

8-28-92

ELY R.D. - HUMBOLDT NATIONAL FOREST

RESPONSE TO ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED
AT THE WILD HORSE AND BURRO ACTIVITY REVIEW
AND SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

SPARKS, NEVADA, AUGUST 24-28, 1992

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TOIYABE S.O.-SPARKS, NEVADA

WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARY OF THE
INTERIOR AND THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
JANUARY 30, 1992

#1. How can these recommendations be implemented on the ground?

Page 5- 1. To protect free-roaming.....

Both the public and agencies view wild horse and burros from varying perspectives. Effective multiple use management recognizes and integrates all users on the range in balance with the resource. It is a lack of management of wild horses and burros on public rangelands that has created the distrust and conflict between some publics and the agencies. A large portion of the public believes that the wild horses should pay their way. Livestock permittees are tied to specific numbers of cattle and/or sheep, required to pay grazing fees and contribute funds and/or labor for maintenance and construction of range improvements beneficial and available to wild horses. Wildlife are maintained through seasonal harvesting. Hunting licenses provide revenue that is returned to the wildlife program for habitat improvement, law enforcement, etc. Wild horses continue to exist "free gratius". On the other hand, there are other segments of the public that believe a lack of responsible management of livestock/wildlife by some operators/agencies has resulted in degraded rangelands and thus impacted the forage base wild horses depend upon.

Responsible on-the-ground management equates to complying with the Wild Horse & Burro Act, Code of Federal Regulations regarding wild horse and burro management, implementing planning documents developed in conjunction with sound monitoring data, and overall administration of the program with adequate funding for personnel and associated activities.

Increasing numbers of wild horses on public rangelands has invited malicious and illegal activities to occur. Unauthorized capture, both small and large scale continue to take place. Reports of horses and burros being shot. Abusive and inhumane treatment to animals being harassed with aircraft, motorcycles, horseback, pickups, dune buggies, etc. Accounts of horses shipped to the "killer". It is our responsibility (BLM/USFS) to protect wild horses and burros from impacts occurring as a result of public intervention.

Under the BLM Strategic Plan, most wild horses that are captured will be "mouthed" at the trap site. At the same time, horses should be branded as an impedence to potential illegal capture. Branding could also provide a system through which age, fertility test groups, and specific herds could be monitored.

Numbered brands would identify the age of the horse by using one or two digits for horses 10 or over) The last digit of the brand would specify the year the animal was captured. An "F" prefixing the numbers would indicate if the animal had received immuno-contraceptive vaccine (fertility control). A specific symbol or mark such as a "bar" or quarter circle could signify which herd the animal came from at the time of gather. This would aid in monitoring interchange of horses between herds. Branding during the initial cycle of the strategic plan would prove cost effective during subsequent gathers as horses would not have to be mouthed again. Animals under the fertility control program would be permanently recorded.

Protection of wild and free-roaming horses and burros can also be defined in terms of herd health. Management of public rangelands must ensure adequate amounts of forage, water, shelter and spatial requirements of wild horses. Starvation and dehydration are not acceptable methods of population control, however, a percentage of deaths can be attributed each year from this. Adequate supplies of water and forage for wild horse and burro herds will continue to diminish unless strong measures to control increasing populations are implemented and appropriate management levels established and maintained. We do not want to get into a situation where we are forced to gather through emergency measures.

The strategic plan recently developed by the BLM provides an approach to manage wild horses and burros in an aggressive but reasonable manner. Funding and personnel are mandatory to implement the plan. Until which time wild horse and burro numbers are brought back to appropriate management levels, conflicts, disillusionment and distrust amongst the agencies and public will continue to occur.

Page 5- 2. Enhance public and agency.....

Awareness and appreciation for wild horses and burros can be enhanced through numerous mediums on a national, state, and local level. Some ideas applicable to the Monte Cristo HMA on the Humboldt include:

Public:

-Interpretive/informational signing located on the perimeter of the HMA on Highways 6 and 50 as well as within the territory. This would increase the opportunity for the public to partake in wild horse viewing in their natural environment. Much of the territory can be accessed by a passenger vehicle or 2WD pickup truck.

-Present a slide show and talk at the annual White Pine County Fair. Display maps illustrating location of the territory/HMA, population census, water locations, seasonal use areas, etc. Offer a question and answer period. Provide information on adoption procedures and requirements. Solicit volunteers who have successfully adopted wild horses and/or burros to share their experience and knowledge with prospective adopters.

-American Bashkir Curly Horse Association, based locally in Ely, has an "APB" in place with the BLM for any curlies captured during gathers. All of these horses have been successfully adopted by Curly horse enthusiasts. This information is published in their newsletter which is available to the public.

-The National Mustang Association, based in New Castle, Utah, has participated in several range improvement projects in coordination with both the Ely USFS and BLM for the benefit of wild horses, wildlife and livestock. These endeavors are published in the NMA newsletter. Local cooperative efforts should be published in the local newspaper.

-Improve information available to the public at the Ely Ranger District concerning wild horses and burros, i.e. pamphlets, viewing areas, adoption applications, etc.

-Post signs along major highways and possibly well-traveled county roads providing the public with a system for reporting suspicious activities or dead/injured wild horses and burros. (Similar to the wildlife poaching and wildfire signs).

-Write articles to the local newspaper on wild horse and burro activities within the district. For example, a synopsis of a recent gather, history, affects of drought on horse herds, etc.

-Involvement with Wild Horse & Burro groups in the planning, implementation and monitoring of wild horse and burro program.

Agency:

-Recognize the wild horse and burro program as an active program on the district. Manage as we do our other programs. It is time we acknowledge our responsibility in administering the program on USFS lands.

-Team meetings with other Humboldt/Toiyabe districts with wild horse territories to exchange ideas and information. Coordination, consultation, and communication about program needs, existing situation, monitoring strategies, planning, budget, etc.

-Continued interagency (USFS/BLM) communication/coordination.

-Provide training opportunities for USFS personnel that would enhance overall administration of the program.

Page 6- Responsibly manage free-roaming.....

To accomplish Items 1.-4. a Wild Horse & Burro Specialist position is required on those districts with wild horse and burro territories. Another alternative would be to detail a permanent Range Conservationist to the program part-time. A Range Technician could be hired seasonally for data collection specific to wild horses. The lack of funding and personnel is one of the major reasons for the program failures. It is more critical now, than ever, with expanding wild horse populations, to identify problems and opportunities for improved management of these animals as part of the multiple use management strategy as provided in the FLMP.

During the range initiative process, all of the allotments on the White Pine Range as well as several on the Quinn and Schell Creek Range will require analysis on wild horse use and associated impacts. To accurately assess the current situation and determine future management towards achieving objectives, time, money and personnel need to be invested in to the wild horse and burro program.

Contracts with the National Academy of Sciences' or University systems to continue ongoing research regarding population studies, behavior, biological requirements, genetics, and associated critical management issues and concerns.

Page 8-Program emphasis be directed at management on the ground.....

Again, implementation of this recommendation requires funding and personnel to conduct monitoring studies, censusing, gathers, administration of fertility control program, research for alternative population control methods, etc.

Additional studies need to be conducted to obtain information on age class with respect to reproduction within the herd, seasonal use areas, fecal analysis, home ranges, affects that drought have on reproduction as well as the forage and water base, behavior, biological requirements of the herd, herd health (blood tests could be conducted on various horses while confined at the trap site during a gather), additional collaring for tracking movements, time lapse camera on water holes reinstated, spatial distribution and requirements, etc.

Influxes of animals within the herd as well as from adjacent territories/herd management areas needs to be determined and monitored so that some degree of accuracy regarding population numbers can be established for management. Increased numbers of wild horses has placed greater demands on forage and water. Horses are trailing further between water and foraging areas oftentimes overlapping home ranges and expanding well outside established herd management area boundaries and/or into adjacent herds. This makes population estimates difficult to track. When gathers occur in territories/herd management areas in proximity to other HMA's, horses become displaced, mixed and oftentimes horses from other herds are inadvertently gathered. Branding would aid in monitoring interchange amongst herds.

On-the-ground management with regard to gathers:

Past census indicates more horses on the Forest on the Blackrock allotment between Birch Spring and Silver Spring (west side of the White Pine Range and east side of Railroad Valley) This can be attributed to the location of ninesprings located on the bench just inside the Forest boundary. There is some use by wild horses on the Forest in the southern end of the White Pine Range but suitable forage is scattered in areas of limited water and access is more difficult. The majority of animals utilizing the bench return to Railroad Valley on adjacent BLM lands after watering to resume grazing.

The Treasure Hill allotment to the north on Mount Hamilton (south end of Newark Valley) has an abundance of suitable range easily accessible from the adjacent BLM in south Newark Valley. Water is also abundant and therefore greater concentrations of horses use this region. Horse use in the Hamilton area of the Treasure Hill allotment and adjacent allotments to the east has increased dramatically in the past two years. This entire region is outside the HMA boundaries.

A tentative date for the Monte Cristo gather has been set by the BLM for FY'93 or 94. The timing (season) of this gather is critical to removing wild horses from the USFS. A summer gather would be advantageous if one of the trap site locations were in the Hamilton Basin area and if horses continue the same movements and use patterns they did in the summer of 1992. 100 head of horses inhabited the Hamilton Basin alone in 1992. Strategic location of a trap in Hamilton Basin would be effective in obtaining total numbers of horses targeted for removal from Forest Service lands; however, it may be more cost-effective, for instance, to gather off of Emmigrant/Six Mile area on the adjacent BLM where even larger numbers of horses could be gathered meeting both agencies objectives for # of horses to be removed.

The key to the Monte Cristo gather is to remove those horses that seasonally move to the Forest and reside in specific use areas in significant numbers the entire season. Wild horses in the HMA have specific home ranges although some overlap. It is those horses in the Hamilton area and those dropping over the mountain into Illipah, Tom Plain, and Ellison Basin that need to be targeted for removal.

