



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Humboldt-Toiyabe  
National Forests

Spring Mountains  
National Recreation Area  
2881 S. Valley View, #16  
Las Vegas, NV 89102

a. mt stirling 6-6-96

Reply to: 1950

Date: June 6, 1996

Wild Horse Commission  
255 West Moana Lande, Suite 207A  
Reno, NV 89509

Dear Ms. Barcomb:

The USDA Forest Service, Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (SMNRA) and the Bureau of Land Management, Stateline Resource Area (BLM) propose to construct a fence, and permit the construction of two water lines, in the Mt. Stirling area, near the boundary between the SMNRA and public lands administered by the BLM. The fence and water lines are needed to keep cattle using the public lands from crossing onto the SMNRA and damaging riparian vegetation.

The Spring Mountains National Recreation Area was established by Congress in 1993 in order to protect the unique values of the Spring Mountains, which contribute to both public enjoyment and biological diversity. The SMNRA provides habitat for species of plants and animals which occur nowhere else in the world. Springs and riparian areas provide fragile and critical resources for many species in the desert of southern Nevada.

In accordance with its multiple-use mandate, the BLM permits ranchers to graze cattle on designated allotments of public land under managed conditions designed to provide for sustainable production of forage. The Mt. Stirling Allotment surrounds the northwestern end of the SMNRA, in Nye County, Nevada, and is grazed annually by 40 to 75 head of cattle. Cattle grazing under the BLM permit frequently cross onto the SMNRA, and have continued to return despite efforts by the permittee to herd them back onto their allotment. Grazing on the SMNRA has been of particular concern near Big Timber and Jaybird Springs.

The BLM and the SMNRA propose to construct approximately six miles of barbed wire fence near the SMNRA boundary from west of the Jaybird Road (FSR 552) to east of the Big Timber Road (FSR 553). See the attached map for the approximate fence location. The fence would interrupt the routes used by the cattle to access the SMNRA. Cattleguards or gates would be used at the road crossings. The fence would include a smooth top strand, to avoid injury to wildlife. The two agencies also propose to construct, or allow the the BLM permittee to construct, water lines from privately held water rights at Jaybird and Big Timber Springs, across the SMNRA to sites with the allotment. The water lines would be buried within the Mt. Stirling Wilderness Study Area, and laid along the surface of the ground elsewhere, to facilitate maintenance and avoid ground disturbance.

Construction of the fence and water lines is needed to protect the ecological

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health of the Spring Mountains, particularly riparian areas and springs, and to improve habitat for wildlife and wild horses and burros which use this area. These improvements will also allow the permittee to continue grazing his cattle without trespassing onto National Forest System land.

We encourage you to let us know if you have comments or concerns about this proposal. The Forest Service and BLM will conduct surveys of plants and archaeological resources in the area in May and June, and hope to make a decision as to whether or not to approve this project by the summer of 1996. Implementation would occur soon thereafter. Your comments and the results of field surveys and interdisciplinary analysis will help us to determine the level of environmental documentation required. At this point, we believe that this project might fall into a category of actions for which preparation of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement is not required.

The Forest Service is the lead agency for this project for the purposes of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Please address your comments to:

Jerry Ingersoll  
USDA Forest Service  
Spring Mountains National Recreation Area  
2881 S. Valley View, Suite 16  
Las Vegas, NV 89102

To be most helpful, we would appreciate receiving your comments by July 6.

