm Springs Pasture by flattening stock water tanks and pipelines.

#### WILD HORSE DECISION ACTIONS

- 1) The utilization level on upland grass/dry meadows vegetation key species by wild horses and burros, once AML is reached, shall not exceed 20% by July 15 on livestock rest pastures. If the utilization levels are not being met after the second year of rest, then the AML will be adjusted.
- 2) By February 28, or the start of the new grazing season, utilization on upland grass/dry meadows vegetation key species shall not exceed 60% (utilization on grass species from 50 to 60% by wild horses and burros will occur during the dormant season and should not have a detrimental impact to plant health and vigor). For upland browse and wet meadows, utilization shall not exceed 50%.
- 3) Maintain the wild horse and burro population within the recommended range to prevent numbers from exceeding AML. This should keep utilization levels on key species at acceptable levels, thereby, achieving a Thriving Natural Ecological Balance and provide for a healthy and thriving wild horse/burro population. If livestock or wild horses/burros exceed the calculated carrying capacity it would not be possible to meet utilization goals and to maintain a functioning vegetation community.

## AUTHORITY

The authority for this decision is contained in Sec. 3(a), 3(b)(1), and 3(b)(2) of the Wild-Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (P.L. 92-195) as amended and in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations:

- 4700.0-6(a) **Policy - Wild horses and burros shall be managed as self-sustaining populations of health animals in balance with other uses and the productive capacity of their habitat.**
- 4710.3-1 **Herd Management Areas - ...In delineating each herd management area, the authorized officer shall consider the appropriate management level for the herd, the habitat requirements of the animals, the relationships with other uses of the public and adjacent private lands, and the constraints contained in 4710.4.**
- 4710.4 **Constraints on Management - Management of wild horses and burros shall be undertaken with the objective of limiting the animals' distribution to herd areas. Management shall be at the minimum level necessary to attain the objectives identified in approved land use plans and herd management areas plans.**
- 4720.1 **Removal of Excess Animals from Public Lands - Upon examination of current information and a determination by the authorized officer that an excess of wild horses or burros exists, the authorized officer shall remove the excess animals immediately...**

## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Based on the interpretation and analysis of monitoring data and consultation with affected interest I will implement the following:

- 1) Continue with the management of wildlife as outlined in the Land Use Plan, Soldier Meadows Desert Dace, Fox Mountain, and Mahogany Creek Habitat Management Plans.
- 2) Manage Mahogany, Summer Camp, and Snow Creeks for Lahontan cutthroat trout.
- 3) Manage the hot spring complex in the Hot Springs Pasture for Desert Dace and Soldier Meadows cinquefoil.

**Rationale:** The analysis of monitoring data indicates the multiple use objectives for the allotment are not being met. Use pattern mapping and field observations have documented that livestock and wild horses are the primary factor in not meeting objectives. Wildlife are impacting their associated habitat, but not to the extent that warrants changes in the existing management.

## FUTURE MONITORING AND GRAZING ADJUSTMENTS

The Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area will continue to monitor the Soldier Meadows Allotment. Monitoring data will continue to be collected in the future to provide the necessary information to determine if the allotment specific objectives are being met under the new grazing management strategy. Subsequent evaluations will determine if adjustments are required to meet the established allotment specific objectives. The allotment is scheduled for re-evaluation in 2001.

DECISION STATEMENT

This Final Full Force and Effect Decision shall take effect January 24, 1994 and is issued in accordance with:

43 CFR 4160.3(c) - "...The authorized officer may place the final decision in full force and effect in an emergency to stop resource deterioration. Full force and effect decisions shall take effect on the date specified, regardless of an appeal (emphasis added)"

The rationale to implement the decision Full Force and Effect are:

- Allotment wide riparian habitat, including those containing T&E species, is being adversely impacted by livestock and wild horse grazing.
- Immediately start implementing livestock management actions that will improve riparian and upland vegetation (utilization limits on riparian woody/herbaceous, meadow grass/grass-like, upland grasses, and browse species). These management actions will enhance identified Lahontan Cutthroat Trout habitat within the Summit Lake Pasture and Desert Dace habitat in the Hot Springs Pasture.
- Implement the Reasonable and Prudent Measures along with the Terms and Conditions outlined in the Fish and Wildlife Service's Biological Opinion on the proposed Soldier Meadows Allotment Livestock Grazing and Wild Horse and Burro Management Decision dated 12/2/93. This Biological Opinion is a response from formal consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. At issue are the potential adverse effects to Lahontan Cutthroat Trout and Desert Dace habitats within the Soldier Meadows Allotment.
- The combined carrying capacity for the allotment is almost exceeded by the existing population of wild horses. Monitoring data used in the preparation of the allotment re-evaluation documented there was not substantial difference in grazing use patterns between post-livestock and the years a pasture was rested from livestock. Regardless of when data was collected, use pattern mapping substantiated that the water sources, meadows, and certain upland areas are consistently receiving heavy use.

### Livestock Appeal Rights

If you wish to appeal this livestock management decision for the purpose of a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge, in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.4, you are allowed thirty (30) days from receipt of this notice within which to file such appeal with:

Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area Manager  
Bureau of Land Management, Winnemucca District  
705 East 4th Street  
Winnemucca, NV 89445

The appeal shall state the reasons, clearly and concisely, as to why you think the Full Force and Effect Decision is in error.

### Wild Horse Appeal Rights

If you wish to appeal this wild horse management decision, it may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with 43 CFR, Part 4. If an appeal is taken, your appeal must be filed with the Bureau of Land Management,

Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area Manager  
Bureau of Land Management, Winnemucca District  
705 East 4th Street  
Winnemucca, NV 89445

within thirty (30) days from receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 4.21 (58 FR 4939, January 19, 1993) for a stay (suspension) of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to the:

Interior Board of Land Appeals  
Office of Hearings and Appeals  
4015 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22203

and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor:

Office of the Regional Solicitor  
Department of Interior  
2800 Cottage Way, Room 2753  
Sacramento, CA 95825

at the same time the original documents are filed with this office.

If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

If you have any questions, please contact Rich Adams, at (702) 623-1500.

Sincerely Yours,



Bud Cribley, Area Manager  
Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area

cc (The Final Decision was mailed certified to the following individuals and groups):

NV Dept. of Wildlife P877068507  
Mrs. Dawn Lappin, WHOA P877068508  
Ms. Rose Strickland, Sierra Club P877068509  
Ms. Cathy Barcomb Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses P877068510  
Mr. Craig Downer P877068511  
Dr. Gary Vinyard, UNR P877068512  
Ms. Deborah Allard P877068513  
Trout Unlimited, Sagebrush Chapter P877068514  
Mr. Demar Dahl, NV Land Action Assn. P877068515  
Ms. Johanna H. Wald, NRDC P877068516  
Mr. Mike Hornbarger P877068517  
Ms. Barbara Spolter, Wilderness Society P877068518  
Mr. Martin Larraneta P877068519  
Paiute Meadow Ranch P877068520  
NV Woolgrowers Assn. P877068521  
NV Cattlemans Assn. P877068522  
Mr. Thomas Van Horne P877068523  
Intermtn Fed. Landbank Assoc. P877068524  
WH&B Comm, Nat'l Academy of Science P877068525  
Ms. Paula Jewell, Humane Soc. of U.S. P877068526  
Mr. Jack Piccolo, Summit Lake Paiute Tribe P877068527  
The Nature Conservancy P877068528  
William Brigham NV Bighorns Unlimited, Reno Chapter P877068529  
Mr. Scott Tomsen P877068530  
Mr. Julian Smith P877068531  
Mr. Dick Stump P877068532  
Mr. Jack Horning P877068533  
Mr. Andy Johas P877068534  
Mr. William C. Cummings P877068535  
Ms. Karen Sussman, ISPM&B P877068536  
Messrs. Paul Holcher/Dave Stix P877068537  
Mr. Donald Molde, Humane Soc. of South NV P877068538  
Mr. Derrel Fulwider P877068539  
American Horse Protection Assn. P877068540  
Ms. Nancy Whitaker, API P877068541  
Mr. Robert Sam, Summit Lake Paiute Tribe P877068542

12 01 10



The Proposed Decision was mailed to the following individuals and groups:

USDI, Sheldon Wildlife Refuge  
Honorable Richard Bryan  
USDI, BLM Susanville/Carson City  
Mr. John Marvel  
Div. of State Lands  
Mr. Jerry Townsend, BIA-Western NV Agency  
Div. of Conservation Districts, NV  
Mr. Tom Ballow, NV Dept. of Ag.  
Mr. Hillary Winebarger  
USDI, BLM Portland/Sacramento

Mr. Craig Plummer  
Mr. Scott Bell, USFS  
USDI, FWS Reno/Portland  
Honorable Harry Reid  
State Multiple Use Advis  
  
Desert Research Inst, UNR  
Chairman NV Conservation Dist  
Honorable James H. Bilbray  
Honorable Barbara Vucanovich

# W H O A

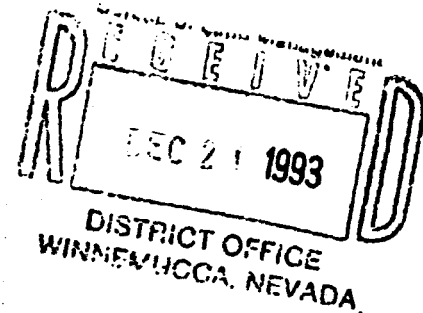
WILD HORSE ORGANIZED ASSISTANCE  
P.O. BOX 555  
RENO, NEVADA 89504



... a note from

Dawn Y. Lappin

December 20, 1993



Mr. Bud Cribley  
Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area  
Bureau of Land Management  
705 East Street  
Winnemucca, Nevada 89406

Subject: Protest - Notice of Proposed Full Force and Effect  
Multiple Use Decision for the Soldier Meadows Allotment

Dear Mr. Cribley:

W H O A has a great concern and interest in the implementation of the Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area land use plan and its effects on wild horse herds and/or their habitats. We view multiple use decisions as the primary vehicle to set a carrying capacity for public rangelands and allocate available forage to wild horses, livestock and wildlife to achieve a thriving natural ecological balance. These decisions must be based upon sound rangeland monitoring data to support management actions necessary to protect natural resources.

It is our finding that the Notice of Proposed Full Force and Effect Multiple Use Decision for Soldier Meadows Allotment does not have supportive data and rationales in the Final Soldier Meadows Re-evaluation. We wish to convey the following issues to be addressed in the Final Decision:

The Proposed Decision will require a land use plan amendment.

The Proposed Decision extends the land use plan short term objectives in excess of 14 years. Range Management-Management Framework III Decision RM-1 set a five year schedule to accomplish wild horse herd management area plans, and other approved activity plans, to establish appropriate management levels to assure viable herds in balance with their habitat by 1987. Short term objectives

Bud Cribley  
December 20, 1993  
Page 2

of the Proposed Decision adjusts the land use plan short term objectives to the year 2001.

The Proposed Decision adjusts the wild horse herd boundaries for the Black Rock West, Warm Springs and Black Rock East Wild Horse Management Areas. These herd areas are delineated in the Sonoma-Gerlach Unit Resource Analysis and Final Grazing Environmental Impact Statement. Any modification or adjustment to these boundaries must be supported by herd delineation data in an environmental analysis to amend the current land use plan.

The Proposed Decision establishes carrying capacities that are arbitrary and contrary to the land use plan.

The Proposed Decision did not consider the allotment short term objective for upland wetland riparian habitat. Rangeland monitoring data found in Appendix 4 of the Final Soldier Meadows Allotment Re-evaluation consistently states "severe" utilization of this key habitat. Carrying capacity computations found in Appendix 6 presents no data to indicate the use of "severe" or 90 percent as the actual utilization or the allotment specific objective of 50 percent as the desire utilization level. Weight averaging of the use pattern mapping data further distracts from the allotment specific objective for wetland meadow habitats.

The Proposed Decision arbitrarily allocates available forage to wild horse and livestock. The land use plan ratio of initial stocking rates for livestock and wild horses were not at a thriving natural ecological balance in 1982. Data and analysis of the Final Environmental Impact Statement did not suggest or conclude that the existing conditions were protecting or restoring natural resources. Therefore, the allocation of available forage must be based upon monitoring data, wild horse herd population dynamics and forage preference of competing ungulates.

The Proposed Decision established an appropriate management level for the East Black Rock Wild Horse Herd of 31 horses. The Soldier Meadows Final Allotment Re-evaluation presents no data or analysis to support this appropriate management level.

Implementation of the policies of the Strategic Plan for the management of wild horse and Burros on Public Lands can exceed the carrying capacity, adversely effect the genetic pool, impact the social behavior and jeopardize the viability of this wild horse herd.

The Proposed Decision is to set a carrying capacity that will meet all allotment objectives and protect natural resources. The

Bud Cribley  
December 20, 1993  
Page #3

capture and release of unadoptable horses to levels above the carrying capacity will cause over utilization to key habitats. Delaying wild horse and livestock adjustments for a minimum of six years is contrary to existing federal regulations that prohibits management actions causing significant resource damage.

The Proposed Decision endorses the broad policy to leave unadoptable horses within the herd area. The sex and age composition of the surviving horses is critical to the longevity and genetic viability of the herd. Wild horse inventory data collected in 1993 indicates the Warm Spring herd suffered over 50 percent mortality last winter. The recruitment rate for 1993 was only six percent. Depending upon the surviving herd's age composition, the Proposed Decision's re-structuring of this herd could jeopardize this herd within two or three years. Implementation of broad policy that effects the sex ratio and age structure of this herd requires an environmental assessment.

The Proposed Decision requires compliance to the National Environmental Protection Act.

The Proposed Decision adjust herd boundaries, restructures the age/sex composition of the herd and alters the genetic pool of the herd without assessing the welfare of this herd. These issues were not presented in the allotment re-evaluation or the land use plan environmental impact statement. Therefore, the Proposed Decision is not programmatic to the current land use plan.

Sincerely,

DAWN Y. LAPPIN  
Director

N2 94 16

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705 EAST 4TH STREET  
WINNEMUCCA, NEVADA 89445



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**SENDER:** *nr. 26.4 4160*

- Complete items 1 and/or 2 for additional services.
- Complete items 3, and 4a & b.
- Print your name and address on the reverse of this form so that we can return this card to you.
- Attach this form to the front of the mailpiece, or on the back if space does not permit.
- Write "Return Receipt Requested" on the mailpiece below the article number.
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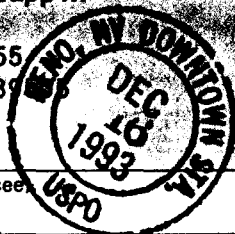
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3. Article Addressed to:

Mrs. Dawn Lappin  
WFOA  
P.O. Box 555  
Reno, NV 89



4a. Article Number

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4b. Service Type

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5. Signature (Addressee)

6. Signature (Agent)

*Dawn Lappin*

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Thank you for using Return Receipt Service.

PS Form 3811, December 1991

U.S. GPO: 1992-323-402

DOMESTIC RETURN RECEIPT



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Winnemucca District Office  
705 East 4th Street  
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
4160  
(NV-0260)

December 10, 1993

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is the Final Re-Evaluation of the Soldier Meadows Allotment and the Proposed Full Force and Effect Multiple Use Decision that implements the recommendations of that re-evaluation.

This marks the culmination of two years of intensive work on the part of the BLM and interested parties in developing these documents. The re-evaluation was started in 1992 and the "Draft Re-Evaluation of the Soldier Meadows Allotment" was issued on January 12, 1993 to 56 affected interests. We received comments from 12 affected interests on that draft. The comments were considered in the development of the final re-evaluation. Throughout the re-evaluation process formal meetings and numerous informal personal contacts with the affected interests were made to coordinate the preparation of these documents.

On July 28, 1993 we completed the Final Re-Evaluation of the Soldier Meadows Allotment and Proposed Multiple Use Decision. On August 17, 1993 we entered into formal consultation with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The consultation was for consideration of impacts of the proposed action on the threatened Lahanton Cutthroat Trout and Desert Dace. A biological opinion was issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on December 2, 1993. All of the terms and conditions required by the biological opinion were included in the Proposed Multiple Use Decision. This exempted the Bureau from the prohibitions of section 9 of the Endangered Species Act. Anyone wanting to review the biological opinion may do so by contacting Arn Berglund, Fisheries Biologists, at this office.

We wish to express our appreciation for the time and effort that you as an affected interest have put into this process and if you have any question regarding these enclosed documents, please feel free to contact Rich Adams, Supervisory Range Conservationist, at this office at 702-623-1500.

Sincerely yours,

Bud C. Cribley, Area Manager  
Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area

Enclosures

N2 94 16



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Winnemucca District Office  
705 East 4th Street  
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
**4160**  
(NV-026.1)

December 10, 1993

CERTIFIED MAIL NO. P374306735  
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

### NOTICE OF PROPOSED FULL FORCE AND EFFECT MULTIPLE USE DECISION SOLDIER MEADOWS ALLOTMENT

R.C. Roberts  
801 A Street  
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Mr. Roberts:

The Record of Decision for the Sonoma/Gerlach Environmental Impact Statement and the Management Framework Plan - Land Use Plan - was issued on September 9, 1982. These documents established the multiple use goals and objectives which guide management of the public lands in the Soldier Meadows Allotment.

In 1988, the Soldier Meadows Allotment was evaluated using monitoring data to determine whether or not the Land Use Plan's (LUP) objectives were being met. As a result of that evaluation an agreement was negotiated with the permittee which specified a grazing system, established a livestock grazing preference, and site specific objectives.

Monitoring has been conducted to determine if livestock grazing, wild horse and burros use, and wildlife use are within the objective parameters established in the LUP. These objectives were carried forward in the Soldier Meadows Allotment Agreement and Management Plan, and the Fox Mountain, Mahogany Creek and Soldier Meadows Desert Dace Habitat Management Plans. Since the 1988 evaluation, additional monitoring has been collected and analyzed to determine whether or not progress is being made in meeting the multiple use objectives for the Soldier Meadows Allotment. In addition, this information will direct changes, if any are required, in management actions to meet those objectives.

Through the allotment re-evaluation process the Bureau of Land Management determined that changes in existing management are required to achieve the multiple use objectives for the allotment. Analysis of the monitoring data indicates that the existing numbers of wild horses and management of livestock is contributing to the failure in meeting parameters of the LUP and the 1988 Allotment Agreement multiple use objectives. Analysis of wildlife and burro monitoring data does not indicate a need for change in the existing management even though wildlife species are impacting their habitat. Therefore, this decision changes livestock management and numbers, the grazing system,

establishes new or modifies objectives, and establishes an Appropriate Management Level (AML) for wild horses and burros resulting in a thriving natural ecological balance.

The draft re-evaluation was sent to interested parties which initiated the consultation, coordination, and cooperation process. Twelve individuals or groups submitted comments that were incorporated into the document.

As a result of this process, and in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act my proposed decisions are:

#### ALLOTMENT WIDE MULTIPLE USE OBJECTIVES

These objectives will be monitored and evaluated to ascertain the success of the grazing system and management actions:

##### A. RIPARIAN OBJECTIVES

Requantify short term objective 1. and long term objectives 1. and 2. to the following:

1. Do not exceed 30% utilization of current years growth on the key riparian trees and shrubs on all reaches, which includes: Aspen (Populus tremuloides) and Willows (Salix spp.). For Mahogany, Summer Camp, and Snow Creeks grasses and grass-like plants will have a minimum stubble height\* of 6 inches. 4 inch stubble height will apply for Coleman, Slumgullion, and Donnelly Creeks when the cows leave the pasture for the following: Nevada Bluegrass (Poa nevadensis), Sedges (Carex spp.), Rushes (Juncus spp.), Intermediate Wheatgrass (Agropyron intermedium), and Tufted Hairgrass (Deschampsia cespitosa).

\* The height of standing herbaceous vegetation in the flood plain. This residual vegetation protects stream bank soils during high flows and filters out sediment to build stream banks. The vegetation adjacent to the water line is the most important place to consider stubble height and secondarily within the riparian area. The cross section of the riparian area will be measured.

2. Improve the riparian condition class on six (6) miles of Mahogany Creek to 70% (from 1992 baseline data of 68%) within the short term (2001) and maintain excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
3. Improve the riparian condition class on 2 miles of Summer Camp Creek to 70% (from 1990 baseline data of 60%) within the short term (by 2001) and maintain excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.



4. Improve the riparian condition class on 3 miles of Snow Creek to 70% (from 1990 baseline data of 60%) within the short term (by 2001) and maintain excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
5. Improve the riparian condition class on 8 miles of Donnelly Creek to 62% (from baseline 1989 data of 52%) within the short term (by 2001) and achieve excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
6. Improve the riparian condition class on 8 miles of Coleman Creek to 66% (from baseline 1991 data of 44%) within the short term (by 2001) and achieve excellent riparian stream habitat condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
7. Improve the riparian condition class on 8 miles of Slumgullion Creek to 63% (from baseline 1990 data of 48%) within the short term (by 2001) and achieve excellent riparian stream habitat condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.

**B. Retain long term objective number 6:**

Protect known sage grouse strutting and nesting habitat and improve brooding habitat by: (WL-1.11)

1. Following NDOW's guidelines for Vegetal Control Programs in Sage Grouse Habitat in Nevada.
2. Maintain sagebrush canopy at 30% in sage grouse nesting areas where sagebrush does not exceed three (3) feet in height.

**C. Retain Long Term Objectives 12, 13 and 14:**

12. Improve or maintain Mahogany Creek to Class A water standards.
13. Improve or maintain the water quality of the following streams to the State criteria set for livestock drinking water, cold water aquatic life, water contact recreation (wading), and wildlife propagation:

Summer Camp Creek  
Snow Creek  
Donnelly Creek  
Slumgullion Creek  
Soldiers Creek

14. Maintain water quality standards for Desert Dace habitat in the springs where they occur to the following:

temperature - 32-38°C/90-100°F  
nitrates - 90 mg/L  
turbidity - 50 NTU

pH - 6.5-9.0  
D.O. - 5.0 mg/L

**D. Allotment Objectives for Uplands and Meadows:**

Redefine long term objectives 5,7,8, and 9 by combining them into resource objectives to manage for desired plant communities.

**RATIONALE:** The limiting factor for wildlife is forage vigor, quality, and cover, therefore, the objectives need to be vegetative ones. Livestock and wild horse objectives are for a sustainable yield of forage, which desired plant communities would account for.

The following lists by pasture the resource objectives, the management actions to meet those objectives, and the procedures to be used to monitor the attainment of the objectives.

Objectives for this allotment were based on ecological status inventory data. The seral stage of each vegetative community and it's potential was considered in conjunction with the wildlife, wild horse, and livestock use to develop desired plant community objectives. Short term objectives will be used to determine the progress each community is making toward it's desired stage.

Summit Lake Pasture

Resource Objectives

Key areas will be established by an interdisciplinary team in key Ecological Sites based on the desired plant community objective.

Objective 1      Short Term

Increase the composition by weight the overall percentage of the following perennial grasses: AGSP, FEID, STH2, ELCI2, POA++, STCO4, and SIHY from 28% to 35% on Ecological Site 023XY007 (Loamy 14-16") in Site Write-up Area (SWA) U044 by the year 2001. The aggregate of ELCI2, POA++, SIHY, and STCO4 can only make up 10% of the total composition.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY007 (Loamy 14-16") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	28%	45%	60%
Forbs	7%	10%	10%
Shrubs	65%	45%	30%

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

**Objective 2**            **Short Term**

Maintain or increase perennial grasses at 45% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") in SWA U044 by the year 2001. These perennial grasses are FEID, AGSP, STH2, POA++, SIHY, and ELCI2 with the aggregate of the latter three making up no more than 10% of the total composition.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	45%	55%	65%
Forbs	11%	10%	10%
Shrubs	44%	35%	25%

This objective should be accomplished by the year 2017.

**Objective 3**            **Short Term**

Increase FEID and AGSP each from 2% to 6% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna) in SWA U044 by the year 2001. Maintain PUTR2 above 10% and CELE3 at 22% composition by weight.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna) manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	23%	30%	40%
Forbs	Trace	8%	10%
Shrubs	77%	62% *	50%

\* At least 25% must be CELE3 and 10% PUTR2.

This objective should be accomplished by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

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**Objective 4**            **Short Term**

Maintain the existing plant community with 61% perennial grasses, 22% forbs, and 17% shrubs in Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U044 by the year 2001.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U044 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
<u>Lifeform</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Desired</u>	<u>Potential</u>
Perennial Grasses	61	65	80
Forbs	22	22	20
Shrubs	17	13	0

Decrease the percent composition by weight of JUBA by increasing the percent composition by weight of PONE3 and HOBR.

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

**Objective 5**            **Short Term**

Maintain the existing plant community with 89% perennial grasses, 11% forbs, and 0% shrubs in Ecological Site 023XY025 (wet meadows) in SWA U202 by the year 2001.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023X025 (wet meadows) in SWA U202 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
<u>Lifeform</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Desired</u>	<u>Potential</u>
Perennial Grasses	89	85	80
Forbs	11	15	20
Shrubs	0	0	0

Decrease the percent composition by weight of Carex by increasing the percent composition by weight of DECE.

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

**Rationale:** The Summit Lake Pasture has been identified as yearlong bighorn sheep range ( BRBY-2, BRBY-4), mule deer summer range (BRDS-8), as well as a sage grouse strutting ground and brood use area. It is also used yearlong by wild horses and by cattle for 3 months. By achieving these objectives the vegetative

communities would be meeting the needs of the mentioned wildlife, wild horses, and livestock.

Warm Springs Pasture

Resource Objectives:

Key areas will be established by an interdisciplinary team in key Ecological Sites based on the desired plant community objective.

Objective 1                      Short Term

Increase perennial grasses from 34% to 41% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") in SWA U125 by the year 2001. These perennial grasses are: AGSP, STH2, POA++, SIHY, and FEID.

Long Term

Increase FEID from a trace to 7% composition by weight while managing for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight.

Percent Composition By Weight

Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial grasses	34%	50%	65%
Forbs	8%	10%	10%
Shrubs	56%	40%	25%

This objective should be completed by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 2                      Short Term

Maintain the following perennial grasses: STH2, SIHY, and POA++ at 46% composition by weight through the year 2001 on Ecological Site 023XY031 (Claypan 10-14") in SWA U174. Also try to get AGSP established on the site.

Long Term

Increase AGSP to 5% composition by weight, as it's potential on the site is 20 to 50% composition by weight. Establish a desired plant community consisting of the following vegetation:

Percent Composition By Weight

Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	46%	55%	65%
Forbs	12%	12%	10%
Shrubs	42%	33%	25%

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

**Objective 3**      **Short Term**

Increase AGSP from 9% to 13% and STTH2 from 8% to 12% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY039 (Loamy Slope 10-14") in SWA U125 by the year 2001.

**Long Term**

Manage for a desired plant community consisting of the following percent composition by weight within Ecological Site 023XY039 (Loamy Slope 10-14"):

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	35%	50%	65%
Forbs	6%	10%	10%
Shrubs	52%	40%	25%

This objective should be reached by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

**Objective 4**      **Short Term**

Increase AGSP, FEID, and STTH2 collectively, from 27% to 36% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY066 (Ashy Loam 12-14") in SWA U162 by the year 2001 while maintaining PUTR2 above 20% composition by weight.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023XY066 (Ashy Loam 12-14") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	33%	43% *	60%
Forbs	2%	8%	10%
Shrubs	65 %	49% **	30%

\* Must be at least 20 % FEID.

\*\* Must be at least 20% PUTR2.

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 5                      Short Term

Maintain or increase FEID at 12% and increase AGSP from 2% to 5% composition by weight. Maintain PUTR2 at 9% composition; increase CELE3 from 3% to 6% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna) in SWA U161 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Manage for the following percent composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna):

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	35%	40% *	40%
Forbs	3%	10%	10%
Shrubs	54%	50% **	50%

- \* Must be at least 15% FEID, 10% AGSP.
- \*\* Must be at least 9% CELE3, and 9% PUTR2.

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 6                      Short Term

Maintain PONE3 at 12% and increase composition by weight for forbs from 8% to 11% with LUPIN making up no more than 5% composition by weight of the forbs in SWA U199 on Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023xy013 (dry meadows) in SWA U199 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	92	85	80
Forbs	8	15	20
Shrubs	0	0	0

Increase composition by weight PONE3 from 12% to 15% in SWA U199 on Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) by the year 2017.

Rationale: This Warm Springs Pasture has been identified as pronghorn yearlong (BRPY-7) and summer range (BRPS-1, BRPS-8); mule deer yearlong (BRDY-3) and winter range (BRDW-4); and as a sage grouse brood use area. It is also used yearlong by wild horses/burros and by cows for three months a year.

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Calico Pasture

Resource Objectives:

Key areas will be established by an interdisciplinary team in key Ecological Sites based on the desired plant community objective.

Objective 1            Short Term

Increase STH2 from 9% to 12% composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY079 (Gravelly Claypan 8-10") in SWA U063 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 027XY079 (Gravelly Claypan 8-10") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	25%	32%	45%
Forbs	8%	8%	5%
Shrubs	67%	60%	50%

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 2            Short Term

Increase AGSP from 2% to 5% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY037 (Clay Slope 8-12") in SWA U109 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY037 (Clay Slope 8-12"):

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	26%	36%	70%
Forbs	25%	22%	10%
Shrubs	42%	42%	20%

Perennial grasses may include: AGSP- must be at least 8%, STH2, POA++, SIHY, FEID. This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.



**Objective 3**      **Short Term**

Increase FEID from 2% to 6% composition by weight while trying to establish AGSP on Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") in SWA U042 by the year 2001.

**Long Term**

Manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	34%	46%	65%
Forbs	28%	20%	10%
Shrubs	38%	34%	25%

Perennial grasses include FEID, AGSP, POA++, STTH2, SIHY and other perennial grasses. This objective should be accomplished by 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Rationale: The Calico Pasture has been identified as pronghorn antelope winter range (BRPW-1). Wild horses use this pasture yearlong and cows use it for one month (April 1 - April 30) for two years and then rest it for two years.

**Soldier Meadows Pasture**

**Resource Objectives:**

Key areas will be established by an interdisciplinary team in key Ecological Sites based on the desired plant community objective.

**Objective 1**      **Short Term**

Increase composition by weight of AGSP from 31% to 36% on Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") in SWA U159 by the year 2001.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	35	44	65
Forbs	7	10	10
Shrubs	58	46	25

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer and antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 2                      Short Term

Increase FEID and STH2 collectively from 12% to 18% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY017 (claypan 14-16") in SWA U229 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY017 (claypan 14-16") in SWA U229 manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	23	35	65
Forbs	8	10	10
Shrubs	69	55	25

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017.

Objective 3                      Short Term

Increase the composition by weight STH2 from 1% to 6% on Ecological Site 024XY005 (loamy 8-10") in SWA U181 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 024XY005 (loamy 8-10") in SWA 181 manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing*	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	7	17	55
Forbs	3	5	5
Shrubs	87	78	40

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

\* The remaining 3% is comprised of BRTE.