A winter gather, providing there was a substantial snowpack, would ensure all the wild horses were off of Forest lands and in the valleys during the gather; however, targeting those horses that more consistently use the Forest would be more difficult. Trap sites strategically constructed in southeast Newark Valley would be relatively successful in achieving the Forest objective. Capture of horses in eastern Railroad Valley, particularly in the vicinity of Lampson Canyon would also be advantageous.

Impacts to public rangelands from wild horses cannot be accurately determined without a comprehensive monitoring strategy. Studies need to be conducted prior to livestock turnout on USFS lands to identify utilization levels on both riparian zones and uplands. Integrate wild horse use into all condition and trend studies established for livestock and/or wildlife where habitats overlap. Determine movements through location of major trail systems. Identify major water sources and the ability of those sources to sustain water demands of the herd as well as livestock and wildlife.

Methods should be consistent with monitoring conducted by BLM personnel; especially within the same HMA/territory.

Aerial censusing should continue to be a coordinated effort between the BLM/USFS. Numbers should be broken down between adults and foals. Ideally, the HMA/territory should be flown seasonally.

If the strategic plan developed by the BLM is implemented, most horses will be mouthed at the trap site(s) during gathers. Accurate age structure and sex ratio data can be recorded at this time. In addition, color, conformation, condition, debilitating injuries, and/or unique characteristics of the herd can be documented. Bloodwork and collaring could also be done at this time as well as branding. Electric brands are an efficient method and leave a "clean" brand.

The recommendation of the Advisory Board on planning, monitoring and inventorying horse populations and habitat is very comprehensive and provides the direction for implementation on the ground. (Pages 9,10,11).

Page 12-Horse Handling.....

Some thoughts on minimizing stress, injury, death and inhumane treatment when handling horses during gathers, shipping, processing and adoptions.

Gathers:

-Continue to schedule "outside" the foaling season to reduce stress to mares in foal and with young foals. (Consider also during censusing).

-Avoid winter gathers where snow depths are too deep for horses to travel to the trap site.

-Avoid gathers during periods of extreme heat or cold.

-Strategically locate trap sites in areas which provide unimpeded access to the trap; i.e. do not use barb wire fences as wings, run horses over extremely rough terrain, (steep slopes, deep, wide washes, rocky country), heavily timbered areas, across highways, and so forth.

-In certain situations, consider water trapping to accomplish a goal. It may be a more humane and cost effective method in the long run.

-Flag any fences that may pose a hazard to horses with yellow flagging. Horses identify yellow better than any other color in the spectrum.

-Authorize only experienced, "proven" contractors, crew, pilots, truck drivers and other pertinent personnel to gather wild horses. *Dave Catoor is probably one of the premiere wild horse contractors in the West. It would be beneficial for the government agencies to consult with him regarding horse handling.

-Do not aerially gather horses already know to be stressed from inadequate forage and/or water conditions, injuries, etc.

-Provide state-of-the-art livestock handling facilities for capture, separation, holding, handling, and loading horses at the trap site. There are numerous designs used in the livestock industry today.

-Provide clean (free from mold and dust), green grass hay to horses held at the trap. Protein content need not exceed 12%. Meadow hay is acceptable and averages 8% protein content. These horses have been accustomed to surviving on a meager existence nutritionally. Alfalfa or other feeds high in protein can cause founder, colic, azoturia and other diseases/illnesses. Any drastic change in diet is undesirable, especially under stressful conditions. Diets can be changed gradually to ensure slow, safe adaptation to new feed and subsequent improved condition of the horse.

-Dust control in corrals at trap site to minimize/prevent respiratory problems and coughs (dust pneumonia).

-Offer water to horses only after they have settled from their journey to the trap site.

-Pay particular attention to the handling of mares and foals from the time the pilot locates and begins driving a band(s) with foals, when they are captured at the trap, separated for loading and shipping, until which time they are reunited at the holding facility. (Minimize the # of leppy foals).

-Trucks approved for transporting wild horses are required to meet stringent specifications; however, they still need to be inspected prior to shipping to ensure those specifications are being met.

-Government personnel have in the past been requested to follow the truck(s) from the trap site to the holding facility to monitor the driver, the stops made to check horses, arrival time at the facility and condition of the horses after they are unloaded. This is not a cost effective practice and had little effect on whether horses were killed or injured in transport.

-Reputable contractors with approved equipment and experienced personnel still remains the safest and most efficient way of handling wild horses. As long as a wild animal is being challenged and removed from their own environment there will be some level of stress and risk to both the animal and the people handling them. Horses evolved with a very strong instinct for "fight or flight" which is heightened during confining confrontations.

-The Palomino Valley Wild Horse & Burro Adoption Center is designed for the processing, holding and adoption of wild horses and appears to be extremely effective. Some improvements and need for expansion have evidently been identified. The director and wranglers that run these facilities nationwide need to exchange information on facility design and construction and how effective they operate in reducing/minimizing injury, death and stress in wild horses and burros processed and residing there.

-Hold clinics put on by professional horse trainers incorporating Ray Hunt, Richard Shrake (Oregon), Pat Parelli (California), John Lyons (Colorado), and others that employ "resistance-free" training techniques. Obtain sponsorship from Wrangler, Copenhagen, Coca-Cola, etc. Advertise to inform adopters and government personnel.

-Nutritional programs need to be based upon the requirements of individual horses and should be developed in consultation with a veterinarian. Mares with foals, mares in foal, open mares, stallions, weanlings, yearlings, two year olds and all young mature horses as well as aged horses require different nutritional programs. Although this is difficult at holding and adoption facilities, varying nutritional programs can be instated with adopted horses. High quality hay, clean water, and a mineral source is reasonable at holding and adoption facilities. Most importantly, diets should be changed gradually. Those horses that may have severe nutritional deficiencies can be identified through bloodwork or in some cases, thorough examination. These individuals can be separated and treated accordingly.

-Vaccination programs need to be continued. Wild horses converting to domestic are exposed to some diseases previously not threatening to the herd.

-Worming programs are vital to horse health. Chemical class and dosage of anthelmintics vary depending upon age class of the animal as well as open mares vs. mares in-foal.

-Hoof care and all other veterinary care is essential to maintenance of horse health.

-Compliance on adopted wild horses and burros is a requirement of the program. Many animals are never inspected due to limited funding and personnel and distances the adopted animals are from district offices. It is not realistic for every animal adopted to be inspected. The public at large and state and local humane societies can be of great assistance through monitoring cases of inhumane treatment. Volunteers can be utilized to conduct inspections as well as members of wild horse organizations.

-Adopters should be required to submit health inspection reports completed by a licensed veterinarian.

-Continue to limit the number of horses that can be adopted per individual. Enter into large scale adoptions only under specific situations; i.e. American Bashkir Curly Horse Association, U.S. Marine Corps., Wild Horse Organizations, Paint Horse Associations, reputable rodeo stock which will adopt older stallions deemed "unadoptable" by private individuals, sheep operations, outfitter/guide camps, etc.

- Increase surveillance of auction yards for illegal marketing of wild horses.
- Impose stiffer penalties for illegal and inhumane activities involving wild horses.
- It is not humane to have wild horses penned/corralled in large numbers in feedlot conditions year after year.

Page 13-Fertility Control.....

- Administer immuno-contraceptive vaccines (single dose) to mares 9 years of age and older as stated in the BLM Strategic Plan.
- Collaring of this same mare "test group" would aid in monitoring social and behavioral implications of the vaccine once the mares were released back onto the range.
- Castration, on site, of older, unadoptable stallions. (winter gathers only to avoid flies and greater risk of infection).
- The reproductive segment of the herd will be significantly reduced, over time, through the removal of all horses between one and three/four years of age.

Page 14-Adoption Fee For Burros.....

Standardization of adoption fees makes good sense and will provide limited but increased revenue for the program. We need more burros.

Page 15-Nevada Wild Horse Center.....

Excellent-What is the status of the market and feasibility study?

Page 16-Prison Training Programs.....

- Establish guidelines for horse handling and halter training in all prison training programs.
- Ensure the guidelines are being followed through compliance checks of facilities and horses. Inspection is occurring at a few facilities now.
- Allow Crabtree Correctional the same opportunity afforded other institutions and monitor their progress.
- Would a program like this be possible at Ely State Prison in Ely, Nevada?
- Require institutions to submit reports and veterinary health inspections on each animal in training. Prisoners handling the horses could be requested to keep a log on those animals he/she works with.

-Although politically unacceptable as a means of dispensing wild horses, processing horses for human consumption is widely accepted in parts of Europe and Japan as a delicacy. Pet foods commonly contain horsemeat obtained primarily from slaughter of domestic horses. The United States has numerous homeless and low-income families that could benefit greatly from horsemeat in their diets not to mention the deplorable conditions in underdeveloped countries.

Wild horses that have been captive in feedlots and labeled unadoptable could be sold in a bidding system and utilized for human consumption as discussed above. Timeframes for unadoptables need to be set. Proceeds from the auction could be put back into the program .

-The excess wild horse issue may resolve itself over the long term upon implementation of the BLM Strategic Plan. Numbers removed from the range will have to be in line with demand through adoption.

-Those horses that remain in holding facilities/feedlots may have to remain there to live out their lives. Old, unadoptable stallions could be gelded and released back onto the range; however, their adaptability from feedlot conditions where food and water are available in quantity and quality to rangelands which can be marginal may prove debilitating to the animal.

-Have we exhausted a list of alternative areas in the United States that excess horses could be released?

-What is wrong with euthanasia once all other alternatives have been exhausted? How many dogs and cats are destroyed each day in the U.S. alone? We need to be realistic! Euthanized horses should be processed for human and/or animal consumption and not simply buried. This may be one alternative to effectively save dollars spent to sustain horses in inhumane "feedlot" scenarios that can be put back into the program for range improvements, research, etc. to enhance the environment for those horses that remain on the range.

-Authorize district Wild Horse & Burro Specialists to process and adopt horses locally in situations where local people express an interest in a particular horse that may be captured during the gather.

-Allow for local adoption of leppy foals found on the range by either the public or government personnel.

-Selectively manage wild horse herds for unique characteristics-color, conformation, breeding, etc. Oftentimes unusual horses are more attractive to prospective adopters irregardless of age. Pay particular attention to those horses that should remain on the range for gene pool contribution so that herd quality is maintained.

