



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Elko Field Office  
3900 East Idaho Street  
Elko, Nevada 89801-0611  
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>

In Reply Refer To:  
4130 (NV-012)  
FEB 23 2001

Parasol Ranching LLC  
c/o Larry Schutte  
HCF 67, Box 2039 Oasis  
Wells, NV 89835

*Goslute*

Dear Mr. Schutte:

Attached is a copy of the draft Agreement for Fire Closure and Management on the Big Springs Allotment as a result of the 2000 wildfire within the East Pequop Bench pasture. Please review this draft agreement and provide any comments no later than March 6, 2001.

A copy of this letter and draft agreement will be sent to anyone who has expressed an interest in the Big Springs Allotment. The interested public is also requested to provide any comments no later than March 6, 2001. Comments can be sent to the Elko Field Office at the above address or by FAX (775-753-0255).

If you have any questions please contact Cedric Selby, Rangeland Management Specialist for the Big Springs Allotment, at (775) 753-0200.

Sincerely,

CLINTON R. OKE, Assistant Field Manager  
for Renewable Resources

Enclosures: As stated above

cc: Elko County Commissioners  
Commission - Preservation of Wild Horses  
Friends of Nevada Wilderness

HTT Resource Advisors  
Nevada Cattlemen's Association  
Resource Concepts, Inc.  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Wild Horse Organized Assistance  
Charles and John Young



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Elko Field Office  
3900 East Idaho Street  
Elko, Nevada 89801-4611  
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In Reply Refer To:  
4130 (NV 012)

### **AGREEMENT FOR FIRE CLOSURE AND MANAGEMENT ON THE BIG SPRINGS ALLOTMENT**

The Big Springs Allotment is grazed by two permittees: Parasol Ranching LLC and Egbert Livestock LLC. Parasol Ranching LLC is authorized to graze within the East Big Springs Grazing Area and is the only permittee affected by the fire. This agreement is made between the Bureau of Land Management and Parasol Ranching LLC. This agreement is entered into in accordance with 43 CFR § 4110.3-3. The areas which will be closed are also included in the attached Notice of Closure.

#### **Background**

During mid July, 2000, the Big Springs Fire burned approximately 1,210 acres of public land and 410 acres of private land within the East Pequop Bench pasture of the Big Springs Allotment. (See attached maps for the location of this fire and allotment.) In order to successfully reestablish perennial vegetation and restore plant vigor and seed production, it is necessary that some of the burned and re-seeded areas within the Big Springs Fire be rested from livestock grazing during the peak growing season.

The Big Springs wildfire burned through range sites dominated by big sage brush with a cheatgrass understory in the East Pequop Bench pasture within the East Big Springs grazing area. As described in the Big Springs Allotment evaluation (September 2000) the Big Springs Allotment is divided down the crest-line of the Pequop Mountains to create two separate grazing areas: East Big Springs and West Big Springs. There are no wild horse herd management areas within the East Pequop pasture of the Big Springs Allotment. Parasol Ranching LLC holds the grazing privileges in the east and is the permittee affected by the fire.

#### **Planned or Completed Rehabilitation**

- 1. Lower Fan Drill Seeding.** Approximately 73 acres of public land in the eastern portion of the burned area were drill seeded with a seed mixture consisting of Siberian wheatgrass and Russian wildrye in December, 2000. This area was also aerially seeded with forage kochia in February, 2001.
- 2. Middle Fan Drill and Aerial Seeding.** Approximately 744 acres of public land in the East Pequop Bench pasture were drill seeded with Siberian wheatgrass in December, 2000. This area was also aerially seeded with forage kochia in February, 2001.

3. **Upper Fan Drill and Aerial Seeding.** Approximately 394 acres in the East Pequop Bench pasture were drill seeded with a seed mixture consisting of Bluebunch wheatgrass and Indian ricegrass in December, 2000. This area was also aerielly seeded with forage kochia in February, 2001.
4. **East Pequop Bench Seeding Protection Fence.** Construct approximately 3.4 miles of fence around the southern portion of the burned area to protect the burned and re-seeded areas from livestock grazing. It is proposed that the fence be constructed using methods that will protect young antelope, sage grouse and other low flying birds from collisions with the wire.
5. **Wildlife Aerial Seed Mixtures.**
  - a. **Upper Fan.** The upper fan portion of the Big Springs fire was aerielly seeded with a mixture of Basin big sagebrush, Wyoming big sagebrush, Mountain big sagebrush, and Western yarrow in February, 2001.
  - b. **Middle Fan.** The middle fan portion of the Big Springs fire was aerielly seeded with a mixture of Basin big sagebrush, Wyoming big sagebrush, and Western yarrow in February, 2001.