Objective 4                      Short Term

Maintain or increase by weight the perennial grasses at 40% or higher on Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") in SWA U117 by 2001. The perennial grasses include AGSP and SIHY.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") in SWA U117 manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing*	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	40	45	65
Forbs	7	10	10
Shrubs	48	45	25

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

\* The remaining 5% is comprised of BRTE.

Objective 5      Short Term

Increase by weight the following perennial grasses: SIHY, STTH2, and POA++ collectively from 12% to 18% on Ecological Site 023XY037 (clay slope 8-12") in SWA U187 by 2001. Also try to establish AGSP on the site from the adjacent range sites.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY037 (clay slope 8-12") manage for the following Desired Plant Community while trying to establish AGSP on the site:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	12	25	70
Forbs	2	7	10
Shrubs	86	68	20

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

Objective 6      Short Term

Increase by weight the perennial grasses from 5% to 8% and increase ARSPS5 from 4% to 10% on Ecological Site 024XY025 (loamy slope 5-8") in SWA U114 manage for the following Desired Plant Community:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing*	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	5	10	20
Forbs	Trace	5	5
Shrubs	92	85	75

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

\* The remaining 3% is comprised of BRTE.

Objective 7            Short Term

Maintain the existing plant community with 61% perennial grasses, 22% forbs, and 17% shrubs in Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U201 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U201 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
<u>Lifeform</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Desired</u>	<u>Potential</u>
Perennial Grasses	61	65	80
Forbs	22	22	20
Shrubs	17	13	0

Increase the percent by weight of the perennial grasses by 4%, while maintaining or decreasing the percent JUBA at 24%.

**Rationale:** The Soldier Meadows Pasture has been identified as pronghorn yearlong (BRPY-5) and winter (BRPW-6, BRPW-7); mule deer summer (BRDS-7, BRDS-5) and winter (BRDW-4); and bighorn sheep yearlong (BRBY-1, BRBY-2). It is also used yearlong by wild horses and burros and cows for one month a year (April 1- April 30).

Black Rock Pasture

Resource Objectives:

Key areas will be established by an interdisciplinary team in key Ecological Sites based on the desired plant community objective.

Objective 1            Short Term

Increase ORHY, SIHY, and STSP3 from a trace to 3% composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY018 (Gravelly Loam 4-8") in SWA U005 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY018 (Gravelly Loam 4-8").

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Percent Composition By Weight

<u>Lifeform</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Desired</u>	<u>Potential</u>
<u>Perennial Grasses</u>	<u>Trace</u>	<u>9%</u>	<u>25%</u>
<u>Forbs</u>	<u>Trace</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>5%</u>
<u>Shrubs</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>88%</u>	<u>70%</u>

The perennial grasses may include ORHY, POSE, SIHY, and STSP3. This objective should be achieved by 2017.

**Objective 2**      **Short Term**

Increase ORHY from 6% to 9% composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY016 (Sodic Dunes) in SWA U004.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023XY016 (Sodic Dunes) manage for a plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight

<u>Lifeform</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Desired</u>	<u>Potential</u>
<u>Perennial Grasses</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>20%</u>	<u>35%</u>
<u>Forbs</u>	<u>Trace</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>5%</u>
<u>Shrubs</u>	<u>84%</u>	<u>77%</u>	<u>65%</u>

Perennial grasses may include : ORHY- must be at least 12% composition, DISP3, ELCI2, and SIHY. This objective should be accomplished by the year 2017.

**Rationale:** The Black Rock Pasture has been identified as yearlong pronghorn antelope range (BRPY-5). It is used as a winter pasture by cattle (Jan. 1 - March 30) and it has wild horse use.

**Hot Springs Pasture**

**Resource Objectives**

- 1) Resource objectives, including livestock will be established in the Desert Dace Habitat Management Plan. These objectives will be incorporated into the re-evaluation/AMP.

**CARRYING CAPACITY**

The combined carrying capacity for livestock and wild horses/burros to achieve these objectives are:

Livestock	12,168 AUMs
Wild Horse and Burros	<u>5,034</u> AUMs
	17,202 AUMs

The carrying capacity between livestock and wild horses/burros is based on the LUP ratios in accordance with MFP Decisions - Range 1.1 and Wild Horse and Burro 1.1. An exception was made on the southern end of the Black Rock Range - West Herd Management Area (HMA) where winter habitat is the limiting factor for the wild horses.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT DECISION

Based upon the evaluation of monitoring data for the Soldier Meadow Allotment, consultation with the permittee, and other affected interests it is my proposed decision to change the livestock management:

From:

1. Grazing Preference (AUMs)
  - a. Total Preference 16,070
  - b. Suspended Preference 4,017
  - c. Active Preference 12,053
  - d. Not Scheduled
  - e. Exchange of Use
  - f. Scheduled Use 12,053
  
2. Season of Use 1/10 - 5/20  
5/21 - 10/30
  
3. Number and Class of Livestock 1500, cow/calf  
500, cow/calf
  
4. Percent Federal Range 100%

To:

1. Grazing Preference (AUMs)
  - a. Total Preference 16,070
  - b. Suspended Preference 3,902
  - c. Active Preference 12,168
  - d. Not Scheduled
  - e. Exchange of Use
  - f. Scheduled Use 7,687

2. Number of Livestock and Season of Use by pasture

Pasture	Lvt Num	Season	AUMs
Black Rk	500	1/01 - 3/31	1480
Calico	1117	4/01 - 4/30	1102
Soldier M	1117	4/01 - 4/30	1102
Summit Lk	1117	7/15 - 10/14	3379
Warm Spr.	1117	7/15 - 10/14	3379
Hot Spr.	1117	11/16- 12/31	1726

The carrying capacity was determined on a pasture basis. The livestock AUMs associated with the rest pasture will not be allocated to any user (livestock, wild horse/burros, or wildlife) during the rest year in order to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance in the allotment. Therefore, on any given year approximately 7,687 AUMs will be used by livestock. The livestock stocking rate per pasture will not exceed the pastures' livestock carrying capacity.

3. Class of Livestock                      cow/calf
4. Percent Federal Range                      100%

GRAZING SYSTEM

From:

	Black Rock	Calico	Soldier M.	Warm Spring	Summit Lake
yr 1	11/16-4/15	4/16-6/15	rested	6/16-11/15	rested
yr 2	11/16-4/15	4/16-6/15	rested	6/16-11/15	rested
yr 3	11/16-4/15	rested	4/16-6/15	rested	6/16-11/15
yr 4	11/16-4/15	rested	4/16-6/15	rested	6/16-11/15

To:

	Black Rock	Calico	Soldier M.	Warm Spring	Summit Lake	Hot Springs
yr 1	1/1-3/31	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	rested	11/16-12/31
yr 2	1/1-3/31	rested	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	11/16-12/31
yr 3	1/1-3/31	rested	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	11/16-12/31
yr 4	1/1-3/31	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	rested	11/16-12/31
yr 5	1/1-3/31	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	rested	11/16-12/31
yr 6	1/1-3/31	rested	4/1-4/3	rested	7/15-10/14	11/16-12/31

The grazing system was changed from a two year deferred/rest rotation system under a four year cycle with five pastures (refer to existing system map overlay) to a two year deferred/rest rotation system with six pastures under a four year cycle (refer to proposed system map overlay). By restricting livestock grazing, the grazing system allows for the key species to meet physiological requirements and assures that spawning of LCT activities will not be impacted by livestock grazing. Riding and

herding is required for all pastures and in particular the Summit Lake Pasture.

Late Winter-January 1 to March 31: Livestock will graze the Black Rock Pasture.

Spring-April 1 to April 30: The two spring pastures are the Calico and Soldier Meadows Pastures. The Calico Pasture will be used for two consecutive years and then rested for two years while the Soldier Meadows Pasture is grazed.

Summer-July 15 to October 14: The two summer pastures are Summit Lake and Warm Springs. Livestock will graze each of the pastures on a two year alternate cycle. When the Summit Lake Pasture is grazed for two consecutive years the Warm Springs Pasture is rested for two consecutive years.

The Summit Lake Pasture will be divided into three separate use areas by the proposed riparian pasture fences; Idaho Canyon-north, Stanley Camp-middle (riparian), and Coleman Creek-south.

Livestock grazing in the Stanley Camp use area will not be allowed until riparian vegetation and stream bank conditions meet the objectives set in this re-evaluation. When the LCT Recovery Plan is approved, BLM will adopt those objectives. In the interim cattle will be allowed to trail through the pasture for three (3) days or less. The proposed trailing route runs along the ridge above the various creeks headwaters. The intent is to move groups of cows, 300 to 400 head at a time, over the three day period and not take three entire days to move the herd from one sub-pasture to the other. At times the entire herd may be moved instead of the smaller groups.

Based on the above, when cattle graze in Summit Lake Pasture, they will start in the Coleman Creek use area and graze for four (4) weeks, move north into the Stanley Camp use area for two (2) weeks, then move into the Idaho Canyon use area to graze for six (6) to eight (8) weeks. When the proposed AMP is completed the Stanley Camp use area will be grazed late (between 7/15-10/14) until the next re-evaluation. The re-evaluation will analyze if the season of use should be modified. The time frames for livestock movements are estimated. The livestock will be moved from one sub-pasture to the next as the utilization levels on key riparian plants approaches use criteria (see pg. 57).

The Stanley Camp use area fence will provide controlled livestock grazing for Summer Camp and Snow Creeks for two (2) out of four (4) years. Under the proposed system the Summit Lake Pasture will be grazed for three (3) months for two (2) years then rested for two (2) years for a total use period of six (6) months out of forty-eight (48) months. The riparian pasture will be grazed a total of one (1) month out of forty-eight (48) months. There will be no authorized grazing within the Mahogany Creek Enclosure.



Late Fall/Early Winter-November 16 to December 31: Cattle will graze the Hot Springs Pasture.

An interim plan will not be developed to cover the next six years -- which is two gather cycles.

Rationale: Livestock management was identified as having the most potential in achieving allotment multiple use objectives. Proposed range projects and changing the grazing dates in the Summit Lake and Hot Springs Pastures are designed to enhance riparian vegetation and LCT/Desert Dace habitat. This grazing system also meets the upland and meadow complex vegetation requirements in the other pastures.

#### LIVESTOCK DECISION ACTIONS

##### 1) Livestock Management

Require permittee to herd livestock so the short term utilization objectives for stream bank riparian, wetland riparian, and upland habitats are achieved.

For adjacent pastures, where utilization or residual vegetation heights have not been exceeded, the gates could be opened a week before the move dates. This would allow cattle to drift into the new pasture. Within a week after the move date the remaining cows would be moved and the gate shut.

If livestock have to be moved due to utilization or residual height requirements, all livestock shall be removed from that area within a week or less and kept out of that area for the remaining grazing period.

Trailing will be allowed for no longer than three days across any pasture that is not scheduled to be used during that time period-- for example: crossing the Hot Spring Pasture when moving from the Calico Pasture to the Summit Lake Pasture.

Livestock will not graze the Summit Lake Pastures until range projects are completed. In addition, livestock will not graze the Stanley Camp sub-pasture until vegetation and stream bank conditions meet the criteria described in the Re-evaluation or those adopted by BLM from the approved LCT Recovery Plan.

Actual use billing will be considered once an AMP is written. the operator will have to submit accurate livestock numbers and dates along with submitting the information within specified time frames.

- 2) Limit utilization on stream riparian, wetland riparian, and upland vegetation

Do not exceed 30% utilization of current years growth on aspen and willows for all reaches when the cattle leave the pasture.

For Mahogany; Summer Camp; and Snow Creeks, and the spring complex associated with the Desert Dace, grasses and grass-like plants will have a minimum stubble height of 6 inches when the livestock leave the pasture; even if wild horse numbers have not reached AML.

A minimum 4 inch stubble height requirement for grass and grass-like plants will apply to Coleman, Slumgullion, and Donnelly Creeks when the cattle leave the pasture.

Combined wild horse/burro and livestock utilization objective on upland grass and grass-like species is 50% at the end of the livestock use period (either a scheduled pasture or the end of the grazing season). If the 50% utilization level is not being met and livestock are moved sooner than scheduled, the grazing preference will be evaluated to determine if a downward adjustment is required. The evaluation will include wild horse, wildlife, and climatic factors.

If monitoring indicates that utilization levels cannot be kept at the recommended stubble heights and browse utilization along the creeks during the combined use periods (livestock and wild horses), after the AML is reached, then the streams, or geographic area, will be excluded from livestock and wild horses.

- 3) Conduct a re-evaluation in 2001 analyzing resource objectives. If significant resource problems are identified sooner then a re-evaluation will be completed at that time.
- 4) Conduct a re-evaluation in 2017 to determine if long term desired plant community objectives have been achieved.
- 5) Write an AMP by FY 95 incorporating the Wall Canyon Allotment into the Soldier Meadows Allotment.

#### TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The below mentioned terms and conditions will be incorporated into the term permit (which will expire in 2001 to correspond with the next re-evaluation) and their annual authorization via the grazing bill:

Grazing use will be in accordance with this grazing decision.

Salt and/or mineral blocks shall not be placed within one quarter (1/4) mile of springs, streams, meadows, riparian zones, or aspen stands. The

area immediate to the Desert Dace habitat blocks shall not be placed within 1/2 mile of those springs.

The permittee is required to perform normal maintenance on the range projects which have been assigned maintenance responsibility.

Livestock will be moved as the key riparian species approach the 6 inch stubble height level and 30% utilization levels for Summer Camp, Mahogany, and Snow Creeks; and the Desert Dace spring complexes and 4 inches for Coleman, Slumgullian, and Donnelly Creeks.

When livestock use the Stanley Camp use area a herder and BLM resource specialist shall be present. If a herder is not present or a BLM resource specialist is not available, the livestock can not be turned out; or if during the grazing period neither are no longer available then the livestock shall be removed.

#### AUTHORITY

The authority for this decision is contained in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations; pertinent citations are cited:

4100.0-8 Land use plans - The authorized officer shall manage livestock grazing on public lands under the principle of multiple use and sustained yield, and in accordance with applicable land use plans. Land use plans shall establish allowable resources uses (either singly or in combination), related levels of production or use to be maintained, areas of use, and resource condition goals and objectives to be obtained. The plans also set forth program constraints and general management practices needed to achieve management objectives. Livestock grazing activities and management actions approved by the authorized officer shall be in conformance with the land use plan as defined at 43 CFR 1601.0-5(b).

4110.3 Changes in grazing preference status - The authorized officer shall periodically review the grazing preference specified in a grazing permit or grazing lease and may make changes in the grazing preference status. these changes shall be supported by monitoring, as evidenced by rangeland studies conducted over time, unless the change is either specified in an applicable land use plan or necessary to manage, maintain or improve rangeland productivity.

4120.3-1(a) Conditions for range improvements - Range improvements shall be installed, use, maintained, and/or modified on the public lands, or removed from these lands, in a manner consistent with multiple-use management.

4130.6-1(a) Mandatory terms and conditions - The authorized officer shall specify the kind and number of livestock, the period(s) of use, the allotment(s) to be used, and the amount of use, in animal unit months, for every grazing permit or lease. The authorized shall not exceed the livestock carrying capacity as determined through monitoring and adjusted as necessary.

4130.6-2 **Other terms and conditions** - The authorized officer may specify in grazing permits or leases other terms and conditions which will assist in achieving management objectives, provide for proper range management or assist in the orderly administration of the public rangelands ....

4130.6-3 **Modification** - Following careful and considered consultation, cooperation and coordination with the lessees, permittees, and other affected interests, the authorized officer may modify terms and conditions of the lease or permit if monitoring data show that present grazing use is not meeting the land use plan or management objectives.

WILD HORSE/BURRO MANAGEMENT DECISION

Based on the evaluation of the monitoring data for the Soldier Meadows Allotment, consultations with the permittee, and affected interests my proposed decision for wild horses and burros is:

WILD HORSE/BURRO APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT LEVELS

The following wild horse and burro AMLs are based on monitoring and should result in a thriving natural ecological balance for the three herd management areas:

<u>Herd Management Area</u>	<u>Wild Horse/Burro Number-AML</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
Black Rock Range-West		
N. of Slumgullion	70	845
S. of Slumgullion	85	1020
Subtotals	155	1865
Warm Springs Canyon	199	2389*
Calico Mountains **	65	780
Grand Totals	419	5034

\* The breakdown between wild horses and burros is:      175 wild horses  
  24 burros

\*\* 30% of the Calico Mountains HMA is within the Soldier Meadows Allotment.

Once AML is reached - which should take two gather cycles - in about six years, the wild horse and burro population will be maintained within the following ranges in order to ensure that the carrying capacity is not exceeded. About 1,300 wild horses and burros will have to gathered to reach AML (500 from Black Rock Range - West, 550 from Warm Springs Canyon, and 250 from Calico Mountains). These ranges are based on gathering horses every three years. If gathering schedules change, these ranges may change.

<u>Herd Management Area</u>	<u>Wild Horse/Burro</u> <u>75% of AML to AML</u>	<u>AUMS</u>
<b>Black Rock Range-West</b>		
N. of Slumgullion	53 to 70	636 to 845
S. of Slumgullion	64 to 85	768 to 1020
Subtotals	117 to 155	1404 to 1865
Warm Springs Canyon	149 to 199	1788 to 2389
Calico Mountains	49 to 65	588 to 780
Grand Totals	315 to 419	3780 to 5034

**Rationale:** During the evaluation period wild horse and burro numbers have exceeded the initial stocking level of 10,140 AUMs (in 1991 by almost 7,000 AUMs). Wild horses and burros have made disproportionate use of the forage resource during the evaluation period, especially in the Black Rock Range - West and Calico Mountains HMAs. Wild horses have adversely impacted the headwaters of Coleman, Snow, and Summer Camp Creeks by overgrazing the vegetation and trampling the spring areas. Wild horses have damaged water projects in the Warm Springs Pasture by flattening stock water tanks and pipelines.

#### WILD HORSE DECISION ACTIONS

- 1) The utilization level on upland vegetation key species by wild horses and burros, once AML is reached, is limited to 20% by July 15 on livestock rest years. If the utilization levels are not being met after the second year of rest, then the AML will be adjusted.
- 2) By February 28, or the start of the new grazing season, utilization on upland grass key species shall not exceed 60%. For upland browse and meadows, utilization shall not exceed 50% (utilization on grass species from 50 to 60% by wild horses and burros will occur during the dormant season and should not have a detrimental impact to plant health and vigor)
- 3) Maintain the wild horse and burro population within the recommended range to prevent numbers from exceeding AML. This should keep utilization levels on key species at acceptable levels, thereby, achieving a Thriving Natural Ecological Balance and provide for a healthy and thriving wild horse/burro population. If livestock or wild horses/burros exceed the calculated carrying capacity it would not be possible to meet utilization goals and to maintain a functioning vegetation community.
- 4) Combine the Black Rock Range - West and East HMA's into the Black Rock Mountain HMA

Manage the wild horse populations of the Black Rock Range- West (Soldier Meadows Allotment, Sonoma-Gerlach R.A.) and the Black Rock Range- East (Paiute Meadows Allotment, Paradise-Denio R.A.) Herd Management Areas (HMAs) as one population. There are no

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topographic barriers or impediments to limit or restrict the free movement and interaction of wild horses between the two HMA's. Monitoring data indicates that horses move between the two HMA's. The combined AML will be based on the carrying capacities and thriving natural ecological balances within the use areas of each allotment as shown below:

<u>HMA/Allotment</u>	<u>Wild Horse Numbers</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
<u>BLACK ROCK WEST</u>		
Soldier Meadows		
N. of Slumgullian	70	845
<u>S. of Slumgullian</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>1020</u>
Total	155	1865
<u>BLACK ROCK EAST</u>		
Paiute Meadows	<u>31</u>	<u>372</u>
Total	186	2237

Census and distribution flights conducted from 1969 to present indicate the historical distribution of wild horses on the Black Rock Range has been approximately fifty percent respectively between the two HMA's. It is unknown at this time what the distribution and number of horses will be between the two allotments at the recommended AML of 186 since the historic distribution patterns were for a typical age structured population, the specific distribution of the horses in the Black Rock Range will not be known until additional monitoring data is collected.

5) **Change the Black Rock Mountain and Warm Springs HMA boundaries**

The original HMA boundaries were developed along vegetative community lines, the District and Resource Area boundaries, and the Summit Lake Indian Reservation. Black Rock Range-West HMA (NV-227) and Warm Springs Canyon (NV-226) lie adjacent to one another and share a common boundary from Sheldon Antelope Range/District boundary fence to a point approximately ¼ mile southwest of Antelope Spring. The proposed changes in the boundaries of the Black Rock West HMA and the Warm Springs Canyon HMA are being proposed to reflect the actual use areas of the wild horses.

There are two proposed changes to the common boundary between the Black Rock Range-West and the Warm Springs Canyon HMA's.

1. **Soldier Creek:** Addition of 4188 acres from the Black Rock Range-West HMA from Soldier Creek through Dry Canyon to Warm Springs Canyon HMA.

The new boundary would run from Soldier Meadows Ranch northeast along Soldier Creek and tie in with the original boundary of the Black Rock Range-West HMA north of Coleman Creek.

**RATIONALE:** Soldier Creek acts as a natural break between the two HMAs. Distribution data and on the ground observations show horses in this area interact with the horse populations from the Warm Springs Canyon HMA when disturbed and not with the horses from the Black Rock Range-West HMA.

2. **Five Mile Flat:** Due to a proposed fence to manage livestock movement running north to south through section 6 and 7 of T.42N, R.26E, 4105 acres would be removed from the Black Rock Range-West HMA and added to the Warm Springs Canyon HMA.

**RATIONALE:** The horses found utilizing this area west of the proposed fence tend to interact with the horse populations from the Warm Springs Canyon HMA when disturbed by aircraft and the horses east of the fence tend to interact with the horse populations from the Black Rock Range-West showing that they are part of that population. The proposed fence line would act as a break and keep the horses in their respective HMAs.

A total of 8293 acres would be transferred from the Black Rock Range- West HMA to the Warm Springs HMA.

#### AUTHORITY

The authority for this decision is contained in Sec. 3(a), 3(b)(1), and 3(b)(2) of the Wild-Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (P.L. 92-195) as amended and in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations:

4700.0-6(a) **Policy** - Wild horses and burros shall be managed as self-sustaining populations of health animals in balance with other uses and the productive capacity of their habitat.

4710.4 **Constraints on Management** - Management of wild horses and burros shall be undertaken with the objective of limiting the animals' distribution to herd areas. Management shall be at the minimum level necessary to attain the objectives identified in approved land use plans and herd management areas plans.



4720.1      **Removal of Excess Animals from Public Lands - Upon examination of current information and a determination by the authorized officer that an excess of wild horses or burros exists, the authorized officer shall remove the excess animals immediately...**

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Based on the interpretation and analysis of monitoring data and consultation with affected interest I will implement the following:

- 1) Continue with the management of wildlife as outlined in the Land Use Plan, Soldier Meadows Desert Dace, Fox Mountain, and Mahogany Creek Habitat Management Plans.
- 2) Manage Mahogany, Summer Camp, and Snow Creeks for Lahontan cutthroat trout.
- 3) Manage the hot spring complex in the Hot Springs Pasture for Desert Dace and Soldier Meadows cinquefoil.

Rationale: The analysis of monitoring data indicates the multiple use objectives for the allotment are not being met. Use pattern mapping and field observations have documented that livestock and wild horses are the primary factor in not meeting objectives. Wildlife are impacting their associated habitat, but not to the extent that warrants changes in the existing management.

FUTURE MONITORING AND GRAZING ADJUSTMENTS

The Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area will continue to monitor the Soldier Meadows Allotment. Monitoring data will continue to be collected in the future to provide the necessary information to determine if the allotment specific objectives are being met under the new grazing management strategy. Subsequent evaluations will determine if adjustments are required to meet the established allotment specific objectives. The allotment is scheduled for re-evaluation in 2001.


PROTEST RIGHTS

If you wish to protest the Proposed Multiple Use Decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.2, you are allowed fifteen (15) days from receipt of this notice within which to file such protest in person or in writing with the Area Manager. The protest should state clearly and concisely why you think the proposed decision is in error. Protests should be sent to:

Area Manager  
Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area  
Bureau of Land Management, Winnemucca District  
705 East 4th Street  
Winnemucca, NV 89445

At the end of the protest period, I will issue a final full force and effect decision.

Sincerely Yours,



Bud Cribley, Area Manager  
Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area

cc (The Proposed Decision was mailed certified to the following individuals and groups):

NV Dept. of Wildlife P111849813  
Mrs. Dawn Lappin, WHOA P111849814  
Ms. Rose Strickland, Sierra Club P111849815  
Ms. Cathy Barcomb Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses P111849816  
Mr. Craig Downer P111849817  
Dr. Gary Vineyard, UNR P111849818  
Ms. Deborah Allard P111849819  
Trout Unlimited, Sagebrush Chapter P111849820  
Mr. Demar Dahl, NV Land Action Assn. P111849821  
Ms. Johanna H. Wald, NRDC P111849822  
Mr. Mike Hornbarger P111849823  
Ms. Barbara Spolter, Wilderness Society P111849824  
Mr. Martin Larraneta P111849825  
Paiute Meadow Ranch P111849826  
NV Woolgrowers Assn. P111849827  
NV Cattlemans Assn. P111849828  
Mr. Thomas Van Horne P111849829  
Intermtn Fed. Landbank Assoc. P111849830  
WH&B Comm, Nat'l Academy of Science P111849831  
Ms. Paula Jewell, Humane Soc. of U.S. P111849832  
Mr. Jack Piccolo, Summit Lake Paiute Tribe P111849833  
The Nature Conservancy P111849834  
William Brigham NV Bighorns Unlimited, Reno Chapter P111849835  
Mr. Scott Tomsen P111849836  
Ms. Julian Smith P111849837  
Mr. Dick Stump P111849838  
Mr. Jack Horning P111849839  
Mr. Andy Johas P111849840  
Mr. William C. Cummings P111849841  
Ms. Karen Sussman, ISPM&B P111849842  
Messrs. Paul Holcher and Don Stix P111849865  
Mr. Donald Molde, Humane Soc. of South NV P111849866  
Mr. Derrel Fulwider P111849867  
American Horse Protection Assn. P111849868  
Ms. Nancy Whitaker, API P111849869  
Mr. Robert Sam, Summit Lake Paiute Tribe P111849870

The Proposed Decision was mailed to the following individuals and groups:

USDI, Sheldon Wildlife Refuge	Mr. Craig Plummer
Honorable Richard Bryan	Mr. Scott Bell, USFS
USDI, BLM Susanville/Carson City	USDI, FWS Reno/Portland
Mr. John Marvel	Honorable Harry Reid
Div. of State Lands	State Multiple Use Advis
Mr. Jerry Townsend, BIA-Western NV Agency	
Div. of Conservation Districts, NV	Desert Research Inst, UNR
Mr. Tom Ballow, NV Dept. of Ag.	Chairman NV Conservation Dist.
Mr. Hillary Winebarger	Honorable James H. Bilbray
USDI, BLM Portland/Sacramento	Honorable Barbara Vucanovich

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## SOLDIER MEADOWS ALLOTMENT RE-EVALUATION

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Soldier Meadows Allotment Re-evaluation will evaluate the actual use, climate, utilization, ecological site inventory, stream survey, wild horse/ burro distribution and census, and wildlife habitat data to determine the effectiveness of the present management on the Soldier Meadows Allotment. This re-evaluation addresses the 1988 Soldier Meadows evaluation, the 1988 livestock agreement, the Fox Mountain Habitat Management Plan, and the Desert Dace Habitat Management Plan to determine whether the allotment specific objectives have been met or not met and if the objectives are still appropriate. Those objectives that are carried forward will be requantified and management actions developed to ensure their achievement. Among the management actions to be developed will be to set the carrying capacity on a pasture by pasture basis and from there establish an Appropriate Management Level for wild horse/burros and the appropriate livestock numbers, the allowable use levels, and a grazing system. The re-evaluation will be the basis for the Multiple Use Decision and will lay the ground work for an Allotment Management Plan.

The Soldier Meadows Allotment is located in the northwest portion of Humboldt County. The allotment is approximately 42 miles long in a north/south direction and 16 miles wide in an east-west direction. The topography within the allotment ranges from the valley floor of the Black Rock Desert to the higher terrain of the Black Rock and Calico Mountain ranges. Vegetative types in the allotment range from Greasewood, Saltbush, Saltgrass sites on the flats at elevations of 4,000' to Sagebrush, Bitterbrush, Mountain Mahogany sites in the higher elevations at 8,600'.

Total acreage of the allotment is as follows:

<u>LAND OWNERSHIP STATUS</u>	<u>PUBLIC</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
Soldier Meadows	327,739	10,518

- A. SOLDIER MEADOWS ALLOTMENT - 00128
- B. PERMITTEE - R.C.ROBERTS
- C. EVALUATION PERIOD - 1988 THROUGH 1992
- D. SELECTIVE MANAGEMENT CATEGORY - I PRIORITY - 1

E. LIVESTOCK PREFERENCE, WILD HORSE/BURRO, AND WILDLIFE NUMBERS

1. Livestock Preference

Total Preference	Active Preference During Evaluation	Suspended Preference	Number of Livestock	Period of Use
16,070	12,053	4,017	1500	1/10 - 5/20
			500	5/21 - 10/30

2. Recommended Wild Horse/ Burro Numbers from the 1988 Evaluation

	Wild Horse/Burro ISL*	Wild Horse/Burro AUMs
Warm Springs Canyon	294/10	3528/120
Black Rock Range-West	424/0	5088/0
Calico Mountains	117/0	1404/0

\* ISL (initial stocking level) refers to the number of wild horse/ burro listed in the Sonoma-Gerlach MFP-III Wild Horse and Burro decision 1:1 to be used as a starting point for monitoring purposes. In accordance with the June 7, 1989 Interior Board of Land Appeals Ruling (IBLA 88-591), adjustments to wild horse/ burro populations and establishment of an AML (appropriate management level) will be based on monitoring data to obtain the optimum number of wild horses and burros which will result in a Thriving Natural Ecological Balance and avoid deterioration of the range.