Page 18-Professionalism in the Wild Horse & Burro Program.....

This has been addressed to a certain extent earlier in these responses; particularly under Horse Handling regarding the expertise required by contractors. All of the direction provided by the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommendation on page 18 and 19 identifies those needs to improve professionalism/qualification of personnel active in the Wild Horse & Burro Program.

An extension to this direction would include local participation by USFS personnel on the ground in conjunction with BLM wild horse roundups. A lot can be learned merely through observation.

Page 20-Public Education and Marketing.....

Is there not a full-time Public Affairs person currently on staff at the BLM State Office?

If not, the recommendation is excellent and should be implemented.

The Nevada Wild Horse Center could also fullfill part of this recommendation.

Page 21-Research.....

-Contract specific in-depth studies requiring specialists to analyze critical management issues as is being done for fertility control.

-Encourage participation by colleges and universities through an M.D. or P.H.D. emphasis on wild horse and burro studies.

-Blood tests, fecal analysis, and water quality samples could all be obtained in the field by USFS personnel and with the assistance of laboratories additional, valuable information can be collected. Data on animal condition, conformation, color, age, and other unique herd characteristics can be recorded during gathers at the trap site as well as at the holding facilities.

Page 22-Agency Accountability.....

The Board states the recommendation very clearly.

2. Management direction for wild horse and burros is grossly limited in the Forest Land Management Plan.

Forest Land Management Plan-Mount Moriah Management Area-IV-138-states that the territory was designated in 1974 but that no horse sightings had been made since 1971. The territory was to be reevaluated in 1986. In Ammendment #1 the area was abolished as a wild horse territory.

FLMP-IV-157:The Murphy Wash Wild Horse Territory Plan was written in 1978. The territory is located in the south end of the Snake Range. There have been no horses sighted since 1977. (FLMP II-14). Elimination of this territory needs to be considered during the next plan ammendment cycle.

Ammendment Number 2 of the FLMP (July 1990) sets forth maximum forage utilization values for both riparian and upland habitats. These utilization standards have been incorporated into each permittees' permit. Use in the allotments is monitored and compliance with allowable use levels being strongly encouraged.

Wild horses are severely impacting most riparian areas within or adjacent to the Monte Cristo Territory. Unlimited numbers of horses continue to degrade these areas in search of adequate amounts of forage and water. Horses not only compete with cattle and wildlife for forage but in areas of limited water resources they may consume all available water prior to livestock and/or wildlife getting a drink. Oftentimes allowable use levels established in the permit, AMP and AOP for which the permittee is held responsible are exceeded prior to livestock turnout. Horses are partially responsible for damage to range improvements as well. Both the agencies and publics should contribute funds for annual maintenance required on all range improvements shared by wildlife, livestock, and wild horses. Wild horses should be managed at population levels in balance with multiple resource management and subject to the same restrictions placed on other users. Furthermore, to watch several bands of wild horses stand at a spring, desperately pawing in the mud in search of water is not a pleasant experience; nor is it humane. Part of our responsibility is to protect and ensure humane treatment of wild horses. Population management is vital to maintaining adequate forage and water on public rangelands.

Goal #20 in the FLMP reads:(IV-6) Manage the Cherry Springs, Monte Cristo, and Quinn Wild Horse Territories in accordance with the Wild Horse and Burro Act and the approved territory plans.

Forest-Wide Management Direction-Page IV-40 reads:

Manage wild horses in accordance with territory plans.

The Monte Cristo Plan is totally inadequate to properly manage the existing horse herd. Some of the more obvious reasons are listed as follows:

-The number of horses to be managed within the herd was established at a maximum of 96 head in 1977. The 1991 census located 725 horses; 165 of which were on USFS lands. The most recent census was flown on August 12, 1992. A total of 781 horses were counted in and adjacent to the Monte Cristo Herd Management Area. Of the total, 286 horses were observed on Forest Service lands. Of this total, 54 were 1992 foals.

-Expansion well outside the Herd Management Area (HMA) boundary continues to occur. Horses are utilizing horse-free areas in the Treasure Hill, Tom Plain, Ellison Basin, Illipah, Currant Creek allotments on the White Pine Range. Horse use is occurring on the north and central portions of the Schell Creek Range. There is no established wild horse territory on the Schell Creek Range. Wild horses were recently (July 1992) sighted on the northeast end of the Grant Range at Brady Spring, south of Murphy Wash (north of the Quinn Range).

-Commitment to monitoring utilization by wild horses was outlined in the Monte Cristo HMAP. Studies were to be done periodically to measure impacts on the vegetative resource by cattle and wild horses and the effect on all users including wildlife. Utilization levels were established as allowable use levels for horses in each home range. Numbers of horses were identified and a population level established that was in balance with wildlife and livestock use occurring in the same use areas/home ranges. Limited funding and staffing were probably the reason that the plan has not been fully implemented nor monitored for tracking achievement of objectives.

-It is imperative that monitoring be implemented immediately to collect data necessary to establish AML's on the USFS lands. Portions of the Monte Cristo HMA have rangelands in deteriorating condition which under continued excessive grazing pressure and drought will ultimately be replaced by invader species. There are already vegetative communities such as whitesage which provided the basis for adjudication of livestock allotments which have changed so drastically that carrying capacities have plunged. Reductions are inevitable on some allotments but those reductions should also take into consideration wild horses. The Monte Cristo Plan established a management level of 96. The population is now above 800 horses. This is not in line with a "thriving ecological balance". Some of the operators have been voluntarily taking non-use to provide their allotments with needed rest or in some instances because adequate forage for livestock was unavailable.

-Time lapse movie camera was to be employed on a 3 year basis as a census tool to augment aerial inventories or replace aerial census in those years the HMA was not flown. This was never implemented.

-The proposed sterilization study was never completed. Several harem stallions were sterilized in order to obtain information on behavior and effects on reproduction.

-Joint reviews of the plan were to be conducted between the BLM/USFS. No annual reviews were conducted nor any subsequent modifications/updates made in the plan.

FLMP-II-14: Surveys on the Quinn territory indicated an estimated 10 horses have inhabited the area. Note: Since completion of the FLMP, horse sightings on the Quinn have been minimal to none. Wild horses were observed this summer (1992) in Davis Canyon and Cedar Springs on the south end of the Quinn Range. These horses probably have traveled into the area from adjacent BLM Herd Management Areas. During the next phase of planning amendments a proposal may be made to eliminate the Quinn as a viable wild horse territory due to its' small size, isolated nature, and limited suitable range for wild horses.

Standards and Guidelines (IV-40) Wild Horse Management:

The 1986 Interagency Agreement is currently being revised. A draft is out. The Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act assigns both the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture with protection, management and control of wild horses and burros on federally owned lands administered by the BLM and the Forest Service.

The updated agreement addresses policy and procedures, agency responsibility, reporting procedures, and annual reviews required to effectively implement and enforce the Act. Interagency cooperation and coordination are key to implementing the new Strategic Plan developed by the BLM and overall administration of the Wild Horse & Burro program.

Wild horse and burro interest groups have been involved with the BLM since the passage of the Act. Coordination and cooperation have improved significantly over the years. Interest groups have been involved in the planning process, present at gathers, participated in funding and construction of range improvements; particularly water development, adoption, etc. The Forest Service encourages participation by all interest groups through the scoping process whereby the public is informed of projects, planning documents, and other activities occurring on Forest Service lands. This involvement is an integral part of wild horse and burro management.

The above standards and guidelines should continue to be employed and are applicable to wild horse management. Opportunities to improve upon employment of these S&G's will continue to be present.

The third standard and guideline is not being adequately addressed. Wild horse populations are not compatible with the resource capabilities and needs. The current population is approximately 11 times the level established in the Monte Cristo Herd Management Plan. Impacts to the rangelands are obvious.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the FLMP (V-7)

Wild free-roaming horses and burros are addressed under range. The FLMP commits to annual monitoring and evaluation in accordance with Territory Management Plans. In order to meet this commitment, monitoring studies specific to wild horses need to be conducted on an annual basis in each territory. This requires at a minimum, utilization mapping of the territory on both upland and riparian areas prior to livestock turnout onto Forest allotments. Mapping of livestock use at the end of the season would include horse use as well and would be more difficult to determine but can be broken out with reasonable accuracy. Actual use records on numbers and locations of horses from aerial census as well as road inventories. Seasonal inventories are ideal for establishing grazing patterns and movements both within the territory boundaries and outside. Time lapse movie camera provides valuable information on numbers of horses and key use areas associated with water availability. Condition and trend studies could be combined in areas where grazing overlaps, but additional condition and trend studies should be conducted in areas used exclusively by wild horses. The FLMP states on Page II-14 that range conditions on most wild horse territories have improved since management and control of wild horses were initiated. Can this be substantiated?

Supplemental information might include: fecal analysis, age class, sex ratios, herd health, trail systems, seasonal movements, unique herd characteristics i.e. color, conformation, etc., data obtained from blood sampling, behavior, etc.

A water inventory would provide valuable information. Dependability: Is the source reliable yearlong? Is it a source available only while cattle are grazing; i.e. windmill, pump, pipeline controlled by a permittee? How many animals can water on the source? Is it dependent upon snowpack, runoff, rain? Water quality: Are horses using waters associated with mining and are they safe? Potential for additional water development needs to be determined.

Close coordination between BLM and USFS procedures in equating horse and burro use and livestock use should be mutually adopted. These should also included procedures for assigning Appropriate Management Levels of wild horses to specific management areas in conjunction with numbers of livestock authorized to graze as addressed in Allotment Management Plans.

The FLMP, through the ammendment process, needs to address the wild horses and burros as a separate program and manage it as such. This would require at a minimum, a position on each district with wild horse territories that, under current management, are not meeting FLMP goals and objectives. Management direction, standards and guidelines and monitoring and evaluation need to be expanded to address all aspects of the program.

