

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

APR 21 1993

Honorable Frankie Sue Del Papa
Attorney General
Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710

APR 27 1993

Dear Madame Attorney General:

In response to your letter dated March 25, 1993, regarding the East Lassen deer herd and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) activities in the region, the BLM California and Nevada State Directors and Susanville and Winnemucca District Offices are cognizant of the resource management issues you have raised. These offices have been involving the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the California Department of Fish and Game in efforts to resolve these matters since 1986. This effort at resolution is continuing today, and involves a wide variety of public and private agencies and the livestock permittees of the region.

Because you identified the Twin Peak Allotment as a focal point of concern, let me briefly explain the livestock management procedures that have been set in place for the 1993 grazing season. All livestock grazing authorizations will be made within the context of the full force and effect grazing decision issued in 1992. This decision contains provisions for protecting specific, sensitive wildlife habitat areas from the impacts of livestock grazing. We will enforce the terms and conditions of the above mentioned decision by determining when resource conditions are appropriate for livestock turnout, monitoring utilization and compliance with the agreement's terms and conditions, and making adjustments as appropriate.

The Winnemucca District has reduced grazing in the Buffalo Hills allotment from approximately 30,000 animal unit months (AUMs) to the present level of 4,000 AUMs during the past 15 years.

Resource specialists are monitoring the resource conditions in the East Lassen area weekly. This season's livestock turnouts will only be authorized based on their assessment of conditions. We also are identifying specific areas where we believe resource conditions cannot support livestock use this grazing season. As these areas are identified, we will notify permittees and take appropriate enforcement action to deal with any violations.

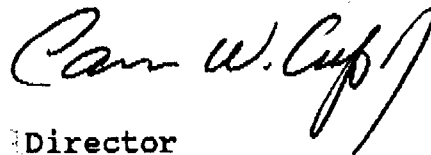
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As you are aware, the above mentioned grazing decision and a similar decision issued for the Tuledad Allotment were appealed by six parties, including the Nevada and California wildlife agencies. Hearings on these appeals are pending before the Department of the Interior's Office of Hearings and Appeals.

In addition to these immediate management actions, the Susanville District is currently working on an approach to improve resource management in the entire East Lassen region for the long term. The District is developing integrated activity plans that will guide management of the entire East Lassen region on an ecosystem basis. Public meetings to help refine the issues were held in November 1992. The BLM resource specialists are now evaluating the vegetation to determine how much livestock, wildlife and other uses the ecosystem can sustain on a long term basis. We expect the first of these integrated activity plans to be completed by the fall.

I have asked both State Directors to personally monitor implementation of these actions to ensure compliance. Cooperation and participation by all affected agencies and parties are absolutely necessary if we are to be successful at achieving sound management of all the resources in the East Lassen region.

Sincerely,



Acting Director