Perennial herbaceous seed planted in the burned areas in the Upper, Middle, and Lower Fan drill seedings (described above) will also provide benefits for big game. In addition, on-going rehabilitation plans include planting a total of 12,000 bareroot bitterbrush seedlings on 30 acres within the Upper Fan (west side) portion of the Big Springs fire during the spring of 2002 and spring of 2003.

### **Interim Management and Closures**

**Big Springs Allotment - East Pequop Bench Pasture.** Parasol Ranching LLC's total active permitted use within the East Pequop Bench pasture of the Big Springs Allotment is 2424 AUMs. Depending on monitoring, the burned area of the East Pequop Bench pasture within the East Big Springs grazing area will be closed to livestock grazing for at least two growing seasons beginning May 15, 2001.

If construction of the East Pequop Bench Seeding Protection Fence is completed before the beginning of the 2002 grazing season, livestock grazing will be authorized to continue in the remainder of the East Pequop Bench pasture during the 2002 grazing season. The only area closed to grazing will be that portion of the East Pequop Bench pasture north of the protection fence.

**Temporary Reduction of Parasol Ranching's Active Use.** The active permitted grazing use for Parasol Ranching LLC will be temporarily reduced and the AUMs associated with the closed areas placed in suspension for the 2001 and 2002 grazing seasons as applicable. Grazing may be authorized within the burned and re-seeded area of the East Pequop Bench

pasture prior to May 15, 2001 (the effective date of closure). If monitoring indicates that the establishment criteria have been met after the second growing season, grazing in the closed portion of the East Pequop Bench pasture may be authorized to resume after August 15, 2002.

AUMs to be suspended from Parasol Ranching LLC's active permitted grazing use are displayed below:

Fire	Public Acres Burned	AUMs to be Suspended in 2001	AUMs to be Suspended in 2002
<b>Big Springs Fire</b>			
Big Springs Allotment	1,210	994 <sup>1</sup>	0 - 994 <sup>2</sup>
<sup>1</sup> AUMS associated with the burned area within the E. Pequop Bench pasture. <sup>2</sup> Based on (a) reducing permitted use by the number of AUMS associated with the burned and fenced area of the E. Pequop pasture, and (b) authorizing grazing after August 15, 2002 depending on monitoring.			

### Monitoring

Following the 2002 growing season, the burned and re-seeded areas within the Big Springs Allotment will be monitored to determine if additional growing season rest or early grazing is needed to ensure successful reestablishment of seeded perennial vegetation.

It has been determined in several local planting trials that bitterbrush seedlings have a 95% chance of survival. The main environmental variable is weather and effective precipitation. Due to the uncertainties associated with environmental factors, opening burned areas to livestock grazing is not contingent upon meeting a specific objective for bitterbrush establishment. Once planted seedlings have established, bitterbrush needs would be considered on an annual basis to ensure wildlife habitat objectives are met.

Opening livestock grazing on the burned areas is not contingent upon sagebrush germination or establishment criteria. Sagebrush is not normally a plant grazed by livestock and success of establishment will depend on other environmental factors.

### Establishment Criteria

- **Establishment criterion for the Lower Fan Drill Seeding is:** three to five seeded perennial herbaceous plants per square meter firmly rooted in the soil.
- **Establishment criteria for the Middle Fan Drill and Aerial Seeding is:** three to five seeded perennial herbaceous plants per square meter rooted firmly in the soil and one seeded kochia plant per square meter firmly rooted in the soil.
- **Establishment criteria for the Upper Fan Drill and Aerial Seeding is:** three to five

seeded perennial herbaceous plants per square meter rooted firmly in the soil and one seeded kochia plant per square meter firmly rooted in the soil.