3. Wildlife Numbers

These are the reasonable numbers established for wildlife in the Sonoma-Gerlach MFP III (WL 1.1) for the Soldier Meadows Allotment and agreed upon by NDOW (Nevada Dept. of Wildlife:

	Number	AUMs
Bighorn Sheep	110	264
Mule Deer	262	786
Pronghorn	179	429

**II. SUMMARY OF THE SOLDIER MEADOWS ALLOTMENT EVALUATION OF 1988**

**A. The 1988 Allotment Evaluation determined that the utilization objectives on the upland sites were being met except for browse species in the Summit Lake Pasture. Riparian utilization objectives and water quality objectives were not being met in the allotment due to over utilization except for the protected areas of the Mahogany Creek Enclosure. Factors contributing to not meeting the objectives were as follows:**

- 1. Poor distribution, livestock movement and high wild horse numbers.**
- 2. The tendency of livestock, wild horses/burros and wild ungulates to concentrate in riparian zones.**
- 3. Wild horse/burro numbers have exceeded the initial numbers from the Land Use Plan by as much as 60% prior to January 1988.**
- 4. Inconsistent and unstable livestock operation which has caused the lack of range improvement maintenance to BLM (Bureau of Land Management) standards.**
- 5. Data indicates that current active preference in combination with existing numbers of wild horse/burros will not allow management objectives to be met even when the grazing system is followed regardless of kind of livestock.**

**B. ALLOTMENT OBJECTIVES FROM THE 1988 EVALUATION:**

**From the above summaries allotment specific objectives from the 1988 evaluation were developed and are illustrated in Appendix 1. The Fox Mountain HMP and Desert Dace HMP objectives not addressed in the 1988 evaluation are also listed in Appendix 1.**



### III. MANAGEMENT ACTIONS FROM THE 1988 EVALUATION AGREEMENT

The Soldier Meadows Allotment was evaluated in 1988 shortly after R.C. Roberts had purchased the Soldier Meadows Ranch. The Livestock Management Agreement resulted in a voluntary reduction of twenty five percent (25%) or 4017 AUMs from the Active Preference which was 16,070 AUMs making the active preference 12,053 AUMs. A deferred/rest rotation grazing system was initiated. Utilization levels of fifty percent (50%) on the upland sites and thirty percent (30%) on key species in the riparian sites were also agreed upon. Mr. Roberts also agreed to grant easements onto his private lands for the purpose of constructing riparian fences and to enter into negotiations toward a land exchange.

#### IV. MONITORING AND INVENTORY DATA DISPLAY AND ANALYSIS

##### Summary of Studies Data

##### 1. Actual Use

Actual use means where, how many, what kind or class of animals, and how long the animals graze on an allotment.

##### a. Livestock

The data is obtained from an actual use report which documents the actual livestock grazing use submitted by the permittee. Actual Use numbers for livestock can be found in APPENDIX 3

During the evaluation period the actual use varied from 5329 to 7963 AUMS which is below the agreed upon voluntary reduction of 25% to 12,053 AUMS.

During the 1991 grazing season there were three documented incidents of unauthorized use in the Summit Lake Pasture for a total of 18 AUMS. The unauthorized livestock incidents involved cattle that drifted from the Piante Meadows Allotment into the Soldier Meadows Allotment.

Warm Springs pasture was supposed to be used on alternate years and rested while the Summit Lake pasture was used. Warm Springs pasture has been used yearly due to the 30% utilization limit on the creeks in the Summit Lake pasture and complete Section 7 consultation with the USFW before the Summit Lake pasture is used again.

##### b. Wildlife

The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) does not provide wildlife population data by allotment, however based on density data provided by NDOW, the following population estimates and AUM demands were calculated for Mule Deer, Pronghorn Antelope and Bighorn Sheep in the Soldier Meadows Allotment. The mule deer and antelope estimates were made using a dot grid to calculate the proportion of each hunt unit in each allotment. The bighorn sheep estimates are actual estimates as noted by NDOW. Actual numbers are in Appendix 3.

Mule deer population estimates appear to be steadily declining. The impacts of the drought and competition with wild horses/burros, along with livestock, maybe impacting the mule deer habitat.

The pronghorn antelope population estimates indicate the population may be expanding. However, the ability of pronghorn to move (most fences are not restricting), drought, high number of wild horses/burros and the avoidance or impacts of wild horses/burros at water sources may cause variations in pronghorn populations. Pronghorn may be migrating from other areas outside the Resource Area and District.

Bighorn Sheep were reintroduced to the west side of the Black Rock Range in February of 1992. This area is historic habitat for bighorn sheep. Bighorn sheep and wild horses may compete for use of the water sources.

c. Wild Horse and Burros

Actual use data for wild horses is derived from the total number of horses (adults and foals) inhabiting a Herd Management Area multiplied by 12 months (March 1 through February 28). The number of wild horses is based on the most recent helicopter census of an HMA. For years in which an aerial census was not conducted a population estimate is calculated by multiplying the previous year's census or population estimate by 11% as outlined in the Draft Sonoma-Gerlach Grazing Environmental Impact Statement. The 11% rate of increase is based on an analysis of helicopter census data collected by experienced personnel in the Sonoma-Gerlach Resource area in 1974, 1977, and 1980 and has been verified by data gathered during wild horse removals.

The census population is obtained by utilizing a helicopter to conduct a direct count of all adults and foals found within an HMA. This method assumes complete coverage of the HMA and observation of all animals. However, Cauley (1974) found in his study and literature search that the closest an aerial survey ever came to the actual population size was 89%. Wagner reported that studies conducted in four horse management areas (Nevada - 2, Oregon and Wyoming) showed about 93% accuracy in areas of low vegetation and moderate terrain, while 60% of the animals in wooded and mountainous topography were missed (Forty-eighth North American Wildlife Conference). Actual use is calculated using the total census population to closely approximate the true forage demand made by wild horses recognizing that all animals are not observed during a census.

When conducting a census, an HMA is flown in a modified transect pattern utilizing topography and natural or man-made barriers to ensure complete coverage and that animals are not counted twice.

d. 1988 Recommended Forage (AUMs) Demand Summary

The following table shows a summary of the 1988 recommended initial forage demand for wild horse/ burros and the agreed upon stocking level for livestock:

Pasture	Livestock	Wild Horses/Burros	Pasture Totals
Black Rock	4488	2544	7032
Calico	1972	1404	3376
Soldier Mead	1972	----	1972
Warm Springs	2679	3528/ 120	6327
Summit Lake	2679	2544	5223
Allot. Total	13790 1/	10140	23930

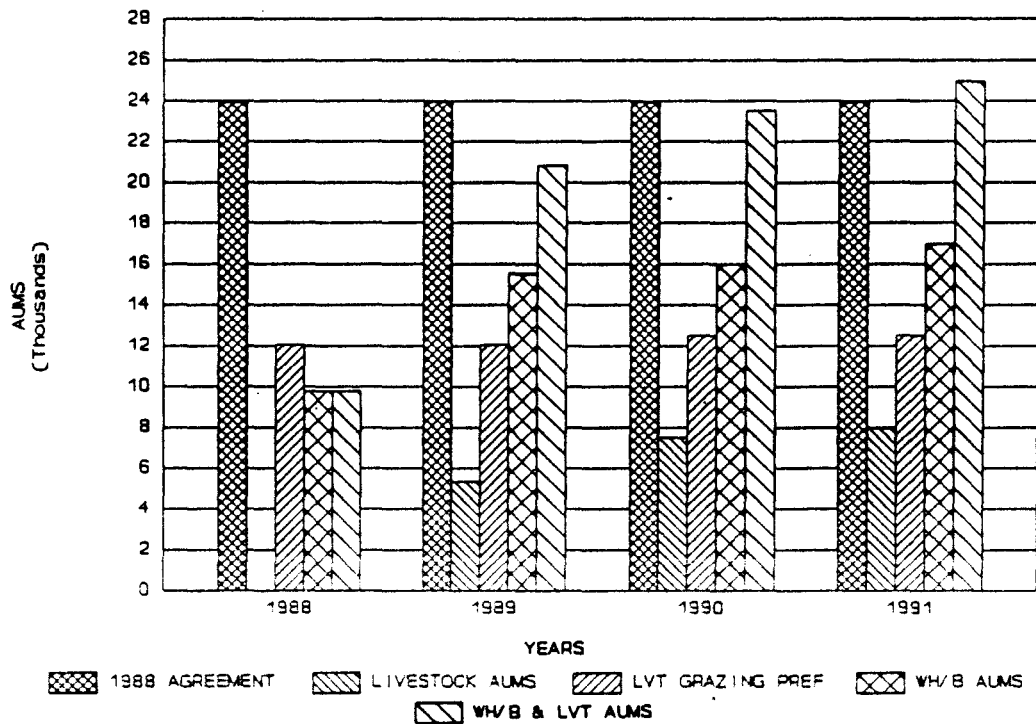
1/ The Calico and Soldier Meadows pastures are the spring pastures. The Calico pasture was to be used 1 year and then rested while the Soldier Meadows pasture was used. The Warm Springs and Summit Lake pastures are the summer pastures. The Warm Springs pasture was supposed to be used one (1) year and then rested while the Summit Lake pasture was used. The AUMs in the rest pastures would not be allocated to any user (livestock, wild horse/burros, or wildlife) in order to maintain a Thriving Natural Ecological Balance in the allotment. Therefore only 9139 AUMs were to be used yearly by livestock.

Actual Use Summary

Pastures		Year			
		1988	1989	1990	1991
	*Livestock	---	1484	3217	3614
Black Rock (winter)	WH/B	2568	1740	2400	2508
	*Livestock	---	---	2050	---
Calico (spring)	WH/B	1724	3132	3480	3864
	*Livestock	---	837	---	1762
Soldier Meadows (spring)	WH/B	---	---	---	---
	*Livestock	---	3008	359	2587
Warm Springs (summer)	WH/B	4152	6552	7272	8064
	*Livestock	---	---	1877	---
Summit Lake (summer)	WH/B	1344	4092	2856	2532
	*Livestock	---	5329	7503	7963
Allotment Yearly Totals	WH/B	9788	15516	16008	16968
	Wildlife	3780	2887	3187	3065
<b>Totals</b>		<b>13568</b>	<b>23732</b>	<b>26698</b>	<b>27996</b>

\* The livestock AUMs reflect the AUMs used on a yearly basis rather than on a grazing year basis as the actual use table illustrates on page 7.

## LVT & WH/B ANNUAL ACTUAL USE SUMMARY



**Figure 1**

### 2. Climate

There are five weather stations that collect climatological data that are relatively close to the Soldier Meadows Allotment. Four of the stations are well established National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administrative (NOAA) sites and one is a BLM Remote Automated Weather System (RAWS) site. Based on the data collected at these stations we were able to draw some conclusions about how this allotment has been influenced by precipitation patterns since the last evaluation. At the NOAA stations the growing season

precipitation has averaged from 2.89" (75% of normal) to 5.36" (138% of normal) from 1988 to 1991. The annual average precipitation has average from 6.14" (77% of normal) to 8.10" (102% of normal) during this period. Although this data does not indicate that the allotment has been hit hard by drought, some of the springs have dried up and areas that usually have an abundant supply of water are extremely low. Timing, form, and amount of precipitation in each event, along with spring time temperatures are all factors which could contribute to lack of recharge. Although the stations are fairly close to the allotment and can be used as a relative indicator of precipitation, storm events in this area tend to be highly localized and variable so actual precipitation on the allotment is not available.

The data can be found in APPENDIX 3.

### 3. Utilization

Use Pattern Maps (UPM) were used to determine utilization zones and levels within each pasture. Key Forage Plant Utilization transects were completed on upland and riparian sites to supplement use pattern maps and to differentiate and ascertain use zones and their levels. The data is used to document the effectiveness of management and forage demand. The procedures used to collect this data can be found in the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook and BLM Handbook 4400-3. Pre-livestock monitoring measures the amount of horse and wildlife use occurring before livestock are turned out. Post-livestock and total use monitoring measure combined utilization levels of all users. Monitoring data collected during rest years reveals wild horse and wildlife use. The analysis of the data is below and the data itself can be found in Appendix 4.

#### a. Black Rock Pasture

Livestock use the Black Rock pasture during the winter from January through March. Wild horses and pronghorn use the area yearlong. Heavy use areas were usually associated with water and are along Mud Meadow Creek, the springs in the Black Rock Range south of Slumgullion, and in Copper Canyon. Livestock made substantial use along Mud Meadow Creek while using the pasture because this is where the most abundant feed is. In the Black Rock Pasture the flats are low productive sites and the use is mainly on shrub species: greasewood (SAVE4), Ephedra (EPHEDRA), shadscale (ATCO), and spiny hopsage (GRSP). The grass species are naturally very sparse in this area which is why the cows use the Mud Meadow Creek area.

Monitoring indicates that the spring areas are receiving heavy horse use before the cows are turned out. Wild horses tend to linger in the Mustang Spring area, evident by places used to roll in silt. Major horse trails between Copper Canyon and Mud Meadow Reservoir indicates that wild horses make the use between these two areas, but that it is a combination of livestock and wild horses at the reservoirs.

Based on several years of grazing this pasture, cows have not been able to graze the entire season without supplemental feeding. The cows had to be brought to facilities and fed hay for substantial periods. In 1993, less than 100 head grazed this pasture.

b. Calico Pasture

Livestock only used the Calico Pasture in the spring for one month (April) every other year. When livestock grazed this pasture utilization levels did not significantly change. Wild horse use is year round and part of the pasture is identified as a pronghorn winter range. Livestock usually do not use the higher elevations in the Calicos but primarily remain in the flats and foothills where the vegetation consists of shadscale (ATCO), spiny hopsage (GRSP), budsage (ARSP5), bottlebrush squirreltail (SIHY), and sandberg bluegrass (POSE). The budsage (ARSP5) greens up while the cows are out, keeping the cows on the flats as opposed to the upper elevations. At Jackass Flat mechanical damage occurred on the shrubs by wild horses pawing at the them to get to the grasses underneath. In the fall of 1989 Donnelly Creek had light use, but in the spring of 1990 Donnelly Creek had moderate to heavy use before the cows were turned out onto the pasture. The use along Donnelly Creek has been moderate to heavy on the willows (SALIX) less than 6' tall along the lower reaches during the spring before the cows are turned out. The lower reaches of the creek are open so animals can access the creek for water. Heavy concentrations of deer scat as well as deer sightings indicate that deer are concentrating in this area. Utilization on the upper reaches of Donnelly Creek within the Soldier Meadows Allotment has been minimal due to the dense willow cover. The north fork of Donnelly Creek had very heavy use by wild horses, which the distribution flight maps and on the ground wild horse observations confirmed. Distribution flight maps, on the ground observations, and stud piles dispersed throughout the upper elevations of the pasture substantiated that the heavy



use found throughout the upper elevations of the pasture was by wild horses.

c. Warm Spring Pasture

Livestock could use the Warm Spring Pasture from June through October but have been using it July through October. Wild horse/ burros use the pasture yearlong. Wildlife use areas include: pronghorn yearlong and summer range, mule deer yearlong and winter, and as a sage grouse brooding area. Generally the use before the cows turn out is light with areas of moderate to heavy use at the reservoir north of Bear Butte, the Five Mile Flat area, and the dry meadows in the northern portion of the pasture. Slight use to no apparent use was found in the southern portion of the pasture. After the livestock come off the southern portion of the pasture the area was mapped as slight to no apparent use while the northern part has light to heavy use. The heavy use occurs predominately at the dry meadows and the areas associated with water: Summit Lake Well and Five Mile Flat area, Sand Creek, Jacob Spring, Rock Spring, Trough Mountain Spring, and Buck Spring. However, the use pattern remained the same when the pasture was rested. The southern part had slight use and the northern portion had heavy use on the dry meadows and developed spring areas. The southern part of the pasture is not used during the summer because all of the current available water is early spring water. Reservoirs were fixed during the 1991 summer, but until the area receives sufficient moisture to fill them, this area will not have significant use and the pasture will continue to have a distribution problem.

d. Summit Lake Pasture

Authorized livestock used the Summit Lake Pasture once since the 1988 evaluation. Wild horse/ burros use the pasture yearlong. Wildlife use areas include: yearlong bighorn sheep, mule deer summer range, and sage grouse strutting and brood use areas. The year that livestock used the pasture, the pre-livestock use showed 0-10% use on willow (SALIX) and quaking aspen (POTRT) along Summer Camp with adjoining uplands having 20% use on the perennial grasses. Heavy use was found in the drainage north of Coleman Creek (Soldiers Creek). The post livestock monitoring showed light use on the northern portion of the pasture and moderate use on

the southern portion of the pasture except for the following heavy use areas: springs associated with Snow Creek, the Summit Lake Mountain area (especially along the boundary fence), and between the Summit Lake Indian Reservation and the Sheldon Antelope Range where use was made on antelope bitterbrush (PUTR2). A lot of deer scat was seen in the area where utilization was documented on antelope bitterbrush (PUTR2). Use on the pasture during the rest from livestock years was generally no apparent use in the northern portion of the pasture, moderate use in the Summit Lake Mountain area and between the Summit Lake Indian Reservation and the Sheldon Antelope Range, and heavy use on the north side of Coleman Creek and the springs associated with Snow Creek. The northern portion of the pasture has early water with the existing maintained range improvements. There are some existing range improvements that need reconstruction and new projects are needed to distribute livestock in the northern part of the pasture to keep them out of the riparian areas. On the bench north of Coleman Creek use has been made by wild horses and unauthorized livestock drifting over from an adjacent allotments. The snowberry (SYMPH) growing on the adjacent uplands to the upper reaches of Coleman Creek had moderate to heavy use by deer evident by deer scat and sightings. In the same area as the snowberry (SYMPH), the grass species which were still green had only slight use and the horses and livestock would select the grasses before the browse species. The use along the Summer Camp Creek when the livestock used the pasture on willow (SALIX) and quaking aspen (POTRT) was light to heavy with most of the use falling into the moderate category. The grass species and grass likes did however receive heavy to severe use at certain points along the creek, but these species were not included as key species to be used to regulate the movement of the livestock. The use on the grasses and grass likes remained below 20% while the herder was still working. Once the herder left the utilization increased significantly (high moderate to heavy).

#### 4. Trend

The Frequency and Trend data collected during the evaluation period (1988 - 1991) is not adequate to determine trend. When the studies were re-read, the individual did not duplicate the collection procedure; making the data non-usable for comparison purposes. During this evaluation period Trend Study Sites were established and monitored to collect initial baseline data.

5. Ecological Status

Agencies such as BLM and the Soil Conservation Service have been using Ecological Sites since 1983. This is the first document written in the Winnemucca District that has incorporated Ecological Site Status so extensively. A close analogy is range condition delineating Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor range condition. BLM Manual 1621.3 and 1622.33 B1 directs offices to use ESI to establish a condition baseline and locate key management areas.

An Ecological site is a distinctive kind of rangeland that differs from other kinds of rangeland in its ability to produce a characteristic natural plant community. An ecological site is the product of all environmental factors responsible for its development. It is capable of supporting a native plant community typified by an association of species that differ from that of other range sites in the kind or proportion of species or in total production.

Ecological sites are a basic component of rangeland inventories. They are ecological subdivisions into which rangeland is divided for study, evaluation, and management. The ecological site map provides the basic ecological data for planning the use, development, rehabilitation, and management of the rangeland.

Ecological site information can be interpreted as to suitability of a site for a single use as grazing or for many other uses such as: wildlife habitat, recreation, natural beauty, watershed, and open space. Ecological Site Inventory (ESI) data was used to develop Desired Plant Communities (DPC). Desired Plant Communities are the plant communities that produce the kind, proportion, and amount of the vegetation necessary for meeting or exceeding the Land Use Plan goals and activity plan objectives established for the site.

An ecological status inventory was completed during the 1991 field season. The following lists the acres and percentage by seral stage for the allotment.

<u>Seral Stage</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Potential Natural Community	51429	16
Late	179656	55
Mid	54414	17
Early	1440	<1
Barren	38076	11
Aspen Woodland	2139	<1
Total	327,154	100

NOTE: Refer to Appendix 8 for Seral Stage definition. Ecological status does not necessarily equate to any particular value for use and management. It merely shows how similar, or dissimilar, an individual community is to the Potential Natural Community (excellent range condition under the old classification system). Understanding site capabilities compared to present community status provides an insight into what can be changed by management or other actions.

6. Wild Horse and Burro Distribution and Census

Data on the distribution of wild horses has been collected from the ground and by aircraft (helicopter and fixed-wing) since 1988. Distribution of horses in the allotment appears to be primarily affected by weather conditions and forage availability. During the period covered by this evaluation there was very little snow pack on the mountains, which allowed the horses to occupy all habitats from the lower to higher elevations yearlong.

When collecting distribution data by fixed-wing aircraft the objective is to identify those areas that wild horses are utilizing at that point in time, not to obtain a count as accurate as a helicopter census. The entire HMA is flown in a transect pattern with the flight lines ranging from 1/2 mile to 2 miles apart depending on visibility and flight conditions. In steep mountainous country the straight line transects are modified to follow the topography of the area to ensure complete coverage. Aircraft altitude ranged from approximately 300 to 600 feet above ground level, depending on visibility and local flight conditions.

During the evaluation period data was collected from two different fixed-wing aircraft: Maule M-5 and Cessna 210. In addition to the fixed wing distribution data, each helicopter census provides distribution information on wild horses. When utilizing the Cessna there were two observers on board, one individual recorded flight lines, animal locations, and the number of animals (adults and foals) seen at each location while the other individual did the counting. In areas of high concentrations a total count of all bands was recorded on the map rather than each individual band.

When conducting a flight using the Maule there were two observers on board; an observer and pilot. Distribution data collected by the Maule is stored in an on-board computer system. As horses were seen, the observers would call out the number of adults and foals to the pilot who would enter the data into the on-board computer system. The computer records the number of horses seen, the location of

the animals by latitude and longitude using a global positioning system, and any remarks the observer may want to record for a specific sighting. Once the flight is completed, the results are printed and transferred by hand to a HMA map. This system does not record the general flight path as is done with the Cessna. Again, in areas of high concentrations a total count of all bands is recorded in the computer system.

Aerial distribution maps are on file in the District Office. Appendix 5 shows the results of each distribution flight, the date flown, and the number of horses observed. An analysis of the distribution data collected during the evaluation period was conducted by pasture.

a. Black Rock Range- West HMA

In the Black Rock Range- West HMA, the distribution has been fairly even, both north and south of Slumgullion Creek with localized areas of heavy concentration. In July, north of Slumgullion Creek the horses are fairly evenly distributed from Red Mountain to Wood Canyon with high concentrations around Summit Lake Mountain area and Summer Camp Canyon, as well as a small concentration at Red Mountain. Horses water at springs on the east and south sides of Red Mountain. During the winter months north of Slumgullion Creek the wild horses are also fairly evenly distributed with concentrations between Coleman Creek and Snow Creek, Summit Lake Mountain, and Wood Canyon. In July, South of Slumgullion Creek wild horses were fairly evenly distributed from Clapper Creek north to Slumgullion Creek with a high concentration west of Big Mountain and at Mustang Spring. During the winter months, distribution has been fairly even from Big Mountain north to Slumgullion Creek with wild horses also in the Clapper Creek area.

b. Warm Springs Canyon HMA

During the winter months, in the Warm Springs Canyon HMA the wild horses use the southern end and the northeast corner. The northwest corner had no wild horses. The heavy concentration areas were Chukar Gulch and Dry Canyon. In 1992 the distribution flight occurred in March and the wild horses were still using the south end of the HMA with the high concentration areas being Chukar Gulch, Warm Springs Canyon, Dry Canyon, and northwest of Clear Springs. During the summer the wild horses move to the northern portion of

the HMA with high concentration areas at Trough Mountain, north of Rock Springs, Bear Buttes going north, and the Five Mile Flat area. This is because the water in the reservoirs on the south end is only available in the early spring. When the reservoirs become dry wild horses move northward. The use is moderate to heavy in the north end during the summer. The use is slight to no apparent use during the summer months in the southern portion of the allotment and the wild horses move south for the winter where the feed still exists and availability of water is not as crucial as during the summer months. The burros stay south of Black Buttes throughout the year.

c. Calico Mountain HMA

In the Calico Mountains HMA the wild horses stay fairly evenly distributed throughout the year. In the spring the horses are fairly evenly distributed with the major concentrations in Willow Creek and north of Box Canyon. During the summer the wild horses were evenly distributed throughout the northern part of the HMA with the heavy concentrations between Willow and Donnelly Creeks, Harry Spring, and Jackass Flat. During the fall the wild horses were evenly distributed throughout the higher elevations with very few wild horses in the foothills. The wild horses were evenly distributed between Cherry Creek and Jackass Flat with very few between Willow Creek and Box Canyon during February.

7. Wild Horse and Burro Removal Data

December 1988	62 Head	Calico HMA
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8. Wildlife Habitat

Habitat suitability ratings were determined using BLM Manual 6630 and Technical Note #384.

Habitat Suitability Rating

**BIGHORN SHEEP**

<u>Habitat Areas</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1992</u>
Black Rock BY-1	65	59
BY-2	79	67
BY-3	73	67
BY-4	69	66
Calico Mtn BY-6	70	60

**MULE DEER**

<u>Habitat Areas</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1992</u>
Bear Buttes DS-1	83	80
Paiute DS-2	58	53
Mahogany Creek DS-2	66	66
Black Rock Range DS-2	75	78
Mahogany Creek DS-2	65	61
Black Mountain DS-3	40	36
Soldier Creek DW-7	64	60
Warm Springs Canyon DW-8	58	55
Box Canyon DY-1	60	55

**PRONGHORN**

<u>Habitat Areas</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1992</u>
Mahogany Creek PS-1	75	63
Bear Buttes PS-2	76	50
High Rock Lake PW-1	34	51
Box Canyon PW-1	59	41
Box Canyon PW-1	57	45
Wagner Springs PW-1	46	48
Warm Springs PW-2	66	68

9. Stream Survey and Water Quality

a. Stream Surveys

**Stream/Riparian Habitat Condition Classification**

% OF HABITAT OPTIMUM

70-100% = EXCELLENT

60-69% = GOOD

50-59% = FAIR

0 -49% = POOR

The Stream Condition rating (expressed as % habitat optimum) is based on the evaluation of factors considered limiting to trout. These include pool-riffle ratio, pool quality, percent gravel and rubble on the stream bottom, bank cover, and bank stability.

Riparian Condition Class is determined in conjunction with percent habitat optimum and represents the average of bank cover and bank stability. See APPENDIX 9 for further explanation of Riparian Condition Class.

(1). Mahogany Creek

The re-evaluation is not attempting to analyze grazing effects on that portion of the reach within the enclosure. The data is presented to show how other factors, such as climate, could impact a creek system. Granted, some trespass has occurred and, at times, a few wild horses could be found in the enclosure during the evaluation period; but these impacts were determined to be insignificant.

Mahogany Creek was first surveyed in 1976 by BLM, then resurveyed by the BLM in 1977 - 1990. Studies were also initiated by the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe (SLPT) in 1987 and every year thereafter until 1991. Data on both fish population and habitat parameters were collected.

Lahontan cutthroat trout (Oncorhynchus clarki henshawi), endemic to the Summit Lake drainage system, were the only fish species found in 1976 and are present in the system today. BLM aquatic habitat studies were established to monitor habitat changes related to livestock utilization on the Mahogany Creek watershed (including Summer Camp Creek).

Surveys conducted by SLPT personnel showed a mean estimated number of salmonids per kilometer of stream in 1990 was 2,169 compared to 4,173 in 1989 and 560 in 1988. According to Cowen (1991) the distribution and abundance of LCT in the Mahogany-Summer Camp Creek drainage from 1988-1990 was primarily affected by water flow and



fish habitat conditions rather than escapement of lacustrine trout spawners.

Stream Habitat Conditions

A comparison of changes in percent habitat optimum and the riparian condition class (average of % bank cover and % bank stability) between 1976, 1986 - 1990 show improvements over the past 14 years.

Changes in stream and riparian habitat condition ratings for Mahogany Creek between 1976, 1986 - 1990.

Percent of  
Habitat Optimum

<u>YEAR OF SURVEY</u>	<u>STREAM HABITAT CONDITION</u>	<u>RIPARIAN CONDITION CLASS</u>
1976	64	74
1986	61	88
1987	63	91
1988	62	91
1989	64	95
1990	68	93
1992	41	68

Stream habitat condition ratings of "good" have remained about the same from 1977 through 1990. However, riparian condition class has improved since 1976 from 74% to 93%, or excellent condition. The decline in riparian condition class between the 1990 and 1992 survey may be explained by the drought, differences in monitoring techniques, and time of year monitoring was conducted impacts.

In August of 1992, NDOW did a GAWS stream survey on the entire length of Mahogany Creek, including the sections of stream on the Summit Lake Paiute Reservation and those inside and outside of the enclosure on public lands. The GAWS survey showed that the stream had a poor rating at 47% of optimum on public lands outside of the enclosure. The same data values were analyzed using the BLM stream survey analysis, the method that was used on previous surveys, and showed that the stream had a poor rating at 39% of optimum habitat. Pool/Riffle ratio and Pool

Quality seem to be limiting optimum habitat. The low Pool/Riffle and Pool Quality factors are related to extremely low flows this year. There were stretches of Mahogany Creek where the only stream flow was subsurface. Stream bank cover and bank stability ratings were at 57% and 74% for those sections of the stream outside of the exclosure. Inside the exclosure the rating was fair at 52% of optimum with GAWS analysis and poor at 41% of optimum based upon BLM survey analysis. Again the limiting factor for this stream appeared to be pool quality and pool/riffle ratio. Bank cover and bank stability ratings were 57% and 74% outside of the exclosure and 51% and 85% inside the exclosure.

(2). Summer Camp Creek

Summer Camp Creek has been surveyed simultaneously with Mahogany Creek. Data on both fish population and habitat parameters were collected. With Summer Camp Creek being tributary to Mahogany Creek, LCT was the only fish species found in 1976 and are currently in this system today.

Stream Habitat Conditions

A comparison of changes in percent habitat optimum and the riparian condition class between 1976, 1986 - 1990 show that stream habitat condition has remained nearly static, however, the riparian condition class has improved from 79 to 88% (excellent).

In August of 1992, NDOW did a GAWS stream survey on the entire length of Summer Camp Creek. The GAWS survey showed that the stream was in good condition at 65% of optimum habitat. The same data values were analyzed using the BLM stream survey analysis, the method that was used on previous surveys, and showed that the stream was at 61% of optimum habitat, giving it a good condition rating. Pool

Quality seems to be limiting optimum habitat. The low Pool Quality factors have been magnified by extremely low flows this year. Stream bank cover and bank stability ratings were at 50% and 75%.

Changes in stream and riparian habitat condition ratings for Summer Camp Creek between 1976, 1986 - 1992.

YEAR OF SURVEY	% OPTIMUM	
	STREAM HABITAT CONDITION	RIPARIAN CONDITION CLASS
1976	62	79
1986	72	90
1987	59	92
1988	49	92
1989	52	88
1990	60	88
1992	61	63

The decline in riparian condition class between the 1990 and 1992 survey maybe explained by the drought, difference in monitoring techniques, time of year monitoring was conducted, and 1990 grazing impacts.

Cowen (1991) conducted GAWS inventories on Mahogany and Summer Camp Creek in 1989 and 1990. Cowen's 1990 inventory was conducted in October following a period of use by livestock (whereas the BLM stream survey was conducted prior to livestock use in June). Cowen stated that "The Mahogany Creek drainage system in the fall of 1990 exhibited degraded aquatic and riparian habitat conditions when compared to 1989, due to two prominent factors: 1) livestock grazing riparian areas, and 2) decreased water discharge. These degraded conditions resulted in decreased trout production. However, the amount of habitat degradation related to effects of livestock grazing riparian areas, and natural variation, could not be evaluated since stations designated to serve as experimental controls within the Mahogany Creek grazing enclosure were impacted by trespass cattle."

812 00 10

(3). Snow Creek

Snow Creek was first surveyed in 1977 by BLM then resurveyed by BLM in 1987 and 1988. NDOW inventoried this system in 1990 and 1991 and 1992. Data on habitat conditions and fish distribution were collected for the surveys in 1990 but not in 1992 due to low water conditions and the subsequent negative effect on the fisheries population.

