

12/26/91

RECEIVED
DEC 31 1991
BUDGET DIRECTOR

Reply to: 2230
Date: 12/26/91

F. S.



MONITOR
COMPLSX

Dear Citizen:

The Ely Ranger District of the Humboldt National Forest is planning to prepare an environmental assessment to analyze a proposal, to prepare an Allotment Management Plan for the Tom Plain, Ellison Basin and Blackrock Cattle and Horse Allotments (3 scoping documents enclosed).

The public is encouraged to submit any comments, concerns or suggestions regarding these proposals. All public response to the attached scoping documents will be considered.

All comments must be received no later than January 27, 1992. If you have any questions not covered in the scoping document, please contact Paul Demeule of the Ely Ranger District at (702) 289-3031.

Please send your comments to:

Humboldt National Forest
Ely Ranger District
P.O. Box 539
Ely, Nevada 89301

Sincerely,

RENE P. DEMEULE
District Ranger

Encl.

Scoping Document
Tom Plain Cattle and Horse Allotment Management Plan
December 26, 1991

Project Description

The Ely Ranger District of the Humboldt National Forest in Region 4 of the National Forest System is proposing to prepare an updated Allotment Management Plan for the Tom Plain C&H (Cattle and Horse) Allotment. This established allotment is located on the White Pine Division in White Pine County, Nevada, essentially located in T14N, R58, 59 and 60E, and T 15N, R58 and 59E, and in a small portion of T13N, R59 and 60E (See attached location maps). The allotment is approximately 53,700 acres in size with approximately 9131 acres of suitable range for livestock grazing.

The proposal must meet the direction and Standards and Guidelines as expressed in the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved 8/19/86, and as expressed in Amendment Number 2 to the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved 7/31/90.

Grazing Management of the Tom Plain C&H allotment is currently managed under a modified 3-pasture deferred-rotation system. A total of 500 cattle (cow/calf pairs) are permitted to graze this allotment from 6/11 to 10/10 (2000 head months) annually under a Term Grazing Permit approved June 5, 1986.

The allotment management plan for this allotment was approved on February 5, 1970, and called for a modified 3 pasture rest-rotation grazing system. This grazing system proved to be unsuccessful because the allotment did not have the forage base to support that number of livestock under this system. In addition, water distribution, lack of structural improvement maintenance and some improvements which are not functioning at all, complicate an already stressed forage base. In 1980 a decision was made to allow the allotment to be used under a 3 pasture deferred rotation grazing system.

Many of the problems mentioned above remain, although the permittees have made a firm effort to maintain the range structural improvements over the last 3 years (1989-1991).

Three years of utilization mapping in 1988, 1990, and 1991 indicate that a reduction in permitted livestock or season of use is required to bring livestock use into compliance with forage utilization standards.

On May 15, 1991, the Term Grazing Permit was amended to include the maximum allowable forage use in riparian and non-riparian sites as expressed in amendment #2 to the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resouce Management Plan approved 7/31/90. The ID Team will firm up or agree to these utilization standards for development of the new Allotment Management Plan.

Decision Needed

The Ely Ranger District is planning to prepare an Environmental Assessment, concerning the proposal to prepare an updated Allotment Management Plan for the Tom Plain C&H Allotment.

The environmental assessment will determine the proper utilization standards to use under various alternative management strategies (Rest-rotation vs. Deferred rotation, etc.) what range improvements are needed to implement the various alternatives; what is the cost, and economic, social and environmental impacts of each alternative (viable alternatives only); and what are the goals and objectives of the updated Allotment Management Plan when it is prepared.

The environmental assessment will address all the concerns and issues identified by the National Forest Interdisciplinary Team which will evaluate this proposal and those issues raised by the public.

Issues and Concerns

To date the ID Team has identified the following Management concerns:

- The allotment is overstocked.
- Key riparian areas are receiving excessive use by livestock.
- Some key water developments are drying up, or have essentially dried up, due to 5 consecutive years of drought.
- Other key water developments have not been properly maintained and have since quit working or have substantially reduced working ability.
- Large areas of Circle Wash seeding go unused due to very poor water distribution and topography.
- Large areas of range on the east side of Bald Mountain should not be considered suitable range due to lack of water and no livestock use.
- Mustang Spring has been dry for many years (a couple of decades) and the suitable range should be reevaluated for suitability.
- Productivity of crested wheat seedings has declined due to pinyon-juniper-sagebrush-rabbit brush invasion, age of the seeding, and overuse by livestock.
- Additional Fencing and water development may be needed to control livestock drift between units and improve livestock distribution.
- Hayden Canyon Seeding receives limited use because of the lack of water.
- Some Spring exclosures need major maintenance or re-construction.
- All of the Six Mile/Indian Garden Unit is dry and has had little to no use over the last 3 or 4 years.

-Watershed in general with particular emphasis on deeply incised stream beds and drainage bottoms need to be evaluated to assess corrective actions and projects.

-Some spring sources need to be protected by excluding livestock.

-Heavy livestock use areas are receiving heavy compaction and disturbance to soil and vegetation.

-There is encroachment of noxious weeds.

-Overall structural range improvement maintenance has been poor to unsatisfactory but has improved in 1989, 1990, and 1991.

-The Deadman area has inadequate water on average years for more than 2 weeks of livestock use. On dry years there may be no water and no use.

-Mule deer and sage grouse exist within the allotment, and they are listed as indicator species in the Forest Plan.

-How do we maintain a healthy biological diversity.

-Elk numbers are increasing on the White Pine Division and frequent sightings are made on this allotment.

-Ellison Creek has a limited fishery and potential for fishery development needs to be determined.

-Wild horses are increasing and spreading across the allotment, both in and out of the established Monte Cristo Wildhorse Territory, as well as entering the allotment from the Jakes Valley herd.

-Trailing of an adjacent allotments permittees stock up Ellison Creek on the Ellison Pasture Unit of the Tom Plain allotment has created additional impacts on that area that need to be mitigated.

-The allotment has the potential for future mineral development and a continuation of mineral exploration.

Potential Alternatives

- Alternative 1 - No Action - Continue to permit 500 cattle for the season of 6/11 to 10/10, using the modified 3-pasture deferred grazing system. Request livestock be removed when riparian or upland areas receive an acceptable use.
- Alternative 2 - Make reduction of livestock to capacity of used and suitable forage base. Use the modified 3-pasture deferred grazing system. Monitor allotment and remove livestock off areas that have received proper use. Consider calling Little Tom Plain Unit and Ellison Creek Unit a trail, and use it as a trail only.