If the establishment criteria are not met by the end of the second growing season of the closure, these burned and re-seeded areas will be evaluated for the potential to meet the criteria. Some of the factors to be considered in this evaluation will be: amount of total precipitation, amount of growing season precipitation, how close to meeting the establishment criteria the seeding is at the end of the first and second growing seasons, what benefits, if any, an additional growing season of rest might provide, etc. Other factors to be considered in the evaluation of the establishment of the drill and aerial seedings in addition to those listed above will include: variability of aerial seed application, seed loss/dispersal due to wind and water erosion, seed loss due to birds and rodents, patchiness of aerial seeding establishment due to poor soils on ridge tops and steep side slopes.

If it is determined that additional rest is needed to provide for seeding establishment, this agreement could:

- 1.) Be extended in time by all parties or,
- 2.) If the parties do not agree, the BLM would issue a decision to provide for additional rest and seeding establishment. This decision would be in Full Force and Effect and provide the opportunity to file an appeal and request for stay.

As per **this** agreement the seeded and unseeded burned areas within the Big Springs Allotment will be closed for no longer than a total of two growing seasons (no longer than August 15, 2002). Parasol Ranching LLC will be notified when the closed portions of the Big Springs Allotment will be open to livestock grazing.

The agreed upon changes identified above are binding on any successor interest or future transferees with such modifications as approved or required by the authorized officer. The term of this agreement is from May 15, 2001 to August 15, 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parasol Ranching LLC, Livestock Grazing Permittee,  
Big Springs Allotment

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
CLINTON R. OKE, Assistant Field Manager  
Renewable Resources, Elko Field Office

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## NOTICE OF CLOSURE TO LIVESTOCK GRAZING USE

For protection of the soil and reestablishment of perennial vegetation on the public lands in the Big Springs Allotment, I hereby exclude grazing by any kind of livestock within the burned portions of the following:

- **Lower Fan Drill Seeding** within the Big Springs Allotment, beginning May 15, 2001.
- **Middle Fan Drill and Aerial Seeding** within the Big Springs Allotment, beginning May 15, 2001.
- **Upper Fan Drill and Aerial Seeding** within the Big Springs Allotment, beginning May 15, 2001.

The Big Springs Allotment is located in Elko County, NV, within the Bureau of Land Management's Elko Field Office area of administration.

This closure is effective May 15, 2001, and will remain in effect until the establishment criteria have been met, but no longer than August 15, 2002.

### Establishment criteria are:

- **For the Lower Fan Drill Seeding is:** three to five seeded herbaceous plants per square meter firmly rooted in the soil.
- **For the Middle Fan Drill and Aerial Seeding is:** three to five seeded herbaceous plants per square meter rooted firmly in the soil and one seeded kochia plant per square meter firmly rooted in the soil.
- **For the Upper Fan Drill and Aerial Seeding is:** three to five seeded herbaceous plants per square meter rooted firmly in the soil and one seeded kochia plant per square meter firmly rooted in the soil.

If the establishment criteria are not met by the end of the second growing season of the closure, these burned and re-seeded areas will be evaluated for the potential to meet the criteria. Some of the factors to be considered in this evaluation will be: amount of total precipitation, amount of growing season precipitation, how close to meeting the establishment criteria the seeding is at the end of the first and second growing seasons, what benefits, if any, an additional growing season of rest might provide, etc. Other factors to be considered in the evaluation of the establishment of the East Pequop Bench pasture seedings in addition to those listed above will include: variability of aerial seed application, seed loss/dispersal due to wind and water erosion, seed loss due to birds and rodents, patchiness of aerial seeding establishment due to poor soils on ridge tops and steep side slopes. If it is determined that further rest is needed to provide for seeding establishment, a second closure notice will be issued.

As per **this** notice of closure, the burned and seeded areas within the Big Springs Allotment will be closed for no longer than a total of two growing seasons (no longer than August 15, 2002).

This closure is issued as a final decision, in full force and effect pursuant to Title 43, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 4110.3-3(b) and 4160.3(f). Parasol Ranching LLC will be notified of the date that the closed portions of the Big Springs Allotment will be open for grazing.