3. Presently, there is no consideration given to wild horses in the establishment of grazing capacities in the allotment management planning process. A desired population level of 96 was established for the Monte Cristo herd and documented in the Monte Cristo Wild Horse Territory Plan in 1975. In allotments where significant resource damage is occurring from wild horses, the Forest Service would be wise to consider these impacts during their analysis prior to issuing a reduction to the permittee based solely upon livestock grazing. The same would apply to areas of heavy use by elk, cattle, sheep, etc. It is vital that the degree of use and percentage made by each user be determined. The BLM is determining reductions in grazing by individual user or offending animal and assigning those reductions on an allotment basis through the allotment evaluation process. They have already determined appropriate management levels of horses on 3 of 6 allotments within the Monte Cristo HMA. This type of approach provides a firm foundation upon which resource decisions can be made and will hold more weight in the event litigation occurs.

Not only do forage requirements and demands of wild horses in Monte Cristo vs. carrying capacity of public rangelands need to be determined, but water availability, dependability and location with regard to adequate forage base also need to be analyzed. Potential for additional water development needs to be explored.

The livestock operator plays an integral role in providing water to wild horses and wildlife through development and maintenance of water developments on rangelands for livestock as well as on privately owned lands. There is potential for additional water development within the Monte Cristo HMA but only through coordination with livestock operators who hold the water rights to those sources. Without coordination and cooperation with the permittee's these waters may never be available.

4. The newly revised draft Interagency Agreement appears to fulfill its mission. However, additional, more specific agreement should be drafted between local USFS/BLM Districts that outline the strategy to achieve objectives specific to each agencies HMA/Territory Plans. Responsibilities could be tailored to local program needs.

5. Some measures that could be used to document program accomplishments and provide linkage to the appropriations process are as follows:

- Revise and implement the Monte Cristo WHT Plan.

- Implement a monitoring program for wild horses to include all aspects of vegetative studies, population analysis/census, behavior, fertility control, etc.

- Establish base level appropriations for all districts with wild horse territories annually for program maintenance.

- Additional funding provided by district on a priority basis. Consideration as to territory acres and herd size to be managed. Priorities also established in line with implementation of the BLM Strategic Plan and coordinated with planning phases of other agencies.

- Maintain a pool of dollars at the R.O. level for Wild Horse and Burro Program for administration whereby unallocated dollars are carried over and made available for emergency situations i.e. full force and effect gathers, etc.

- The "new measures" document (8/89) is broad Resource cost measures for resource reporting could include those items addressed under #6.

6. Annual reporting procedures need to be a simple process, however additions to current reporting should include:

- Appropriate Management Levels to be established

- Acres managed to standard in the territory

- Under Plan status-whether or not FLMP objectives are being met

- Identify revision needs

- Accomplishment of studies in units

- Fertility control-#'s in test group, sex, age class

- Numbers removed further defined by sex and age class

7. Relations between the USFS and BLM in the field are good. Improvements could be made by conducting monitoring studies jointly within the Monte Cristo HMA and identifying range improvement needs for wild horses whether it be maintenance, reconstruction or new construction. Seasonal road inventories or coordinated effort in reinstating time lapse camera studies. Any field studies enacted within the Monte Cristo HMA could be coordinated and conducted by both BLM and USFS personnel.

8. Present coordination and communication with the Ely BLM District are excellent! Data is shared, aerial inventories are flown with personnel from both agencies, meetings conducted regarding planning, budget, gathers, impacts, etc. Assistance is provided upon request from any of the horse specialists on the Ely District.

9. Coordination measures that may require strengthening in order to effectively implement the BLM Strategic Plan might include:

- Timing in the development and implementation of AMP's for those allotments within the Monte Cristo HMA.

- Coordination in the development of a local interagency agreement.

- Interagency effort in revising the Monte Cristo Herd Management Area Plan.

- USFS review and constructive input into capture (gather) plans.

- Coordinated efforts in emergency situations.

- USFS assistance at gathers, may include, data collection on sex ratio and age structure/classification, overall health, unique herd characteristics, blood sampling; assisting brand inspector/contractor in specific activities i.e. tallying horses as they load into trucks, dust control in corrals, watering/feeding, documenting daily activities during capture, relocating traps, etc. There is always something that needs to be done on a gather even if it is simply observation.

- Provide interagency training.

10. The strategic plan offers a realistic approach to management of wild horses and burros on public rangelands. The plan should be implemented and monitored towards achievement of objectives. However, several problems have the potential to occur. Wild horses become "savy" to aircraft after being gathered several times. They hang in the trees and simply will not come out. Water trapping may become an alternative method if this occurs. It seems as though it will take until the 2nd cycle (6 years) in order to gain any ground on reducing/maintaining horse populations. It is imperative that budgets be "fail proof" to initiate and perpetuate the strategic plan. Budgets need to be "in-line" with scheduling of gather cycles by District(both USFS/BLM) in order for the plan to be effective.

11. The Forest should adopt all of the program goals and objectives of the BLM's current strategic planning effort for the management of wild horses and burros. Consistency improves the effectiveness of management and overall program administration. The goals and objectives are very similar between agencies. This can be accomplished through ammendment of FLMP and other planning documents, manuals, handbooks, legislative acts, writing of HMAP's, interagency meetings, trainings, coordinated efforts between districts both in the office and the field.

12. Funding and budgeting levels USFS needs to provide adequate coordination with the BLM to implement the Strategic Plan may include:

-Approximately \$40,000.00 for each gather cycle to remove horses from the Forest lands both within and outside Monte Cristo Herd Management Area boundaries.

-At least one GS5/7/9 Wild Horse and Burro Specialist position full time on the Ranger District. Salary would depend upon grade and level of experience. Also needed are support dollars, a vehicle, travel, training and uniform.

-Possibly one seasonal who would devote all or part of their time conducting monitoring specifically on wild horses in Monte Cristo.

-Funding for range improvements identified for wild horses. Identify and economically analyze during the revision of the Monte Cristo HMAP.

13. The current draft Interagency Agreement address the BLM as the lead agency for the Wild Horse and Burro Program in Nevada. A local interagency agreement between the Ely Ranger District-Humboldt National Forest and Ely Bureau of Land Management for management of the Monte Cristo Herd Management Area will be drafted in conjunction with the revision of the Monte Cristo Herd Management Plan.

Lower Priority Issues:

1. Reasonable timeframes need to be established for bringing the remaining 61% of Wild Horse Territory Plans into compliance with the FLMP. No priority schedules to accomplish this exist at this time. Who will be responsible for completing these documents as well as ensuring they are implemented, monitored and enforced? Without a specific position established, this task will inevitably be assigned to range conservationists who are already up against an unreasonable schedule to accomplish the range initiative. Yes, they are needed to effectively administer the wild horse and burro program in compliance with the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act and to comply with federal regulation, policy, and FLMP.

2. The image of the wild horse and burro program on the Forest is either non-existent because most people equate the program with the BLM or is one of lack of management due to the excessive populations in most herds and subsequent impacts to livestock and wildlife. The USFS needs to begin an aggressive approach to responsibly manage wild horses on Forest lands in balance with the forage/water resource taking into consideration all other forage consumers.

3. Standardization of terminology can be accomplished concurrently with the adoption of program goals and objectives through ammendment of planning documents, manuals, handbooks, CFR revisions, etc. This could also be incorporated into the Interagency Agreement.

4. There has been some recent revision to 43 CFR 4700 Wild Horse and Burro Management (BLM). The CFR's now allow for full-force-and-effect decisions to be made to gather horses in emergency situations. They can still be appealed but cannot stop the gather. This is effective August 5, 1992. A thorough review of all USFS regulations and manuals should be made and changes proposed. Although regulations and policy are often broadly written, this allows for the flexibility needed to adequately manage.

5. Improved cooperative relations and outreach efforts can be achieved in concert with the BLM through the following actions/activities:

-Coordinated, communicative and consultative review of planning documents by those interest groups having expressed an interest in program involvement.

-Coordinated efforts with wild horse and burro groups on the ground to improve wild horse habitat.

Range conditions of the suitable range is as follows:

TABLE II-7
Range Condition Class

Total Acres	Percent of Suitable Acres	Condition Class
217,747	16	Good
615,150	47	Fair
499,713	37	Poor

The trend for good condition ranges is generally static while the trend is usually upward on fair and poor condition ranges.

Current management direction for the range resource is to develop upward trends where the range is in less than good ecological condition and to maintain a static trend for good condition range. Also, emphasis is placed on obtaining management on each allotment as prescribed in the Allotment Management Plan to coordinate forage production with other multiple use values. This includes proper livestock rotation from unit to unit on schedule and obtaining proper use of the forage resource. Emphasis is also placed on the proper maintenance of range fences and water developments so that effective management systems can be continued.

Allotment Management Plans have been approved and implemented on 90 percent of the 199 grazing allotments at this time. All of the allotments on the Forest will have approved plans by 1988. There may be some downward adjustments in stocking levels on some of the allotments which do not yet have approved plans.

Range improvements to date include the reseeding of 72,328 acres of formerly depleted rangeland, construction of 1,500 miles of fence for controlling livestock, and installation of 1,300 water developments and 139 miles of pipelines to carry water to formerly dry range areas. These improvements also provide forage and water for big game animals.

Through the use of Range Betterment Funds, the Forest will continue to treat approximately 2,000 acres of vegetation annually. Management fences and water developments will be installed to continue rangeland improvements.

Five wild horse territories have been designated on the Forest. A joint Forest Service/BLM Management Plan has been approved for the Monte Cristo wild horse territory. Management plans have also been completed on the Murphy Wash and Cherry Springs territories; plans are scheduled for completion by 1986 on the Quinn and Mt. Moriah territories. The horses will be managed under the Wild Horse and Burro Act (PL92-195) of December 15, 1971.

TABLE II-8
 Status of Wild Horse Territories
 Humboldt National Forest

Territory	Mgmt. Plan Completion	No. Horses Inventoried (1981)	Mgmt. Plan Stocking Levels
Monte Cristo	1977	130	72-96 head
Quinn	1986	10	0
Mt. Moriah	1988	0	0
Murphy Wash	1978	0	0
Cherry Spring	1977	38	42-68 head

There have been no sightings of horses since 1977 on the Mt. Moriah or Murphy Wash territories. Surveys on the Quinn territory indicated an estimated 10 horses inhabit the area.