Alternative 3 - Make reduction of livestock to capacity of used and suitable forage base. Split the allotment into 5 pastures and rest-rotate use, resting one unit each year. Monitor pasture use and remove livestock when proper use is achieved.

Alternative 4 - Remove livestock from the allotment.

All alternatives would require that historically unused areas which were classed as suitable, on original Range Environmental Analysis be reclassified as not suitable.

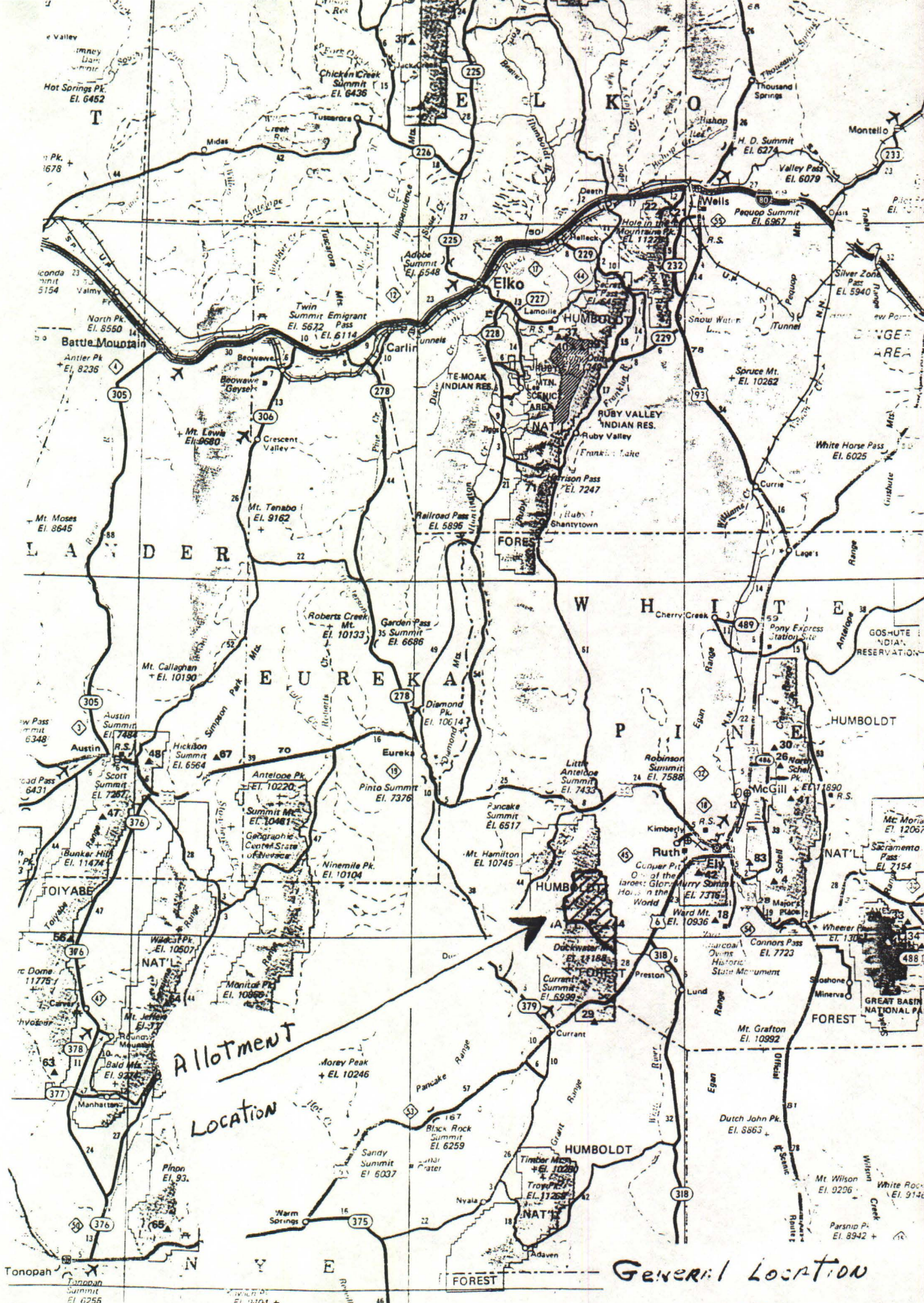
Other possible alternatives exist within the four alternatives mentioned (Alt. 1, 2, 3, and 4), all reasonable alternatives will be evaluated.

Schedule

The public is encouraged to respond in writing to this proposal, in order to address any additional issues they may have. Please address any issues you may have by January 27, 1992 to the following address:

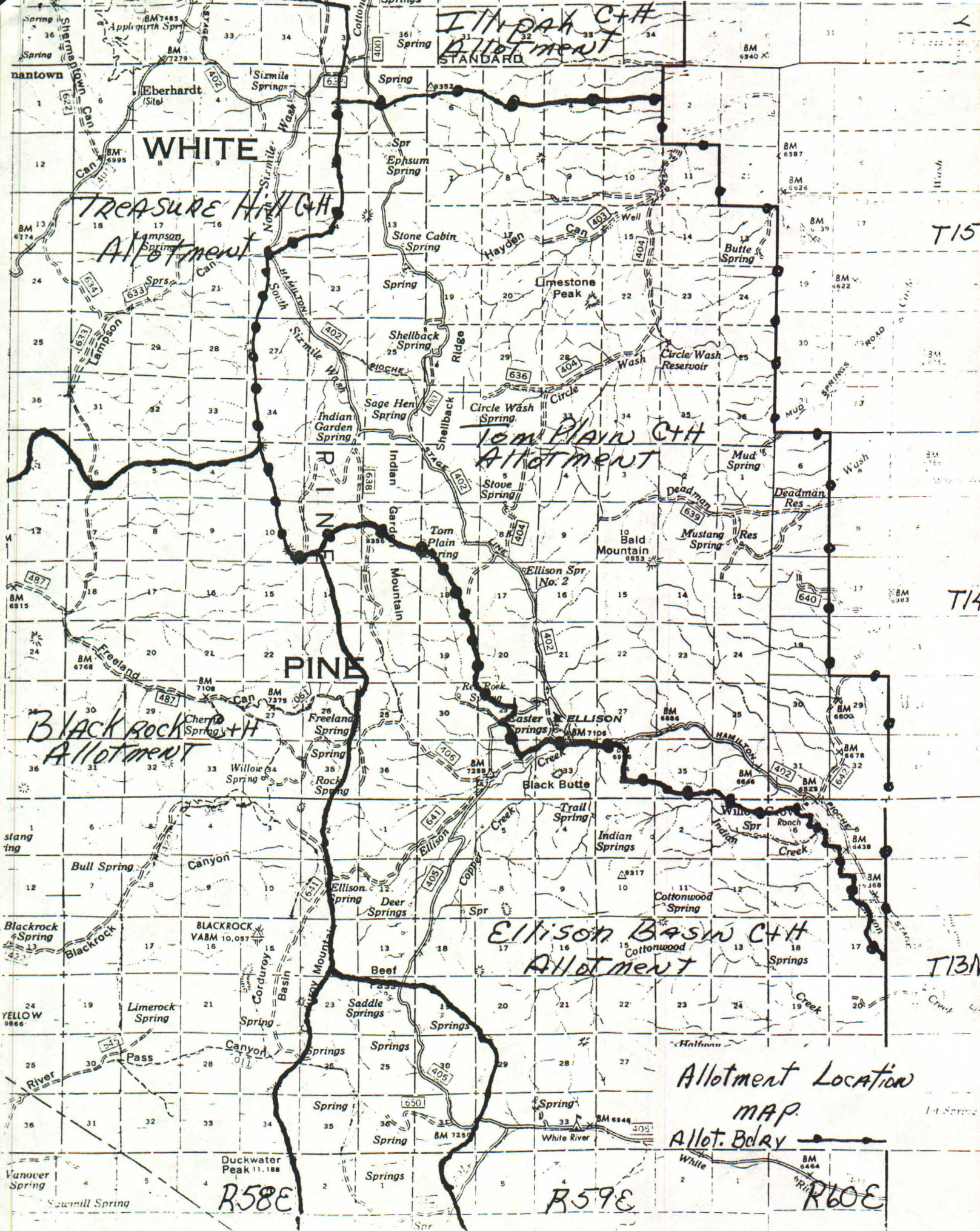
Ely Ranger District
P.O. Box 539
Ely, Nevada 89301

If you have questions or need further classification concerning this proposal please feel free to stop by the Ely Ranger District office at 350-8th Street Ely, Nevada, or call at (702)289-3031.



Allotment
Location

General Location
MAP



INDIAN C&H
ALLOTMENT
STANDARD

WHITE
TREASURE HIGH
ALLOTMENT

PINE RIVER
ALLOTMENT

BLACK ROCK C&H
ALLOTMENT

ELLISON BASIN C&H
ALLOTMENT

Allotment Location
MAP
Allot. Bdry

R58E

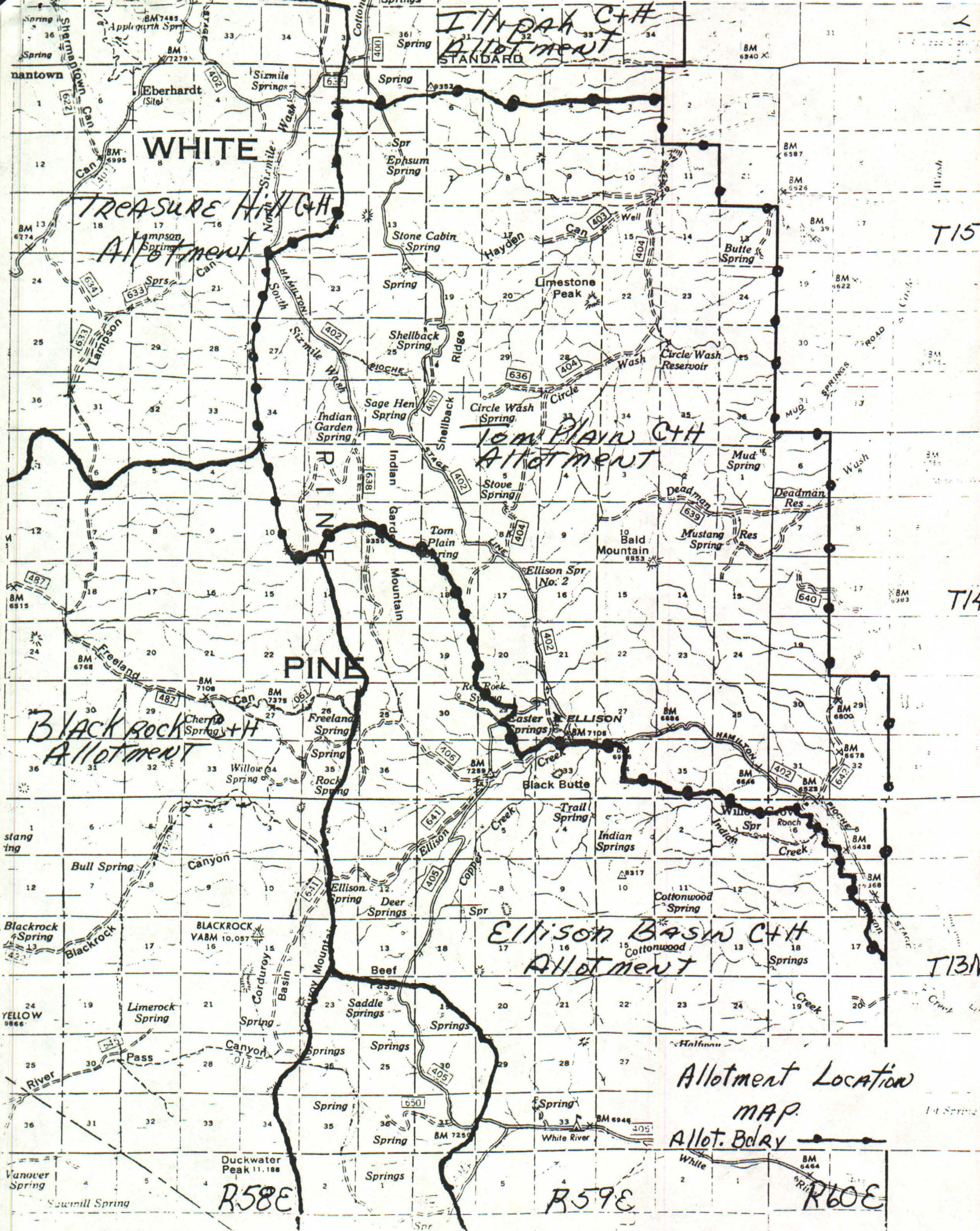
R59E

R60E

T15

T14

T13N



Scoping Document
Blackrock Cattle and Horse Allotment Management Plan
December 26, 1991