Following a landslide that occurred in Snow Creek approximately 12,500 years ago, there is no lacustrine population of LCT which enter into Snow Creek from Summit Lake. LCT currently reside in Snow Creek as a result of an accidental introduction in 1988 (William Cowen, personal comm.)

Stream Habitat Conditions

A comparison of changes in percent habitat optimum and the riparian condition class between 1977, 1987, 1988, and 1990 show an improvement in habitat condition.

In September of 1992 NDOW did a GAWS stream survey on the entire length of Snow Creek. The GAWS survey showed that the stream was in fair condition at 55% of optimum habitat. The same data values were analyzed using the BLM stream survey analysis, the method that was used on previous surveys, and showed that the stream was at 49% of optimum habitat, giving the stream a poor rating. Pool Quality and lack of desirable stream bottom materials seem to be limiting optimum habitat. The low Pool Quality factors have been magnified by extremely low flows this year. Stream bank cover and bank stability ratings were at 54% and 78%

Changes in stream and riparian habitat condition ratings for Snow Creek between 1977, 1987, 1988, and 1990.

YEAR OF SURVEY	STREAM HABITAT CONDITION	RIPARIAN CONDITION CLASS
1977	56	68
1987	39	44
1988	46	74
1990 (NDOW)	60	79
1992 (NDOW)	49	66

Stream habitat condition ratings of fair recorded in 1977 declined to poor in 1988 then back to good in 1990. Major limiting factors included a poor pool-riffle ratio, and an absence of quality pools. The decline in riparian condition class between the 1990 and 1992 survey maybe explained by the drought, difference in monitoring techniques, time of year monitoring was conducted, and 1990 grazing impacts.

(4). Coleman Creek

Coleman Creek was surveyed in 1988 by BLM and partially surveyed by NDOW in 1991 (data not available). There are currently no fish in Coleman Creek (personal communication, Ralph Phoenix, NDOW). In 1988, the stream habitat condition rating was 44% (poor).

The Sonoma-Gerlach resource area inventoried Coleman Creek, but no stream survey data was collected to determine the condition of the stream itself. The condition of Coleman Creek appears to be the result of heavy wild horse use on the south facing slopes, concentrated livestock use (uncontrolled livestock drift from adjacent allotments), unstable soils (open erosive slopes that naturally produce high sediment to the creek), and the 1983-84 high water event. High stream temperatures were also recorded.

In September of 1992 NDOW did a GAWS stream survey on the entire length of Coleman Creek. The GAWS survey showed that the stream was in fair condition at 59% of optimum habitat. The same data

values were analyzed using the BLM stream survey analysis, the method that was used on previous surveys, and showed that the stream was at 59% of optimum habitat, giving the stream a fair rating. Pool Quality and lack of desirable stream bottom materials seem to be limiting optimum habitat. The low Pool Quality factors have been magnified by extremely low flows this year. Stream bank cover and bank stability ratings were at 51% and 54%.

(5). Slumgullion Creek

Slumgullion Creek was first surveyed in 1977 by BLM and resurveyed in 1988 by BLM and in 1990 by NDOW. No fish were found during the NDOW survey.

Stream Habitat Conditions

A comparison of changes in percent habitat optimum and the riparian condition class between 1977, 1988, and 1990 show some improvement through 1990.

Changes in stream and riparian habitat condition ratings for Slumgullion Creek between 1977, 1988, and 1990.

YEAR OF SURVEY	% OPTIMUM	
	STREAM HABITAT CONDITION	RIPARIAN CONDITION CLASS
1977	46	56
1988	48	59
1990	53	74

Stream habitat condition ratings of poor recorded in 1977 have improved slightly to fair in 1990. According to data collected by NDOW, limiting factors for Slumgullion Creek are low water flows and poor pool structure. Quality pools were completely lacking throughout most of the system. Heaviest livestock use was observed in the headwaters.

(6). Donnelly Creek \*

Donnelly Creek was first surveyed in 1977 by BLM and resurveyed in 1988 by BLM and in 1989 by NDOW. No fish were found

during the 1989 survey, however, the stream does have the potential to support a viable fish population. This stream was inventoried by BLM in 1991, however, no stream survey data was collected.

Stream Habitat Conditions

A comparison of changes in percent habitat optimum and the riparian condition class between 1977, 1988, and 1989 show a slight decline. Visual observations made in 1991 showed that upper reaches of Donnelly Creek are improving, but that the lower reaches are static to declining slightly. The use in this part of the creek was from deer who had found a niche for themselves in this area. Wild horse/ Burro distribution flights show that horses are not using the lower reaches of Donnelly Creek. The vegetation along the creek is receiving heavy use whether or not livestock are using the Calico pasture signifying that livestock are not making substantial use of the creek. Heavy deer scat as well as three deer were seen along the lower reaches of Donnelly Creek to indicate that the deer were making the use. The north fork of Donnelly Creek had heavy use by wild horses, which the distribution flight maps and on the ground horse observations confirm by showing a high concentration of wild horses along the north fork of Donnelly Creek.

\* Since the 1988 evaluation Donnelly Creek has been identified as a potential LCT recovery stream.

Changes in stream and riparian habitat condition ratings for Donnelly Creek between 1977, 1988, and 1989.

YEAR OF SURVEY	% OPTIMUM	
	STREAM HABITAT CONDITION	RIPARIAN CONDITION CLASS
1977	54	83
1988	50	65
1989 (NDOW)	52	60

Stream habitat ratings of fair recorded in 1977 have dropped slightly but still remain fair. The main overall limiting

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factors for Donnelly Creek were low ratings for pool quality, stream bottom substrate, and bank vegetation stability. Pool-riffle ratio rated good to excellent for most of this system. In 1989 as well as 1991, wild horses have had a negative affect on the stream system in the north fork of Donnelly Creek. Deer appear to be having a negative impact on the lower reaches of the creek.

(7). Desert Dace Hot Springs Complex

No additional BLM data has been gathered applicable to this evaluation for the Desert Dace ACEC. Observations by the BLM Fishery Biologist (Winnemucca District) and personal communication with Dr. Gary Vinyard of the University of Nevada, Reno, indicated that water temperature and quality are being met for the habitat objective for Desert Dace.

a. WATER QUALITY

Water quality data has been collected in 1980 and 1982 for streams considered in this Allotment Evaluation. However, this data is outdated. While it can be used for baseline information, it will not be used in this evaluation process. Recent water quality data collected for Mahogany, Summer Camp, Donnelly, and Slumgullion Creeks will be used in this evaluation.

(1). Mahogany/Summer Camp Creek

The pH readings on Mahogany and Summer Camp Creek in 1990 (Cowen) ranged from 7.3 to 7.4. Stream temperatures at all sampling locations were all below 20 degrees C. However, it should be noted that these temperatures were recorded in October. Alkalinity ranged from 27.4 to 41.7 mg/l. Sulphate was from 2.0 to 4.0 mg/l. Conductivity at 25 degrees C ranged from 107 to 110 UMHOS.

(2). Slumgullion Creek

The pH readings on Slumgullion Creek ranged from 7.5 to 8.5. Stream



temperatures averaged 77 Degrees F. with a maximum of 86 degrees F. Alkalinity ranged from 102.6 to 136.8 mg/l. Sulphate ranged from 50 to 60 mg/l.

(3). Donnelly Creek

The pH readings on Donnelly Creek ranged from 7.5 to 8.5. Stream temperatures averaged 47 degrees F with a maximum of 56 degrees F. Alkalinity ranged from 119.7 to 153.9 mg/l. Sulphate ranged from 50 to 60 mg/l.

(4). Snow Creek

No recent water quality data.

(5). Coleman Creek

No recent water quality data.

## V. EVALUATION OF OBJECTIVES

### A. Short Term

1. Utilization of Willow (Salix spp.) and Aspen (Populus tremuloides) in stream bank riparian areas shall not exceed 30% on the following streams. (WLA-1.3)

Mahogany Creek (outside exclosure)  
Mahogany Creek (inside exclosure-10%)  
Summer Camp Creek  
Snow Creek  
Donnelly Creek  
Slumgullion Creek  
Soldiers Creek

This objective was not met for Donnelly Creek, Slumgullion Creek, Coleman Creek or the springs adjacent to Snow Creek. For the years 89-91 all of these areas had moderate to heavy use. The utilization on the upper half of Donnelly Creek was minimal due to the dense willow cover. The lower half of the creek, however, which is open so animals can access the creek for water had moderate to heavy use in the spring. The use in this part of the creek can be attributed to wildlife. The North Fork of Donnelly Creek had some areas of heavy use by wild horses. Coleman Creek has had heavy use on the north side of the creek, but only light use on the south side and the lower reaches of the creek. Most of the use by livestock has historically been made by unauthorized livestock drifting over from adjacent allotments and not from the permittee in the Soldier Meadows Allotment.

During the 1990 grazing season along Snow Creek, mid-season monitoring documented grazing utilization levels were 0-20%. When the herders left, utilization levels exceeded the 30% limit on Salix/Potrt-- between 50 to 60%.

2. Utilization of Nevada bluegrass (Poa nevadensis) and Cinquefoil (Potentilla spp.) on 1,383 acres of wetland riparian habitat shall not exceed 50%. (WL-1. )

These meadows complexes are too small to delineate while use pattern mapping, but the corresponding Use Pattern Map memos state that the meadows had moderate to heavy use. Therefore this objective is not being met.

3. Utilization shall not exceed 50% for mountain mahogany and 40% for aspen in upland sites. (WL-1.9)

This objective was not met. In the Warm Springs Pasture

mountain mahogany had severe use. The leader growth and plant health appeared to be moderate and the drought seemed to be stressing shrubs in most areas. The mountain mahogany within the Summit Lake Pasture also had severe use as well as the mountain mahogany within the Mahogany Creek Enclosure. The mountain mahogany in these two areas had good leader growth and was in good plant condition. Along Summer Camp Creek the aspen have had light to heavy use with most being in the moderate use category. The area inside the Mahogany Creek enclosure had no use, moderate, and severe use on aspen. The Mahogany Creek Enclosure is an area that mule deer and pronghorn don't compete with the cattle and high wild horse numbers and their use on mountain mahogany and aspens inside the enclosure indicates that the use on these browse species outside of the enclosure is made at least in part by wildlife. Authorized livestock in 1990, did utilize aspens along Summer Camp Creek. Livestock also used the mountain mahogany for shade in the Warm Springs and, to some extent, in the Summit Lake Pastures-- this includes some trespass cattle. The mountain mahogany is highlined to 4.5' in most instances from past use with very little regeneration evident either inside or outside of the enclosure.

**B. Long Term**

1. Improve or maintain riparian habitat along the following streams as follows: (WLA-1.3 & WL-1.9)

<u>Stream Name</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>From - To</u>
*Mahogany Creek	100	At - Excellent
*Summer Camp Creek	30	At - Excellent
*Snow Creek	30	At - Good
Donnelly Creek	109	Fair - Good
Soldiers Creek	100	Fair - Good
Slumgullion Creek	100	Poor - Good

\* These streams have populations of the federally listed threatened Lahontan Cutthroat Trout.

<u>STREAM NAME</u>	<u>ACRES OF RIPARIAN HABITAT</u>	<u>MILES</u>	<u>PRESENT % OF OPTIMUM</u>	<u>EXPECTED % OF OPTIMUM</u>
*Mahogany Creek	100	6	68%	>60%
*Summer Camp Creek	30	2	60%	>60%
*Snow Creek	30	3	60%	>60%
Donnelly Creek	109	8	52%	>60%
Coleman Creek	100	8	44% (1988)	>60%
Slumgullion Creek	100	8	48%	>60%

\* These streams have populations of the federally listed threatened Lahontan

cutthroat trout.

**NOTE:** Coleman Creek will be added to the list of creeks addressed under this objective. Past stream surveys conducted on Soldiers Creek were in actuality conducted on lower Soldiers and Coleman Creek.

Mahogany Creek exceeded the 60% percent of optimum. It progressed from less than 60% to 68% in 1990 then dropped to 41% in 1992. The higher percent of optimum levels have not been achieved within the Mahogany Creek exclosure because of pool quality being a limiting factor in the overall rating. Mahogany Creek (within the exclosure) currently exhibits a significant amount of quality riffles which are deep and fast. These riffles, critical for the existing LCT fishery, do not factor into the overall rating as highly as quality pools do. This explains why the percent of optimums are less than 70%, even within the exclosure. Riparian Condition Class (RCC) a component of the percent of optimum (average bank cover and bank stability), reflects that even though the percent of optimum is less than 70%, RCC is near 90%. Even though Mahogany Creek may not have quality pools within the survey transects, bank cover and bank stability are rated Class I, excellent. In 1992, all parameters declined in value. The exact reason for the decline can not be attributed to any one factor. Based upon documented field observations there have not been enough unauthorized livestock in this area to result in a major change in condition. The most probable causes for the declined rating could be attributed to the extended drought conditions and the different times of year that the data was collected. Additional factors could be the increased use in this area by wild horses/burros and wildlife as well as the drought related low flows contributing to lower pool/riffle and quality pool values.

Summer Camp Creek is progressing toward the objective of 70%. It has gone from 49% in 1988, 60% in 1990 and 61% in 1992. The Riparian Condition Class changed from 92% in 1988 to 63% in 1992. Pool quality is the limiting factor in this creek.

Snow Creek has met the objective of 60% of optimum as of the 1990 NDOW study. The Riparian Condition Class went from 74% in 1988 to 66% in 1990. The major limiting factor to this creek is once again a poor pool-riffle ratio and an absence of quality pools.

Donnelly Creek is progressing toward the optimum as of the 1989 NDOW study, which had it improving from 50% in 1988 to 52% in 1989. The Riparian Condition Class dropped from 65% to 60% during the same time period. The limiting factors include pool quality, stream bottom substrate, and bank

vegetation stability.

Slumgullion Creek is progressing toward 60% of optimum. It was 48% in 1988 and in 1990 it improved to 53%. The Riparian Condition Class has improved also from 59% in 1988 to 74% in 1990. The limiting factor is pool quality.

Six consecutive years of drought combined with livestock (including non-permitted use) and wild horses concentrating along certain reaches of these riparian areas, appear to be the limiting factor for most of these streams.

2. Improve or maintain the following streams from the percent of optimum indicated to 60% or better. (WLA-1.3)

Table from 1988 Evaluation:

<u>Stream Name</u>	<u>Present % of Optimum</u>	<u>Public Miles</u>
Mahogany Creek	67%	6
Summer Camp Creek	62%	2
Snow Creek	56%	3
Donnelly Creek	53%	8
Soldiers Creek	58%	8
Slumgullion Creek	46%	8

NOTE: Coleman Creek will be added to the list of creeks addressed under this objective in future allotment evaluations.

Table reflecting the new information:

<u>STREAM NAME</u>	<u>PERCENT % OF OPTIMUM</u>	<u>YEAR MONITORED</u>	<u>PUBLIC MILES</u>
MAHOGANY CREEK	41%	1992	6
SUMMER CAMP CREEK	61%	1992	2
SNOW CREEK	49%	1992	3
DONNELLY CREEK	52%	1989	8
SOLDIERS CREEK	30%	1988	8
SLUMGULLION CREEK	53%	1990	8
COLEMAN CREEK	59%	1992	-

Note: Mahogany, Summer Camp, Snow, and Coleman Creeks were inventoried in 1992 by NDOW. To summarize, their findings of % of Optimum were: 47%, 65%, 55%, and 59% respectively (the above numbers are adjusted based on BLM methodology).

This objective has already been addressed under objective 1 (long term).

3. **Maintain habitat for the federally listed threatened Desert Dace at excellent within the 307 acre ACEC. (WL-1.5a)**  
The Use Pattern Maps (UPM) indicate that there wasn't a problem with exceeding the established use levels in this area of the pasture therefore the objective was achieved during the evaluation period. The Bureau has acquired the lands that are habitat for the Desert Dace and will maintain or improve these areas in accordance with U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) guidelines.

No additional BLM data has been gathered applicable to this evaluation for the Desert Dace ACEC. Visual observation by the BLM Fishery Biologist (Winnemucca District) and personal communication with Dr. Gary Vinyard of the University of Nevada, Reno, indicated that water temperature and quality are being met for the habitat objective for Desert Dace.

4. **Improve to and maintain in good or higher condition, 1,383 acres of wetland riparian habitat. (WL-1.10)**

BLM ESI data shows 1679.12 acres of meadows that include range sites 023XY013(Dry Meadows- Pone3) , 023XY025(Wet Meadow- Dece), and 025XY001(Moist Floodplain- Salix/Eltr3-Elci2). 441 acres are in low seral (26%), 770.23 acres are in mid seral (46%), 402.45 acres are in high seral (24%), and 65.44 acres are PNC (4%). It is undeterminable if the wetland riparian habitat is progressing toward this objective of good or higher condition because the past condition of these areas when the objective was established was not known.

5. **Manage, maintain and improve public rangeland habitat condition to provide forage on a sustained yield basis, with an initial forage demand for big game of 786 AUMs for mule deer, 429 AUMs for pronghorn, and 264 AUMs for bighorn sheep by:**
  - a. **Improving the following mule deer habitat from good to excellent condition: Bear Buttes DS-1 (4,174 acres); Mahogany DS-2 (24,047 acres); Soldier DW-7 (18,666 acres) and Warm Springs DW-8 (43,633 acres).**
  - b. **Improving Big Mountain DS-2 (7,077 acres) and Soldier DW-6 (6,995 acres) mule deer habitat from fair to good condition.**
  - c. **Improving Black Mountain DS-3 (19,462 acres) and Paiute DS-2 (2,255 acres) mule deer habitat from poor to fair condition.**

- d. Improving Black Butte AS-2 (19,148 acres) and Warm Springs AW-2 (61,452 acres) pronghorn habitat from fair to good condition.
- e. Improving High Rock Lake AW-1 (7,665 acres) pronghorn habitat from poor to fair condition.
- f. Improving Calico Mts. BY-6 (28,515 acres) California bighorn sheep habitat from 70% to 90% of optimum.
- g. Maintain 49,254 acres of Black Rock Range BY-4 potential California bighorn sheep habitat in good condition to support reestablishment.

#### Mule Deer

Based on 1991 ESI data, the condition of the management areas in objectives a through c appears to be static. A slight decline in condition was recorded from 1988 to 1991. This change may be due to a difference in vegetative sampling techniques and to different criteria for plot selection. The 1988 sampling method used vegetative canopy cover to determine species composition, while the 1991 method determined species composition by weight. The 1988 transects were located in areas critical for mule deer habitat, but were small inclusions in the ecological site. The 1991 transects were located in areas that are representative of the entire ecological site. This makes correlation between the two years difficult. Based on the limited data that we do have, we can say that we are not progressing toward our objectives.

Mule deer habitat analysis is based on: a browse vigor rating, forage quality, vertical cover, disturbance or interface, and water distribution. Forage variables from the above list were the only ones that changed during this period. Forage vigor, quality, and cover are the variables most likely to be influenced by management, and will therefore be the ones we will concentrate on in the future. For future evaluations, mule deer habitat condition transects will be done at the key areas identified under Resource Objectives in Section VII E of this document by an interdisciplinary team. Inclusions of special consideration will also be monitored and noted as such.

#### Pronghorn Antelope

ESI data from 1991 indicates that we have achieved objectives d and e in the Warm Springs AW-2 and High Rock AW-1 use areas. Data was not available for the Black Butte AS-2 area. Sampling techniques and transect locations may account for these differences as they did for mule deer.

Pronghorn habitat condition ratings are based on : vegetation quality, quantity, height, diversity, water distribution, water quantity, and limiting factors (fences, snow depth, and habitat disturbance). Vegetation will be monitored at key areas identified under Resource Objectives in section VII E of this document. Inclusions of special concern for pronghorn habitat will also be monitored and noted as such.

#### California Bighorn Sheep

Based on 1991 habitat suitability ratings, objectives f and g have not been achieved and progress is not being made in obtaining these objectives. Habitat suitability ratings for both the Calico Mountains BY-6 and the Black Rock Range BY-4 have declined slightly from the 1988 rating.

California bighorn sheep habitat suitability ratings are based on topography, water, forage, human conflicts, and domestic sheep use conflicts. The water rating includes: distance from escape cover, competition, visual obstruction, and distance between waters.

Competition for water was the only variable to change during the evaluation period due mostly to wild horse numbers being very high.

6. Protect known sage grouse strutting and nesting habitat and improve brooding habitat by: (WL-1.11)
  - a. Following NDOW's guidelines for Vegetal Control Programs in Sage Grouse Habitat in Nevada.
  - b. Maintain sagebrush canopy at 30% in sage grouse nesting areas where sagebrush does not exceed three (3) feet in height.

This objective has been met. There were no vegetal manipulations as a result of new range improvement projects such as fencing, brush control, or pipelines or alterations to the vegetation by wildland fires.

7. Maintain or improve 658 acres of aspen woodland and 1,825 acres of mountain mahogany thicket to late seral status or equivalent. (WL-1.9)

It is undeterminable if we are progressing toward this objective because the past condition was not known. Currently, though, based on ESI mapping there are 2139 acres of Aspen in the allotment. Aspen stands are considered a woodland site and are given a woodland suitability rather than a seral stage. The woodland suitability rating was not



determined, but transects were performed on the under story vegetation. It would be more appropriate to address age class structure and/or stem density rather than a seral stage for aspen stands in future evaluations.

The mountain mahogany areas are classified as mahogany savannahs and are given a seral stage. 1419.29 acres were mapped of mountain mahogany, of which 769.65 acres are in mid seral (54%) and 649.64 acres are in late seral (46%).

This objective will be requantified in the technical recommendations.

8. Manage, maintain and improve rangeland conditions to provide forage on a sustained yield basis with an initial stocking level of 16,070 AUMs.

Improve range/ecological 1/ condition from:

Poor to fair on 49,161 acres.  
Fair to good on 131,096 acres.  
Good to excellent on 98,321 acres.

1/ The range/ecological conditions in this document are forage condition that will be replaced with ecological status condition as information becomes available. The objective will be redefined/quantified to obtain a particular ecological status when site potential and identified uses are combined to meet vegetative objectives.

An Ecological Site Inventory (ESI) was completed since the 1988 evaluation. This data will replace the forage condition and the objective will be redefined/quantified to obtain a particular ecological status when the site potential and identified uses are combined to meet vegetative objectives as desired plant communities. Currently, 71% of the allotment is late seral or PNC.

At this time the allotment is not providing on a sustained yield basis a stocking level of 16,070 AUMs. During the evaluation period the actual use varied from 5329 to 7963 AUMS which is below the agreed upon voluntary reduction of 25% to 12,053 AUMS. The problems identified through the monitoring and evaluation are as follows:

- 1) The use pattern mapping shows that the livestock distribution is poor due to lack of water, so only parts of pastures are being used.
- 2) Reservoirs in the Warm Springs Pasture have been maintained/reconstructed, but need an extensive snow pack and spring rains to fill them. Once these reservoirs are

full, UPM can document if improved livestock distribution is occurring. Currently the use is primarily being concentrated in the northern part of the pasture by wild horses and livestock with only slight use in the southern portion of the pasture.

- 3) In the northern portion of the Summit Lake Pasture water projects need to be maintained or possibly reconstructed to provide water late in the summer for livestock. Additional waters may be needed in this part of the pasture to provide alternative watering sites other than the riparian areas.
- 4) Horse populations have been up to 175% above LUP identified numbers within the allotment.
- 5) In the Black Rock Pasture the grass is naturally sparse and use has mainly been on the shrub species with concentrated use along Mud Meadow Creek by livestock and at the springs by horses in the higher elevations. Thus, the carrying capacity for the winter range is lower than what was agreed upon in the 1988 evaluation.

This objective is being updated to utilize the ESI data that was collected since the last evaluation. In the technical recommendations this objective has been redefined/quantified to use desired plant communities for the identified uses in each specific area.

9. Manage, maintain and improve public rangeland conditions to provide an initial level of 10,140 AUMs of forage on a sustained yield basis for 835 wild horses and 10 burros in the following Herd (Management) Areas:

	<u>ISL*</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
Warm Springs Canyon	294/10	3528/120
Black Rock Range-West	424/0	5088/0
Calico Mountains	117/0	1404/0

\* ISL (initial stocking level) refers to the number of wild horse/ burro listed in the Sonoma-Gerlach MFP-III Wild Horse and Burro decision 1:1 to be used as a starting point for monitoring purposes. In accordance with the June 7, 1989 Interior Board of Land Appeals Ruling (IBLA 88-591), adjustments to wild horse/ burro populations and establishment of AML will be based on monitoring data to obtain the optimum number of wild horses and burros which result in a Thriving Natural Ecological Balance and avoids deterioration of the range.

This objective was met or exceeded, however not on a sustained yield basis. Total AUM demand by wild horses and burros within the allotment ranged from a low of 9,788 AUMs in 1988, to a high of 16,968 AUMs in 1991. In 1988, AUM demand in the Warm Springs Canyon and Calico Mountains Herd Management Areas exceeded the initial AUM level identified in the Sonoma-Gerlach MFP-III by 15% and 32% respectively. AUM demand in the Black Rock Range- West was 23% below the initial AUM level. In 1989 the AUM demand was exceeded in all three Herd Management Areas in the Soldier Meadows Allotment by 79% in Warm Springs, 123% in the Calico Mountains, and 15% in the Black Rock Range West. In 1990 the initial AUM demand was exceeded by 99% in Warm Springs Canyon, 148% in the Calico Mountains, and 3% in the Black Rock Range- West. In 1991 Warm Springs Canyon AUM demand was exceeded by 120%, Calico Mountains by 175%, and was slightly below in the Black Rock Range- West. The initial AUM level was exceeded for all years except for the Black Rock Range- West in 1988.

Use Pattern Mapping (UPM) collected in the Warm Springs Canyon Herd Management Area in May 1989 found moderate to heavy use by wild horses in the Five Mile Flat area. UPM data collected in November 1989 on combined use (livestock and wild horses) indicates the heavy use zone in the Five Mile Flat increased in size and additional areas of heavy use were found in Sand Creek, Jacob Springs, and Rock Springs. Weighted average utilization for wild horses was 51% in October 1990 and 53% in July 1991.

Weighted Average Utilization (refer to Appendix 6) by wild horses only in the Calico Mountains Herd Management Area was 52% in April 1989, 56% in October 1989, 56% in March 1990, and 61% in May 1991.

In the Black Rock Range- West Herd Management Area, weighted average utilization north of Slumgullion Creek was 53% (livestock and wild horses) in October/November 1990, and 59% by wild horses in November 1991. South of Slumgullion Creek weighted average utilization on 1989 forage was 62% for combined use (wild horses and livestock) in April 1990. Weighted Average use by wild horses only was 65% in October 1990 and 70% in November 1991. Combined weighted average utilization on 1990 forage production was 60% in May 1991.

The Weighted Average Utilization calculations only used the moderate, heavy, and severe use classes. The light, slight, and no apparent use classes were not used. The moderate, heavy, and severe use classes were used because desired stocking level depends on the assumption that management, specifically utilization patterns, will not change if only the stocking level changes. These areas of moderate, heavy,

and severe use are concentrated around or near water sources. This results in not meeting riparian, wetland, and/or meadow utilization objectives. Using the weighted average utilization calculations should reduce use and thus, succeed in meeting these objectives.

Furthermore, utilization levels which exceed 50% use by August 31 (end of the growing season) each year, tend to lead to a static or downward trend in range condition. At this level a sustainable yield of forage for wild horses will not be maintained.

10. Maintain and improve the free-roaming behavior of wild horses and burros by protecting and enhancing their home ranges.

Aerial distribution and on the ground distribution data collected during the evaluation period indicates that wild horses and burros have freedom of movement and are maintaining their free roaming behavior within the Herd Management Areas. This objective has been met.

11. Maintain/improve wild horse/burro habitat by assuring free access to water.

This objective has been met. During the time period covered by this evaluation the Bureau acquired the water rights to the Summit Lake Windmill for wild horses and wildlife and restored the windmill to working order. The permittee has repaired and replaced troughs within the allotment, and has worked on most catchment reservoirs in the area. The amount of the water available to wild horses and burros has increased during the evaluation period as a result of maintenance on springs and reservoirs within the allotment.

12. Improve or maintain Mahogany Creek to Class A water standards.

Only three of the items of the water quality standards were measured. They were pH, temperature, and total dissolved solids. All three of these met the specifications for class A water standards.

13. Improve or maintain the water quality of the following streams to the State criteria set for livestock drinking water, cold water aquatic life, water contact recreation (wading), and wildlife propagation:

Summer Camp Creek  
Snow Creek  
Donnelly Creek

Slumgullion Creek  
Soldiers Creek

Except for Summer Camp only two of the items of the water quality standards were measured. They were pH and temperature. On Summer Camp total dissolved solids was also measured. On Summer Camp all three of the items measured met the class B water quality specifications. On Slumgullion Creek the pH met the specifications, but the temperature was too warm being 25 degrees C to 30 degrees C which is above the 20 degrees C for trout waters and 24 degrees C for non-trout waters. Donnelly Creek met the specifications for pH and water temperature (trout or non-trout waters) for class B water standards. Water quality was not measured on Snow or Soldiers Creeks.

14. Maintain water quality standards for Desert Dace habitat in the spring where they occur to the following:

temperature - 32-38°C/90-100°F  
nitrates - 90 mg/L  
turbidity - 50 NTU  
pH - 6.5-9.0  
D.O. - 5.0 mg/L

No additional BLM data has been gathered applicable to this evaluation for the Desert Dace ACEC. Visual observation by the BLM Fishery Biologist (Winnemucca District) and personal communication with Dr. Gary Vinyard of the University of Nevada, Reno, indicated that water temperature and quality are being met for the habitat objective for Desert Dace.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

There was not substantial difference in grazing use patterns between post-livestock and the year a pasture was rested from livestock. Areas of heavy use are associated with water sources, riparian areas, and upland areas where wild horses have concentrated. Regardless of when data was collected, use pattern mapping tends to show that the water sources, meadows, and certain upland areas are consistently receiving heavy use. The high levels of use occurring before livestock turnout and during rest years indicate that uncontrolled wild horse numbers are a major contributor to heavy use areas. Post-livestock use patterns indicate that poor livestock distribution is also a factor. If high livestock utilization levels are mapped after AML is reached (and wild horses and wildlife utilization objectives are met), that will indicate too many cattle.

The primary factor for poor livestock distribution occurring is a lack of water availability throughout entire pastures; especially in the Warm Springs and Summit Lake Pastures. The southern portion of the Warm Spring Pasture has early water (late winter - early spring). It follows that the use has been slight to no apparent use in the southern portion when post-livestock monitoring is done. Livestock and wild horses use the northern portion of the pasture during the summer when water availability becomes critical. In order to effectively utilize this area, the southern portion of the Warm Springs Pasture with the Soldier Meadows Pasture should be combined. This will allow for sufficient residual forage will be left during the winter months when the wild horses and burros use the area. In the Summit Lake Pasture, the water developments in the northern portion need to be reconstructed and additional developments should be built to enable the cows to utilize this part in the summer. Furthermore, water developments away from the creeks in the pasture may be needed to keep livestock from using the riparian areas for water. In 1990, when the cows used the Summit Lake Pasture, herding was effective in minimizing the utilization occurring in the riparian areas, but once the herders left use exceed utilization levels on key species. In addition, unauthorized livestock drift from neighboring allotments also increased the use in the Summit Lake Pasture. Drift fences could stop the drift of unauthorized use.

