

G Ely/Elko 2/25/87



United States Department of the Interior

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4700
(NV-043)

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ely District Office
Star Route 5, Box 1
Ely, Nevada 89301

FEB 25 1987

Mrs. Dawn Y. Lappin, Director
Wild Horse Organized Assistance, Inc.
P.O. Box 555
Reno, NV 89504

Dear Mrs. Lappin:

In your letter dated February 13, 1987, you expressed concern with the number of horses removed under the Cherry Creek/Goshute/Antelope Wild Horse Removal contract.

Two of the three herds gathered - Cherry Creek and Antelope - contain horses both within the Ely and Elko Districts and are jointly administered by the two BLM districts. The Goshute herd is managed exclusively by the Elko District.

The Ely District conducted a pre-gather census in June 1985 for both the Antelope and Cherry Creek herds. The number of horses to be gathered under this contract was based on this census which was conducted simultaneously with the census flown by the Elko District. The Ely and Elko District's wild horse specialists, Bob Brown and Bruce Portwood, closely coordinated their census by flying at the same time to ensure that double-counting would not occur between districts. No horses were counted on Ely's Cherry Creek herd, and 451 horses were censused on Ely's Antelope herd.

Based on the results of this census, the Ely District intended to remove 148 horses from our side of the Antelope herd and none from our side of the Cherry Creek herd. The appropriate management levels (AMLs) established for the Ely District in the Egan RMP and Schell MFP is 11 horses on Cherry Creek and 303 horses for the Antelope Herd.

The Cherry Creek removal was conducted entirely on the Elko District. A total of 48 horses were removed. A post-gather census was conducted and 16 horses were counted on the Ely District side. This is 5 horses above the AML established in the Ely RMP.

There were 107 horses removed from Ely's Antelope herd under the Tom Warr contract in September 1986. As you are aware, this contract was terminated due to problems with the contractor. Dave Catoor completed the contract this month. He removed an additional 58 horses from Ely's Antelope herd under the contract. This brought the total number removed from the Ely Antelope herd to 165. A post-gather census was conducted simultaneously with the Elko District to again prevent double-counting. There were 782 horses counted on Ely's Antelope herd which is 479 horses in excess of our AML.

The remainder of the horses removed under this contract were from Elko's Antelope and Goshute herds. The Elko District will provide you with the status of their herds based on the post-gather census conducted there.

As you can see, we left a sufficient number of horses after the contract completion. We are still above AMLs on both of our herd areas.

We assume that the large discrepancy in our Antelope herd 1985 census and 1987 census is due to several factors:

1. The Antelope herd horses can move freely between Utah and Nevada along the east herd boundary. The stateline is not fenced. The Utah side of the line is not a herd area. We do not census east of the stateline and it is assumed that large number of horses may have been in Utah during our 1985 census, but had moved into the Antelope herd area during our 1987 census.
2. Both 1985 and 1986 were mild winters in the area, and we feel that the colt crop was up and winter death losses were minimal.
3. The horses were more visible during the 1987 winter count by being down lower in the open valleys. More horses were shaded up (pinyon-juniper cover) during the 1985 summer census and were missed.
4. More time was spent on the census in 1987 (approximately 12 hours) than on the 1985 census (approximately 8.5 hours).

Hopefully, the above information answers all of your concerns. But, if you need any further information please let us know and we will be glad to assist you.

Sincerely,



Kenneth G. Walker
District Manager

cc: Nevada State Director (NV-931.3)
Elko District Office