Project Description

The Ely Ranger District of the Humboldt National Forest in Region 4 of the National Forest System is proposing to prepare an updated Allotment Management Plan for the Blackrock C&H (Cattle and Horse) Allotment. This established allotment is located on the White Pine Division in White Pine and Nye County, Nevada, essentially located in T14N, R57 and 58E, and T13N, R57 and 58E, and T12N, R57 and 58E, and in T11N, R58E (See attached location maps). The allotment is approximately 69,102 acres in size with approximately 10,132 acres of suitable range for livestock grazing.

The proposal must meet the direction and Standards and Guidelines as expressed in the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved 8/19/86, and as expressed in amendment number 2 to the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved 7/31/90.

Grazing management on the Blackrock C&H Allotment is currently managed under a 2 pasture deferred rotation grazing system. A total of 244 cattle (cow/calf pairs) are permitted to graze this allotment from 6/21 to 9/30 (813 head months) annually under a Term Grazing Permit issued to two permittees. Permits were issued to Halstead-Forsgren Ranches, Inc. on 6/16/86 and to Barry K. and Norma J. Bradshaw on 6/17/91.

The Allotment Management Plan (AMP) for this allotment was approved on 4/4/72, and called for a 2-pasture deferred rotation grazing system. This grazing system has only been partially effective in resolving the resource problems associated with the grazing of livestock. Several major problems have not been solved. Among these major problems is that this allotment is overstocked; that a 102 head reduction approved in the 1972 AMP was never implemented; and that a substantial number of wildhorses are severely over using all of the lower elevation range, as well as all of Freeland Canyon, Blackrock Canyon and White Pine Pass, up to the more suitable upper summer range.

In addition to these major problems, unauthorized use by livestock and use not in compliance with the term permit occurs regularly on all of the lower range and upper range. The lack of maintenance on structural improvements has been a continuing problem on this allotment and on adjoining allotments. This lack of maintenance has resulted in livestock drift between allotments, and has allowed livestock to enter the allotment outside of the permitted grazing season.

Poor water distribution has contributed to poor livestock distribution in some instances. There is a need for the maintenance of existing water facilities and water distribution. There may also be a need for additional fencing to control livestock drift.

Three years of utilization mapping in 1988, 1989 and 1991 indicate that reduction in permitted livestock or season of use is required to bring

livestock use into compliance with forage utilization standards. These utilization standard will be established thru an Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team), using guidelines found in Amendement #2 to the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved 7/31/90.

On May 15, 1991, the Term Grazing Permit for Halstead-Forsgren Ranches, Inc. was amended to include the maximum allowable forage use in riparian and non-riparian sites as expressed in amendment #2 to the Forest Plan. The Term Grazing Permit for Barry K. and Norma J. Bradshaw issued on June 17, 1991, also included the new maximum allowable forage utilization standards.

Decision Needed

The Ely Ranger District is planning to prepare an Environmental Assessment, concerning the proposal to prepare an updated Allotment Management Plan for the Blackrock C&H Allotment.

The environmental assessment will determine the proper utilization standards to use under various alternative management strategies (Rest-rotation vs. Deferred rotation, etc.) what range improvements are needed to implement the various alternatives; what is the cost, and economic, social and environmental impacts of each alternative (viable alternatives only); and what are the goals and objectives of the updated Allotment Management Plan when it is prepared.

The environmental assessment will address all the concerns and issues identified by the National Forest Interdisciplinary Team which will evaluate this proposal and those issues raised by the public.

Issues and Concerns

To date the ID Team has identified the following Management concerns:

- The allotment is overstocked.
- Key riparian areas are receiving excessive use by livestock and head cutting is occurring on some riparian and other highly favored forage areas.
- Some key water developments are drying up, or have essentially dried up, due to 5 consecutive years of drought. Some water developments and springs need to be developed and spring sources protected.
- Other key water deveopments have not been properly maintained and have since quit working or substantially reduced working ability or were never properly installed.
- Productivity of crested wheat seedings has declined.
- Additional Fencing may be needed to control livestock drift between units and on the western Forest boundary to improve livestock distribution/use patterns.
- Some Spring exclosures need major maintenance or re-construction.

-Freeland Canyon is the only viable trail at this time for livestock to trail to or from summer grazing land.

-Portions of this allotment are within the Currant Mountain Wilderness (27,215 acres of Wilderness are within the allotment - 416 acres are considered suitable).

-How do we maintain a healthy biological diversity.

-Mule deer and sage grouse exist within the allotment, and they are listed as indicator species in the Forest Plan.

-Most of this allotment includes a small herd of Desert Bighorn Sheep.

-Elk numbers are increasing on the White Pine Division and frequent sightings are made on this allotment.

-Wild horses are increasing and spreading across the allotment, both in and out of the established Monte Cristo Wildhorse Territory. Current numbers of wild horses are substantially above recommended levels.

-The allotment has the potential for future mineral development and a continuation of mineral exploration.

Potential Alternatives

Alternative 1 - No Action - Continue to permit 244 cattle for the season of 6/21 to 9/30, using the 2-pasture deferred grazing system. Request livestock be removed when riparian or upland areas receive an acceptable use.

Alternative 2 - Make reduction of livestock to capacity of used and suitable forage base. Use the 2-pasture deferred grazing system. Monitor allotment and remove livestock off areas that have received proper use.

Alternative 3 - Make reduction of livestock to capacity of used and suitable forage base. Split the allotment into 3 pastures and rest-rotate use, resting one unit each year. Monitor pasture use and remove livestock when proper use is achieved. This alternative would require a more extensive reduction than what may be proposed under Alternative 2.