Range conditions on most of the wild horse territories have improved since management and control were initiated. The Monte Cristo territory has not improved due to the number of horses that occupy the area.

There is a national demand for wild horses mostly from the scenic and historical aspect. However, most people recognize the need to keep wild horse numbers within the limits prescribed by the management plan.

Noxious weeds known to grow on the Forest are hoary cress (whitetop) (Cardaria draba), leafy spurge (Euphoria esula), Canada thistle (Cardium arvense), musk thistle (Carduus theormeri), Scotch thistle (Onopordum acanthium), and dalmatian toadflax (Linaria dalmatica). All of these noxious weeds pose a real threat to the productivity of the land.

The Forest treats approximately 20-100 acres of noxious weeds per year, mostly along roadsides. Many ranchers in cooperation with their respective counties treat noxious weeds on private lands. However, there are serious problems in many areas adjacent to the Forest boundary where private land owners may not be aware of the threat or may not be financially able to treat large acreages.

The Forest supports the A.P.H.I.S. predator control program including making recommendations to A.P.H.I.S. for each allotment as to the need for control, methods to be used, and special precautions needed. The Forest Service evaluates the environmental effects of the predator control program. The current control program has consisted of trapping and shooting of coyotes from aircraft during the winter. Aerial shooting is used in conjunction with summer trapping in areas where livestock losses to predation are extremely high and summer control alone has not been effective. Control efforts are directed to problem areas as outlined in the Annual Operating Plan prepared by the Forest and A.P.H.I.S. In areas where mountain lions are the target species control efforts are directed at the offending animal. Losses of livestock to predators varies from year to year.

Goal #17

Produce a sustained yield of forage on all lands available and suitable for livestock grazing while maintaining or enhancing the productivity of the land.

Objectives

- a. Develop an acceptable balance between the available grazing capacity and livestock numbers through proper monitoring of allotment management plans, to insure that resource objectives are met.
- b. Complete vegetative treatment projects that are prescribed in allotment management plans that are compatible with other resources and are cost effective.
- c. Complete coordinated resource management plans where private lands, BLM lands and other Federal lands can be managed in conjunction with National Forest System lands.

Goal #18

Manage livestock to recognize the special needs relating to wet meadows and riparian areas, and fisheries habitat.

Objectives

- a. Emphasize proper range management techniques that will improve livestock distribution.
- b. Utilize the latest research information available in designing and implementing grazing systems.
- c. Fence developed springs or small wet meadows that cannot otherwise be protected.
- d. Consider conversions from sheep allotments to cattle allotments only after careful consideration of these areas through an environmental analysis process.

Goal #19

Reduce conflicts between livestock and wildlife for forage on key winter ranges.

Goal #20

Manage the Cherry Springs, Monte Cristo, and Quinn Wild Horse Territories in accordance with the Wild Horse and Burro Act and the approved territory plans.

Goal #21

Maintain sensitive plant species.

Forest-Wide Management Direction, Standards, and Guidelines

PRACTICES	MIH CODE	MANAGEMENT DIRECTION	STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES
RANGE (Cont.) Range Administration and Management (Cont.)	D07		Treatment of rangeland pests by APHIS will be requested when serious forage loss is expected.
Wild Horse Management		Manage wild horses in accordance with territory plans.	Carry out Interagency agreements between the Humboldt National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management. Involve wild free-roaming horse and burro interest groups as well as other Federal and State agencies in the management of wild free-roaming horses and burros. Manage wild free-roaming horses and burros to population levels compatible with the resource capabilities and needs.

miles of fence and numerous water developments that were constructed to improve cattle distribution. Cattle use in the management area amounts to 1,560 AUMS. Both allotments have improved allotment management plans. The range resource in this unit is generally in fair condition.

The Moriah Wild Horse Territory was designated in 1974 in the northern portion of the management area. There has not been any documented horse use since 1971 and it is assumed that there are no horses in the territory. The territory will be reevaluated by 1986 to determine if it should be eliminated.

This unit contains several pinenut gathering areas. Cutting of juniper posts, aspen poles and fuelwood also occurs periodically.

Overall watershed value for the area is moderate. Annual snowpack and precipitation are not as high as in the adjacent Mt. Moriah Recommended Wilderness due to this area's lower elevation and its large stands of pinyon and juniper. There are 5 perennial streams in the area.

This unit is rated moderate in prospective potential for base and precious metals. Gold, garnet, and building stone have been mined in the past. Potential remains for increased mining activity. Several claims are located within the management area.

This management area experienced two wildfires during the 1970 decade. Both of these fires were lightning caused. The largest fire was two acres in size and occurred in 1977. Historic records show that wildfire does not play an active role in this management area.

There is no private land within this unit.

Special-use authorizations include two water transmission and five outfitter-guide permits.

The Moriah Cabin Administrative Site is located in the northwest portion of the unit. The site consists of a one-room cabin and a horse pasture. There are 49 miles of inventoried Forest roads and 16 miles of uninventoried roads present in the area.

Portions of this area were inventoried during the RARE I process. These areas have since been dropped from wilderness consideration due to their small size.

Management Prescription

Recreation: Emphasize dispersed recreation. Manage caves as stated in District Cave Management Plan.

Wildlife and Fish: Habitat for T&E species, critical big game winter range, aquatic species, and MIS will be maintained at levels needed to support either reasonable populations or at least exceed requirements for minimum viable populations.

Re-number second paragraph as (1) *Sietz Canyon*

Delete third paragraph, pertaining to Jack Creek Crater (the proposed RNA was shift southeast to upper Fall Creek).

Re-number fourth paragraph as (2) *Pearl Peak*

Page IV-5, fourth paragraph: Change to be consistent with Management Direction on Page IV-29: "g. Consider reintroductions of indigenous wildlife and fish species, as well as **introductions of new species**, where vacant niches have been identified and conflicts with other resources can be resolved.

Page IV-29, first paragraph, right column: Change to be consistent with the Goal on Page IV-5 (above): "Transplants of **new and indigenous** species will be considered appropriate where a vacant niche has been identified and conflicts with other resources are minimal."

Page IV-52: Change first sentence in next to last paragraph to read "An environmental analysis will be conducted by the Forest Service for each application for permit to drill (ADP)."

Page IV-81: Add footnote to Table IV-3: Projected average annual costs for the Forest Plan shown in Table IV-3 are adjusted annually in the budget requests prepared for Congressional action. Although the balance of outputs and services described in the Forest Plan provide guidance in developing future programs, response to actual and unanticipated needs, such as the Minerals impact, cause the budget levels and balance to shift somewhat through the planning period. Current annual projections are available upon request.

Page IV-82: Change last paragraph to show completion of the comprehensive Cultural Resource Overview by 1996.

Page IV-84: Under RANGE, second sentence, to correct an error, change 69 to 63 percent.

Page IV-90: Delete reference to MIH in numbered paragraph 5.

Page IV-95: Update third paragraph to read: "The discovery of disseminated gold in the Independence Mountains led to extensive exploration and eventual development of several mine/mill complexes. **Proven ore reserves will sustain the four mines in operation in 1989, and at least eight additional mine proposals through the next decade.**"

Page IV-101: Delete Guideline under Facilities directing removal of all buildings at Gold Creek Guard Station.

Page IV-102: Change first sentence of fifth paragraph to read: **Lamolille Canyon, a designated Scenic Byway, is used heavily for viewing by motorists and as a trailhead into the Ruby Mountains.**

Page IV-103: Change first sentence of ninth paragraph to read: **The Ruby Crest Trail has been designated a National Recreation Trail.**

Page IV-128: Same as above.

Page IV-138: Delete second paragraph referencing the Moriah Wild Horse Territory. The Territory was abolished following a re-evaluation and finding of no documented horse use.

This area receives approximately 2,600 AUMs of domestic livestock use. It contains portions of seven grazing allotments (5 cattle and 2 sheep). All allotments are managed under approved allotment management plans. Several miles of fencing and many water developments located throughout this management area help to regulate livestock distribution and use. Numerous acres of vegetative manipulation have been conducted, mainly along the north and south ends of this area to increase production of desirable forage species. Overall range condition is fair or better.

Grazing is coordinated to comply with recreation demands in high recreation use areas.

All of the Murphy Wash Wild Horse Territory is located in the southern half of this management area. A territory management plan was written in 1978, but no horses have been sighted since 1977.

The Snake Management Area is an important source of fuelwood, posts, poles, Christmas trees, and pinenuts to the people of Baker, Nevada and Garrison, Utah, and to a lesser extent Ely, Nevada. The area contains approximately 75 MBF of fuelwood. Approximately 2 MBF of fuelwood has been harvested annually in recent years.

A soils inventory has been completed and a map prepared for the area. Parent materials include quartzites and limestone. There are several perennial streams, most of which have water transmissions associated with them.

There is a low to high potential for beryllium, tungsten, silver and gold throughout the area. At present there are 6,300 acres under oil and gas lease and 991 mining claims present. Approximately 2 operating plans are processed annually.

There are 21 Special-Use Permits. These include powerlines, water transmission lines, roads, telephone lines, an electronic site and apiary. Private inholdings include 1,517 acres. Land line location does not have a high priority.

Facilities include the Baker Guard Station (outside MA), Lehman Caves home and trailer (outside MA), and several smaller outlying administrative sites. The withdrawals for the smaller sites have been recommended for revocation. There are 101 miles of inventoried Forest roads and 26 miles of uninventoried roads.

Lightning is the major cause of fire. One or two fires occur annually. Law enforcement activities are targeted at recreation and timber.

Management Prescription

Recreation: Emphasize dispersed recreation except at developed sites. Aim developed site management to maintenance of health and safety items. Make group camping facility available. Manage caves as stated in the District Cave Management Plan. Maintain cooperation with NPS at Lehman Caves Visitor Center. Relocate Lexington Arch Trail.

