United States   **Forest**   **Region 4**   **Toiyabe National Forest**
Department of   **Service**   **Las Vegas Ranger District**
Agriculture   **550 E. Charleston**
                                                       Las Vegas, NV 89104

Reply To: xx 2260

Date: September 24, 1990

Ms. Dawn Lappin
15640 Sylvester Rd
Reno, NV 89511

Dear Ms. Lappin:

Enclosed is the decision memo addressing the wild and free roaming horses in
Lee Canyon.

Kim E. Marshall
District Ranger

Date 9/24/90

DECISION MEMO

Lee Canyon Wild and Free Roaming Horse Removal

Las Vegas Ranger District
Toiyabe National Forest
Las Vegas, NV

I have decided to allow the wild and free roaming horses to remove themselves
from Lee Canyon. This area is located on Mount Charleston, 1.5 miles from
Charleston Peak (T. 19S., R. 56E., Sec.10 and 14). Lee Canyon is not within
the existing Spring Mountain Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Territory.

There will be no actual removal of the horses from Lee Canyon. I will wait and
let the winter conditions force the horses out of the canyon to the lower
elevations. The existing fence will be reconstructed at the mouth of Lee
Canyon (T. 18S, R. 56E, Sec. 35) prior to the horses leaving and a portion of
the fence will be left open to allow their migration. The fence will then be
completed after all the horses are out of the canyon area to alleviate any
reoccurrence of this problem. If the fence is not successful at keeping the
horses out of the canyon next spring, the horses will be captured early in the
season and will be taken to the Kingman Wild Horse and Burro Handling
Facility.

The removal of the horses and the reconstruction of the fence is necessary in
order to maintain the integrity of the Lee Canyon watershed. Ski Lee is
required through the terms and conditions of their permit to maintain
vegetative cover on the ski slopes to provide for watershed stability and soil
protection from rain and snow melt runoff. The permit requirement represents a
large financial investment by Ski Lee. The horse presence in the area has
degraded the seeding on the ski slope, decreasing vegetative cover, therefore,
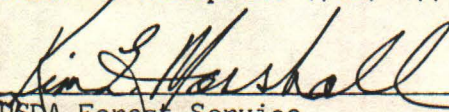causing problems with existing watershed improvements.

Scoping was completed with thirteen people representing nine different
organizations. No one objected to the project.

This proposed action falls within Category 2 (low impact range management
activities, such as fencing, seeding and installing water facilities). No
extraordinary circumstances exist that might cause the action to have
significant effects on the quality of the human environment nor any adverse
cumulative or secondary environmental effects; therefore, the action is
categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement
or an environmental assessment (FSH 1909.15, section 26.2).

This action is consistent with the management direction, including standards
and guidelines, in the Forest Plan.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 217. A Notice of Appeal
must be filed with the Forest Supervisor, Toiyabe National Forest, 1200
Franklin Way, Sparks, Nevada, 89431, within 45 days of the date of this
decision. Simultaneously send a copy of the notice of appeal to my office.

For further information, contact George Perkins or Kim Marshall at the address
below or telephone (702) 477-7782.

Caring for the Land and Serving People   9/24/90
                                                Date

USDA Forest Service
ATTN: Kim E. Marshall, District Ranger
550 E. Charleston Blvd.
Las Vegas, Nevada 89104

FS-6200-28(7-82)

Reply To: 2260

Date: August 20, 1990

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

Dear Ms. Lappin:

This letter is to answer several generic questions raised as a result of your responses to the scoping document about the problem horses in Lee Canyon. The questions and responses are as follows:

Question 1.   How many problem horses are involved and how long has this use been occurring?

There are 12-15 head of horses using the meadow and Ski Lee and this use has been occurring over the past several years.

Question 2.   What is the current actual use by domestic livestock?

There is not any use by domestic livestock. Lee Canyon is not part of a grazing allotment. The National Forest System lands acquired through the enhancement act at the mouth of Lee Canyon does contain an allotment but it is currently inactive. When active this permit was for horses not cattle. The cattle guard located in Lee Canyon was to prevent horses from straying into the canyon.

Question 3.   What is the current availability of forage and water for horses in the surrounding areas?

The Bureau of Land Management's response to the scoping statement states "that their monitoring data indicates that there is not an excess of wild horses or burros within the Herd Management Area."

Water in this area does not appear to be limiting at this time. In the Mt. Potosi area, some horses have died as a result of lack of water.

Question 4.   What type of terrain and vegetation is involved?

Lee Canyon is a relatively narrow canyon. The sides of the canyon are steep and the soils are very gravelly with cobbles and many small rocks. The ski area operators are required in their permit to revegetate slopes which range from 6 to more than 40 percent. This vegetation is primarily grasses with some sweet clover. Native vegetation includes ponderosa pine and white fir with bristlecone pine and aspen at the higher elevations. The forest floor is relatively open and free from heavy understory. Shrubs such as current, bitterbrush, and sagebrush can be found along with some small shrubby trees like mountain mahogany. Native grasses include bluegrasses, brome, and lower in the canyon indian ricegrass.

We hope that this letter answers most of your questions. If you still have questions or would like to visit the area in question, please contact Sara Mayben of my staff (702) 477-7782, and she will arrange a tour for you.

Sincerely,

KIM E. MARSHALL
District Ranger