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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Elko Field Office
3900 East Idaho Street
Elko, Nevada 89801-4611
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>



In Reply Refer To:
4130 (NV-012)

JAN 10 2000

H & R Livestock
c/o Kay Richins
P.O. Box 302
Henefer, UT 84033

LEPPY HILLS ALLOTMENT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REGARDING PROPOSED LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT FOLLOWING THE PILOT FIRE

Dear Mr. Richins:

On July 17, 1999, a lightning caused wildfire started what became the Pilot Fire. The fire burned 3,200 acres in the Leppy Hills Allotment (refer to the attached map). H&R Livestock is the sole livestock permittee on the Leppy Hills Allotment.

Based on vegetation data available prior to the burn and field observations soon after the fire had been controlled, it has been determined that the plant communities within the lower portion of the burn had a heavy cheatgrass component and a portion of the plant communities in the upper part of the burn lacked sufficient numbers of perennial plants to let the area recover without the invasion and competition of cheatgrass.

Fire rehabilitation projects associated with the Pilot Fire include aerially seeding selected areas within the upper portion of the Pilot burn in the Leppy Hills Allotment. Approximately 200 acres on the upper portion of the burn would be aerially seeded to minimize the spread of cheatgrass in the Pilot burn by establishing sufficient ground cover of perennial species. Canby bluegrass, shadscale, and kochia would be aerially seeded at a rate of 7.25 pure live seed lbs per acre.

Interim grazing management changes for the Leppy Hills Allotment will be necessary to protect the burned area and to ensure the attainment of multiple use objectives on the unburned areas within the allotment. The following grazing management actions are being proposed in consultation with the livestock permittee:

1. Interim Grazing Management: Leppy Hills Allotment - The current season of use on the Leppy Hills Allotment is from November 1 to April 30 annually. The burned area within the Leppy Hills Allotment would be closed to livestock grazing until November 1, 2001. From November 1, 2001 to April 30, 2003 the burned area would only be grazed during the dormant season (Nov. 1 to March 1).

Annual grazing would continue to be authorized in the lower portion of the burned area after March 1 to help control cheatgrass invasion (see attached map). The lower portion of the burned area is not proposed to be aerially seeded.

The permitted use on the Leppy Hills Allotment would be reduced from 3,807 AUMs to 3,547 AUMs. This reduction of 260 AUMs is based on the authorized AUMs allocated to the Leppy Hills Allotment which would be affected by this closure. A total of 260 AUMs would be placed in suspension for the duration of the closure.

2. Monitoring - Monitoring study sites would be selected within the burned area to monitor the reestablishment of perennial species. The burned area would be monitored for progress toward successful recovery and establishment of perennial vegetation in both seeded and unseeded areas.


Successful restoration of perennial herbaceous species would be assessed by comparing the production at the selected monitoring study area with the production of herbaceous perennial species on nearby unburned rangeland. **The minimum criteria for opening the burn to livestock grazing in addition to the mandatory closure would be that production of perennial species equals or exceeds production on nearby unburned range within the same range site.** If the burned areas minimum criteria is not met, the burned area would be closed for a maximum of 3 years.

The permittee, interested public and State agencies are being informed that prior to the start of the next grazing season, I plan on issuing a Notice of Closure to livestock grazing for portions of the Leppy Hills Allotment that were burned in the Pilot fire. This closure would continue in effect until the conditions outlined above are met. Furthermore, this closure would be issued as a final decision effective upon issuance pursuant to Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subparts 4110.3-2(a), 4110.3-3(b) and 4160.3(f).

This letter is being sent for your review and comment. If you wish to provide comments relating to this action, please return your comments to the Elko Field Office at 3900 E. Idaho St., Elko, NV 89801 on or before January 22, 2000.

If you have any questions please contact Bruce Thompson, Rangeland Management Specialist, at (775) 753-0200.