Wild horses were fairly evenly distributed yearlong throughout their respective HMAs. Little snowpack and mild winters allowed the wild horses to stay in the higher elevations during the winters. Only in the Warm Springs Canyon HMA did horses show different use areas between summer and winter. Water availability is the reason for their seasonal difference as explained above. Other areas of concentrated wild horse use are as follows: the spring areas in the northern part of the Warm springs Canyon HMA; the springs in the southern part of the Black Rock - West HMA; the Summit Lake Mountain area and the area between Snow and Coleman Creeks in the northern part of the Black Rock - West HMA; and along the north fork of Donnelly Creek in the Calico Mountain HMA.

Browse (mountain mahogany, quaking aspen, antelope bitterbrush, snowberry, and serviceberry) utilization ranged from light to severe both inside and outside of the Mahogany Creek Exclosure.

The highest use levels occurring along/in riparian areas was along the lower reaches of Donnelly Creek within the Calico Spring Pasture. This part of the creek had moderate to heavy use on willows before livestock were turned out. Wild horse distribution flights and other observations did not document high concentration of horses along the lower reaches of Donnelly Creek. Deer sightings and pellets were documented along the lower reaches. It follows that the use on the willow is attributed to wildlife.

Summer Camp and Coleman Creeks improved from 1988 to 1992. Slumgullion and Donnelly Creeks also improved as of 1989 and 1990 respectively. Mahogany and Snow Creeks had a lower rating in 1992 which was attributed to low water flows. The limiting factor for all the streams is the lack of quality pools. The other parameters appear to be satisfactory. Areas of concentrated use along the creeks by livestock, wild horses, and/or wildlife can affect overall specific ratings and impact riparian vegetation. A discrepancy has been identified in the stream survey analysis. This will require some additional fine tuning as time allows.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Carrying Capacity For Livestock and Wild Horses and Burros

The carrying capacity was determined using the weighted average of utilization and desired stocking level calculations found in BLM Technical Reference 4400-7, see Appendix #6.

Carrying Capacity by Pasture for Livestock and Wild Horse/Burros:

<u>Pasture</u>	<u>AUMS</u>
Black Rock	2500
Calico	1882
Soldier Meadows	1102
Warm Springs	5768
Summit Lake	4224
<u>Hot Springs</u>	<u>1726</u>
TOTAL:	17,202

The carrying capacity for the allotment will be distributed between livestock and wild horses and burros as follows:

LVT 12,168\* AUMs  
WH/B 5,034 AUMs

\* Allocation between livestock and wild horses/burros was on a proportional base in accordance with MFP Decision Range 1.1 and is based on the LUP ratios. An exception was made on the southern end of the Black Rock Range HMA where winter habitat is a limiting factor, which limited the numbers of wild horses, see appendix 6.

a. Wild Horses/Burros

The AMLs are based on the carrying capacities to achieve thriving natural ecological balance within the use areas of the allotment.



<u>Herd Management Area</u>	<u>Wild Horse/ Burro</u> <u>Number-AML</u>	<u>AUMS</u>
<b>Black Rock Range-West</b>		
N. of Slumgullion	70	845
S. of Slumgullion	85	1020
Subtotals	155	1865
Warm Springs Canyon	199	2389
Calico Mountains	65	780
Grand Totals	419	5034

NOTE: The Strategic Plan for the Management of Wild Horses on the Public Lands was signed on June 6, 1992. This policy states that unadoptable wild horses will remain on the public lands, and that other methods such as fertility control may be utilized for population management. It is BLM's current policy in Nevada to return unadoptable wild horses and/or horses that are six years of age or older to public lands.

About 1,300 wild horses and burros will have to be gathered to reach AML (500 from Black Rock, 550 from Warm Springs, and 250 from Calico). It should take two gathers to reach AML. Once AML is reached the wild horse/burro population will be maintained within the following ranges in order to insure that the carrying capacity is not exceeded.

<u>Herd Management Area</u>	<u>Wild Horse/ Burro</u> <u>75% of AML to AML</u>	<u>AUMS</u>
<b>Black Rock Range-West</b>		
N. of Slumgullion	53 to 70	636 to 845
S. of Slumgullion	64 to 85	768 to 1020
Subtotals	117 to 155	1404 to 1865
Warm Springs Canyon	149 to 199	1788 to 2389
Calico Mountains	49 to 65	588 to 780
Grand Totals	315 to 419	3780 to 5034

This is based on gathering horses every three years. If gathering schedule changes, these ranges may also change.

b. Livestock:

From:

<u>Total</u>	<u>Active Preference</u>	<u>Suspended</u>	<u>Number of</u>	<u>Period</u>
<u>Preference</u>	<u>During Evaluation</u>	<u>Preference</u>	<u>Livestock</u>	<u>of Use</u>
16,070	12,053	4,017	1500	1/10 - 5/20
			500	5/21 - 10/30

To: (Since the release of the draft re-evaluation a meeting was held in Cedarville with BLM Area Managers from that office and the Sonoma-Gerlach office, the Sheldon Wildlife Refuge Manager (FWS), and the operator to discuss future grazing strategies. The group realized there would be benefits in using the Wall Canyon Allotment (just Roberts' grazing preference - there is one other operator in the Wall Canyon Allotment), Cedarville Resource Area -- Susanville District, as a summer pasture along with Warm Springs and Summit Lake Pastures. This would allow flexibility to use the Warm Springs and Summit Lake Pastures at time periods other than late. This could enhance riparian and upland browse management. This could also build in some early summer deferment and rest into the Wall Canyon Pasture, where there is none now.

The Sheldon Wildlife Refuge Manager requested the refuge not be included in any long term planning effort. The Manager stated grazing will be authorized on a yearly basis only. During any particular year if vegetation conditions do not require manipulation then livestock will not be authorized. But when the Refuge is used, this will allow greater rest/deferment in the BLM pastures.

Based on this meeting it was decided to incorporate the Wall Canyon Allotment into a combined AMP, with the overall summer dates expanded to include the first of May to mid-October. Until the AMP is written, in two to three years, the specific pastures and dates will be worked out annually. The AMP will specify pasture sequences, length of rest periods, and other details. Before the AMP is approved, BLM will request informal consultation with the USFWS to fulfill BLM's obligation for Section 7 consultation. Until the AMP is approved the Multiple Use Decision will reflect the following tables. The AMP will not change the pasture capacities, but the grazing periods are expected to change. Also, the technical recommendations described further will be adhered to regardless of what system is selected. All interested parties will be kept apprised of the on-going situation.

In the AMP, the summer base herd should still be 1,117 cows. To reflect the change in season to include the entire summer, livestock numbers would be averaged over the entire time period. The amount of time that the 1,117 cows will graze either the Warm Springs or Summit Lake Pastures will still be about 90 days.

For 1993, 600 head will graze Wall Canyon Allotment from about 5/15 to 8/15 and 400 head in the Warm Springs Pastures from 5/15 to 10/15. Around 8/15, the Wall Canyon cows will move to the Sheldon Wildlife Refuge until 10/15).

Total Preference	Active Preference	Suspended	Number of Livestock	Period of Use	AUMs*
16,070	12,168	3,902			
Pasture					
Black Rk			500	1/01 - 3/31	1480
Calico			1117	4/01 - 4/30	1102
Soldier M			1117	4/01 - 4/30	1102
Summit LK			1117	7/15 - 10/14	3379
Warm Spr.			1117	7/15 - 10/14	3379
Hot Spr.			1117	11/16 - 12/31	1726

\* The carrying capacity was determined on a pasture basis. The livestock AUMs associated with the rest pasture will not be allocated to any user (livestock, wild horse/burros, or wildlife) in order to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance in the allotment. Therefore, on any given year approximately 7,687 AUMs will be used by livestock. Based on equalizing the carrying capacity and livestock numbers to the smallest summer pasture - Summit Lake - the Area Manager limited the amount of livestock forage designated in the Warm Springs Pasture. According to the Warm Springs Pasture AUMs calculations there should be 6,458 AUMs available for livestock. Use Pattern Mapping was not done for the Hot Spring and Soldier Meadows Pastures to determine a carrying capacity. Since these pastures are similar to the Black Rock and Calico Pastures respectively, the stocking levels calculations were correlated on a per-acre basis, documenting there should be adequate livestock forage. Future monitoring will further document the actual available forage and adjustments made accordingly.

FORAGE DEMAND SUMMARY FOR LIVESTOCK AND WILD HORSE/BURROS

Pasture	Livestock	Wild Horses/Burros	Pasture Totals
Black Rock	1480	1020	2500
Calico	1102	780	1882
Soldier Mead	1102	----	1102
Warm Springs	3379	2389	5768
Summit Lake	3379	845	4224
Hot Springs	1726	----	1726
Allot. Total	12168	5034	17202

## 2. Change the Grazing System

Change the grazing system from a two year deferred/rest rotation system under a two year cycle with five pastures (refer to existing system map overlay) to a two year deferred/rest rotation system with six pastures under a four year cycle (refer to proposed system map overlay). By restricting livestock grazing, the grazing system allows for the key species to meet physiological requirements and assures that spawning of LCT activities will not be impacted by livestock grazing. Riding and herding is required for all pastures and in particular the Summit Lake Pasture.

Late Winter-January 1 to March 31: Livestock will graze the Black Rock Pasture. Based on four years of monitoring, the Black Rock Pasture is not capable of supporting 1,500 head during this time period, therefore, livestock numbers were returned to the 500 head level decreed in the Earp's (former Soldier Meadow permittee) court decision.

Spring-April 1 to April 30: The two spring pastures are the Calico and Soldier Meadows Pastures. The Calico Pasture will be used for two consecutive years and then rested for two years while the Soldier Meadows Pasture is grazed.

Summer-July 15 to October 14: The two summer pastures are Summit Lake and Warm Springs. Livestock will graze each of the pastures on a two year alternate cycle. When the Summit Lake Pasture is grazed for two consecutive years the Warm Springs Pasture is rested for two consecutive years.

The Summit Lake Pasture will be divided into three separate use areas by the proposed riparian pasture fences; Idaho Canyon-north, Stanley Camp-middle (riparian sub-pasture), and Coleman Creek-south.

Livestock grazing in the Stanley Camp sub-pasture will not be allowed until riparian vegetation and stream bank conditions meet the objectives set in this re-evaluation. When the LCT Recovery Plan is approved, BLM will adopt those objectives. In the interim cattle will be allowed to trail for three (3) days or less. The proposed trailing route runs along the ridge above the various creeks headwaters. The intent is to move groups of cows, 300 to 400 head at a time, over the three day period and not take three entire days to move the herd from one sub-pasture to the other. At times the entire herd may be moved instead of the smaller groups. There could be some occasional cows lost during the trailing. At worse case there could be up to 20 cows lost for one to five days before they are located and consume between 1-2 AUMs of forage from the riparian complexes.

Based on the above, when cattle graze in Summit Lake Pasture, they will start in the Coleman Creek sub-pasture and graze for four (4) weeks, move north into the Stanley Camp sub-pasture for two (2) weeks, then move into the Idaho Canyon sub-pasture to graze for six (6) to eight (8) weeks. When the proposed AMP is completed the Stanley Camp sub-pasture will be grazed late (between 7/15-10/14) until the next re-evaluation. The re-evaluation will analyze if the season of use should be modified. The time frames for livestock movements are estimated. The livestock will be moved from one sub-pasture to the next as the utilization levels on key riparian plants approaches use criteria (see pg. 57).

The Stanley Camp sub-pasture fence will provide controlled livestock grazing for Summer Camp and Snow Creeks for two (2) out of four (4) years. Under the proposed system the Summit Lake Pasture will be grazed for three (3) months for two (2) years then rested for two (2) years for a total use period of six (6) months out of forty-eight (48) months. The riparian pasture will be grazed a total of one (1) month out of forty-eight (48) months. There will be no authorized grazing within the Mahogany Creek Enclosure.

Late Fall/Early Winter-November 16 to December 31: Cattle will graze the Hot Springs Pasture.

#### Grazing Pasture Sequences

	Black Rock	Calico	Soldier M.	Warm Spring	Summit Lake	Hot Springs
yr 1	1/1-3/31	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	rested	11/16-12/31
yr 2	1/1-3/31	rested	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	11/16-12/31
yr 3	1/1-3/31	rested	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	11/16-12/31
yr 4	1/1-3/31	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	rested	11/16-12/31
yr 5	1/1-3/31	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	rested	11/16-12/31
yr 6	1/1-3/31	rested	4/1-4/30	rested	7/15-10/14	11/16-12/31

The above grazing description is for the foreseeable short term. For adjacent pastures, where utilization or residual vegetation heights have not been exceeded, the gates could be opened a week before the move dates. This would allow cattle to drift into the new pasture. Within a week after the move date the remaining cows would be moved and the gate shut. If livestock have to be moved due to other criteria, then all livestock will be removed from that area within a week or less and kept out of that area for the rest of the grazing period.

Trailing will be allowed for no longer than three days across any pasture that is not scheduled to be used during that time period --for example: crossing the Hot Springs Pasture when moving from the Calico Pasture to the Summit Lake Pasture.

Refer to the existing grazing system and the proposed grazing system overlays on the base map for the pasture boundaries and season of use.

Livestock grazing will be maintained within the use areas through waters, salting, and herding.

An interim plan will not be written to cover the next six years -- two gather cycles. Livestock will be moved based on utilization criteria as described in pasture management actions (see pages 54-75).

3. Wild Horse/Burro Management

- a. Combine the Black Rock Range - West and East HMA's into the Black Rock Mountain HMA

Manage the wild horse populations of the Black Rock Range - West (Soldier Meadows Allotment, Sonoma-Gerlach R.A.) and the Black Rock Range - East (Paiute Meadows Allotment, Paradise-Denio R.A.) Herd Management Areas (HMAs) as one population. There are no topographic barriers or impediments to limit or restrict the free movement and interaction of wild horses between the two HMAs. Monitoring data indicates that horses move between the two HMAs. Establish the Appropriate Management Level (AML) for the total area. The combined AML will be based on the carrying capacities and thriving natural ecological balances within the use areas of each allotment as shown below:

<u>HMA/Allotment</u>	<u>Wild Horse Numbers</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
<u>BLACK ROCK WEST</u>		
Soldier Meadows		
N. of Slumgullian	70	845
<u>S. of Slumgullian</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>1020</u>
Total	155	1865
<u>BLACK ROCK EAST</u>		
Paiute Meadows	<u>31</u>	<u>372</u>
Total	186	2237

NOTE: Refer to Appendix 6 for an explanation of the Stocking Level Formula and procedures used to determine the AML in the Black Rock Range- West HMA. Refer to the Paiute Meadows Allotment Evaluation for the rationale used to establish the AML in the Black Rock East HMA.

Census and distribution flights conducted from 1969 to present indicate the historical distribution of wild horses on the Black Rock Range has been approximately fifty percent respectively between the two HMAs. It is unknown at this time what the distribution and number of horses will be between the two allotments at the recommended AML of 186

since the historic distribution patterns were for a typical age structured population, the specific distribution of the horses in the Black Rock Range will not be known until additional monitoring data is collected.

b. **Change the HMA boundaries**

The original HMA boundaries were developed along vegetative community lines, the District and Resource Area boundaries, and the Summit Lake Indian Reservation. Black Rock Range-West HMA (NV-227) and Warm Springs Canyon (NV-226) lie adjacent to one another and share a common boundary from Sheldon Antelope Range/District boundary fence to a point approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile southwest of Antelope Spring. The proposed changes in the boundaries of the Black Rock West HMA and the Warm Springs Canyon HMA are being proposed to reflect the actual use areas of the wild horses.

There are two proposed changes to the common boundary between the Black Rock Range-West and the Warm Springs Canyon HMA's.

1. **Soldier Creek:** Addition of 4188 acres from the Black Rock Range-West HMA from Soldier Creek through Dry Canyon to Warm Springs Canyon HMA. The new boundary would run from Soldier Meadows Ranch northeast along Soldier Creek and tie in with the original boundary of the Black Rock Range-West HMA north of Coleman Creek.

**RATIONALE:**

Soldier Creek acts as a natural break between the two HMAs. Distribution data and on the ground observations show horses in this area interact with the horse populations from the Warm Springs Canyon HMA when disturbed and not with the horses from the Black Rock Range-West HMA.

2. **Five Mile Flat:** Due to a proposed fence to manage livestock movement running north to south through section 6 and 7 of T.42N, R.26E, 4105 acres would be removed from the Black Rock Range-West HMA and added to the Warm Springs Canyon HMA.

**RATIONALE:**

The horses found utilizing this area west of the proposed fence tend to interact with the horse populations from the Warm Springs Canyon HMA

when disturbed by aircraft and the horses east of the fence tend to interact with the horse populations from the Black Rock Range- West showing that they are part of that population. The proposed fence line would act as a break and keep the horses in their respective HMAs.

A total of 8293 acres would be transferred from the Black Rock Range- West HMA to the Warm Springs HMA.

c. Wild horse and Burro Census and Distribution

Continue collecting Wild horse/ Burros census and seasonal distribution data to determine population trends (reproductive rate, recruitment rate, etc.) and seasonal use areas. Wild horse/Burros monitoring should be conducted on alternate years as follows:

(1). Census every three years in July. (First year) Start census flights in 1993.

(2). Aerial distribution mapping every three years with flights conducted in January, April, July, and October. (Second year). Start aerial distribution mapping in January of 1994.

(3). Conduct on the ground distribution mapping in July and October every three years to supplement aerial distribution mapping, and provide more specific population information on band size and composition. (Third year). Start ground distribution mapping in July of 1995.

d. Requantify long term objectives 10 and 11 to\*:

Maintain and improve the free-roaming behavior of wild horses and burros by:

- (a) protecting their home range
- (b) assuring free access to water

B. RIPARIAN OBJECTIVES\*

Requantify short term objective 1. and long term objectives 1. and 2. to the following:

- 1. Do not exceed 30% utilization of current years growth on the key riparian trees and shrubs on all reaches, which

\* Objectives recommended to be carried forward to the Multiple Use Decision



includes: Aspen (Populus tremuloides) and Willows (Salix spp.). For Mahogany, Summer Camp, and Snow Creeks grasses and grass-like plants will have a minimum stubble height\* of 6 inches. 4 inch stubble height will apply for Coleman, Slumgullion, and Donnelly Creeks when the cows leave the pasture for the following: Nevada Bluegrass (Poa nevadensis), Sedges (Carex spp.), Rushes (Juncus spp.), Intermediate Wheatgrass (Agropyron intermedium), and Tufted Hairgrass (Deschampsia cespitosa).

\* The height of standing herbaceous vegetation in the flood plain. This residual vegetation protects stream bank soils during high flows and filters out sediment to build stream banks. The vegetation adjacent to the water line is the most important place to consider stubble height and secondarily within the riparian area. The cross section of the riparian area will be measured.

2. Improve the riparian condition class on six (6) miles of Mahogany Creek to 70% (from 1992 baseline data of 68%) within the short term (2001) and maintain excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
3. Improve the riparian condition class on 2 miles of Summer Camp Creek to 70% (from 1990 baseline data of 60%) within the short term (by 2001) and maintain excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
4. Improve the riparian condition class on 3 miles of Snow Creek to 70% (from 1990 baseline data of 60%) within the short term (by 2001) and maintain excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
5. Improve the riparian condition class on 8 miles of Donnelly Creek to 62% (from baseline 1989 data of 52%) within the short term (by 2001) and achieve excellent riparian stream condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
6. Improve the riparian condition class on 8 miles of Coleman Creek to 66% (from baseline 1991 data of 44%) within the short term (by 2001) and achieve excellent riparian stream habitat condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.
7. Improve the riparian condition class on 8 miles of Slumgullion Creek to 63% (from baseline 1990 data of 48%) within the short term (by 2001) and achieve excellent riparian stream habitat condition (70% of optimum or better) to the year 2017.

**C. Retain long term objective number 6\*:**

Protect known sage grouse strutting and nesting habitat and improve brooding habitat by: (WL-1.11)

1. Following NDOW's guidelines for Vegetal Control Programs in Sage Grouse Habitat in Nevada.
2. Maintain sagebrush canopy at 30% in sage grouse nesting areas where sagebrush does not exceed three (3) feet in height.

**D. Retain Long Term Objectives 12, 13 and 14\*:**

12. Improve or maintain Mahogany Creek to Class A water standards.
13. Improve or maintain the water quality of the following streams to the State criteria set for livestock drinking water, cold water aquatic life, water contact recreation (wading), and wildlife propagation:

Summer Camp Creek  
Snow Creek  
Donnelly Creek  
Slumgullion Creek  
Soldiers Creek

14. Maintain water quality standards for Desert Dace habitat in the springs where they occur to the following:

temperature - 32-38°C/90-100°F  
nitrates - 90 mg/L  
turbidity - 50 NTU  
pH - 6.5-9.0  
D.O. - 5.0 mg/L

**E. Allotment Objectives for Uplands and Meadows\*:**

Redefine long term objectives 5,7,8, and 9 by combining them into resource objectives to manage for desired plant communities.

**RATIONALE:** The limiting factor for wildlife is forage vigor, quality, and cover, therefore, the objectives need to be vegetative ones. Livestock and wild horse objectives are for a sustainable yield of forage, which desired plant communities would account for.

\* Objectives recommended to be carried forward to the Multiple Use Decision

The following lists by pasture the resource objectives, the management actions to meet those objectives, and the procedures to be used to monitor the attainment of the objectives.

Objectives for this allotment were based on ecological status inventory data. The seral stage of each vegetative community and it's potential was considered in conjunction with the wildlife, wild horse, and livestock use to develop desired plant community objectives. Short term objectives will be used to determine the progress each community is making toward it's desired stage. Following is a list of the key species plant symbols used, the common name, and the scientific name:

Key Spp <u>Symbol</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>
AGSP	Bluebunch wheatgrass	<u>Agropyron spicatum</u>
CELE3	Mountain mahogany	<u>Cercocarpus ledifolius</u>
DISP2	Inland saltgrass	<u>Distichlis spicata stricta</u>
ELCI2	Basin wildrye	<u>Elymus cinereus</u>
FEID	Idaho fescue	<u>Festuca idahoensis</u>
HOBR	Meadow barley	<u>Hordeum brachyantherum</u>
JUBA	Baltic rush	<u>Juncus balticus</u>
LUPIN	Lupine	<u>Lupinus spp.</u>
ORHY	Indian ricegrass	<u>Oryzopsis hymenoides</u>
POA++	Bluegrass	<u>Poa spp.</u>
PONE3	Nevada bluegrass	<u>Poa nevadensis</u>
POSE	Sandberg bluegrass	<u>Poa secunda</u>
PUTR2	Antelope bitterbrush	<u>Purshia tridentata</u>
SIHY	Bottlebrush squirreltail	<u>Sitanion hystrix</u>
STCO4	Needle & thread grass	<u>Stipa comata</u>
STTH2	Thurber needlegrass	<u>Stipa thurberiana</u>

### Summit Lake Pasture

#### Resource Objectives

Key areas will be established by an interdisciplinary team in key Ecological Sites based on the desired plant community objective.

#### Objective 1      Short Term

Increase the composition by weight the overall percentage of the following perennial grasses: AGSP, FEID, STTH2, ELCI2, POA++, STCO4, and SIHY from 28% to 35% on Ecological Site 023XY007 (Loamy 14-16") in Site Write-up Area (SWA) U044 by the year 2001. The aggregate of ELCI2, POA++, SIHY, and STCO4 can only make up 10% of the total composition.

12 94 16

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY007 (Loamy 14-16") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	28%	45%	60%
Forbs	7%	10%	10%
Shrubs	65%	45%	30%

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 2      Short Term

Maintain or increase perennial grasses at 45% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") in SWA U044 by the year 2001. These perennial grasses are FEID, AGSP, STH2, POA++, SIHY, and ELCI2 with the aggregate of the latter three making up no more than 10% of the total composition.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	45%	55%	65%
Forbs	11%	10%	10%
Shrubs	44%	35%	25%

This objective should be accomplished by the year 2017.

Objective 3      Short Term

Increase FEID and AGSP each from 2% to 6% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna) in SWA U044 by the year 2001. Maintain PUTR2 above 10% and CELE3 at 22% composition by weight.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna) manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight

<u>Lifeform</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Desired</u>	<u>Potential</u>
Perennial Grasses	23%	30%	40%
Forbs	Trace	8%	10%
Shrubs	77%	62% *	50%

\* At least 25% must be CELE3 and 10% PUTR2.

This objective should be accomplished by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 4            Short Term

Maintain the existing plant community with 61% perennial grasses, 22% forbs, and 17% shrubs in Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U044 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U044 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight

<u>Lifeform</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Desired</u>	<u>Potential</u>
Perennial Grasses	61	65	80
Forbs	22	22	20
Shrubs	17	13	0

Decrease the percent composition by weight of JUBA by increasing the percent composition by weight of PONE3 and HOBR.

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

Objective 5            Short Term

Maintain the existing plant community with 89% perennial grasses, 11% forbs, and 0% shrubs in Ecological Site 023XY025 (wet meadows) in SWA U202 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023X025 (wet meadows) in SWA U202 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

<u>Percent Composition by Weight</u>			
<u>Lifeform</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Desired</u>	<u>Potential</u>
<u>Perennial Grasses</u>	89	85	80
<u>Forbs</u>	11	15	20
<u>Shrubs</u>	0	0	0

Decrease the percent composition by weight of Carex by increasing the percent composition by weight of DECE.

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

**Rationale:** The Summit Lake Pasture has been identified as yearlong bighorn sheep range ( BRBY-2, BRBY-4), mule deer summer range (BRDS-8), as well as a sage grouse strutting ground and brood use area. It is also used yearlong by wild horses and by cattle for 3 months. By achieving these objectives the vegetative communities would be meeting the needs of the mentioned wildlife, wild horses, and livestock.

Recommended Management Actions for Summit Lake Pasture

(Regardless when the pasture is grazed, the following actions apply)

1) Reduce the number of days grazed by livestock from approximately 164 to 92. The pasture will be used by livestock for two years and then rested for two consecutive years.

2) Divide the pasture into 3 smaller use areas by installing drift fences to control the movement of livestock (see map):

- a) between Soldier Meadows and Paiute Meadows to prevent the drift of livestock into Coleman Creek.
- b) between Snow Creek and Coleman Creek to develop 2 riparian sub-pastures (Stanley Camp and Coleman Creek).
- c) between the Sheldon Antelope Range and the Summit Lake Indian Reservation (this would be a solid fence).

3) Develop water in the Idaho Canyon sub-pasture in order to better distribute the livestock and develop off site waters (waters other than the creeks) in the Riparian pastures (for #2 & 3 project layout, survey and design and resource clearance will occur in FY 93. If the funding is available the projects will be built in FY 95/96).

4) Livestock will not graze the Summit Lake Pasture until range projects are completed. Livestock grazing in the Stanely Camp sub-pasture will not be allowed until riparian vegetation and stream bank conditions meet the objectives set in this re-evaluation. When the LCT Recovery Plan is approved, BLM will adopt those objectives.

5) Change the Warm Springs and Black Rock West HMA boundaries to correspond to the fence proposed in 2c.

6) The utilization level on uplands by wild horses once the AML is reached is 20% before July 15 (seed dissemination) on livestock rested years. If the utilization levels are not being met after the second year number of horses will be adjusted.

7) a) Combined wild horse and livestock utilization objective on upland grass and grass-like species is 50% at the end of the livestock use period (either a scheduled pasture or the end of the grazing season). If the 50% utilization level is not being met with livestock moving into the next pasture earlier than scheduled or removed from the allotment sooner than expected, the grazing preference will be evaluated to determine if a downward adjustment is required. This evaluation will include wild horse, wildlife, and climatic factors (terms and conditions of the permit).

b) By February 28, or the start of the new grazing season, utilization on upland grass and grass-likes shall not exceed 60%. For upland browse and meadows utilization shall not exceed 50%. If we are not meeting this objective wild horse numbers will be adjusted (utilization on grass species from 50 to 60% by wild horses will occur during the dormant season and should not have a detrimental impact to plant health and vigor).

8) The livestock will be moved as the key riparian species approach the 6 inch stubble height level for Summer Camp, Mahogany (outside of enclosure), and Snow Creeks when the pasture is used late (terms and conditions of the permit).

9) When livestock use Stanley Camp sub-pasture (b in #2) a herder and a BLM resource specialist - that will be available to monitor utilization levels and other resource parameters - shall be present. If a herder is not present or a BLM resource specialist is not available, the livestock can not be turned out; or if during the scheduled period neither are no longer available then the livestock shall be removed (terms and conditions of the permit).

10) Set up Key Areas before the end of the first grazing year is over. (1993)

11) Install a 3-way enclosure on Coleman Creek which would exclude livestock, wild horses, and wildlife. The study enclosure would consist of three (3) equal portions of the habitat. One portion would exclude livestock, wild horses and big game. The second portion of the enclosure would exclude livestock and wild horses and have wildlife use only. The third portion would be open for livestock, wild horse, and wildlife use (programmed to be built in FY 1996)

12) Install a wildlife enclosure on Mountain Mahogany within the Mahogany Creek enclosure (programmed to be built in FY 1996).

13) Install an enclosure fence around the springs at the headwaters of Snow Creek that would exclude horses and livestock (programmed for FY 96).

If with the proposed grazing system and fencing strategy the utilization objectives on the streams are still not being met, then corridor fencing

would be considered:

Corridor fencing of Summer Camp Creek, Snow Creek and Coleman Creek was considered as an alternative to provide protection of the riparian areas associated with these streams by excluding livestock and wild horses. The following is an estimate of the costs of fencing the mentioned streams and the resource conflicts related to the proposed fencing.

COST ESTIMATES OF RIPARIAN FENCING

<u>STREAM</u>	<u>MILES OF STREAM</u>	<u>COST</u>
Summer Camp Creek	11.0	\$99,000
Snow Creek	4.5	\$40,500
Coleman Creek	18.0	\$162,000
	<u>TOTAL</u>	\$301,500**

RESOURCE CONFLICTS

1. The proposed fencing of Coleman Creek would restrict the free-roaming movement of wild horses movement from north to south within the pasture.
2. The proposed fencing of Summer Camp Creek would restrict wild horse, and livestock movement from east to west within a portion of the pasture.
3. The proposed Summer Camp Creek fencing could create traps for horses and livestock where they intersect the existing Mahogany Creek Enclosure fence and the Summit Lake Tribal fence.
4. The proposed Snow Creek fence could create traps for horses and livestock where it would intersect the Summit Lake Tribal fence.
5. The proposed fencing would impose a substantial long term visual impact as well as short term disturbance during construction within a Wilderness Study Area (WSA). Constructing this would be in conflict with the Wilderness Interim Management Plan.

FOOTNOTE:

\*\* The total cost does not include cattleguards, water gaps, gates, etc. The estimate of \$9,000/mi. is based on information provided by District Operations Staff on similar riparian fencing projects in the Paradise-Denio Resource Area.