Alternative 4 - Remove livestock from the allotment and close it to future use by livestock.

All alternatives would require that historically unused areas which were classed as suitable, on original Range Environmental Analysis by reclassified as not suitable.

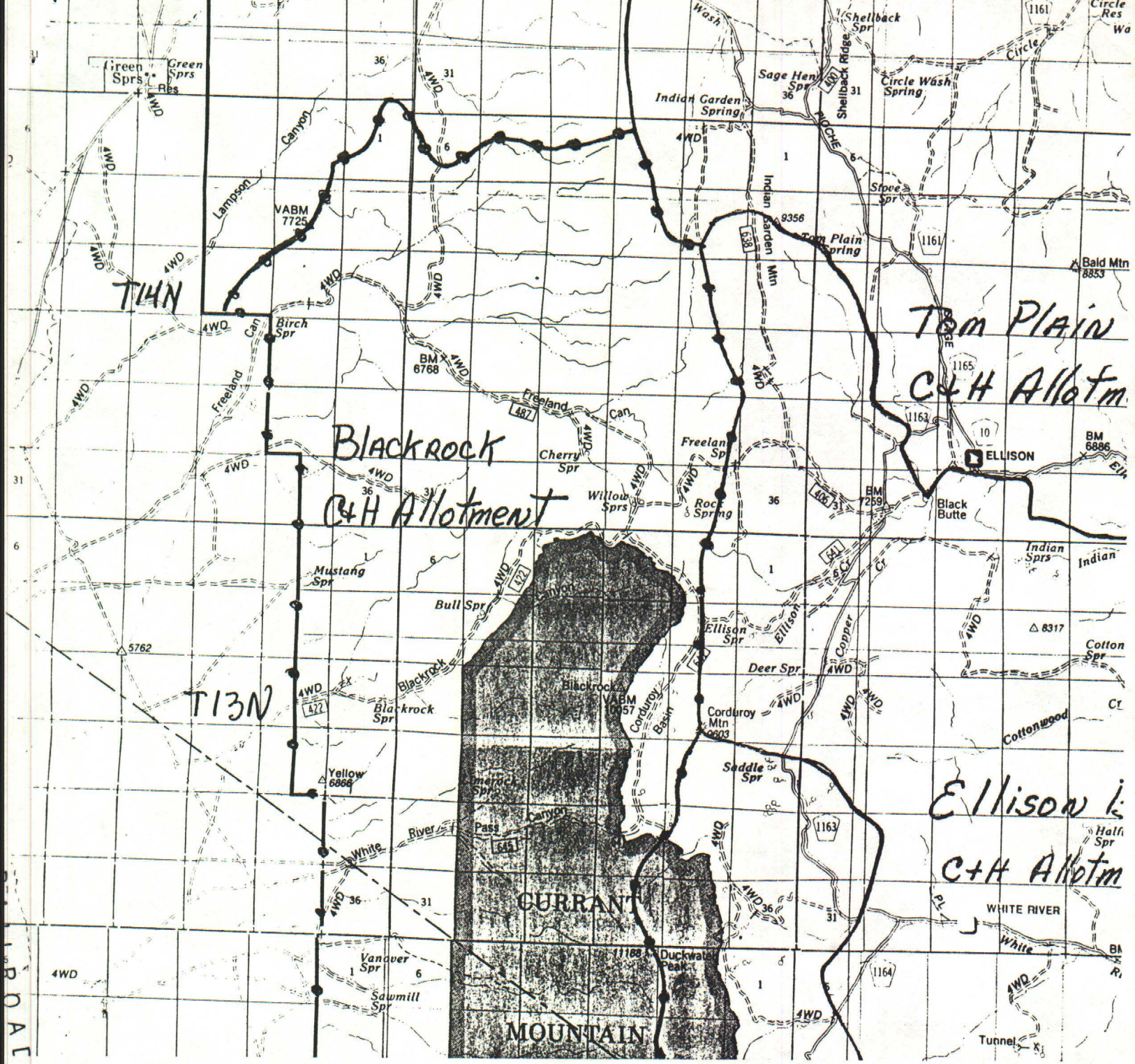
Other alternative may surface during the development of the Environmental Assessment, all reasonable alternatives will be evaluated.

Schedule

The public is encouraged to respond in writing to this proposal, in order to address any additional issues they may have. Please address any issues you may have by January 27, 1992 to the following address:

Ely Ranger District
P.O. Box 539
Ely, Nevada 89301

If you have questions or need further classification concerning this proposal please feel free to stop by the Ely Ranger District office at 350 8th Street, Ely, Nevada or call at (702)289-3031.