All owners of livestock affected by this closure will refrain from grazing livestock on the affected lands and will continue to keep all livestock off the above lands during the designated time period. During this time period the Assistant Field Manager, Renewable Resources, Bureau of Land Management, Elko District, or his authorized representative, may proceed to impound, remove and dispose of any livestock found in violation of this notice pursuant to 43 CFR § 4150.4

Detailed maps of the Big Springs Allotment and the areas affected by this closure are available at the Elko Field Office, Elko, Nevada.

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CLINTON R. OKE, Assistant Field Manager  
Renewable Resources

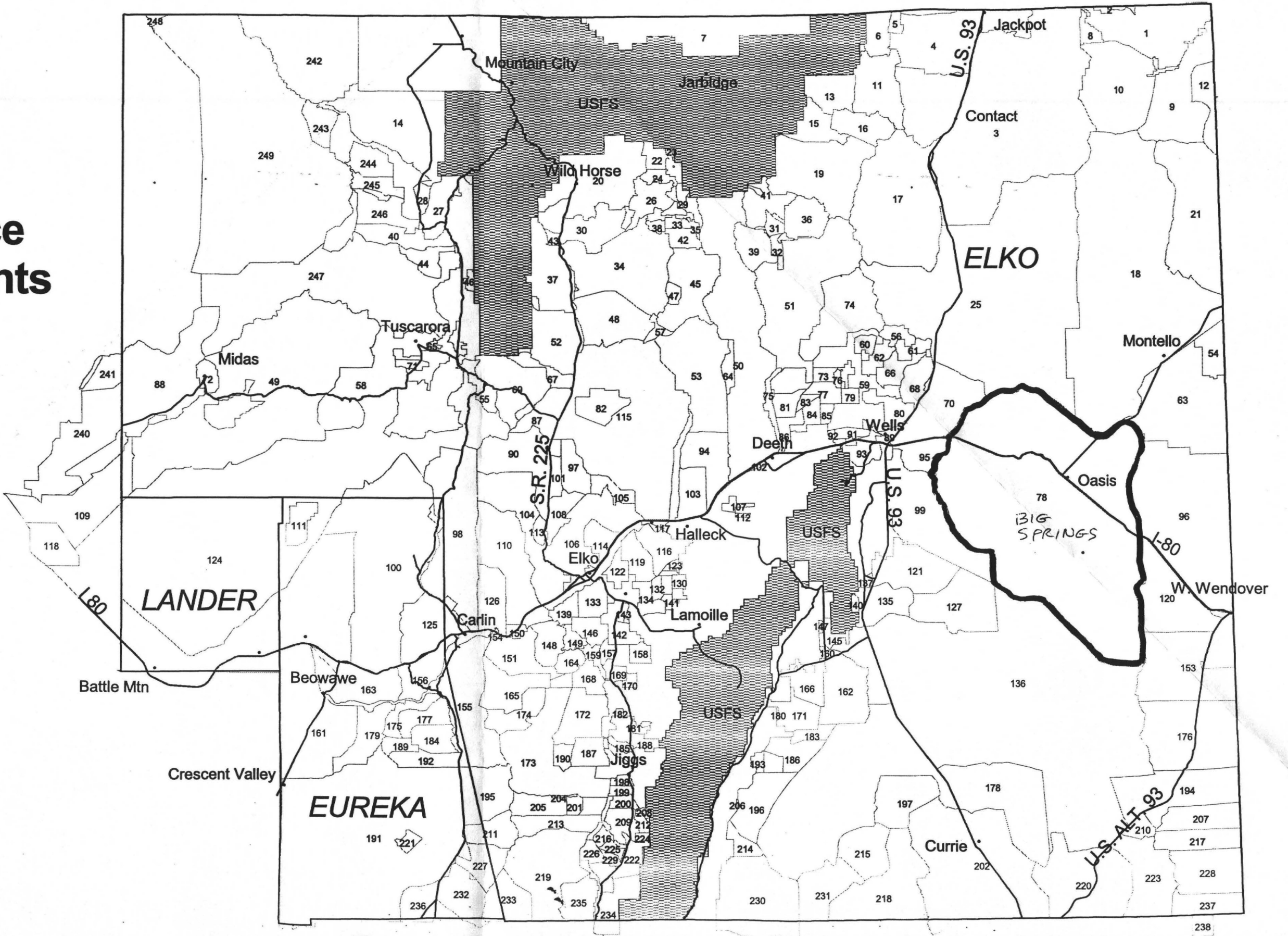
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Date