## Monitoring Procedures For the Summit Lake Pasture

### For Resource Objectives

- 1993 Establish vigor and age class studies on Putr2, Cele3, and Potrt.
- 1993 Establish Riparian Studies on Summer Camp, Snow Creek, and Coleman Creek.
- 2001 Read Double Sampling Transect and an Ocular transects at the key areas to determine if short term vegetative objectives are being met.
- 2017 Reread Double Sampling Transect and an Ocular transects at the key areas to determine if long term objectives are being met.

### For Management Actions

Complete Use Pattern Maps prior to livestock turn out (July 15), after livestock are removed (October 14), and prior to start of next growing season until the use patterns are established.

On livestock rest years complete Use Pattern Maps at seed dissemination or around July 15 to determine if the 20% utilization requirement is being met. Continue until the use patterns are established.

Monitor riparian utilization levels during the grazing period on Coleman Creek, Summer Camp, Snow Creek, and Mahogany Creek and if key species are at the 6 inch stubble height, move the livestock.

Inspect the Range Improvement Projects according to the RIPS schedule.

Establish studies on Coleman Creek inside and outside of the proposed enclosure.

Establish studies on Cele3 inside and outside of the proposed enclosure in the Mahogany Creek enclosure.

### Warm Springs Pasture

#### Resource Objectives:

Key areas will be established by an interdisciplinary team in key Ecological Sites based on the desired plant community objective.

**Objective 1      Short Term**

Increase perennial grasses from 34% to 41% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") in SWA U125 by the year 2001. These perennial grasses are: AGSP, STH2, POA++, SIHY, and FEID.

**Long Term**

Increase FEID from a trace to 7% composition by weight while managing for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight.

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial grasses	34%	50%	65%
Forbs	8%	10%	10%
Shrubs	56%	40%	25%

This objective should be completed by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

**Objective 2      Short Term**

Maintain the following perennial grasses: STH2, SIHY, and POA++ at 46% composition by weight through the year 2001 on Ecological Site 023XY031 (Claypan 10-14") in SWA U174. Also try to get AGSP established on the site.

**Long Term**

Increase AGSP to 5% composition by weight, as it's potential on the site is 20 to 50% composition by weight. Establish a desired plant community consisting of the following vegetation:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	46%	55%	65%
Forbs	12%	12%	10%
Shrubs	42%	33%	25%

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

**Objective 3      Short Term**

Increase AGSP from 9% to 13% and STH2 from 8% to 12% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY039 (Loamy Slope 10-14") in SWA U125 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Manage for a desired plant community consisting of the following percent composition by weight within Ecological Site 023XY039 (Loamy Slope 10-14"):

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	35%	50%	65%
Forbs	6%	10%	10%
Shrubs	52%	40%	25%

This objective should be reached by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 4 Short Term

Increase AGSP, FEID, and STH2 collectively, from 27% to 36% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY066 (Ashy Loam 12-14") in SWA U162 by the year 2001 while maintaining PUTR2 above 20% composition by weight.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY066 (Ashy Loam 12-14") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	33%	43% *	60%
Forbs	2%	8%	10%
Shrubs	65%	49% **	30%

\* Must be at least 20 % FEID.

\*\* Must be at least 20% PUTR2.

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 5 Short Term

Maintain or increase FEID at 12% and increase AGSP from 2% to 5% composition by weight. Maintain PUTR2 at 9% composition; increase CELE3 from 3% to 6% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna) in SWA U161 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Manage for the following percent composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY026 (Mahogany Savanna):

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	35%	40% *	40%
Forbs	3%	10%	10%
Shrubs	54%	50% **	50%

\* Must be at least 15% FEID, 10% AGSP.

\*\* Must be at least 9% CELE3, and 9% PUTR2.

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

**Objective 6**      **Short Term**

Maintain PONE3 at 12% and increase composition by weight for forbs from 8% to 11% with LUPIN making up no more than 5% composition by weight of the forbs in SWA U199 on Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) by the year 2001.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023xy013 (dry meadows) in SWA U199 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	92	85	80
Forbs	8	15	20
Shrubs	0	0	0

Increase composition by weight PONE3 from 12% to 15% in SWA U199 on Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) by the year 2017.

**Rationale:** This Warm Springs Pasture has been identified as pronghorn yearlong (BRPY-7) and summer range (BRPS-1, BRPS-8); mule deer yearlong (BRDY-3) and winter range (BRDW-4); and as a sage grouse brood use area. It is also used yearlong by wild horses/burros and by cows for three months a year.

**Management Actions For the Warm Springs Pasture**

1) Reduce the number of days grazed from approximately 164 to 92. The pasture will be used by livestock for two years and then rested for two consecutive years.

2) The utilization level on uplands by wild horses once the AML is reached is 20% before July 15 (seed dissemination) on livestock rested years. If the utilization levels are not being met after the second year number of horses will be adjusted.

3) a) Combined wild horse and livestock utilization objective on upland grass and grass-like species is 50% at the end of the livestock use period (either a scheduled pasture or the end of the grazing season). If the 50%

100 30 30

utilization level is not being met with livestock moving into the next pasture earlier than scheduled or removed from the allotment sooner than expected, the grazing preference will be evaluated to determine if a downward adjustment is required. This evaluation will include wild horse, wildlife, and climatic factors (terms and conditions on the permit).

b) By February 28, or the start of the new grazing season, utilization on upland grass and grass-likes shall not exceed 60%. For upland browse and meadows utilization shall not exceed 50%. If we are not meeting this objective than wild horse numbers will be adjusted (utilization on grass species from 50 to 60% by wild horses will occur during the dormant season and should not have a detrimental impact to plant health and vigor).

4) Shift distribution of cows, so they use the southern portion of the pasture more then they have in the past by improving the water sources in the southern portion of the pasture

5) Establish additional Key Areas before the end of the grazing year.  
(1993)

6) Evaluate the feasibility of seeding the Five Mile Flat area to provide additional forage for livestock, wild horses, and wildlife in the Warm Springs pasture.

7) Develop additional water sources to better distribute livestock and horses. Programmed for FY 97.

#### Monitoring Procedures for the Warm Springs Pasture

##### For Resource Objectives

- 1993 Establish vigor and age class studies on Putr2 and Cele3.
- 2001 Read Double Sampling Transect and an Ocular at the key areas to determine if short term vegetative objectives are being met.
- 2017 Reread Double Sampling Transect and an Ocular at the key areas to determine if long term objectives are being met.

##### For Management Actions

Complete Use Pattern Maps prior to livestock turn out (July 15), after livestock are removed (October 14), and prior to start of next growing season until use patterns are established.

On livestock rest years complete Use Pattern Maps at seed dissemination or around July 15 to determine if the 20% utilization requirement is being met. Continue until use patterns are established.

Inspect Range Improvement Projects according to the RIPS schedule.

Feasibility study on the seeding in the Five Mile Flat area.

Calico Pasture

Resource Objectives:

Key areas will be established by an interdisciplinary team in key Ecological Sites based on the desired plant community objective.

Objective 1      Short Term

Increase STH2 from 9% to 12% composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY079 (Gravelly Claypan 8-10") in SWA U063 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 027XY079 (Gravelly Claypan 8-10") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	25%	32%	45%
Forbs	8%	8%	5%
Shrubs	67%	60%	50%

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 2      Short Term

Increase AGSP from 2% to 5% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY037 (Clay Slope 8-12") in SWA U109 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY037 (Clay Slope 8-12"):

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	26%	36%	70%
Forbs	25%	22%	10%
Shrubs	42%	42%	20%

Perennial grasses may include: AGSP- must be at least 8%, STH2, POA++, SIHY, FEID. This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

**Objective 3      Short Term**

Increase FEID from 2% to 6% composition by weight while trying to establish AGSP on Ecological Site 023XY017 (Claypan 14-16") in SWA U042 by the year 2001.

**Long Term**

Manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	34%	46%	65%
Forbs	28%	20%	10%
Shrubs	38%	34%	25%

Perennial grasses include FEID, AGSP, POA++, STH2, SIHY and other perennial grasses. This objective should be accomplished by 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

**Rationale:** The Calico Pasture has been identified as pronghorn antelope winter range (BRPW-1). Wild horses use this pasture yearlong and cows use it for one month (April 1 - April 30) for two years and then rest it for two years.

**Management Actions for the Calico Pasture**

1) Change season of use from April 11- May 20 to April 1- April 30. Use the Calico pasture for two years in a row and then rest it for two years while the Soldier Meadows Pasture is being used (terms and conditions on the permit).

2) The utilization level on uplands by wild horses once the AML is reached is 20% before July 15 (seed dissemination) on livestock rested years. If the utilization levels are not being met after the second year number of horses will be adjusted.

3) a) Combined wild horse and livestock utilization objective on upland grass and grass-like species is 50% at the end of the livestock use period (either a scheduled pasture or the end of the grazing season). If the 50% utilization level is not being met with livestock moving into the next pasture earlier than scheduled or removed from the allotment sooner than expected, the grazing preference will be evaluated to determine if a downward adjustment is

required. This evaluation will include wild horse, wildlife, and climatic factors (terms and conditions on the permit).

b) By February 28, or the start of the new grazing season, utilization on upland grass and grass-likes shall not exceed 60%. For upland browse and meadows utilization shall not exceed 50%. If we are not meeting this objective than wild horse numbers will be adjusted (utilization on grass species from 50 to 60% by wild horses will occur during the dormant season and should not have a detrimental impact to plant health and vigor).

4) Set up key areas before the end of the first grazing year is completed. (1993)

5) Determine the feasibility of developing water in the Calicos to better distribute the livestock. Programmed for FY 97.

#### Monitoring Procedures for the Calico Pasture

##### For Resource Objectives

- 1993 Establish Riparian Studies on Donnelly Creek.
- 2001 Read Double Sampling Transect and an Ocular at the key areas to determine if short term vegetative objectives are being met.
- 2017 Reread Double Sampling Transect and an Ocular at the key areas to determine if long term objectives are being met.

##### For Management Actions

Complete Use Pattern Maps prior to livestock turn out (April 1), after livestock are removed (April 30), and prior to start of next growing season until use patterns are established.

On livestock rest years complete Use Pattern Maps at seed dissemination or around July 15 to determine if the 20% utilization requirement is being met are established.

Inspect Range Improvement Projects according to the RIPS schedule.

#### Soldier Meadows Pasture

##### Resource Objectives:

Key areas will be established by an interdisciplinary team in key Ecological Sites based on the desired plant community objective.



Objective 1      Short Term

Increase composition by weight of AGSP from 31% to 36% on Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") in SWA U159 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
L Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	35	44	65
Forbs	7	10	10
Shrubs	58	46	25

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017. The shrub component still maximizes the potential of the site to provide quality mule deer and antelope habitat as described in BLM's 6630 Manual.

Objective 2      Short Term

Increase FEID and STH2 collectively from 12% to 18% composition by weight on Ecological Site 023XY017 (claypan 14-16") in SWA U229 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY017 (claypan 14-16") in SWA U229 manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	23	35	65
Forbs	8	10	10
Shrubs	69	55	25

This objective should be achieved by the year 2017.

Objective 3      Short Term

Increase the composition by weight STH2 from 1% to 6% on Ecological Site 024XY005 (loamy 8-10") in SWA U181 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 024XY005 (loamy 8-10") in SWA 181 manage for the

following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing*	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	7	17	55
Forbs	3	5	5
Shrubs	87	78	40

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

\* The remaining 3% is comprised of BRTE.

**Objective 4    Short Term**

Maintain or increase by weight the perennial grasses at 40% or higher on Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") in SWA U117 by 2001. The perennial grasses include AGSP and SIHY.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023XY039 (loamy slope 10-14") in SWA U117 manage for the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing*	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	40	45	65
Forbs	7	10	10
Shrubs	48	45	25

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

\* The remaining 5% is comprised of BRTE.

**Objective 5    Short Term**

Increase by weight the following perennial grasses: SIHY, STH2, and POA++ collectively from 12% to 18% on Ecological Site 023XY037 (clay slope 8-12") in SWA U187 by 2001. Also try to establish AGSP on the site from the adjacent range sites.

**Long Term**

Within Ecological Site 023XY037 (clay slope 8-12") manage for the following Desired Plant Community while trying to establish AGSP on the site:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	12	25	70
Forbs	2	7	10
Shrubs	86	68	20

72 54-10

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

Objective 6      Short Term

Increase by weight the perennial grasses from 5% to 8% and increase ARSPS5 from 4% to 10% on Ecological Site 024XY025 (loamy slope 5-8") in SWA U114 manage for the following Desired Plant Community:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing*	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	5	10	20
Forbs	Trace	5	5
Shrubs	92	85	75

This objective should be achieved by 2017.

\* The remaining 3% is comprised of BRTE.

Objective 7      Short Term

Maintain the existing plant community with 61% perennial grasses, 22% forbs, and 17% shrubs in Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U201 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY013 (dry meadows) in SWA U201 manage for the desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition by Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	61	65	80
Forbs	22	22	20
Shrubs	17	13	0

Increase the percent by weight of the perennial grasses by 4%, while maintaining or decreasing the percent JUBA at 24%.

**Rationale:** The Soldier Meadows Pasture has been identified as pronghorn yearlong (BRPY-5) and winter (BRPW-6, BRPW-7); mule deer summer (BRDS-7, BRDS-5) and winter (BRDW-4); and bighorn sheep yearlong (BRBY-1, BRBY-2). It is also used yearlong by

wild horses and burros and cows for one month a year (April 1- April 30).

Management Actions for the Soldier Meadows Pasture

1) Change season of use from April 11- May 20 to April 1- April 30. Use the White Rock pasture for two years in a row and then rest it for two years while the Calico pasture is being used (terms and conditions of the permit).

2) The utilization level on uplands by wild horses once the AML is reached is 20% before July 15 (seed dissemination) on livestock rested years. If the utilization levels are not being met after the second year number of horses will be adjusted.

3) a) Combined wild horse and livestock utilization objective on upland grass and grass-like species is 50% at the end of the livestock use period (either a scheduled pasture or the end of the grazing season). If the 50% utilization level is not being met with livestock moving into the next pasture earlier than scheduled or removed from the allotment sooner than expected, the grazing preference will be evaluated to determine if a downward adjustment is required. This evaluation will include wild horse, wildlife, and climatic factors (terms and conditions of the permit).

b) By February 28, or the start of the new grazing season, utilization on upland grass and grass-likes shall not exceed 60%. For upland browse and meadows utilization shall not exceed 50%. If we are not meeting this objective than wild horse numbers will be adjusted (utilization on grass species from 50 to 60% by wild horses will occur during the dormant season and should not have a detrimental impact to plant health and vigor).

4) Set up key areas before the end of the first grazing year is completed. (1993)

#### Monitoring Procedures for the Soldier Meadows Pasture

##### For Resource Objectives

- 1993 Establish Riparian Studies on Slumgullian Creek.
- 2001 Read Double Sampling Transect and an Ocular at the key areas to determine if short term vegetative objectives are being met.
- 2017 Reread Double Sampling Transect and an Ocular at the key areas to determine if long term objectives are being met.

##### For Management Actions

- 1) Complete Use Pattern Maps prior to livestock turn out (April 1), after livestock are removed (April 30), and prior to start of next growing season until the use patterns are established.
- 2) On livestock rest years complete Use Pattern Maps at seed dissemination or around July 15 to determine if the 20% utilization requirement is being met. Continue until the

use patterns are established.

- 3) Inspect Range Improvement Projects according to the RIPS schedule.

Black Rock Pasture

Resource Objectives:

Key areas will be established by an interdisciplinary team in key Ecological Sites based on the desired plant community objective.

Objective 1      Short Term

Increase ORHY, SIHY, and STSP3 from a trace to 3% composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY018 (Gravelly Loam 4-8") in SWA U005 by the year 2001.

Long Term

Manage for a desired plant community with the following percent composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY018 (Gravelly Loam 4-8").

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	Trace	9%	25%
Forbs	Trace	3%	5%
Shrubs	100%	88%	70%

The perennial grasses may include ORHY, POSE, SIHY, and STSP3. This objective should be achieved by 2017.

Objective 2      Short Term

Increase ORHY from 6% to 9% composition by weight on Ecological Site 027XY016 (Sodic Dunes) in SWA U004.

Long Term

Within Ecological Site 023XY016 (Sodic Dunes) manage for a plant community with the following percent composition by weight:

Percent Composition By Weight			
Lifeform	Existing	Desired	Potential
Perennial Grasses	16%	20%	35%
Forbs	Trace	3%	5%
Shrubs	84%	77%	65%

Perennial grasses may include : ORHY- must be at least 12% composition, DISP3, ELCI2, and SIHY. This objective should be accomplished by the year 2017.

**Rationale:** The Black Rock Pasture has been identified as yearlong pronghorn antelope range (BRPY-5). It is used as a winter pasture by cattle (Jan. 1 - March 30) and it has wild horse use.

**Management Actions for the Black Rock Pasture**

1) Change season of use from January 10- April 10 to January 1- March 31.

2) Once the AML is reached, the target utilization level on uplands by wild horses will be 30% before December 31 (seed dissemination) on livestock rested years. If the utilization levels are not being met after the second year the number of horses will be adjusted.

3) a) Combined wild horse and livestock utilization objective on upland grass and grass-like species is 50% at the end of the livestock use period (either a scheduled pasture or the end of the grazing season). If the 50% utilization level is not being met with livestock moving into the next pasture earlier than scheduled or removed from the allotment sooner than expected, the grazing preference will be evaluated to determine if a downward adjustment is required. This evaluation will include wild horse, wildlife, and climatic factors (terms and conditions of the permit).

b) By February 28, or the start of the new grazing season, utilization on upland grass and grass-likes shall not exceed 60%. For upland browse and meadows utilization shall not exceed 50%. If we are not meeting this objective than wild horse numbers will be adjusted (utilization on grass species from 50 to 60% by wild horses will occur during the dormant season and should not have a detrimental impact to plant health and vigor). Combined utilization of upland perennial grasses wild horses and livestock shall not exceed 60% and utilization upland browse and meadows by February 28 or start of the new growing season.

4) Set up key areas before the end of the grazing year is completed. (1993)

5) Develop water on the Black Rock range for wildlife (bighorn sheep), wild horses, and livestock. Waters developed for bighorn sheep will be constructed for exclusive use of wildlife species.

6) Install drift fences between Soldier Meadows and Paiute Meadows to prevent livestock drift. Programmed for FY97.

7) Shift livestock distribution, so that use is being made in the Hot Springs (southern) portion of the allotment as well as the Mud Meadow Creek area.

**Monitoring Procedures for the Black Rock Pasture**

**For Resource Objectives**

2001 Read Double Sampling Transect and an Ocular at the key areas to determine if short term vegetative objectives are being met.

2017 Reread Double Sampling Transect and an Ocular at the key areas to determine if long term objectives are being met.

#### For Management Actions

Complete Use Pattern Maps prior to livestock turn out (January 1) and after livestock are removed (March 31).

Inspect the Range Improvement Projects according to the RIPS schedule.

#### Hot Springs Pasture

##### Resource Objectives

- 1) Resource objectives, including livestock will be established in the Desert Dace Habitat Management Plan. These objectives will be incorporated into the re-evaluation/AMP.

##### Management Actions for the Hot Springs Pasture

- 1) Establish the Hot Springs Pasture as a fall pasture to be used November 16 - December 31 (terms and conditions of the permit).
- 2) Set up key areas after the resource objectives are written for the Desert Dace Habitat Management Plan is written.
- 3) In 1993, monitor Desert Dace populations with assistance from UNR.
- 4) Establish baseline information for the Soldier Meadows Cinquefoil in FY 93.
- 5) Construct study exclosures for the Desert Dace and Soldier Meadows Cinquefoil. These sites will be monitored to assess the effects of grazing or lack of grazing on the respective species. The sites will be selected in FY 93 and programmed for construction in FY 95.
- 6) Salt will be located at least 1/2 mile from the Desert Dace springs (terms and conditions of the permit).
- 7) Monitor vegetation utilization levels along the Desert Dace springs and if it is at the 6 inch stubble height on key species move the livestock (terms and conditions of the permit).

8) If livestock can not be kept in, or out, through riding then a pasture fence should be constructed.

F. Conduct a re-evaluation in 2001 analyzing Resource Objectives developed from the ecological site inventory to determine if desired plant community objectives are being met. If resource problems are identified a re-evaluation will be conducted sooner. The re-evaluation date is based on completing two grazing cycles. It will take two cycles to measure the effectiveness of management actions, the grazing system, and estimated AMLs for wild horses to conclude if the short term objectives are met or not met.

G. Conduct a re-evaluation in 2017 to determine if long term desired plant community objectives have been achieved.

H. Annual monitoring will be reviewed and a narrative written documenting the success of the management actions and the grazing system toward meeting the AMP objectives. This is an informal process. This narrative will analysis climate, actual use, utilization, upland/riparian trend, and any other pertinent data. If the available information documents management actions are not achieving or meeting resource needs, BLM, through consultation, coordination, and cooperation with all affected parties, will devise a strategy to deal with the shortcomings.

The type and frequency of monitoring will be considered when the narrative is written. This will be the time to insure the studies are appropriate for the objective, if time frames between readings should be expanded, new studies added, or if a study should be dropped.

I. Actual Use billing will be considered once an AMP is written. The operator will have to submit accurate livestock numbers and dates along with submitting the information within specified time frames.

#### VIII CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION

The following individuals and groups were mailed copies of the draft re-evaluation:

NV Dept of Wildlife

Ms. Rose Strickland, Sierra Club

Mrs. Dawn Lappin, WHOA

Ms. Cathy Barcomb Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses



Mr. Bob Roberts	USDI, BLM Susanville District
Mr. Craig Downer	USDI, FWS Reno
USDI, Sheldon Wildlife Refuge	Mr. Jack Piccolo, Summit Lake Paiute Tribe
Dr. Gary Vinyard, UNR	The Nature Conservancy
Ms. Deborah Allard	William Brigham NV Bighorns Unlimited, Reno Chapter
Trout Unlimited, Sagebrush Chapter	Mr. Scott Tomsen
Mr. Demar Dahl, NV Land Action Assn.	Mr. Scott Bell, USFS
Ms. Johanna H. Wald, NRDC	Honorable James H. Bilbray
Honorable Richard Bryan	Honorable Barbara Vucanovich
Mr. Mike Hornbarger	Honorable Harry Reid
USDI, FWS Portland	Ms. Julian Smith
Ms. Barbara Spolter, Wilderness Society	USDI, BLM - Portland/Sacramento
Mr. Martin Larraneta	Mr. Craig Plummer
Mr. John Marvel	Mr. Dick Stump
Paiute Meadows Ranch	Mr. John Horning
NV Woolgrowers Assn.	State Multiple Use Advis.
NV Cattlemans Assn.	Dept. of Conservation & Natural Res.
Div. of State Lands	Mr. Andy Johas
Mr. Thomas Van Horne	Mr. William C. Cummings
Mr. Jerry Townsend, BIA-Western NV Agency	Ms. Karen Sussman, ISPM&B
Intermtn Fed Landbank Assoc.	Messrs. Paul Holcher/Don Stix
USDI, BLM Carson City	Desert Research Inst., UNR
WH&B Comm, Nat'l Academy of Science	Chairman NV Conservation Dist.
Div. of Conservation Districts, NV	Humane Society of So. NV
Mr. Tom Ballow, NV Dept. of Ag.	Mr. Donald Molde, Humane Soc. of So. NV
Ms. Paula Jewell, Humane Soc. of U.S.	Mr. Derrel Fulwider

American Horse Protection Assn.

Ms. Robyn Burdette, Summit Lake  
Paiute Tribe

Ms. Nancy Whitaker, API

Mr. Hillary Winebarger

The following individuals and groups provided comments on the draft which were incorporated into the final document:

NV Dept of Wildlife

Rose Strickland, Sierra Club

Dawn Lappin, WHOA

Cathy Barcomb, Commission for the  
Preservation of Wild Horse

The Nature Conservancy

Jack Piccolo, Summit Lake Paiute  
Tribe

Bob Roberts

USDI, FWS Reno

Dr. Gary Vinyard, UNR

USDI, FWS Sheldon Wildlife Refugee

Trout Unlimited, Sagebrush Chap.

Desert Bighorn Council

#### IX. SELECTED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Incorporate all of the Technical Recommendations as outlined in this allotment re-evaluation.

#### X. RATIONALE

Through the re-evaluation process it has been determined that changes in existing management are required to achieve the multiple use objectives for the Soldier Meadows Allotment. Analysis of the monitoring data indicates that the existing numbers of wild horses and management of livestock is significantly contributing to the failure in meeting LUP and the 1988 Allotment Agreement multiple use objectives. Analysis of the wildlife monitoring data does not indicate a need for change in the existing wildlife management. These adopted Technical Recommendations change livestock management, season of use, and numbers; the grazing system; establishes an Appropriate Management Level for wild horses and burros; and modify or establishes new multiple use objectives along with a time frame to establish studies and to monitor. Various projects were identified to assist in meeting the allotment objectives. By implementing the Technical Recommendations it should be possible to attain the

objectives for this allotment.

#### XI. FUTURE MONITORING AND GRAZING ADJUSTMENTS

The Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area will continue to monitor existing studies as outlined on pages 53 through 74. This monitoring data will continue to be collected to provide the necessary information for subsequent re-evaluations. These re-evaluations are necessary to determine if the allotment specific objectives are being met under the existing and/or new grazing strategies or if changes are required. Also, adjustments in dates, grazing management, and the determination of new range projects will be based on the data collected.

#### XII. NEPA REVIEW

The selected management actions for grazing in the Soldier Meadows Allotment conforms with the environmental analysis of grazing impacts described in the Final Sonoma-Gerlach Environmental Impact Statement dated September 9, 1982.

The EIS and NEPA Compliance Record are on file in the Winnemucca District Office, located at 705 E. Fourth Street, Winnemucca, Nevada 89445.

I. Allotment Objectives From the 1988 Soldier Meadows Allotment Evaluation

A. Short Term

1. Utilization of Willow (Salix spp.) and Aspen (Populus tremuloides) in stream bank riparian areas shall not exceed 30% on the following streams. (WLA-1.3)

Mahogany Creek (outside enclosure)  
 Mahogany Creek (inside enclosure-10%)  
 Summer Camp Creek  
 Snow Creek  
 Donnelly Creek  
 Slumgullion Creek  
 Soldiers Creek

2. Utilization of Nevada bluegrass (Poa nevadensis) and Cinquefoil (Potentilla spp.) on 1,383 acres of wetland riparian habitat shall not exceed 50%. (WL-1.10)

3. Utilization shall not exceed 50% for mountain mahogany (Cercocarpus ledifolius) and 40% for aspen (Populus tremuloides) in upland sites. (WL-1.9)

B. Long Term

1. Improve or maintain riparian habitat along the following streams as follows: (WLA-1.3 & WL-1.9)

<u>Stream Name</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>From - To</u>
*Mahogany Creek	100	At - Excellent
*Summer Camp Creek	30	At - Excellent
*Snow Creek	30	At - Good
Donnelly Creek	109	Fair - Good
Soldiers Creek	100	Fair - Good
Slumgullion Creek	100	Poor - Good

\* These streams have populations of the federally listed threatened Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT).

2. Improve or maintain the following streams from the percent of optimum indicated to 60% or better. (WLA-1.3)

<u>Stream Name</u>	<u>Present % of Optimum</u>	<u>Miles</u>
Mahogany Creek	67%	6
Summer Camp Creek	62%	2
Snow Creek	56%	3
Donnelly Creek	53%	8
Soldiers Creek	58%	8
Slumgullion Creek	46%	8

3. Maintain habitat for the federally listed threatened Desert Dace at excellent within the 307 acre ACEC. (WL-1.5a)
4. Improve to and maintain in good or higher condition, 1,383 acres of wetland riparian habitat. (WL-1.IO)
5. Manage, maintain and improve public rangeland habitat condition to provide forage on a sustained yield basis, with an initial forage demand for big game of 786 AUMs for mule deer, 429 AUMs for pronghorn, and 264 AUMs for bighorn sheep by:
  - a) Improving the following mule deer habitat from good to excellent condition: Bear Buttes DS-1 (4,174 acres); Mahogany DS-2 (24,047 acres); Soldier DW-7 (18,666 acres) and Warm Springs DW-8 (43,633 acres).
  - b) Improving Big Mountain DS-2 (7,077 acres) and Soldier DW-6 (6,995 acres) mule deer habitat from fair to good condition.
  - c) Improving Black Mountain DS-3 (19,462 acres) and Paiute DS-2 (2,255 acres) mule deer habitat from poor to fair condition.
  - d) Improving Black Butte AS-2 (19,148 acres) and Warm Springs AW-2 (61,452 acres) pronghorn habitat from fair to good condition.
  - e) Improving High Rock Lake AW-1 (7,665 acres) pronghorn habitat from poor to fair condition.
  - f) Improving Calico Mts. BY-6 (28,515 acres) California bighorn sheep habitat from 70% to 90% of optimum.
  - g) Maintain 49,254 acres of Black Rock Range BY-4 potential California bighorn sheep habitat in good condition to support reestablishment.

100 18

6. Protect known sage grouse strutting and nesting habitat and improve brooding habitat by: (WL-1.11)
- a) Following NDOW's (Nevada Department of Wildlife) guidelines for Vegetal Control Programs in Sage Grouse Habitat in Nevada.
  - b) Maintain sagebrush canopy at 30% in sage grouse nesting areas where sagebrush does not exceed three (3) feet in height.
7. Maintain or improve 658 acres of aspen woodland and 1,825 acres of mountain mahogany thicket to late seral status or equivalent. (WL-1.9)
8. Manage, maintain and improve rangeland conditions to provide forage on a sustained yield basis with an initial stocking level of 16,070 AUMs.

Improve range/ecological 1/ condition from:

Poor to fair on 49,161 acres.  
 Fair to good on 131,096 acres.  
 Good to excellent on 98,321 acres.

1/ The range/ecological conditions in this document are forage condition that will be replaced with ecological status condition as information becomes available. The objective will be redefined/quantified to obtain a particular ecological status when site potential and identified uses are combined to meet vegetative objectives.

9. Manage, maintain and improve public rangeland conditions to provide an initial level of 10,140 AUMs of forage on a sustained yield basis for 2/ 835 wild horses and 10 burros in the following Herd Management Areas:

	<u>AML</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
Warm Springs Canyon	294/10	3528/120
Black Rock Range-West	424/0	5088/0
Calico Mountains	117/0	1404/0

2/ AML refer to adult horses and burros (i.e., two years or older).

10. Maintain and improve the free-roaming behavior of wild horses and burros by protecting and enhancing their home ranges.