WHITE PINE MANAGEMENT AREA - 344,575 ACRES

Description

The White Pine Management Area lies approximately 50 miles west of Ely in east-central Nevada, in White Pine and Nye Counties. The high peaks of the White Pine Range, reaching over 11,000 feet elevation, and adjacent foothills run generally north-south for 40 miles. The area lies within the Basin and Range physiographic province and is bounded by Railroad Valley to the west and by Jakes and White River Valleys to the east. Access is provided primarily by U.S. Highway 50 from the north and Highway 6 from the east and south.

The terrain is a result of water and volcanic deposited sediments, later uplifted into fault-block mountain ranges. Soils have moderate erosion potential and serious erosion problems occur in several riparian areas.

This area lies within the intermountain sagebrush/ponderosa pine ecosystem. Pinyon pine and juniper dominate the lower slopes and white fir, limber pine and bristlecone pine occupy the upper elevations.

Yearlong dispersed recreation focuses on hunting, fishing, camping and exploring historic mining camps. Developed recreation areas are provided at White River and Currant Creek. There are approximately 5 miles of trails in poor condition which receive light use.

The northern portion of the area contains widespread historic resources associated with the concentration of the old mining camps in the area. Prehistoric sites are found throughout the area; only a few have been recorded.

The area contains important mule deer summer range, migratory routes and some winter range. Mule deer range is in satisfactory condition with stable and downward trends. Portions of the area are important to upland game species, particularly sage grouse strutting grounds and summer habitat. The unit provides habitat for Nevada's northern most population of desert bighorn sheep. Three streams contain fishable quantities of game fish.

The area is intensively managed to produce forage for cattle on six allotments. Most of the range resource is in poor or fair condition with a static trend. Approximately one-quarter of the total forage is provided by revegetated areas. Range development activities have been concentrated on this area; a large number of fence, pipeline and revegetation projects have been completed.

A 227,000 acre wild horse territory has been designated on the western half of the area and is managed according to an approved management plan. Use by wild horses is on the increase. Roundups to maintain the horse population at prescribed levels have been completed and more are planned for the future.

Timber products, including pinenuts, fuelwood, posts and poles, are harvested on a limited basis.

Management Direction, Standards, and Guidelines for the White Pine Management Area

<u>PRACTICES</u>	<u>MIH CODE</u>	<u>MANAGEMENT DIRECTION</u>	<u>STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES</u>
<u>RECREATION (Cont.)</u>			
Cave Management	A08	Update and follow approved Cave Management Plan.	Do not issue cave entrance permits to inexperienced spelunkers. Warn qualified spelunkers of cave hazards. Spelunkers must know exact location and name of cave before permit will be issued. Encourage NPS not to give cave locations.
Trail System Maintenance and Operation	A12	Provide a trail system adequate for administrators, permittees, and the public.	Maintain trails to Level 2.
<u>WILDLIFE & FISH</u>			
Bighorn Sheep Management	C01	Cooperate with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) in managing wildlife. Manage desert bighorn sheep winter and summer range.	Allow supplemental transplants of desert bighorn sheep. Design fences in bighorn sheep areas to minimize impacts to bighorn sheep. Work with NDOW to establish a study of desert bighorn sheep habitat needs.
<u>RANGE</u>			
Range Resource Planning	D01	Reduce conflicts between livestock and wildlife.	Generally defer livestock use of fenced meadows until August 15 of each year to minimize impacts to grouse brood habitat. Specific direction will outlined in the annual plan of use.
Range Administration	D07	Manage wild horses in accordance with the approved Monte Cristo Territory plan.	Coordinate wild horse population control with HLM and state agencies.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROGRAM

MH Reference Code	Activity Practice or Effect To Be Measured	Monitoring Technique	Expected Precision/Reliability	Measurement Frequency	Reporting Period	Variation Which Would Cause Further Evaluation and/or Change in Management Direction	Level of Intent of Monitoring	Responsibility	Monitoring Sample Size
Range									
D01	Grazing use record	Record of actual use by livestock or wild free-roaming horses	M/M	Annual	Annual	Number change up or down 10% or more	To check for compliance with the grazing permit; to determine the presence of excess animals; to firm up stocking capacity	District Ranger	According to approved AMP or TIP
D01	Distribution and intensity of grazing use	Use mapping	M/M	According to approved AMP or TIP	End of grazing cycle or every 5 years	Uneven grazing use occurs or use intensity is outside of standards	To identify management problems; to firm up stocking capacity	District Ranger	According to approved AMP or TIP
D02	Key forage plant utilization	Grazing impact study	M/M	According to approved AMP or TIP	End of grazing cycle or every 5 years	Proper use standards are not being met	To identify management problems; to firm up stocking capacity	District Ranger	According to approved AMP or TIP
D02	Weather information	General observation of plant growing conditions	M/M	Annual for each Ranger District	Annual for each Ranger District	Significant change in weather occurs, e.g. dry rainy, stormy cold or hot	To determine effect on forage production; to interpret management effectiveness	District Ranger	Observations of seasonal weather patterns on District
D02	Long-term trend in range conditions	Measure change in ecological status and/or resource value	M/M	According to approved AMP or TIP	According to approved AMP or TIP	Ecological status or resource value changes	To determine management effectiveness	District Ranger	According to approved AMP or TIP
D02	Supplemental information such as phenology, ground cover, fire, insects, diseases, noxious weeds, rodents, photographs, enclosures and occupation areas	According to approved AMP or TIP	M/M	According to approved AMP or TIP	According to approved AMP or TIP	A significant event occurs or information indicates a need for change in management practices	To help interpret management effectiveness	District Ranger	According to approved AMP or TIP