T14N

Blackrock
C&H Allotment

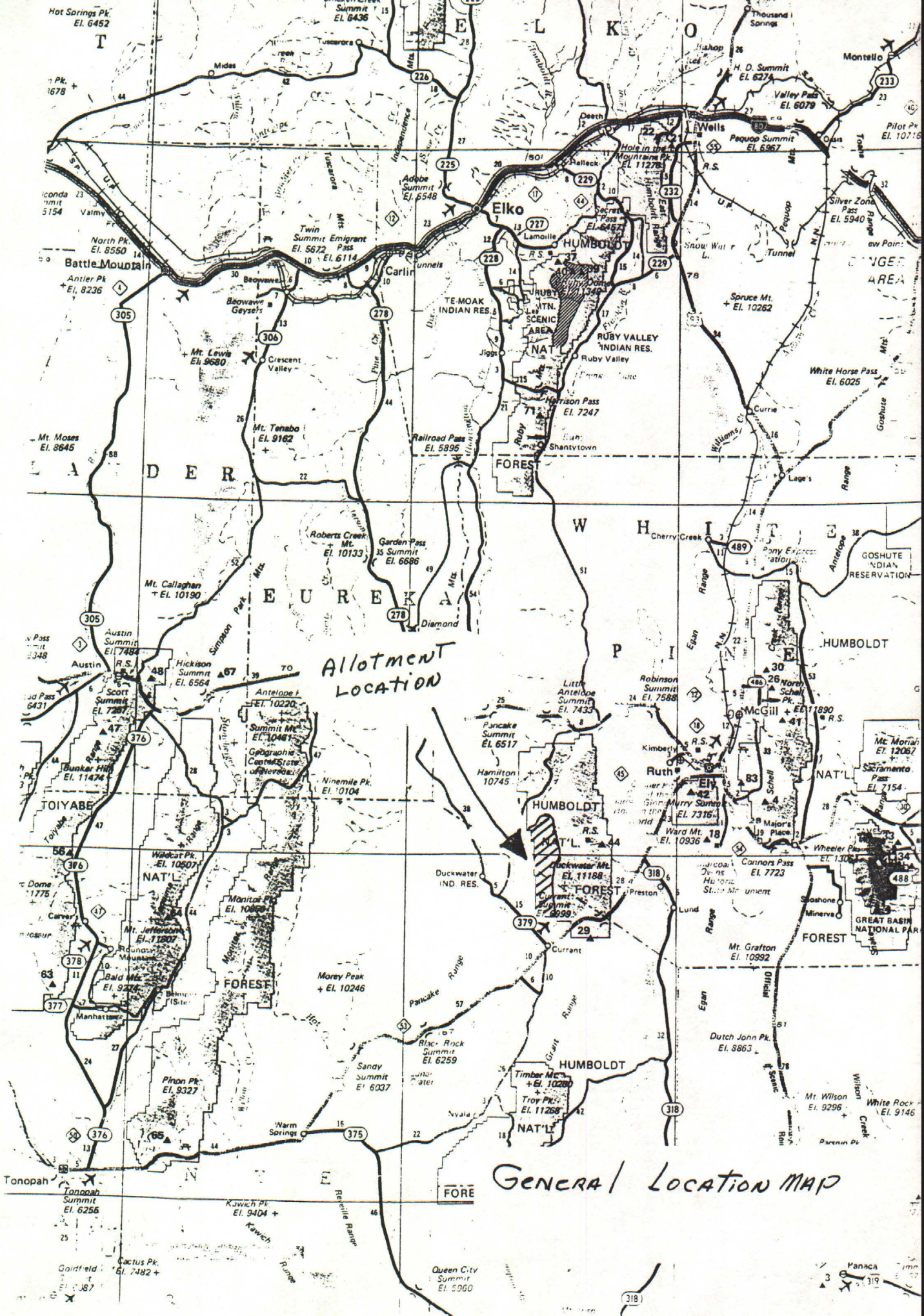
Tom Plain
C&H Allotment

T13N

ELLISON i
C&H Allotment

CURRANT
MOUNTAIN

ROAD



Allotment
Location

GENERAL LOCATION MAP

Scoping Document
Ellison Basin Cattle and Horse Allotment Management Plan
December 26, 1991

Project Description

The Ely Ranger District of the Humboldt National Forest in Region 4 of the National Forest System is proposing to prepare an updated Allotment Management Plan for the Ellison Basin C&H (Cattle and Horse) Allotment. This established allotment is located on the White Pine Division. Over 95% of the allotment is in White Pine County, Nevada. A very small percentage (less than 5%) lies in Nye County. The allotment is essentially located in T14N, R58 and 59E; T13N, R58, 59, and 60E; T12N, R59 and 60E' and T11N, R59 and 60E. (See attached location maps). The allotment is approximately 57,032 acres in size, with approximately 15,352 acre of suitable range for livestock grazing.

The proposal must meet the direction and Standards and Guidelines as expressed in the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved 8/19/86, and as expressed in Amendment Number 2 to the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved 7/31/91.

Grazing management on the Ellison Basin C&H Allotment is currently managed under a 6-pasture deferred rotation system. A total of 359 cattle (cow/calf pairs) are permitted to graze this allotment from 6/11 to 10/10 (1436 head months) annually under a Term Grazing Permit approved 2/19/90.

The allotment management plan for this allotment was approved on 5/9/75 and called for a 5-pasture rest-rotation grazing system, resting 2 pasture each year. This system was implemented and tried thru the 1979 grazing season, with only very limited success. Since 1980, a modified 6-pasture deferred rotation grazing system has been used.

A review of the approved and the subsequent modified grazing system has indicated only limited success. A continual problem with some livestock being in the wrong unit, a limited forage base, drought, poor livestock distribution, lack of consistent structural improvement maintenance and some improvements have stopped working, have complicated an already stressed forage base.

Two years of utilization mapping in 1990 and 1991 indicated that a reduction in permitted livestock or season of use is required to bring livestock use into compliance with forage utilization standards as included and amended to the permittees grazing permit on May 15, 1991. In addition, these standards will be reviewed and modified if an Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) feels further change is needed using guidelines found in Amendment #2 to the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved 7/31/90.

One more year of utilization mapping may be needed to firm up grazing capacity; however, the continuous record of excessive use per old or the new utilization standards, strongly suggest that some livestock reduction should be started as soon as possible to maintain the present season of use.

Decision Needed

The Ely Ranger District is planning to prepare an Environmental Assessment, concerning the proposal to prepare an updated Allotment Management Plan for the Ellison Basin C&H Allotment.

The environmental assessment will determine the proper utilization standards to use under various alternative management strategies (Rest-rotation vs. Deferred rotation, etc.) what range improvements are needed to implement the various alternative; what is the cost, and economic, social and environmental impacts of each alternative (viable alternatives only); and what are the goals and objectives of the updated Allotment Management Plan when it is prepared.

The environmental assessment will address all the concerns and issues identified by the National Forest Interdisciplinary Team which will evaluate this proposal and those issues raised by the public.

Issues and Concerns

To date the ID Team has identified the following Management concerns:

- The allotment is overstocked.
- Key riparian areas are receiving excessive use by livestock.
- Some key water developments are drying up, or have essentially dried up, due to 5 consecutive years of drought.
- Other key water developments have not been properly maintained and have since quit working or have been substantially reduced working ability.
- Productivity of crested wheat seedings has declined due to pinyon-juniper invasion and age of the seeding.
- Additional Fencing may be needed to control livestock drift between units and improve livestock distribution.
- Some Spring exclosures need major maintenance or re-construction.
- The Boundary fence on the very east side of the allotment may need to be re-constructed over the next several years.
- White River is an important recreation, fishery, and riparian area.
- An old Goshawk nest exists in the White River drainage. This is classed as a sensitive species.
- There is encroachment of noxious weeds into the allotment.
- How do we maintain a healthy biological diversity.
- Mule deer and sage grouse exist within the allotment, and they are listed as indicator species in the Forest Plan.