Sincerely,

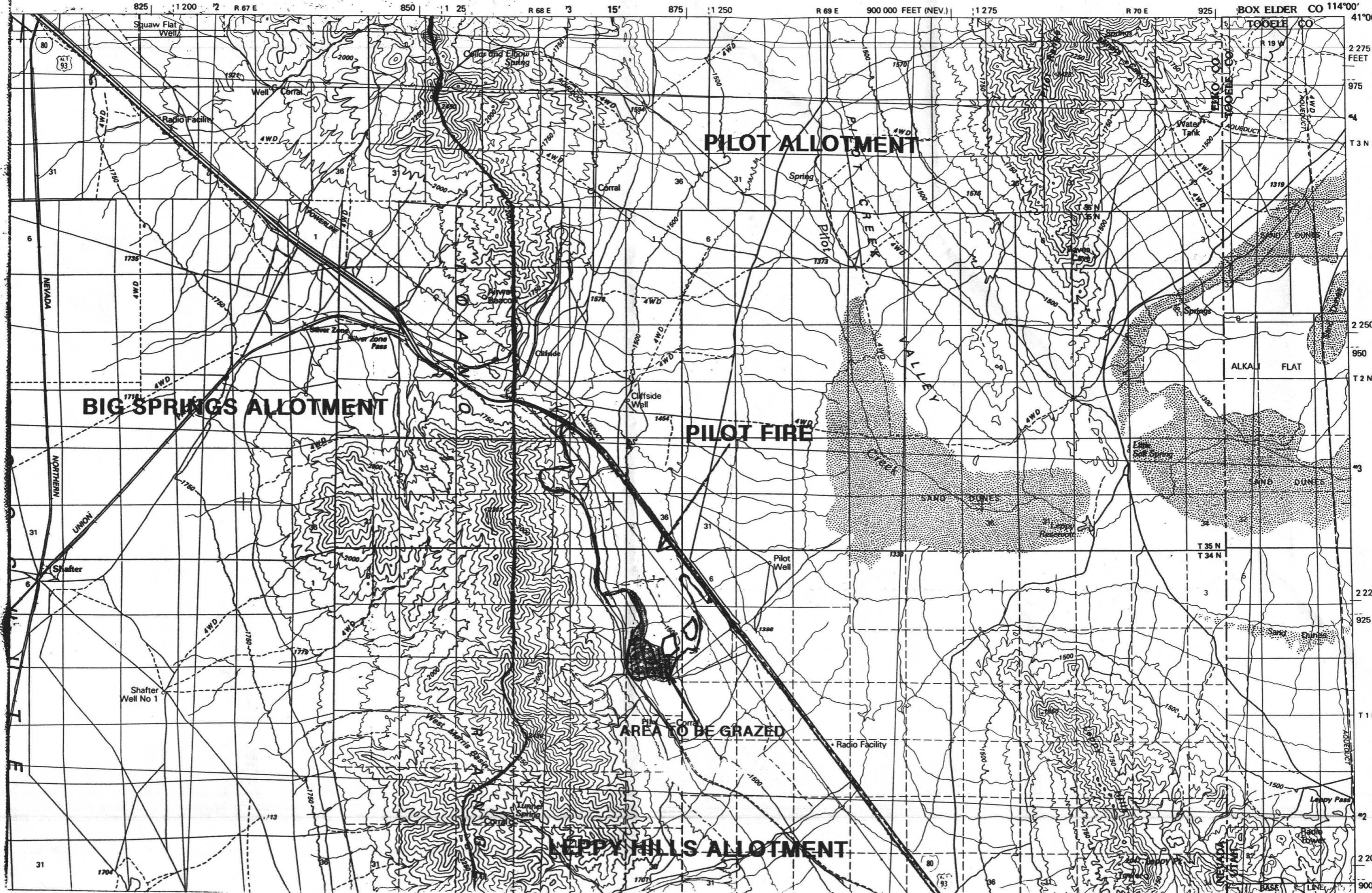


CLINTON R. OKE
Assistant Field Manager
Renewable Resources

Enclosure: As stated

cc: Nevada Division of Wildlife

Nevada Cattlemen's Association
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Resource Concepts Inc.
Elko Board of County Commissioners
Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
Wild Horse Organized Assistance
Commission-Preservation of Wild Horses
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Paul Bottari
HTT Resource Advisors



BIG SPRINGS ALLOTMENT

PILOT ALLOTMENT

PILOT FIRE

AREA TO BE GRAZED

NEPPY HILLS ALLOTMENT