MONTE CRISTO WILD HORSE TERRITORY

BIM

USFS

ILLIPAH

TERRITORY BOUNDARY

TOM PLAIN

TREASURE HILL

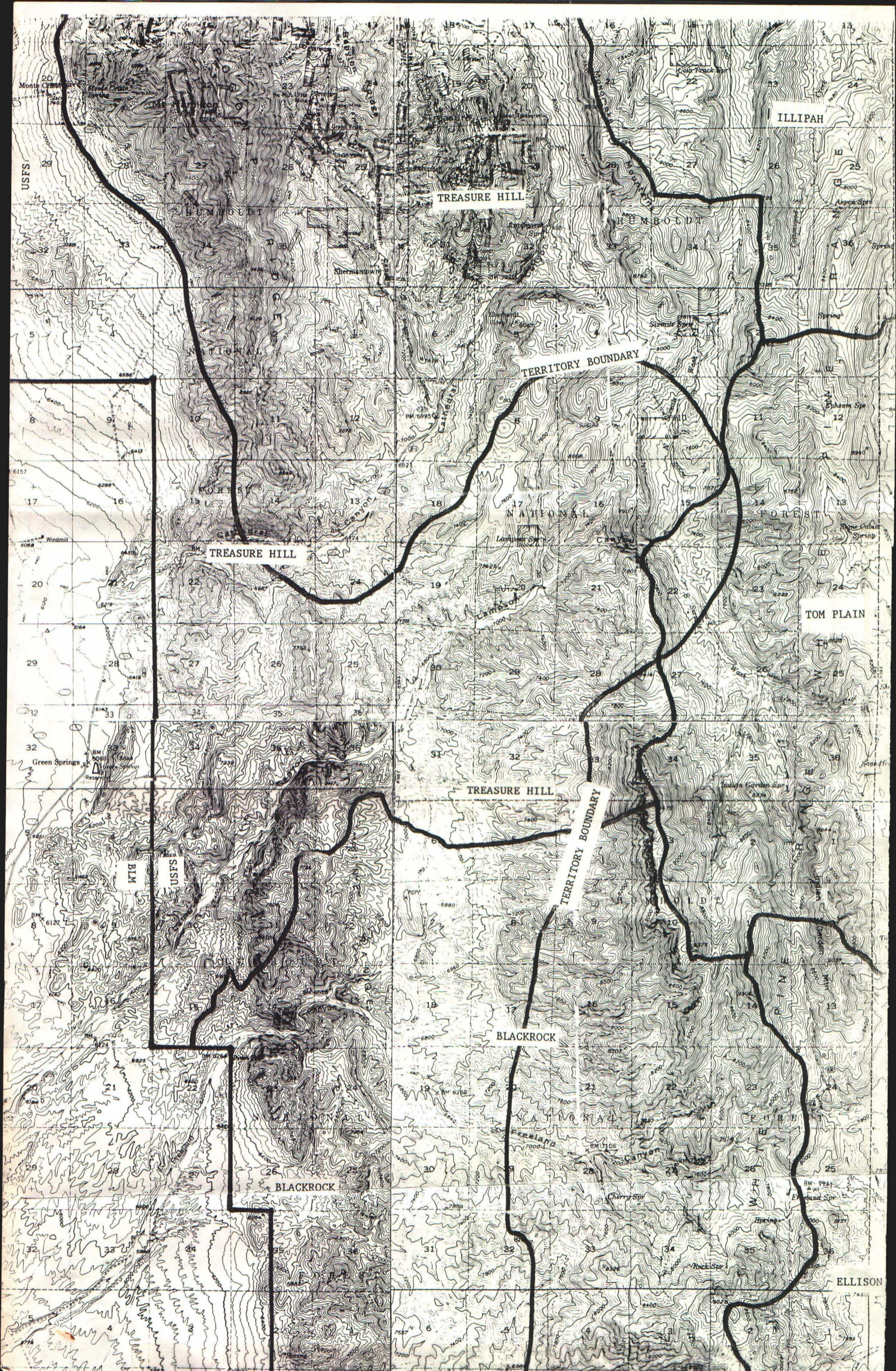
TREASURE HILL

TREASURE HILL

TREASURE HILL

TERRITORY BOUNDARY

TERRITORY BOUNDARY



ILLIPAH

TREASURE HILL

HUMBOLDT

TERRITORY BOUNDARY

TREASURE HILL

NATIONAL FOREST

TOM PLAIN

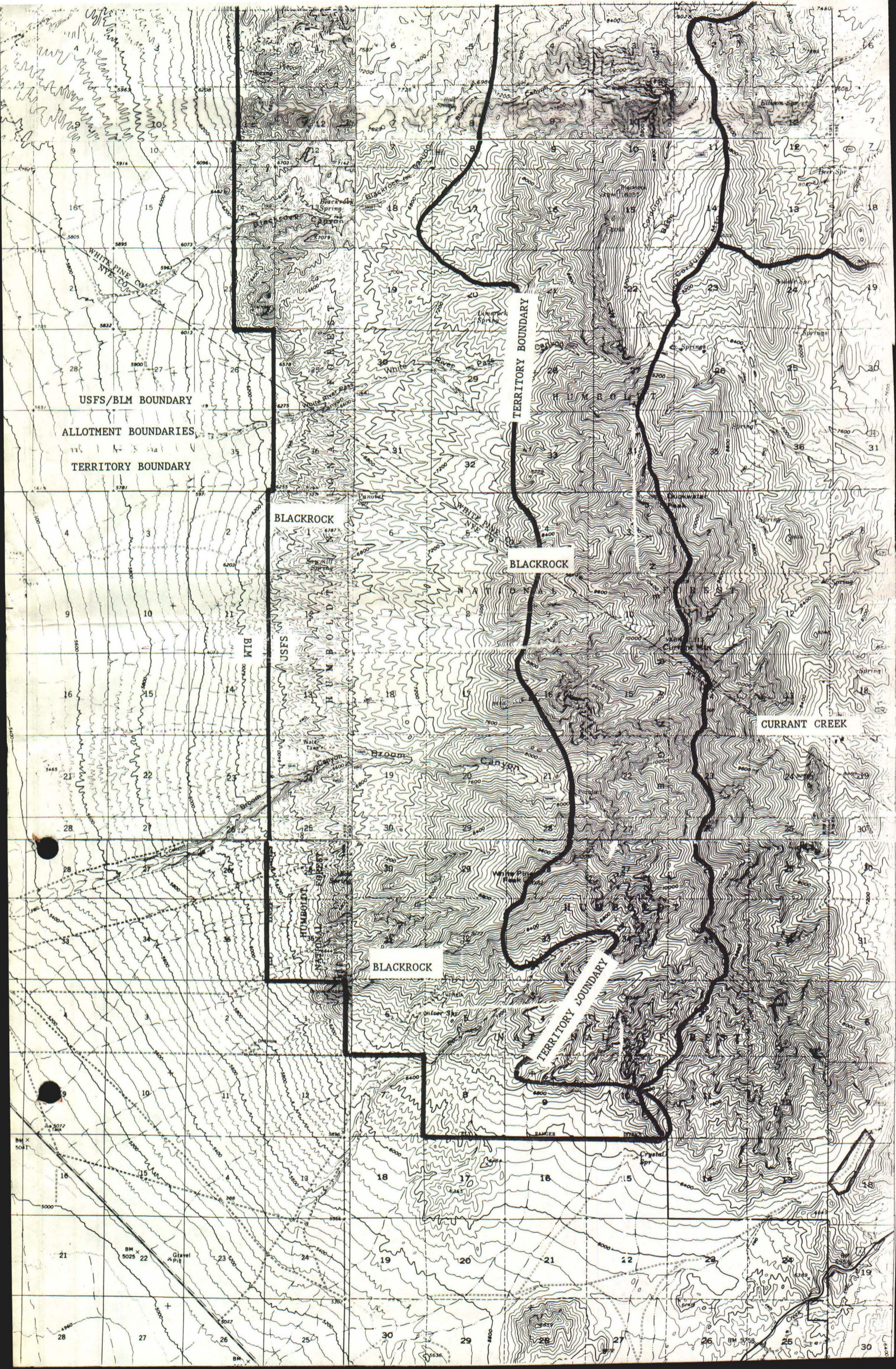
TREASURE HILL

TERRITORY BOUNDARY

BLACKROCK

BLACKROCK

ELLISON



USFS/BLM BOUNDARY

ALLOTMENT BOUNDARIES

TERRITORY BOUNDARY

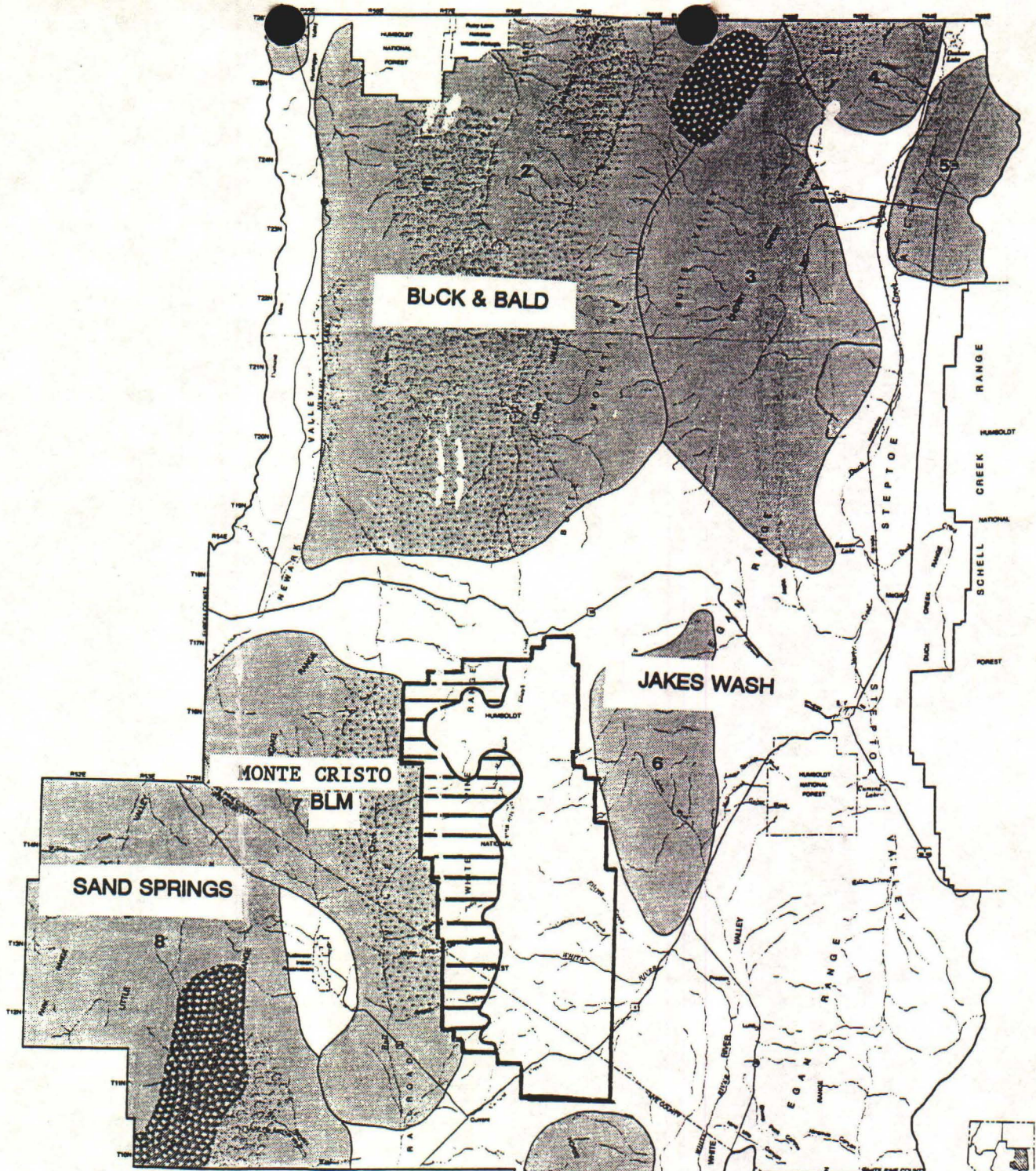
BLACKROCK

BLACKROCK

CARRANT CREEK

BLACKROCK

TERRITORY BOUNDARY



KEY USE AREAS

-  SUMMER
-  WINTER
-  YEAR LONG

HERD USE AREAS (HORSE NUMBERS)

- 1 Diamond Hill (36)
- 2 Buck and Bald (700)
- 3 Butte (60)
- 4 Cherry Creek (11)
- 5 Antelope (14)
- 6 Jakes Wash (20)
- 7 Monte Cristo (96)
- 8 Sand Springs (494)
- 9 White River (20)



MONTE CRISTO
USFS

*water S at Hamilton
Cathedral Canyon - mod use
Samson Canyon - no line use
severe use*

*at Lt
7800 WH on Apr 1992*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
EGAN RECORD OF DECISION

WILD HORSE HERD USE AREAS

June July visit prep.

TABLE I.

SUMMARY OF POPULATION CENSUS OF MONTE CRISTO WILD HORSE HERD MANAGEMENT AREA

CENSUS/GATHER YEAR	DATE	TOTAL HORSES	ADULTS	FOALS	BLM	USFS	ALLOTMENT
1973 CENSUS	FEB.	88					
1975 CENSUS	MAR.	158					
1978 CENSUS		198					
1979 GATHER	JAN.	96 REMOVED					
1981 CENSUS	SEPT.	206	185	21	73	133	47 TREASURE HILL 86 BLACKROCK
1982 CENSUS	SEPT.	365	333	32	200	165	13 TREASURE HILL 152 BLACKROCK
1983 CENSUS	AUG.	223	177	46	171	102	35 TREASURE HILL 142 BLACKROCK
1983 GATHER	AUG.	43 REMOVED	35	8			
1983 CENSUS	AUG.	101					
1983 CENSUS	SEPT.	208	173	35	93	115	7 TREASURE HILL 108 BLACKROCK
1983 CENSUS	DEC.	252	218	34	246	6	6 BLACKROCK
1985 CENSUS	MAY	253	211	42	201	52	52 BLACKROCK
1985 GATHER	JULY	185 REMOVED	147	38			
1986 CENSUS	FEB.	145	142	3	121	24	2 TREASURE HILL 22 BLACKROCK
1989 CENSUS	MAR.	392	349	43	320	72	10 TREASURE HILL 62 BLACKROCK
1991 CENSUS	APR.	152*	144	8	101	51	51 BLACKROCK
1991 CENSUS	JULY	725	598	127	560	165	104 TREASURE HILL 61 BLACKROCK
1992 CENSUS	AUG.	781	627	154	495	286	247 TREASURE HILL 25 BLACKROCK 9 ILLIPAH 5 TOM PLAIN