Sincerely,

*Timothy J. Short*

for JAMES S. TALLERICO  
District Ranger



# Spring Mountains NRA Mt. Stirling Fence

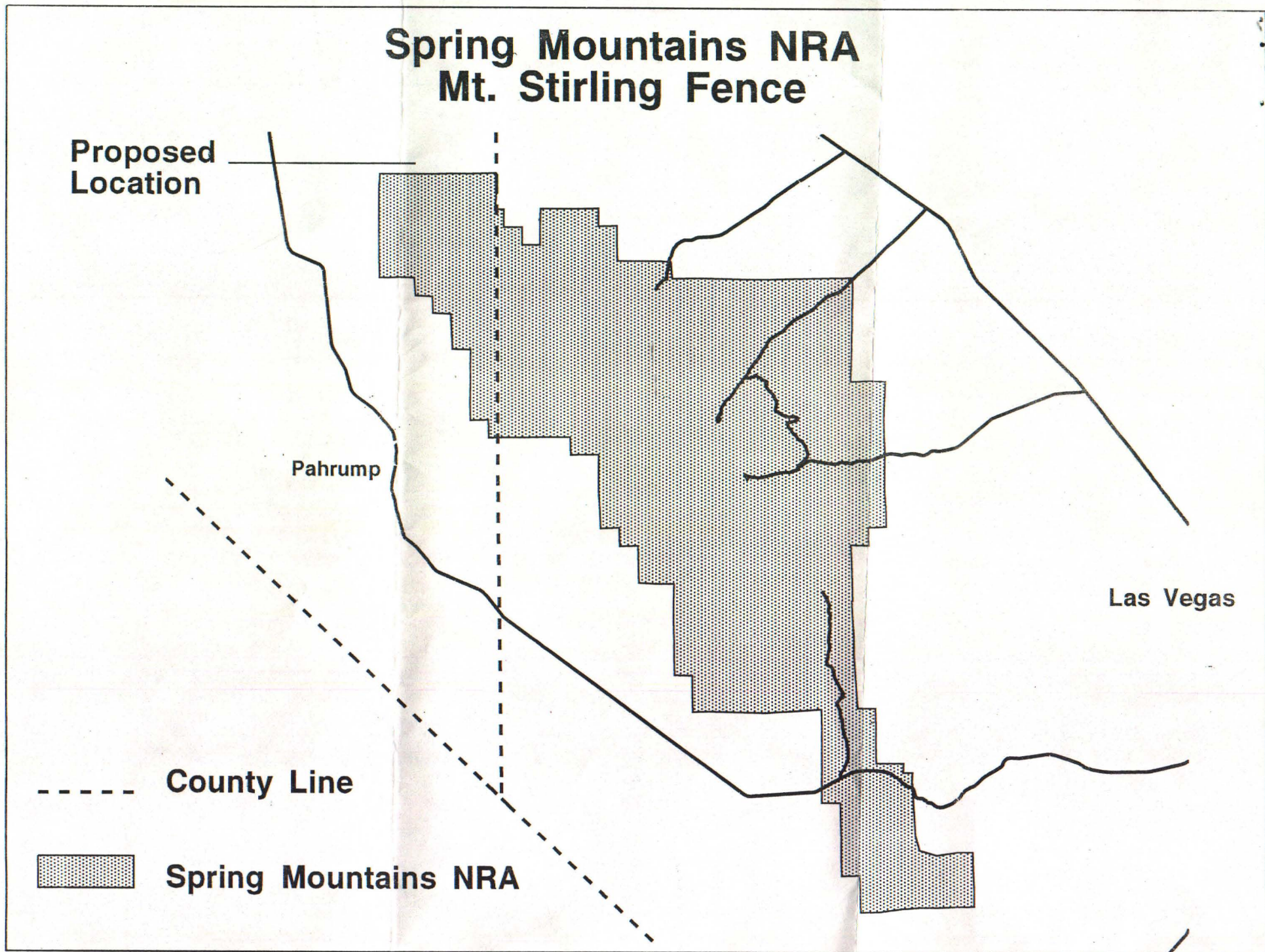
Proposed  
Location

Pahrump

Las Vegas

----- County Line

▒ Spring Mountains NRA







COMMISSION FOR THE  
PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES

255 W. Moana Lane

Suite 207A

Reno, Nevada 89509

(702) 688-2626

June 25, 1996

Mr. James S. Tallerico  
District Ranger  
USDA Forest Service  
Spring Mountains National Recreation Area  
2881 South Valley View, Suite 16  
Las Vegas, NV 89102

Subject: Mt. Stirling Allotment - Mt. Stirling HMA

Dear Mr. Tallerico:

The Spring Mountain National Recreation Area is presently under a Forest Plan Amendment to establish Standards and Guidelines for future management actions affecting natural resources. At present, the Commission has submitted numerous concerns and comments pertinent to wild horses and burros by the proposed Forest Plan amendments.

As justification for the Forest Plan environmental impact statement and guidelines, the Forest submits the inadequacies of present planning; therefore, any new management action should be contingent to new NEPA analysis.

From our records, the proposed project to fence and divert waters is within a wild horse herd management area. This herd is being jointly managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. Appropriate management levels are not established and herd management areas have not been re-delineated in new or draft land use plans. The notification does not address possible impacts to the free-roaming nature of the Johnnie Wild Horse Herd. Obviously, the exclusion of wild horses from water sources or portions of their range can or will have adverse effects.

We recommend an environmental assessment be prepared and that wild horses and burros be addressed prior to any decision.

Sincerely,

  
CATHERINE BARCOMB  
Executive Director