-Elk numbers are increasing on the White Pine Division and frequent sightings are made on this allotment.

-Wild horses are increasing and spreading across the allotment, both in and out of the established Monte Cristo Wildhorse Territory, as well as entering the allotment from the Jakes Valley herd.

-Trailing stock up Ellison Creek on the Ellison Pasture Unit of the Tom Plain allotment has created additional impacts on that area that need to be mitigated.

-The Ellison Basin Unit has the majority of the livestock capacity for the allotment, and may need to be split into two units.

-Red Rock Unit is short on water for good livestock distribution.

-The allotment has the potential for future mineral development and a continuation of mineral exploration.

Potential Alternative

Alternative 1 - No action - Continue to permit 359 cattle for the permitted season of 6/11 to 10/10, using the currently used 6-pasture deferred grazing system. Request livestock be removed when riparian or upland areas receive an acceptable use.

Alternative 2 - Make reduction of livestock to capacity of used and suitable forage base per Forest Plan Utilization standards.

On the north end (now 5 units) - split the Ellison Basin Unit into 2 units, creating a total of 6 units. Rest-rotate these units and manage Ellison Pasture (1 of the 6) as a riparian pasture with strict controls on livestock use.

On the south end - graze 2 units under a rest-rotation grazing system.

Under this system further reduction of livestock would be needed other than mentioned under "issues and concerns."

Alternative 3 - Make reduction of livestock to capacity of used and suitable forage base per Forest Plan utilization standards.

Same as Alternative 2 except rather than rest-rotation grazing, use a deferred rotation grazing management system.

Alternative 4 - Remove livestock from the Allotment.

All alternatives would require that historically unused areas which were classed as suitable, on original Range Environmental Analysis be reclassified as not suitable.

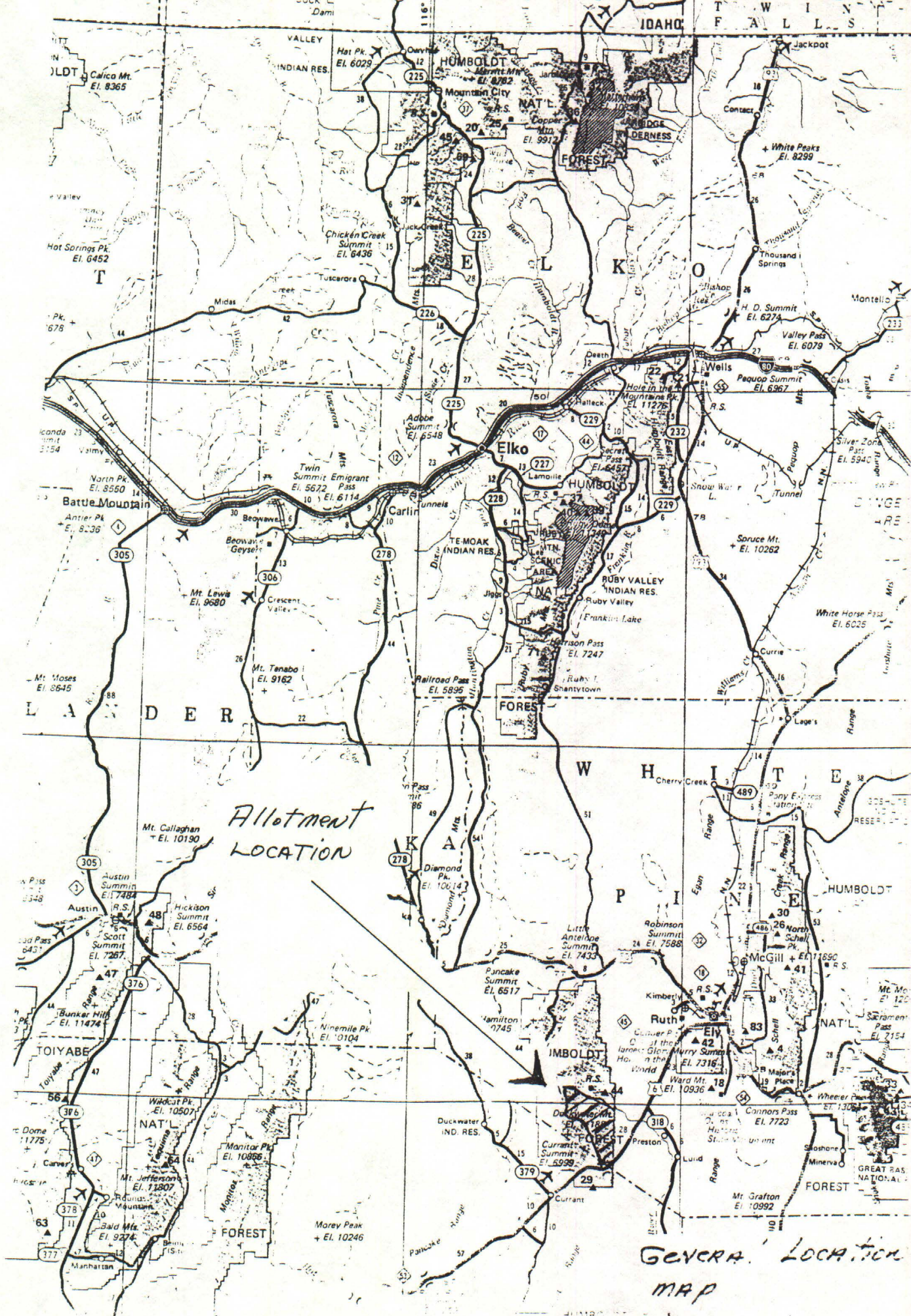
Other possible alternatives exist within the four alternatives mentioned (alt. 1, 2, 3, and 4), all reasonable will be evaluated.