11. Maintain/improve wild horse/burro habitat by assuring free access to water.
12. Improve or maintain Mahogany Creek to Class A water standards.
13. Improve or maintain the water quality of the following streams to the State criteria set for livestock drinking water, cold water aquatic life, water contact recreation (wading), and wildlife propagation:

Summer Camp Creek  
 Snow Creek  
 Donnelly Creek  
 Slumgullion Creek  
 Soldiers Creek

14. Maintain water quality standards for Desert Dace habitat in the spring where they occur to the following:

temperature - 32-38°C/90-100°F  
 nitrates - 90 mg/L  
 turbidity - 50 NTU  
 pH - 6.5-9.0  
 D.O. - 5.0 mg/L

II. Allotment Objectives from the Fox Mountain HMP

2. Specific Objectives

NOTE: Those objectives constrained by habitat projects are target dated. Planned action dates and projects are dependent upon workload, work force and funding levels.

a. Fisheries

- 1) Improve fisheries habitat as follows:

<u>Stream/Components</u>	<u>Objectives</u>	<u>When</u>
b) Donnelly Creek	Overall Rating from 53% to 60%+	1995
Sedimentation	From 63% to 10%	1994
Bank Cover	From 59% to 60%	1994
Bank Stability	From 55% to 60%	1994
Maximum Summer H <sub>2</sub> O Temperature	Decrease to 70°F	1994
Average Pool Quality	To 60%	1994

- 3) Utilization on key plants in the streambank riparian zones should not exceed 30%. Key plants include willow (Salix spp.), and bluegrass (Poa spp.).

- 4) Maintain the potential use of Cottonwood, Wagon Tire and Donnelly Creeks for recovery of the Lahontan cutthroat trout.

b. Terrestrial

- 4) Improve Mule Deer habitat as follows:

<u>Use Area</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>When</u>
Donnelly Peak DS-5	0.72 (Good)	0.80 (Excellent)	1995

- 5) Improve Pronghorn habitat as follows:

<u>Use Area</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>When</u>
Donnelly Peak AS-1	0.61 (Fair)	0.76 (Good)	1996
Wagner Springs AW-1	0.54 (Fair)	0.70 (Good)	1998

- 6) (a) Establish Sage Grouse habitat improvement needs by 1991.  
 (b) Protect sage grouse strutting grounds and nesting habitat and improve brooding habitat by 1996.

- 7) Improve Chukar habitat by 1998 as follows:

68,659 acres from low to medium density  
 204,881 acres from medium to high density  
 138,139 acres maintain at high density

- 8) Improve the condition of 2,126 acres of wetland riparian habitats to late seral by 1994 as follows 1/:

Dry Meadows

Establish an air dry weight vegetative composition of 30-40% perennial grasses, 30-40% forbs, and not to exceed 5% shrubs. Key preferred species shall be Nevada Bluegrass (dominate), carex, yarrow, dandelion, clover, and wild rose.

Wet Meadows

Establish an air dry weight vegetative composition of 30-40% native perennial grasses, 30-40% forbs, and not to exceed 5% shrubs. Key preferred species shall be tufted hairgrass (dominate), meadow barley, yarrow, dandelion, aster, clover, wild rose, and willow.

Utilization of key plant species in wetland riparian habitats shall not exceed 50% unless a meadow is to be managed for the specific benefit of sage grouse within the established grazing plan.

- 1/ Objectives are established in accordance with the USDA  
 - Soil Conservation Service Technical Guide Section II E for the Major Land Resource Area 23 - Malhuer High Plateau dated 3/88.

3. Objective Summary



All specific objectives are summarized on Form 6780-2 Habitat Management Plan Progress Report (pages 15 through 32).

D. PLANNED ACTIONS

NOTE: Dates provided in this HMP are target dates. Planned action completion is constrained by workload, work force and funding levels.

1. Description of Actions

a. Fisheries

- 1) Lower sedimentation loading, and maximum summer water temperature while increasing bank cover, bank stability and average pool quality in Cottonwood, Donnelly, Red Mountain, and a portion of Wagon Tire Creeks by fencing those portions of the streams on public lands as needed (Overlay 10, Appendix One). Cottonwood and Wagon Tire Creeks are fenced as one unit.
  - (c) Donnelly Creek: Project layout and design completed in 1989. Engineering, design, and clearances completed in 1990. Construction completed in 1992.
  - (g) Cottonwood, Donnelly and Wagon Tire Creeks are available to be used as Lahontan cutthroat trout streams as long as no treatment of existing cold water game fish population is necessary. If treatment is deemed necessary an amendment to this HMP will be necessary.

b. Terrestrial

- 3) Mule Deer habitat improvement will be accomplished through a few broad steps.
- 4) Improvement of Pronghorn habitat will be accomplished in several broad steps.

E. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Methodology used by NDOW to gather wildlife seasonal distribution and population data are at the discretion of that agency. The Buffalo Hills Monitoring Plan, Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook, Winnemucca District Coordinated Monitoring Plan and BLM Manual Supplement NSO 6630 - Big Game Studies provide the minimum standards which will be met in monitoring terrestrial wildlife habitat condition, use and trend. BLM Manual Supplement NSO 6671 - Stream Surveys has been used and will continue to be used to monitor fisheries habitat. Initial riparian habitat studies were established during 1987 using Platts et al, 1987.

Permanent studies will be established by 1989. Copies of documents referenced above are available at the Winnemucca District Office. Interdisciplinary studies have been established in the HMP area. Use pattern mapping and evaluation is a cooperative effort between range, wild horses, and wildlife specialists.

III. Allotment Objectives from the Desert Dace HMP

3. Desert Dace HMP Management Objectives

Soldier Meadow is located in the Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area. Wildlife MFP III decisions applicable to Soldier Meadow are listed below.

- 1) Retain in public ownership all public lands containing valuable wildlife habitat, as determined by appropriate Bureau personnel at the time of disposal proposals, unless it is determined that such lands, because of its location or other characteristics are difficult and uneconomical to manage as part of the public lands or there is a higher and better use.
- 2) In BLM initiated actions apply no herbicides or pesticides directly over the Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Areas's streams, lakes or reservoirs unless adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated.
- 3) That fire lines not be constructed by heavy equipment on riparian stream zones and that fire retardant not be applied to water.
- 4) Designate a 307.22 acre parcel surrounding the warm spring located in T. 40 N., R. 24 E., Section 23 which contains the Soldier Meadow desert dace as an area of critical environmental concern.
- 5) The Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area will be open to geothermal and oil and gas leasing with the following restrictions:

Special stipulations for no surface occupancy will be applied to the visible remnants of the Applegate-Lassen Trail from Rye Patch Reservoir to the Western Pacific Railroad track near Trego. In this area the Trail is defined as the actual trail itself.

Sage grouse strutting grounds

S-1 cultural and historical sites "

The George Lund Petrified Forest

The Soldier Meadow desert dace Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

Habitat Management Plan Objectives

The desert dace is currently listed by the State of Nevada as a "protected" species, a classification that gives the species full state

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protection. The Bureau of Land Management and the Nevada Department of Wildlife cooperatively consider the species to be a sensitive species, requiring special management attention. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently reconsidering the species for listing as threatened.

The Bureau's policy is to manage habitat for State listed and sensitive species much as it would federally listed species. Bureau Manual 6840.06 states:

"It is Bureau policy to conserve federally and State-listed endangered or threatened animals and to utilize its authorities in furtherance of the purposes of the ESA (Endangered Species Act) and similar State laws. State laws protecting animals faced with local extirpation or premature extinction apply to BLM programs and actions to the extent that they are consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (P.L. 94-579) and other Federal law. It is also Bureau policy to ensure that the crucial habitats of sensitive animals will be managed and/or conserved to minimize the need for listing those animals by either Federal or State Governments in the future."

Thus, while the desert dace is not currently listed as a federal threatened or endangered species, it is consistent with Bureau policy to develop and implement this HMP, in order to protect and enhance the desert dace habitat.

The desert dace is the only priority species for this Habitat Management Plan. A priority species is defined as those fish, wildlife, and plant species or habitats that have been identified in the MFP, RMP, (Resource Management Plan) or through special studies as having special significance for management (reference BLM Manual 6780.05E).

The WHA contains habitat for other species of animals. The discussion of these animals, except endemic mollusks, is reserved for future revisions of this HMP.

The specific objectives of this HMP are as follows:

- 1) Determine the biological needs and current population status of the desert dace through a baseline study of its present habitat and population level.
- 2) Sign a cooperative agreement with NDOW to establish populations of desert dace in as many as possible of the five warm springs on public land in the habitat area that do not now support such populations, but which have potential to do so.
- 3) Reduce to a minimum the possibility that man's activities will endanger the desert dace and its habitat.

- 4) Develop a list of biologically acceptable alternate habitats for the desert dace for use as transplant sites should the species or its natural habitat become endangered through man's activities.
- 5) Determine the taxonomic status and distribution of the endemic mollusks on public land in the WHA.

#### 4. Planned Actions

##### 4.1 Actions Planned Under HMP Objective 1

Determining the biological needs and current population status of the desert dace is a function of the Nevada Department of Wildlife. Practically all of the dace habitat and dace population is located on private land where BLM has no management authority.

##### 4.2 Actions Planned Under HMP Objective 2

- 4.2.1 Nevada Department of Wildlife will transfer desert dace from existing populations to springs on public land in the habitat area found to be suitable for them (accomplished in cooperation with BLM under cooperative agreement). In order to assure gene pool diversity in public land dace populations, each of the transplant populations will originate from a different source spring; no one spring will provide seed stock for more than one transplant.

Some of the potential habitats may need to be enlarged or have emergent vegetation removed before they are suitable for introduction of dace. Altering potential habitat should be done on very limited basis. The effects of the alteration on the habitat should be monitored to determine if it would be desirable to alter other potential habitats.

A bioassay will be performed for each spring prior to introduction of a population of dace.

- 4.2.2 In cooperation with NDOW, monitor the introduced desert dace populations for viability and their habitats for continued suitability.
- 4.2.3 Aquatic surveys will be made of each potential transplant site before introductions, to insure protection of any endemic organisms that may be incompatible with the dace.

Since little is known about the specific factors in the desert dace's habitat requirements, few specifics can be stated about those requirements. However, from information obtained from chemical analyses of the springs, and from observation of the springs by BLM personnel it appears that all but one of the seven warm springs on public land in the habitat area could support dace populations. The one clear exception is Number 7, which has 110°F temperature, and runs only a short distance before entering private land. One other spring, Number 1, may have an excessive growth of tules or cattails, which could prevent a transplant from succeeding. One spring, Number 4, already supports a dace

population as a result of a 1975 transplant. Thus, at least four, possibly five, new populations could be established.

On the ground checks of all potential transplant sites will be made by Bureau of Land Management and Nevada Department of Wildlife personnel before transplants occur. There will be consensus of agreement between the agencies that each transplant has at least a 50% chance of succeeding, based on habitat quality, and the bioassay, before each transplant occurs.

Until such time as transplanted populations became firmly established, in the judgement of fisheries personnel of both BLM and NDOW, at least semi-annual joint inspections of the area will be made. The proprietor of Soldier Meadow Ranch will be invited to participate in these inspections. The inspections will take place in early spring and late fall, unless future conditions warrant a change in the timing. Once populations are firmly established, joint annual inspections of the habitat area will be made. Personnel of both agencies will make additional inspections of the transplant springs any time they are in the area and time permits. Written reports of population and habitat conditions will be made following all inspections, and copies will be sent to all concerned people and agencies.

Should any inspection of the habitat area reveal problems with transplanted desert dace populations or their habitat, suitable measures needed to correct the problems will be determined jointly by concerned entities. Such measures will be carried out as soon as possible by the appropriate agency.

#### 4.3 Actions Planned Under HMP Objective 3

4.3.1 The public land surrounding Spring 4 has been designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The area that has been designated an ACEC is as follows (see appendix 2 - Map 5):

T. 40 N., R. 24 E., Sec. 23  
Lot 2 - 44.38 acres  
Lot 3 - 43.86 acres  
Lot 5 - 43.61 acres  
Lot 6 - 44.39 acres  
Lot 8 - 43.37 acres  
Lot 9 - 43.66 acres  
Lot 2 - 43.95 acres  
307.22 acres total

As habitat for a sensitive species, federal candidate threatened species and a species on the state protected list, the area qualifies for ACEC designation.

Designation as an ACEC insures that proper management attention is focused on the area, and will thus help reduce the possibility of man's

activities endangering the dace or its habitat.

- 4.3.2 Designate areas surrounding potential transplant sites within the WHA as ACECs upon completion and success of transplants.
- 4.3.3 Install a Stevens A-71 recorder and V-notch weir on spring No. 4 to establish baseline flow data. Recorders and weirs should be placed on other springs which are potential dace habitat, at such time dace have been established in them.
- 4.3.4 Acquire through exchange or purchase, title to any private land within the habitat area which becomes available for exchange or purchase.
- 4.3.5 The land designated as an ACEC should be withdrawn from mineral entry if the desert dace is federally listed as threatened or endangered.
- 4.3.6 To prevent livestock concentrations near desert dace habitat, a stipulation directing that livestock salt be placed no closer than one quarter mile of any warm spring or warm water carrying ditch or stream in the habitat area will be included in the grazing permit for the Soldier Meadow Allotment (see section 7.1.1).

4.4 Actions Planned Under HMP Objective 4

"Under Objective 4, the following actions will be taken.

All hot and warm springs and thermal artesian wells within the Winnemucca District will be studied for their suitability for use as alternate desert dace habitats. The characteristics of each spring or well that will be studied are:

1. Physical Characteristics

- a. Location (public or private land, relationship to private land);
- b. Water temperatures, amount of flow;
- c. Spatial areas suitable for fish habitat;
- d. Previous water rights, giving rights for uses incompatible with dace habitation.

2. Chemical Characteristics

Determine whether chemical characteristics of the water will allow desert dace and associated biota to live.

3. Biological Characteristics

- a. Determine whether or not an adequate food source for desert dace is present, or could be introduced;
  - b. Determine presence or absence of desert dace competitors and predators;
  - c. Determine presence or absence of threatened or endangered

species, and degree of potential conflicts between desert dace and any such species.

Any list of alternate habitat sites is likely to be quite short. Several of the above characteristics will eliminate many such sites. Land ownership alone will eliminate most springs and wells in the district. Water temperatures will eliminate some, as may the presence or absence of threatened or endangered species, or species potentially so listed. "

Should there be no suitable already existing alternate habitat, one could be "created" by drilling along the edge of Black Rock Desert. Several artesian thermal wells exist in this area on private land. A suitable alternate habitat could be created in this manner. This possible alternative is only suggested here as an emergency measure; it will not be pursued further unless necessary.

The research that must be conducted to determine which warm springs and/or wells in the Winnemucca District would be suitable alternate desert dace habitats is generally beyond the capabilities of the Bureau. It could best be accomplished through a contract with a university, which would have the needed expertise available in the form of faculty and graduate students.

#### 4.5 Actions Planned Under HMP Objective 5

Contract a study to determine the distribution and taxonomic status of endemic snails in springs on public land in the WHA.

#### 4.6 Information Sources to Support Actions

Currently no other state or federal management plans have been developed for the priority species of this HMP.

#### 4.7 Water Right Considerations

Six springs within the WHA qualify as public water reserves. These include springs 1, 3, 4, 5. Two sources are located at spring 1 and 5 (see district water rights file Soldier Meadow, T. 40 N., R. 24 E.,--Hot springs A, B, C, D, E, F). The Bureau will not file with the state for water rights to springs that qualify as public water reserves. The Bureau will protest all filings made on public water reserves.

Executive Order 107 of April 17, 1926 states public water reserves are withdrawn from settlement, location, sale, or entry and reserved for public use. The Act of June 25, 1910 as amended, cited in the Executive Order provides that the land withdrawn "shall at all times be open to exploration, discovery, occupation, and purchase under the mining laws of the United States, so far as the same apply to metalliferous minerals."

Alterations to springs should be done in accordance with provisions of Nevada water law and with concurrence of the water right owner if a valid water right exists.

5. Evaluation and Monitoring

The only planned action which lends itself to monitoring is the transplanting of desert dace to the warm springs on public land. Steps needed to monitor these transplants have already been outlined in Section 4.1.2. Schedules and costs are given in Section 10.

This habitat management plan is subject to annual review and revision, as needed, either through Bureau motion or by request of any concerned entity. All revisions must be documented, dated, and signed by the District Manager.

This plan should be incorporated into a Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) if one is developed for the Soldier Meadow Allotment.

NOTE: At the time of this re-evaluation (1993) the Desert Dace is a federally listed threatened species.



There are five (5) stations that collect climatological data that are relatively close to the Soldier Meadows Ranch. Four (4) of the stations are well established National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) sites and one is a BLM Remote Automated Weather System (RAWS) site.

## a. NOAA

The following table describes the amount of growing season, annual, departure from normal, and percent of normal precipitation recorded at the Denio, Dufferrena, Gerlach, and Leonard Creek Ranch NOAA weather stations from 1988 through 1991. Annual precipitation is recorded from October to September and growing season precipitation is March through August. This is provisional data supplied by the SCS (Soil Conservation Service) Climatic Data Facility.

Precipitation Data

	Precip - Inches		Departure from Normal		Percent of Normal	
	Grow Ssn	Annual	Grow Ssn	Annual	Grow Ssn	Annual
<u>1988</u>						
Denio	3.14	6.56	-1.46	-2.66	68.3	71.1
Dufferrena	2.74	5.46	-1.03	-1.54	72.7	76.5
Gerlach	2.72	5.32	-0.80	-2.08	77.3	71.9
Leonard Crk	2.94	7.21	-0.68	-0.89	81.2	89.0
<u>1989</u>						
Denio	4.37	9.04	-0.23	-0.18	95.0	98.0
Dufferrena	2.91	5.60	-0.86	-1.54	77.2	78.4
Gerlach	3.80	8.09	0.28	0.69	108.0	109.9
Leonard Crk	3.89	9.43	0.27	1.33	107.5	116.4
<u>1990</u>						
Denio	4.38	6.60	-0.22	-2.62	95.2	71.6
Dufferrena	3.37	4.93	-0.40	-2.21	89.4	69.0
Gerlach	6.28	8.15	2.76	0.75	178.4	110.1
Leonard Crk	4.67	7.74	1.05	-0.36	129.0	95.6
<u>1991</u>						
Denio	6.37	9.58	1.77	0.36	138.5	103.9
Dufferrena	5.72	7.85	1.95	0.71	151.7	109.9
Gerlach	4.27	7.08	0.75	-0.32	121.3	95.7
Leonard Crk	5.06	7.90	1.44	-0.20	139.8	97.5

The following tables show the normal precipitation received at each station.

<u>Growing Season</u>	
<u>Station</u>	<u>Normal Precip.</u>
Denio	4.60"
Duferrena	3.77"
Gerlach	3.52"
Leonard Crk	3.62"

<u>Annual</u>	
<u>Station</u>	<u>Normal Precip.</u>
Denio	9.22"
Duferrena	7.14"
Gerlach	7.40"
Leonard Crk	8.10"

b. RAWS

The following table lists the amount of growing season, annual, departure from normal, and percent of normal precipitation recorded at the Dry Canyon Remote Automated Weather System (RAWS) from 1987 through 1990. Due to a change in RAWS archival procedures, 1991 precipitation data is not available at this time.

Dry Canyon Elevation - 5249'

<u>Year</u>	<u>Precipitation -Inches</u>		<u>Departure From Normal</u>		<u>Percent of Normal</u>	
	<u>Grow Ssn</u>	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Grow Ssn</u>	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Grow Ssn</u>	<u>Annual</u>
1987	6.00	7.90	2.32	1.82	163.0	129.9
1988	2.60	5.70	-1.08	-0.38	70.7	93.8
1989	3.10	6.10	-0.58	0.02	84.2	100.3
1990	3.00	4.60	-0.68	-1.48	81.5	75.7

Normal = 4 year average (1987 - 1990) = 3.68 in. growing season  
 = 4 year average (1987 - 1990) = 6.08 in. annual

NOTE: The above tables based on best available data. The following lists the years used and the years of incomplete data for each station.

Denio Elevation - 4185'

Growing season based on 38 years ( 1952-1991); incomplete for 1964 & 1965.

Annual based on 37 years ( 1952 -1991); incomplete for 1964, 65 & 87.

Duferrena Elevation - 4800'

Growing season based on 32 years ( 1960 -1991).

Annual based on 28 years ( 1960 -1991); incomplete for 1974, 82, 84 & 86.

12 24 16

Gerlach Elevation - 3950'

Data from stations at two different locations, but in the same general area. Growing season based on 25 years ( 1949 - 1991); incomplete for 1950, 58-62, & 73-85. Annual based on 21 years ( 1949 - 1991); incomplete for 1950, 51, 58-62, & 72-86.

Leonard Crk Elevation - 4220'

Growing season based on 36 years ( 1955 - 1991); incomplete for 1980. Annual based on 32 years ( 1956 - 1991); incomplete for 1980 - 83.

APPENDIX 3

Actual Use Numbers

I. Livestock

ACTUAL USE BY PASTURE 1988 - 1991

Pasture	Grazing Year	Number of Livestock	Period of Use	AUMs
	1988			
Black Rock		250	1/10-2/22	362
		860	2/23-2/28	170
Allotment Yearly Total				532

	1989			
Black Rock		860	3/01-3/31	876
		230	4/01-4/10	76
Soldier M.		1340	4/11-4/30	837
Warm Spr.		500	5/01-10/30	3008
Black Rock		1208	1/10-2/28	1986
Allotment Yearly Total				6783

	1990			
Black Rock		1208	3/01-3/31	1231
Calico		1247	4/01-5/20	2050
Summit LK		500	6/10-9/21	1710
		130	9/22-10/30	167
Warm Spr.*		280	9/22-10/30	359
Black Rock		1208	1/10-2/28	1986
Allotment Yearly Total				7618

	1991			
Black Rock		1208	3/01-4/10	1628
White Rock		1000	4/11-5/20	1315
Soldier M.		340	4/11-5/20	447
Warm Spr.		645	7/01-10/30	2587
Black Rock		1500	1/10-2/29	2515
Allotment Yearly Total				8492

\* Pasture was rested except for some authorized use in the Chukar Gulch area.

II. Wildlife

	<u>Deer</u>		<u>Antelope</u>		<u>Big Horn Sheep</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>Population</u>	<u>AUMS</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>AUMS</u>	<u>Populations</u>	<u>AUMS</u>	<u>AUMS</u>
1988	1261	3026	314	754			3780
1989	1018	2443	185	444			2887
1990	795	1908	533	1279			3187
1991	719	1726	558	1339			3065
1992					11*	26	

\* Eleven California bighorn sheep were released on the Black Rock Range in February 1992. Eight ewes and three rams were transplanted from the Eight Mile Creek area.

III. Wild Horse/ Burro

The following is a summary of the Wild Horse and Burro numbers and the AUM forage demand by Herd Management Area (HMA) within the allotment from 1988 through 1991.

<u>HMA</u>	<u>HORSES</u>		<u>BURROS</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>NUMBERS</u>	<u>AUMS</u>	<u>NUMBERS</u>	<u>AUMS</u>	<u>AUMS</u>
1988					
BLACK ROCK WEST					
N. OF SLUMGULLION	112*	1344	0	0	1344
S. OF SLUMGULLION	214*	2568	0	0	2568
Total:	326*	3912	0	0	3912
WARM SPRINGS	339*	4068	7*	84	4152
CALICO MTNS. 1/	154	1724	0	0	1724
TOTAL	819	9704	7	84	9788

1/ AUM demand by wild horses has been adjusted to reflect the removal of the 62 horses from the Calico Mountains HMA in December of 1988.

1989					
BLACK ROCK WEST					
N. OF SLUMGULLION	341	4092	0	0	4092
S. OF SLUMGULLION	145	1740	0	0	1740
Total:	486	5832	0	0	5832
WARM SPRINGS	526	6312	20	240	6552
CALICO MTNS.	261	3132	0	0	3132
TOTAL	1273	15276	20	240	15516

1990					
BLACK ROCK WEST					
N. OF SLUMGULLION	238	2856	0	0	2856
S. OF SLUMGULLION	200	2400	0	0	2400
Total:	438	5256	0	0	5256
WARM SPRINGS	584*	7008	22*	264	7272
CALICO MTNS.	290*	3480	0	0	3480
TOTAL	1312	15744	22	264	16008

1991

BLACK ROCK WEST

N. OF SLUMGULLION	211	2532	0	0	2532
S. OF SLUMGULLION	209	2508	0	0	2508
Total:	420	5040	0	0	5040
WARM SPRINGS	648*	7776	24*	288	8064
CALICO MTNS.	322*	3864	0	0	3864
TOTAL	1390	16680	24	288	16968

\* Not censuses that year, so an increase of 11% from the previous year was used.

APPENDIX 4 UTILIZATION

I. Utilization

A. Use Pattern Mapping

Use Pattern Mapping (UPM) data was collected for the last three years over the period 1989, 1990, and 1991. UPM mapping was done using six use classes: No apparent use (0%); slight use (1-20%); light use (21-40%); moderate use (41-60%); heavy use (61-80%); and severe use (81-100%).

Refer to UPM's in the study files.

Warm Springs pasture was supposed to be used on alternate years and rested while the Summit Lake pasture was used. Warm Springs pasture has been used yearly due to the 30% utilization limit on the creeks in the Summit Lake pasture and that a section 7 consultation must be done with the USFW before the Summit Lake pasture is used again.

Season of Use

	Black Rock	Calico	Soldier M.	Warm Spring	Summit Lake
1988	1/10-2/28				
1989	3/01-4/10	rested	4/11-4/30	5/01-10/30	rested
1990	1/10-3/31	4/01-5/20	rested	9/22-10/30	6/10-9/21
1991	1/10-4/10	rested	4/11-5/20	7/01-10/30	rested

1. Black Rock Winter Pasture

a. 1989

April- (post livestock) generally moderate use throughout the pasture. Areas of heavy use occurred from Mud Meadow Reservoir down along Mud Meadow Creek until the creek was about even with Box Canyon and from Wheeler Ranch up along Donnelly Creek for 2 miles, a portion of which is in the Calico pasture.

October- (pre-livestock) 46% no apparent use, 8% light use, 22% moderate use, and 24% heavy use. The areas of heavy use are the spring areas, especially Mustang Springs, and Mud Meadow Creek from Mud Meadow Reservoir to the Wheeler Ranch. There is heavy trailing by horses throughout the pasture. The grasses are very sparse and the

use is mainly on the shrubs- greasewood (Sarcobatus vermiculatus), ephedra (Ephedra), shadscale (Atriplex confertifolia), and spiny hopsage (Grayia spinosa).

b. 1990

April- (post livestock) Generally moderate use was found throughout the pasture with the heavy use areas found along Mud Meadow Creek and along Donnelly Creek for two miles up from Wheeler Ranch. Most of Donnelly Creek is in the Calico Pasture.

October- (pre-livestock) 1% no apparent use, 24% light use, 18% moderate use, and 57% heavy use. The moderate use area was in the canyon south of Clapper Canyon. The heavy use areas include Mustang Springs, Through Springs, Clapper Canyon and the flat east of Wheeler Reservoir. Horses had been rolling in the silt around Mustang Springs, which shows that the horses concentrated in the area.

In October 1990, the use on bitterbrush was found to be heavy. The plant vigor and leader growth was moderate. The use on the grasses was also found to be heavy.

c. 1991

May- (post livestock) 49% moderate and 51% heavy. The moderate area included the flats between Mud Meadows and Wheeler Reservoir. The heavy areas included Mud Meadow Creek and the flats south of Wheeler Ranch to Double Hot Springs. Cows used Mud Creek early in the winter and then were moved onto private land and fed due to extreme cold and lack of feed.

November- (pre-livestock) 60% slight, 23% light, 1% moderate and 16% heavy. The moderate area included part of Slumgullion Creek. The heavy use areas included part of Slumgullion Creek and all the spring areas on the Black Rock West south of Slumgullion Creek. Three major horse trails exist from Copper Canyon to Mud Meadow Reservoir.



2. Calico Spring Pasture

a. 1989

March- (pre-livestock) 28% slight use, 70% light use, 1% moderate use, and 1% heavy use. Last year's growth was monitored for this mapping to determine use through the winter.

September- (wild horse use only) 17% no apparent use, 40% light use, 30% moderate use, and 13% heavy use. The heavy use areas include Box Canyon and Harry Spring. This year's growth was monitored to determine utilization.

b. 1990

March- (pre-livestock) 28% no apparent use, 3% light use, 49% moderate use, and 20% heavy use. The heavy use occurred in Box Canyon and along Donnelly Creek. Donnelly Creek had light use in the fall of 1989 and moderate to heavy use in the spring 1990. Although this was a pre-livestock mapping some cows had moved on to the Calico Pasture before the mapping was done.

May- (post livestock) heavy use found throughout the pasture with an area of moderate use South of Cottonwood Creek. Wild horse stud piles were dispersed from Cherry Creek to Box Canyon.

c. 1991

May- (pasture rested from livestock) 46% moderate use and 54% heavy use. The areas of moderate use include Donnelly Creek and the flats to the foothills of the Calicos from Wagner Springs north. The heavy use areas include Harry Springs and the flats south of Wagner Springs. Mechanical damage from horses pawing at the shrubs occurred in the Jackass Flat area. Moderate use on willows (*Salix spp.*) less than 6' tall occurred along Donnelly Creek. The heavy use area near Harry Spring appeared to be a deer wintering range. The deer scat was scattered throughout the area. Last year's growth was monitored to determine the

utilization.

3. Warm Spring Pasture

a. 1989

May- (pre-livestock) overall the use was light. Moderate use was found in two areas- the reservoir north of Bear Buttes and Chukar Gulch area. Cows had used the Chukar Gulch area prior to the mapping, but did not go onto the rest of the pasture until May 21. The Five Mile Flat area had moderate to heavy use on basin wildrye (Elymus cinereus).

November- (post livestock) Bear Buttes south had light use of which most would have been placed into the slight category had 6 use classes been used. Bear Buttes north to the Sheldon had light to moderate to heavy use. The dry meadows had moderate to heavy use. The Summit Lake Well and Five Mile Flat had heavy use as well as Sand Creek, Jacob Spring and Rock Spring areas. Trough Mountain Spring had moderate use.

b. 1990

October- (rested from livestock use except for in the Chukar Gulch area) 12% no apparent use; 58% light use; 28% moderate use; and 2% heavy use. The heavy use areas include Trough Mountain, the dry meadows in the northern part of the pasture, Five Mile Windmill, and Jacob Spring. There was a higher concentration of horses north of Clear Springs and west of Trough Mountain. Two heavy horse trails going down to Antelope Springs were present, which shows that horses trail through the area. The cows used the Summit Lake pasture until 9/21 when the utilization level in Summer Camp was approaching the 30% utilization objective on aspens (Populus tremuloidea) and willows (Salix spp.), so the cows had to be moved off the Summit Lake Pasture. The cows were then moved onto the Indian Reservation and into the Chukar Gulch area of the Warm Springs pasture where the use was found to be light at the time of this mapping. In October 1990, bitterbrush had areas of

no use to severe use. Snowberry had light use. Mountain mahogany had severe use. The leader growth and plant health appeared to be moderate and the drought seemed to be stressing shrubs in most areas. The areas monitored indicated the same use on the grasses as the browse. The same browse species are being similarly used inside the Mahogany Creek Exclosure indicating the use on the browse species is from wildlife. In addition, areas near water sources normally had the heavier use on mountain browse available along with the grasses. Normally mountain browse species is a winter and early spring forage supply for mule deer and pronghorn, however with the high number of wild horses, the wildlife species are forced to modify their foraging habits. This adds additional stress to the wildlife species in addition to the impacts of the drought.

c. 1991

July- (pre-livestock) 87% slight; 9% light; 3% moderate; and 1% heavy. The Five Mile Flat area had light use. The heavy use was in the meadow areas in the northern part of the pasture and the immediate area surrounding the Five Mile Windmill.