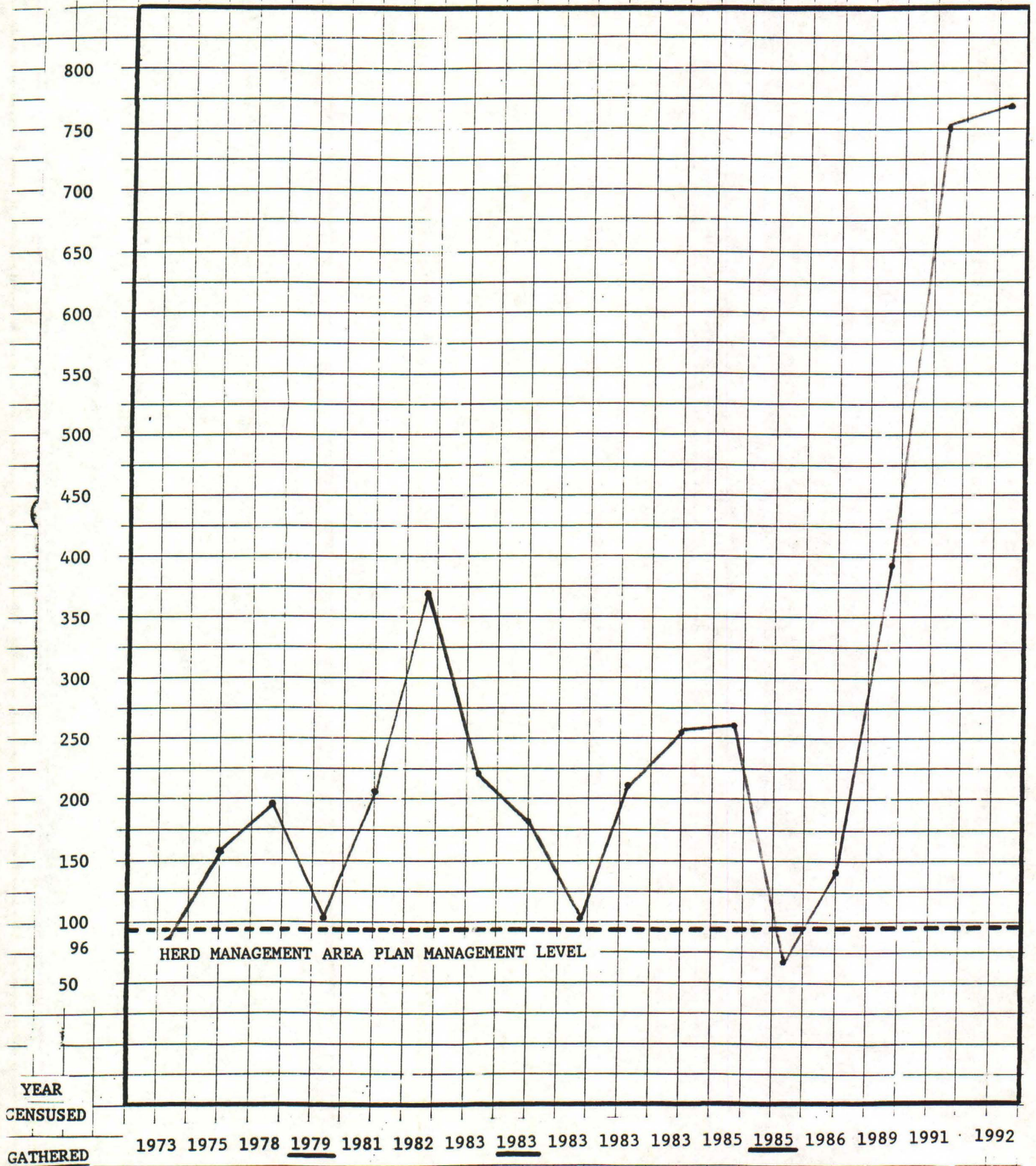
* A partial census was conducted in April 1991 along the southern boundary. This did not include the Treasure Hill allotment.

GRAPH #1.

MONTE CRISTO POPULATION CENSUS/GATHER

#'S OF WILD HORSES

USFS/BLM



HERD MANAGEMENT AREA PLAN MANAGEMENT LEVEL

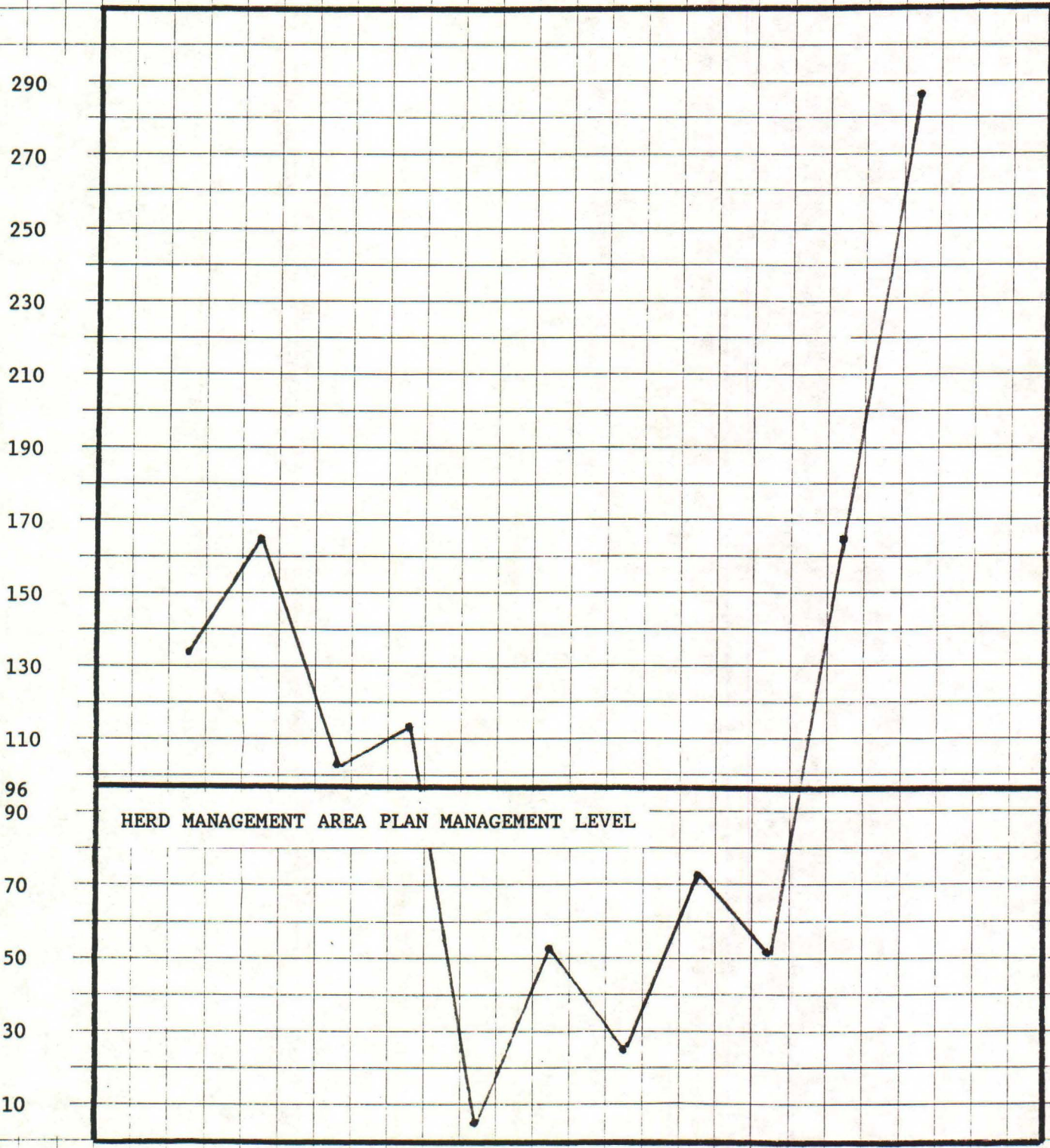
YEAR
CENSUSED
GATHERED

1973 1975 1978 1979 1981 1982 1983 1983 1983 1983 1985 1985 1986 1989 1991 1992

MONTE CRISTO POPULATION CENSUS

USFS

#'S OF WILD HORSES



YEAR CENSUSED

1981 1982 1983 1983 1983 1985 1986 1989 1991 1991 1992

SEASON

SEPT SEPT AUG SEPT DEC MAY FEB MAR APR JULY AUG

POPULATION CENSUS NARRATIVE

Much variability exists within the table and the graphs illustrating population census summaries for the Monte Cristo Herd Management Area. Numerous factors enter into this, some of which are listed below:

-Illegal capture of wild horses in this management area has been known to occur.

-There is a % of error in censusing attributed to:

Weather conditions

Light conditions

Experience of personnel censusing

Pilot expertise

Topography; especially timbered areas

HMA's that cannot be flown in one day (repeat counts or missed horses)

Age class difficult to determine

Observer fatigue

-Seasons and time of day aerial inventories are conducted. This is especially important for obtaining census data on the Forest, for greater numbers reside on the Forest in spring, summer, fall.

-Consecutive drought years may have had an effect on conception rates. The past few years, the numbers of horses censused has been considerably under normal reproductive increases within the herd.

-Mortality rates in foals born may be higher as well as with older horses competing for adequate amounts of forage and water.

-Exchange of horses between Herd Management Areas.

-Forced emmigration out of the HMA/Territory in search of water and forage.

-Emmigration out of the management area from other disturbances; i.e. seismic, mining, etc.

-Effects of the Highway 50 Fence constructed along the northern border of the HMA in the late 1980's. Prior to the fence construction, horses moved freely back and forth across the highway mixing with the Buck & Bald Herd.

-Gathering of Monte Cristo horses in conjunction with other HMA gathers.

All of these factors need to be considered when analyzing population information.