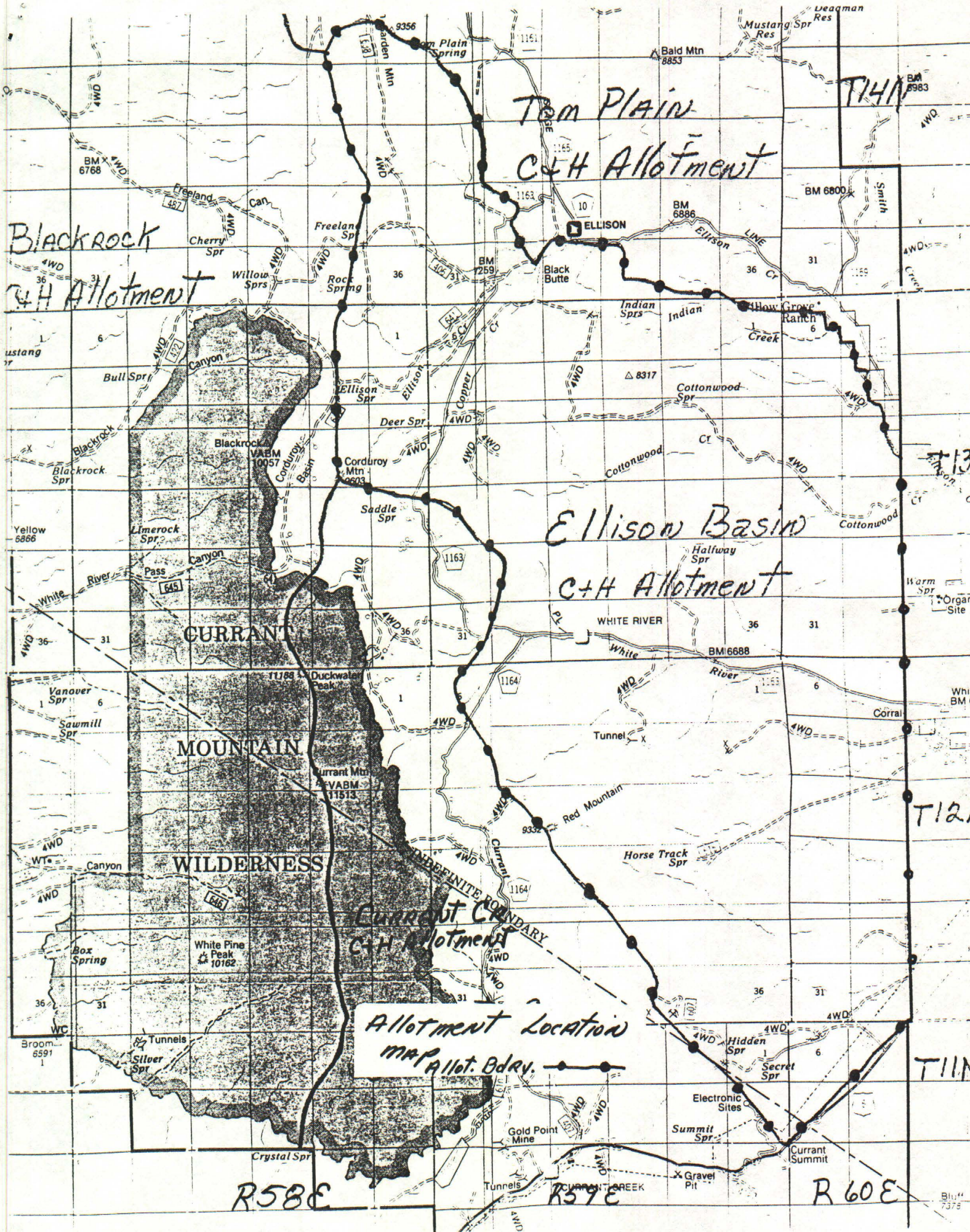
Schedule

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P.O. Box 539
Ely, Nevada 89301

If you have questions or need further classification concerning this proposal please feel free to stop by the Ely Ranger District office at 350-8th street, Ely, Nevada, or call at (702) 289-3031.





Blackrock
C+H Allotment

Tom Plain
C+H Allotment

Ellison Basin
C+H Allotment

Curren Mountain Wilderness
Curren C+H Allotment

Allotment Location
MAP Allot. Bdry.

R58E

R57E

R60E

T14N

T13N

T12N

T11N



COMMISSION FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES

Stewart Facility
Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710
(702) 687-5589

January 13, 1991

COMMISSIONERS

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Las Vegas, Nevada

Michael Kirk, D.V.M.,
Reno, Nevada *Chairman*

Paula S. Askew
Carson City, Nevada

Steven Fulstone
Smith Valley, Nevada

Dawn Lappin
Reno, Nevada

Rene P. Demeule, District Ranger
Humbolt National Forest
Ely Ranger District
P.O. Box 539
Ely, Nevada 89301

Dear Ms. Demeule,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the preparation of an EA to analyze a proposal, to prepare an Allotment Management Plan for the Tom Plain, Ellison Basin and Blackrock Battle and Horse Allotments (3 scoping documents). Allotment Evaluation Process.

We wish to be considered an interested and affected party as our concern by law is for the protection of wild horses and their habitat in Nevada.

We wish to be included in the evaluation process for any of the allotments listed that contain wild horses and/or their habitat.

Our main concern for the wild horses during the allotment evaluation process is who ate what....when and where.

Some of the information we would need to evaluate the allotment in question would be:

- 1) Actual Livestock Use
 - (a) Actual Use Reports
- 2) Season of Use by Wild Horses
- 3) Season of Use by Livestock
- 4) Seasonal Census...showing where the majority of wild horses graze during seasonal yearly movements.
- 5) Use Pattern Mapping
- 6) Location of water used by livestock and wild horses.
- 7) Map of the Territory in relationship to the allotment that shows distribution of horses, cows, and water.

In the issues and concerns you stated that wild horses are increasing and spreading and entering the allotment from Monte and Jakes Valley herds.

Do you have monitoring data that substantiates that wild horses are causing vegetation/soil damage?

do you know whether or not the movement is not the result of the drought?

do you know whether or not this is "historical" movement in times of severe climatic influences?

What are the practices within herd territory affecting their movement?

Are the issues related solely to increasing numbers?

Rene P. Demeule
January 13, 1992
Page 2

Before we could make a recommendation on grazing alternatives, we would have to know what area horses are using cccc what are their critical use areas; and what affect would change in livestock make on wild horses in their territory.

We would also need to know numbers of wild horses, and the forage capacity for their herd area.

Any specific conclusions or technical recommendations you present in any of the allotments in question should be thoroughly defined, well documented statements that support your decisions to maintain the public lands in a thriving natural ecological balance and prevent a deterioration of the range.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to participate in the evaluation process. Please keep us informed.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,



CATHERINE BARCOMB
Executive Director