November- (post livestock) 32% slight; 32% light; 25% moderate; and 11% heavy. The heavy use areas included Buck Springs, Rock Springs, Sand Creek, Jacob Springs, and Five Mile Flat areas.

4. Summit Lake Pasture

a. 1989

September- (rested from livestock) Generally no apparent use to slight use. The North end of the pasture had slight (0-20%) use. Idaho Canyon area and Summer Camp had slight use also. Coleman Creek however had heavy use.

October- (rested from livestock use) The bench north of Coleman Creek had heavy use.

b. 1990

April/May- (pre-livestock) 7% no apparent use, 72% light use, 8% moderate use, and 13% heavy use. The heavy use occurred along Slumgullion Creek from the ranch up to White Rock Canyon and in the drainage north of Coleman Creek (Soldier Creek).

July- (During livestock use period) Riparian monitoring on Slumgullian and Summer Camp - willows (Salix spp.) and aspens (Populus tremuloides) both had 0-10% use in the riparian. The adjoining uplands had 20% use on bluebunch wheatgrass (Agropyron spicatum), bottlebrush squirreltail (Sitanion hystrix), basin wildrye (Elymus cinereus), and bluegrass (Poa spp.).

September- (During livestock use period) Riparian monitoring on Summer Camp -willows (Salix spp.) and aspens (Populus tremula tremuloides) had 0-20% use and the adjoining uplands had 30% use on bottlebrush squirreltail (Sitanion hystrix) and bluegrass (Poa spp.) and 30-40% use on bluebunch wheatgrass (Agropyron spicatum) and basin wildrye (Elymus cinereus)

October and November- (post livestock) The use was as follows : 52% light use; 40% moderate use; and 8% heavy use. The light use was in the northern portion of the pasture and moderate use was mainly in the southern portion of the allotment. The heavy use areas included the springs around Snow Creek and along the Indian Reservation fence. A significant amount of deer sign was noted between the Indian Reservation and the Sheldon Antelope Refuge. The use on the antelope bitterbrush (Purshia tridentata) was heavy.

In October 1990, the Quaking Aspen adjacent to Slumgullion Creek had light use. The bitterbrush had heavy use on the lower elevations. This is a winter mule deer area and most probably the mule deer had already left their summer range for the winter range because of the over utilization of the forage by the high number of wild horses. The use on the grasses also corresponds to use as noted on the browse. The overall

browse health and leader growth was noted to be good (6").

The aspens near Snow Creek had light use. The snowberry in the headwaters of Snow Creek had severe use, this also corresponds to the use as noted on the grasses. This is an area where licensed and unauthorized cattle congregate and wild horses are present yearlong. Mule deer also congregate in this area during October for thermal cover as well as for protective cover from the hunters, which are numerous in this area. The mule deer normally may not browse snowberry at this time of the year, but because of the use already on the grass species the deer are forced to use the snowberry. The browse leader growth and plant health was good.

The area outside the Mahogany Creek exclosure was found to have slight, light, moderate, and severe use on snowberry. Aspen had heavy and severe use. Ceanothus and mountain mahogany had severe use. Along Summer Camp Creek the aspen had light to heavy use with most being in the moderate use category and this area is where cattle congregated once the herder left. The areas which had the higher use on the browse also are areas which had higher use on the grasses.

The area inside the Mahogany Creek exclosure had no use, moderate, and severe use on aspen. The snowberry had slight use. The ceanothus and mountain mahogany had severe use. The leader growth and the plant health was good. Pole Creek area in 1990 had some unauthorized cattle congregate there. The Mahogany Creek exclosure is a refuge for mule deer and pronghorn from the impacts of cattle and high wild horse numbers.

c. 1991

July- (rested from livestock use) Riparian monitoring along Summer Camp Creek - willows (Salix spp.) and aspens (Populus tremula tremuloides) had no apparent use.

November- (rested from livestock use) 41t

no apparent use except for wildlife in special habitat (in the enclosure); 7% slight use; 14% light use; 20% moderate use; and 18% heavy use. The light use areas included the lower reaches of Coleman Creek to Soldier Creek and the south side of Coleman Creek. The moderate use areas included the bench Summit Lake Mountain Area and an area between the Indian Reservation and the Sheldon. The heavy use areas included the bench north of Coleman Creek, the spring area associated with Snow Creek, and the area adjacent to the Five Mile Flat area. The antelope bitterbrush (Purshia tridentata) was decadent between the Indian Reservation and The Sheldon. There was little leader growth this year. And although the leader growth was sparse, the antelope bitterbrush (Purshia tridentata) received heavy use by the deer. The taller antelope bitterbrush (Purshia tridentata) was showing signs of highlining. Many deer dropping sighted in the area. The snowberry (Symphoricarpos spp.) in this area had moderate use.

B. Utilization in Riparian Areas

1. 1990

Key Forage Plant method was used on the following streams :

a. May- Coleman Creek transect 85% or severe use on willows (Salix spp.); Slumgullian Creek- 24% or light use on willows (Salix spp.); the lower reaches of Donnelly Creek- 88% or severe use on willows (Salix spp.); and the lower reaches of Snow Creek 77% or heavy use on willows and 73% or heavy use on Aspens (Populus tremula tremuloides).

2. 1991

a. July- use at the upper and mid reaches of Coleman Creek had moderate use. The lower reaches had 33% or light use on willow (Salix spp.).

Severe use was noted at the springs and seeps at the headwaters of Snow

Creek.

- b. October- Use pattern mapping west side of Big Mountain had severe use at the numerous springs and meadows. Heavy use was found on the perennial grasses in the uplands.
- c. November- Coleman Creek- 73% or heavy use on willows (Salix spp.), 87% or severe use on sedges (Carex spp.), 89% or severe use on grasses.
- Slumgullian Creek- 49% use on willows (Salix spp.), 80% on sedges (Carex spp.), and 80% on basin wildrye (Elymus cinereus).
- Mud Meadow Reservoir- 7% use on willows (Salix spp.).
- Wheeler Reservoir had 3% use on willows (Salix spp.).
- Donnelly Creek had 77% use on willows (Salix spp.), 74% use on sedges (Carex spp.), and 89% use on grasses.
- Summer Camp Creek had 90% use on willows (Salix spp.), aspen (Populus tremula tremuloides), 70% use on sedges (Carex spp.) and 71% use on grasses.
- Snow Creek- 90% use on willows (Salix spp.), 85% use on aspens (Populus tremula tremuloides)

Data on the distribution of wild horses and burros has been collected by aircraft (helicopter and fixed-wing) since 1988.

The following is a summary of the Black Rock West, Calico, and Warm Springs Canyon HMA distribution flights:

**Black Rock West (Summit Lk and Black Rock Pastures)**

<u>Date</u>	<u>N. of Slum.</u>	<u>S. of Slum.</u>	<u>Aircraft</u>
July 1989	334	140	Bell 47G3B-S
February 1990	208	161	Bell 47G3B-S
January 1991	156	62	Cessna 210
July 1991	357	58	Maule M-5
December 1991	207	180	Hughes 500D
March 1992	235	96	Cessna 210

July 1989

N. of Slumgullion

The horses were heavily distributed from Red Mtn. to Wood Canyon.

S. of Slumgullion

The horses were scattered evenly throughout the area with a concentrated group west of Big Mtn. and on Mustang Spring.

Out of HMA Boundary

There were 12 horses north of the HMA boundary and 5 horses west of the HMA boundary.

February 1990

N. of Slumgullion

Horses observed were evenly distributed throughout the area with a larger concentration between Coleman Creek and Snow Creek.

S. of Slumgullion

Horses were evenly distributed throughout the southern half of the HMA.

Out of HMA Boundary



There were several groups scattered to the west of the HMA boundary.

January 1991

N. of Slumgullion

Distribution was fairly even with a small concentration in the Summit Lake Mtn. area.

S. of Slumgullion

The majority of horses were concentrated from Black Mtn. north to Slumgullion Creek. One group of 15 horses were observed in Clapper Creek area.

July 1991

N. of Slumgullion

Horses were scattered throughout the area with the highest concentrations around Summit Lake Mtn. and Summer Camp Canyon. A smaller concentration was noted near Red Mtn.

S. of Slumgullion

All the horses were found at Clapper Creek and northward to Slumgullion.

December 1991

N. of Slumgullion

The major concentrations were around Summit Lake Mtn. and Wood Canyon, but animals were scattered throughout the area.

S. of Slumgullion

Distribution was from Big Mtn. northward to Slumgullion Creek.

Out of HMA Boundary

Horses were scattered to the southern end of the Black Rock Range.

March 1992

N. of Slumgullion

Major concentration of horses was from Slumgullion Creek to Summit Lake Mtn.

S. of Slumgullion

Horses were distributed evenly throughout the southern pasture with a concentration at Black Mtn.

Warm Springs Canyon(Warm Spr Pasture)

<u>Date</u>	<u># Horses</u>	<u># Burros</u>	<u>Aircraft</u>
February 1988	596	14	Jet Ranger B206
July 1989	526	20	Bell 47G3B-S
February 1990	302	0	Cessna 210
January 1990	187	16	Cessna 210
July 1991	549	23	Maule M-5
March 1992	557	23	Cessna 210

February 1988

The major concentration of horses found on this flight were on the southern end of the HMA, and in the northeast corner. The northwestern corner had no horses at this time. Burros were found on the southern end of the HMA.

July 1989

The horses were concentrated around Trough Mtn., north of Rock Springs, and north of Black Buttes area. Burros were observed south of Black Buttes to the southern HMA boundary.

February 1989

Concentrations seemed to be towards the southern end of the HMA area with the major areas being Chukar Gulch and Dry Canyon.

January 1991

Horses were fairly evenly distributed throughout the area. Burros were found toward the southern end of the HMA.

July 1991

The highest concentrations were observed in the northern part of the HMA area, from Bear Buttes, and Trough Mtn. to Five Mile Flat. The burros were located at the southern end of the HMA.

March 1992

The southern area of the HMA had the highest concentrations. The areas containing the most horses were; Chukar Gulch, Warm Springs Canyon, Dry Canyon, and northwest of Clear Springs. Burros were located at the southern end of the HMA.

Calico Mountains(Calico Pasture)

<u>Date</u>	<u># Horses</u>	<u>Aircraft</u>
October 1988	154	Bell 47G3B-1
July 1989	261	Bell 47G3B-S
February 1990	140	Cessna 210
August 1990	155	Cessna 210
January 1991	81	Cessna 210
July 1991	125	Maule M-5
March 1992	268	Cessna 210

October 1988

Horses were found evenly distributed throughout the high elevations. There were very few throughout the foothills.

July 1989

Horses were evenly distributed throughout the northern part of the pasture. Harry Spring had a high concentration of horses and the only horses found south of there, were at Jackass Flat.

February 1990

On this flight, horses were evenly distributed throughout the area with very few horses between Box Canyon and Willow Creek.

August 1990

The major concentrations of horses were found between Willow Creek and Donnelly Creek.

January 1991

Horses were evenly distributed throughout the area with the

major concentration between Cherry Creek.

July 1991

Major concentration of horses in the southern part of the pasture between Cherry Creek and Donnelly Creek.

March 1992

Distribution of horses was fairly even throughout the pasture. The areas with the highest concentrations were Willow Creek and north of Box Canyon.

APPENDIX 6 Stocking Level Calculations and procedures.

To determine stocking levels the Weighted Average Utilization and Potential Stocking Level calculations were used.

$$\text{Weighted Average Utilization} = \frac{\text{zone a} \quad \text{zone b} \quad \text{zone..}}{\text{(# acres x midpoint of use class) + (# acres x midpoint of use class) + ...}} \text{Total \# of Acres}$$

The moderate and heavy use zones were used in calculating the Weighted Average Utilization.

$$\text{Potential Stocking Level} = \frac{\text{Actual Use}}{\text{Weighted Average Utilization}} = \frac{\text{Desired Actual Use}}{\text{Desired Average Utilization}}$$

The Potential Stocking Level calculation was used to determine the potential stocking level in order to set wild horse and livestock numbers by pasture in the Soldier Meadows Allotment. July 15 was chosen as the date for the 20% utilization because the key species selected should all have gone through seed dissemination by this date. On the Black Rock Pasture 30% utilization by wild horses before livestock turnout (January 1) was used as the desired average utilization because this utilization level would leave enough vegetation for the wild horses and livestock through the winter. 60% utilization was used as the desired end of grazing season (February 28) utilization for all pastures. 50% utilization was used as the combined wild horse and livestock desired utilization level on the uplands by the end of the growing season (August 31).

Summit Lake Pasture:

LUP Ratios: 80% Lvt                      20% Horses

$$\text{Lvt: } 4224(.80) = 3379 \text{ AUMs} \Rightarrow \frac{X(92 \text{ Days})}{30.41666} = 3379 \Rightarrow 1117 \text{ Cows}$$

$$\text{WH: } 4224(.20) = 845 \text{ AUMs} \Rightarrow \frac{X(365 \text{ Days})}{30.41666} = 845 \Rightarrow 70 \text{ WH yearlong}$$

Warm Springs Pasture:

LUP Ratios: 73% Lvt                      27% Horses

$$\text{Lvt: } 8847(.73) = 6458 \text{ AUMs} \Rightarrow \frac{X(92 \text{ Days})}{30.41666} = 6458 \Rightarrow 2135 \text{ Cows*}$$

$$\text{WH: } 8847(.27) = 2389 \text{ AUMs} \Rightarrow \frac{X(365 \text{ Days})}{30.41666} = 2389 \Rightarrow 199 \text{ WH/B's yearlong}$$

Based on equalizing the carrying capacity and livestock numbers of the smallest summer pasture - Summit Lake - the Area Manager limited the amount of livestock

forage designated in this pasture to 1,117 cows and 3,379 AUMs.

Calico Pasture:

LUP Ratios: 74% Lvt                      26% Horses

Lvt: 2996(.74) = 2217 AUMs =>  $\frac{X(30 \text{ Days})}{30.41666} = 2217$  => 2248 Cows\*

WH: 2996(.26) = 778 AUMs =>  $\frac{X(30 \text{ Days})}{30.41666} = 778$  => 65 WH yearlong

\* To balance the use between spring and summer pastures only 1,117 cows and 1,102 AUMs are authorized.

Hot Spring and Soldier Meadows Pastures:

Use Pattern Mapping was not done for the Hot Spring and Soldier Meadows Pastures. Since these pastures are similar to the Black Rock and Calico Pastures respectively, calculations using those stocking levels documented there should be adequate forage to graze livestock during the proposed seasons. Future monitoring will further document the actual available forage and adjustments made accordingly.

Hot Spring Pasture:

1,117 cows from 11/16 - 12/31      1,726 AUMs

Soldier Meadows Pasture:

1,117 cows from 4/1 - 4/30          1,102 AUMs

APPENDIX 7 Key Species Monitored: Upland and Riparian

1. Upland Habitat

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
AGSP	<u>Agropyron spicatum</u>	bluebunch wheatgrass
AMAL2	<u>Amelanchier alnifolia</u>	serviceberry
ARSP	<u>Artemisia spinescens</u>	bud sagebrush
ATCO	<u>Atriplex confertifolia</u>	shadscale
BASA3	<u>Balsamorhiza sagittata</u>	arrowleaf balsamroot
CELE3	<u>Cercocarpus ledifolius</u>	curlleaf mountain mahogany
CRAC2	<u>Crepis acuminata</u>	tapertip hawksbeard
ELCI2	<u>Elymus cinereus</u>	basin wildrye
ELTR3	<u>Elymus triticoides</u>	creeping wildrye
EPHED	<u>Ephedra spp.</u>	ephedra
EULA5	<u>Eurotia lanata</u>	winter fat
FEID	<u>Festuca idahoensis</u>	Idaho Fescue
LUPIN	<u>Lupinus spp</u>	lupine
ORHY	<u>Oryzopsis hymenoides</u>	Indian ricegrass
POSE	<u>Poa secunda</u>	Sandberg's bluegrass
PUTR2	<u>Purshia tridentata</u>	antelope bitterbrush
SIHY	<u>Sitanian hystrix</u>	bottlebrush squirreltail
STCO3	<u>Stipa columbiana</u>	Columbia needlegrass
STTH2	<u>Stipa thurbiana</u>	Thurber's needlegrass
SYMPH	<u>Symphoricarpus spp</u>	snowberry
* POBA	<u>Potentilla basaltica</u>	Soldier Meadows cinquefoil

2. Riparian Habitat

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
AGIN2	<u>Agropyron intermedium</u>	intermediate wheatgrass
CAREX	<u>Carex spp.</u>	sedge
DECE	<u>Deschampsia cespitosa</u>	tufted hairgrass
HOBR	<u>Hordeum brachyantherum</u>	meadow barley
JUNCUS	<u>Juncus spp.</u>	rush
JUBA	<u>Juncus balticus</u>	baltic rush
POA++	<u>Poa spp</u>	bluegrass
POA3	<u>Poa nevadensis</u>	Nevada bluegrass
POTR5	<u>Populus tremuloides</u>	quaking aspen
ROWO	<u>Rosa woodsii</u>	woods rose
SALIX	<u>Salix spp.</u>	willow

\* Listed as a rare and sensitive species

APPENDIX 8 List of acronyms

ACRONYM

AML  
 AUM  
 AS  
 AW  
 AY  
 BLM  
 BR  
 BS  
 BW  
 BY  
 DS  
 DW  
 DY  
 ESI  
 FONSI  
 HMA  
 ISL  
 LCT  
 MFP  
 NEPA  
 NDOW  
 NOAA Administration  
 RAWS  
 RIPS  
 RMP  
 SCS  
 SWA  
 UPM  
 WHA

DEFINITION

Appropriate Management Level  
 Animal Unit Month  
 Antelope Summer  
 Antelope Winter  
 Antelope Yearlong  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 Black Rock  
 Bighorn sheep Summer  
 Bighorn sheep Winter  
 Bighorn sheep Yearlong  
 Deer Summer  
 Deer Winter  
 Deer Yearlong  
 Ecological Site Inventory  
 Finding Of No Significant Finding  
 Herd Management Area  
 Initial Stocking Level  
 Lahontan Cutthroat Trout  
 Management Framework Plan  
 National Environmental Policy Act  
 Nevada Department Of Wildlife  
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
 Remote Automated Weather Station  
 Rangeland Improvement Project System  
 Resource Management Plan  
 Soil Conservation Service  
 Site Writeup Area  
 Use Pattern Map  
 Wildlife Habitat Area

ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS

Growing Season -  
 Animal Unit Month -

March through August  
 the amount of vegetation necessary for  
 the subsistence of one cow or its  
 equivalent (i.e., five deer, five  
 antelope, five bighorn sheep, five  
 domestic sheep or one horse) for one  
 month.

Use Classes -

No use 0%, Slight Use 1 - 20%, Light  
 Use 21 - 40%, Moderate Use 41 - 60%,  
 Heavy Use 61 - 80%, Severe Use 81 -  
 100%.

Seral StagesClass

Percent of Potential Natural Seral  
 Community by Air Dry Weight

0 - 25 Early  
 26 - 50 Mid



51 - 75 Late  
76 - 100 PNC

Habitat Suitability Rating - Poor, Fair, good, Excellent

APPENDIX 9 BLM RIPARIAN CONDITION CLASS

A. From 6740 - Wetland-Riparian Area Protection and Management - Appendix 1

Condition Classes for Streambanks and Shorelines

Riparian condition class  
percent of optimum

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| > 70%  | 1. <u>Class I, Excellent</u> - No negligible use/damage; well-rooted vegetation (primarily grasses, sedges, and forbs); sod intact; very little, if any erosion from vegetation areas, less than 5 percent bare soil showing along shoreline. |
| 60-69% | 2. <u>Class II, Good</u> - Some use/damage; vegetation generally well-rooted; sod mostly intact; soil showing in places (6 percent to 15 percent bare soil showing overall); some surface erosion evident.                                    |
| 50-59% | 3. <u>Class III, Fair</u> - Use or damage close to sod; vegetation shallow-rooted; moderate surface erosion (16 percent to 25 percent bare soil showing overall).   |
| < 49%  | 4. <u>Class IV, Poor</u> - Heavy to severe use/damage; vegetation generally grazed down to the soil; considerable soil showing (over 25%) with sod damage serious; active surface erosion a serious problem.                                  |

B. Condition Class Determination from Stream Inventory Data

An average of the bank cover and bank stability ratings from stream inventory reports has been determined to provide the best correlation with riparian condition class descriptions outlined above. The average of the ratings is expressed as a percentage of optimum and this determines the condition class based upon the percentage ranges indicated immediately to the left of the classes. This method was derived through discussions between the NSO Fishery Biologist, Elko, and Winnemucca Fishery Biologists, and through comparisons with photographs and site specific knowledge.

APPENDIX 10 Phenology.

Soldier Meadows Allotment

DEVELOPMENT STAGES

<u>Species</u>	<u>Start Growth</u>	<u>Flowering</u>	<u>Peak of Flowering</u>	<u>Seedripen</u>	<u>Seed Disseminate</u>
<b>Grasses:</b>					
STTH2	3/15-3/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-6/30	6/30-7/15
ORHY	3/15-3/30	5/01-5/15	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-6/30
POA++	3/15-3/30	5/01-5/15	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-6/30
SIHY	3/15-3/30	5/01-5/15	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-6/30
FEID	3/15-3/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-6/30	7/01-6/15
AGSP	5/01-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-6/30	6/30-7/15	7/15-7/30
ELCI2	3/15-3/30	5/01-5/15	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-6/30
BRMA4	3/15-3/30	5/01-5/15	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-6/30
<b>Forbs:</b>					
BASA3	4/15-4/30	5/01-5/15	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-6/30
CRAC2	4/15-4/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/01-6/15	6/15-6/30
SPHAE	4/15-4/30	5/15-5/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-6/30
HAVE	4/15-4/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-7/01	6/15-7/01
TAOF	4/15-4/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-7/01	6/15-7/01
LUPIN	4/15-4/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-7/01	6/15-7/01
ERIOG	4/15-4/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-7/01	6/15-7/01
CASTI	4/15-4/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-7/01	6/15-7/01
CREPI	4/15-4/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-7/01	6/15-7/01
ACMIL	4/15-4/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-7/01	6/15-7/01
BAHO	4/15-4/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	6/15-7/01	6/15-7/01
<b>Shrubs:</b>					
PUTR2	3/15-3/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	7/01-7/15	7/15-7/30
SYMPH	3/15-3/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	7/01-7/15	7/15-7/30
POTR5	3/15-3/30	5/15-5/30	6/01-6/15	7/01-7/15	7/15-7/30

This phenology data was obtained from reference to the Sonoma-Gerlach Environmental Impact Statement. Phenology study data was collected in cooperation with Natural Resource Consultants during the period 1977-1979.

R.23E

R.24E

R.25E

R.26E

R.27E

T.42N

WARM SPRINGS PASTURE  
SUMMER USE 05/21 - 07/30

SUMMIT LAKE PASTURE  
SUMMER USE 05/21 - 07/30

T.41N

T.40N

SOLDIER MEADOWS PASTURE  
SPRING USE 04/11 - 05/20

T.39N

T.38N

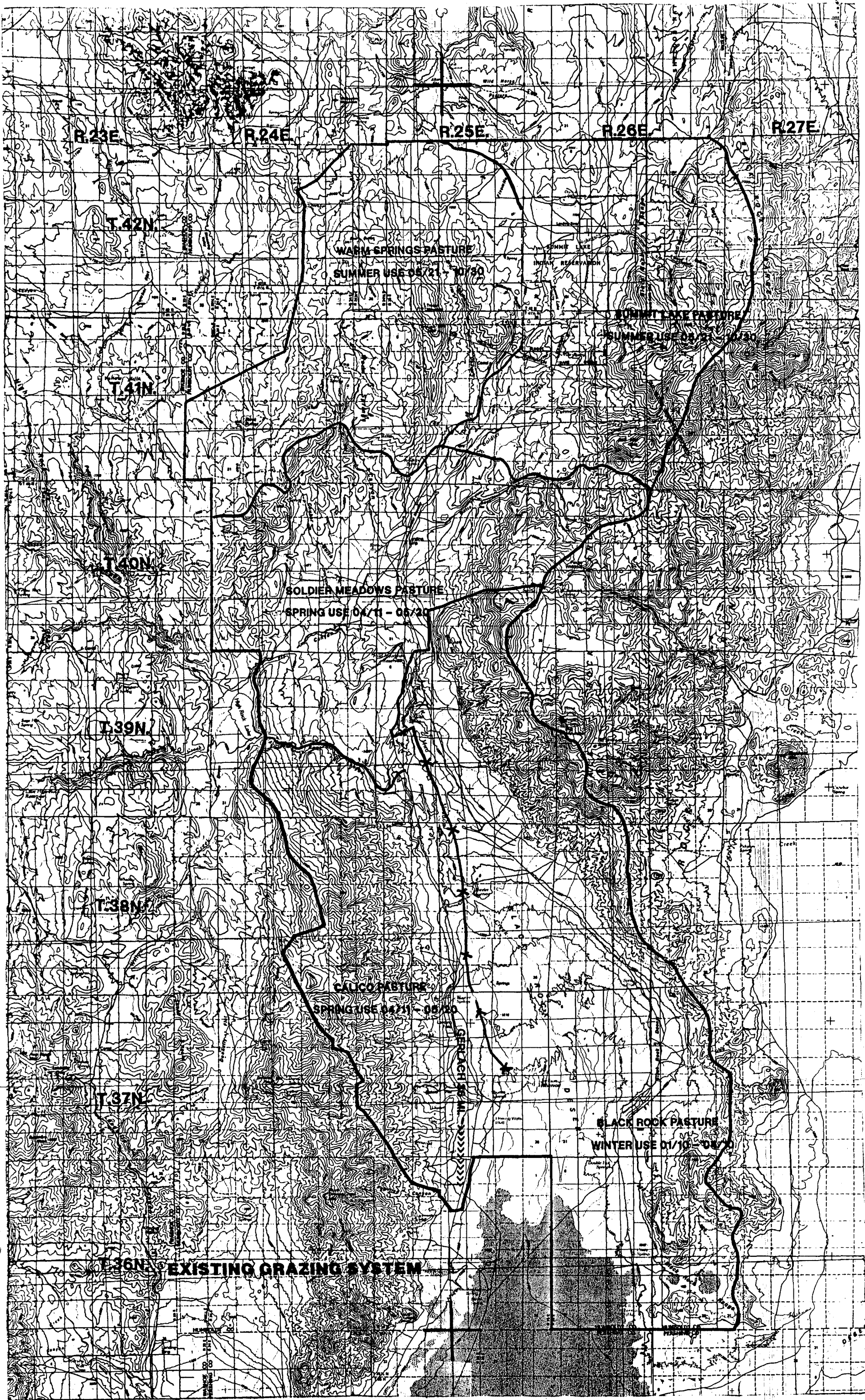
CALICO PASTURE  
SPRING USE 04/11 - 05/20

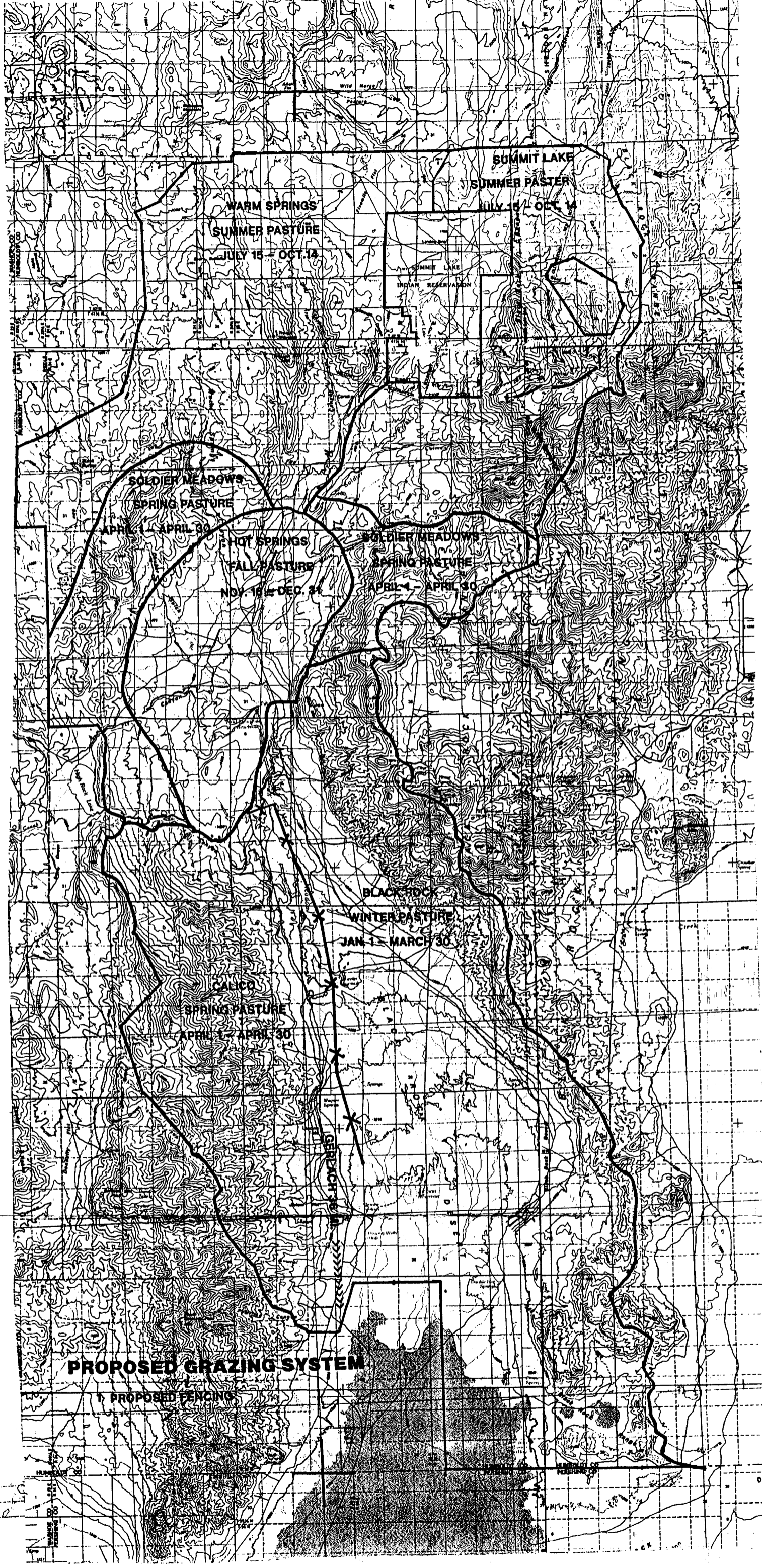
T.37N

BLACK ROCK PASTURE  
WINTER USE 01/10 - 04/01

T.36N EXISTING GRAZING SYSTEM

N2 94 16





97 50

111