# Elko Field Office Grazing Allotments

-  Allotment Boundaries
-  Major Roads
-  Cities/Towns
-  USFS Lands
-  County Boundaries

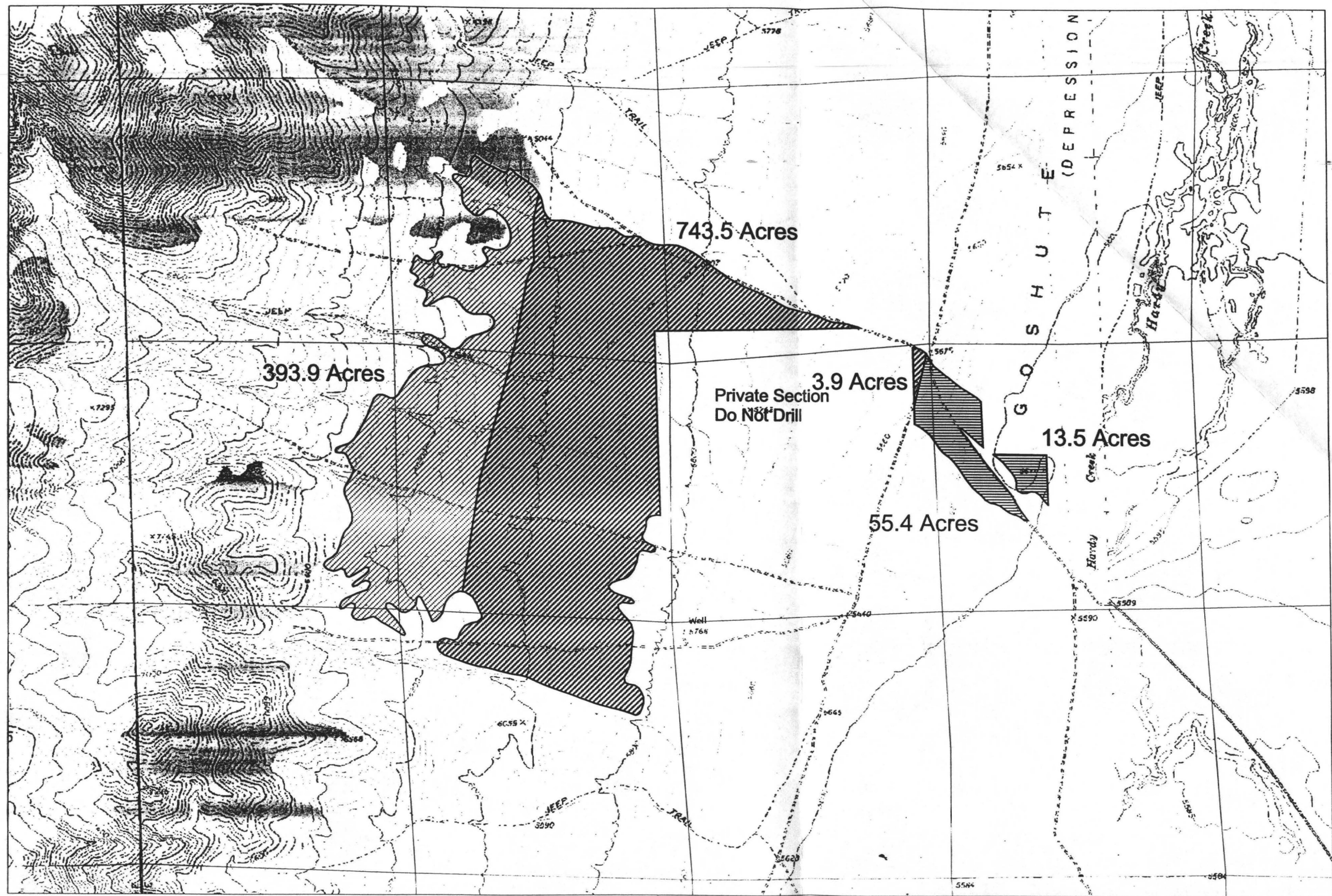


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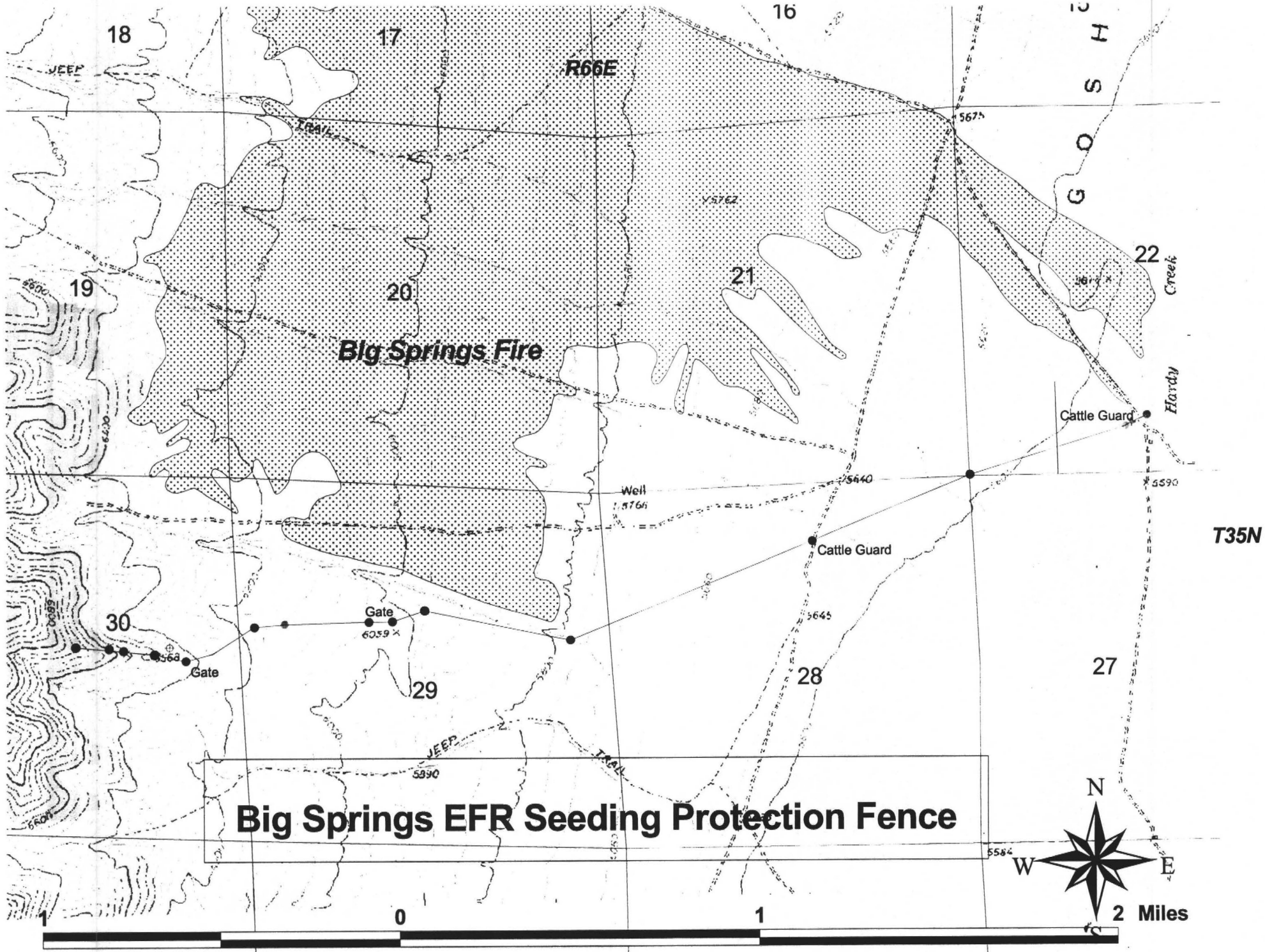




**Big Springs  
Drill Seeding Area's**



- Sect
- Baer-treat-py
- Drill Low Fan
- Drill MF & Aerial WL
- Drill Nat/Aerial CWL



**Big Springs Fire**

**Big Springs EFR Seeding Protection Fence**

T35N

Goshute Creek  
Hardy Creek

Cattle Guard

Cattle Guard

Gate

Gate

Well

30

29

28

27

21

20

17

18

16

R66E

G O S H U T E

