

6/16/92



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Region 4

Toiyabe National Forest
Las Vegas Ranger District
2881 So. Valley View - Suite 16
Las Vegas, NV 89102

Reply To: 2260

Date: June 16, 1992

Wild Horse Organized Assistance
ATTN: Dawn Lappin, Director
P.O. BOX 555
Reno, NV 89504

Ms. Lappin:

The Forest Service is proposing to gather wild horses which are occupying and using lands located in Lee Canyon and the Mt. Charleston wilderness area. Use of these lands by wild horses is not authorized under the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act. That Act limits wild horse distribution to federally designated territories.

The scoping process provides the public with an opportunity to review and respond to management activities proposed on National Forest System lands. Your response is appreciated and will allow the Forest Service to adequately analyze this proposal. Written comments on the proposal are preferred, however, we will accept comments over the phone.

Questions regarding this proposal should be referred to George Perkins of my staff at (702) 873-8800.

Sincerely,

For KIM E. MARSHALL
District Ranger

enclosure



SCOPING DOCUMENT

PROPOSAL TO GATHER AND REMOVE WILD HORSES FROM LEE CANYON AND THE MT. CHARLESTON WILDERNESS AREA

Las Vegas Ranger District
Toiyabe National Forest
Clark County, Nevada

I. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

A. Location and General Size of Area Involved

Wild and free roaming horses are entering into and occupying habitat in Lee Canyon and portions of the Mt. Charleston Wilderness Area. Wild horses are entering these areas from the adjacent Spring Mountain Wild Horse Territory. This proposed action would remove wild horses which are occupying and using Lee Canyon and Mt. Charleston Wilderness as summer range.

The proposal would gather wild horses occupying Lee Canyon, and Macks Canyon, Mc Farland Canyon, Trough Spring, and Wallace Canyon inside the wilderness boundary.

B. Relationship to Other Plans and Documents

The land involved with this proposal is under the administrative jurisdiction of the Las Vegas Ranger District, Toiyabe National Forest. The wild horses are occupying and foraging on lands located in Lee Canyon and the wilderness area. These lands are managed under standards and guidelines contained in the Toiyabe Land Management Plan and laws and regulations provided by wilderness legislation and the Wild Horse and Burro Act.

Lee Canyon is located in Management Area 11. The Toiyabe National Forest Land Management Plan (LMP) identifies general management area direction as "Continue exclusion of wild horses and burros.

The remaining four identified locations extend into the wilderness area. Management Area 12's objectives include:

Management will meet the objectives and intent of the Wilderness Act. Emphasis will be on maintaining natural conditions to:

- protect the fragile environment and its unique plants and animals.
- maintain quality watershed conditions.

Both federal law and regulations require that wild horses not be allowed to expand their range outside of federally designated territories. The federal code of regulations at 36 CFR 222.21 (a(1)) requires that wild horses be managed "in the areas" where they "occur" at the time of enactment of the Act.

C. Nature of Decision to be Made

Which bands or groups and what method or technique should be used to gather wild horses from the identified lands? How many horses need to be removed to prevent expansion into areas outside federally designated territories?

II. IDENTIFIED LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The following issues and concerns have been identified by the Forest Service:

1. Establishment and use by wild horses in Lee Canyon and the Mt. Charleston Wilderness Area outside a designated territory boundary.
2. Impacts to rare and endemic plant species caused by wild horse activities.
3. Cumulative impacts to rare and endemic plant species created by wild horse use.
4. Potential impacts to rare and endemic plant species from wild horse use.
5. Potential introduction of non-desirable plant species carried into the area by the seasonal movement of wild horses.
6. Impacts of wild horses on wildlife and springs.
7. Public safety of motorists traveling in Lee Canyon and on the Deer Creek highway.

These identified preliminary issues and concerns are not all-inclusive, but are provided as a starting point for public input and to assist in identifying additional interdisciplinary team or resource specialist input needed for completion of the environmental analysis.

III. TIMING NEEDS OR REQUIREMENTS

The public is encouraged to participate throughout the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) environmental analysis process, which is expected to be completed by September 30, 1992. Individuals and organizations on the Las Vegas Ranger District mailing list will receive a copy of the scoping document. Comments should be addressed to: District Ranger, 2881 S. Valley View, Suite 16, Las Vegas, Nevada 89102.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public comments received during the scoping process will be used in developing the necessary NEPA document. The level of NEPA documentation will depend on the comments received and significance of the identified impacts. Comments received will assist the Forest Service in determining the scope of the issues and to identify those significant issues related to this proposal early in the analysis process.