



COMMISSION FOR THE  
PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES

1105 Terminal Way  
Suite 209  
Reno, Nevada 89502  
(702) 688-2626

December 5, 1996

Helen Hankins, District Manager  
BLM - Elko District Office  
Box 831  
3900 E. Idaho St.  
Elko, Nevada 89801

RE: Rock Creek Allotment Evaluation and Gather

Dear Helen,

I am writing again to express my concern that the Rock Creek Allotment Evaluation has not been issued. BLM (yourself, Tom Pogacnik, and Kathy McKinstry), Harvey Barnes and Besty McFarland from the Nevada Cattlemens Association, Deloyd Satterthwaite, WHOA, and the Commission all met on the situation on the Rock Creek Allotment around February/March 1996. Both yourselves and Mr. Satterthwaite expressed your concerns with historical waters that had dried up and the lack of forage. With your presentation of the allotment situation and the potential emergency for the horses we agreed to an interim gather for the safety of the animals.

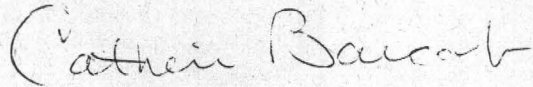
We were assured that an allotment evaluation was in the pipeline and we understood it would be out in early summer. When we wrote you last summer about the evaluation you informed me at the Northeastern Great Basin RAC meeting that the AE was not scheduled for summer but early fall. We are now within a few weeks of 1997, almost 10 months from when we first met on this, a horse gather was conducted in June 96, and we still have no allotment evaluation.

Many months have passed and we are equally as concerned as when we agreed to the interim gather. No allotment evaluation has been completed and no long term planning initiated on an allotment that was presented to us as being "in trouble." The only event that has occurred is removal of horses. Please advise us as to the

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time frame for the Rock Creek Allotment Evaluation, Proposed and Final Decisions. We look forward to working with you for responsible, collaborative, management of this area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Barcomb".

CATHERINE BARCOMB  
Executive Director

cc: Ann Morgan  
Deloyd Satterthwaite





# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
ELKO FIELD OFFICE  
3900 E. IDAHO STREET  
ELKO, NEVADA 89801

*Excuses  
Delays*

*Forget!*

*12/13/96*

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
4400.4/4710

Commission for the Preservation  
of Wild Horses  
1105 Terminal Way, Suite 209  
Reno, NV 89502

DEC 13 1996

Dear Ms. Barcomb:

I would like to respond to your letter of December 5, 1996 regarding the progress and status of the Rock Creek Allotment Evaluation. As discussed in the meeting we had in Elko on May 3, 1996, we did not anticipate completion of the allotment evaluation and issuance of a multiple use decision for Rock Creek prior to the proposed gather. However, we did have an approved plan to remove wild horses from the Mahogany Springs Fire area. This plan, including closure of the area to livestock and wild horses, had already been addressed through an emergency fire rehabilitation plan, environmental assessment, and gather plan that were reviewed by the public in 1994. We also discussed monitoring data, current drought conditions, and the need to reduce wild horse numbers to prevent death loss. This gather was not developed to meet a "draft" AML but to prevent wild horses dying and to prevent significant resource damage.

We have collected additional monitoring data and continued to work on the Rock Creek Allotment Evaluation through the summer and fall, in spite of a devastating fire season and the corresponding workload. The rangeland management specialist has devoted an enormous amount of time and effort to this document while trying not to neglect her other allotments and responsibilities. We will issue the allotment evaluation as soon as possible, probably in January 1997. Even with completion of the allotment evaluation, appropriate management level for wild horses would not be established until formal consultation with U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service is completed and a multiple use decision is issued. As you know, formal consultation may take several months.

Following the public review and comment period of the allotment evaluation, we will enter into formal consultation with the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Following our submittal of a Biological Assessment to U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, they have 135 days to respond with a Biological Opinion. A proposed multiple use decision will be issued after we receive the Biological Opinion. Based on reasonable time frames and absent the need for major changes

as identified through the review process, a proposed decision for Rock Creek (Spanish Ranch and Squaw Valley Allotments) could be issued in late September 1997. However, these time frames may vary depending on the length of time requested by the public for review of the allotment evaluation, the amount of comments and suggestions for changes due to public review, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service's response and possible need for additional time or information, and the need for additional coordination, consultation, and cooperation with the interested public.

As discussed earlier with you, the permittee has made changes in management, including reductions of cattle use in the herd area to eliminate or reduce competition for water during the past drought. The Bureau continued to monitor the water and forage resources and potential impacts to horses during this past summer, as well as conduct the gather completed in July 1996.

We share your interest in properly managing the resources on these allotments and are continuing our evaluation process to ensure making the best decisions possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Hankins".

HELEN HANKINS  
District Manager