

Nellis

9-13-89

BLM

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Nancy Whitaker
Animal Protection Institute of America
P.O. Box 22505
Sacramento, CA 95822

Dear Ms. Whitaker:

Your comment letter on the Nellis Air Force Range Draft Resource Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Draft RP/EIS) was received by the Caliente Resource Area office on September 13, 1989. The comment period ended on September 1, 1989.

Because your comments were not received until after the close of the public comment and review period, they will not be included in the Proposed Resource Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement, and therefore, do not establish a record of participation in the planning process and do not establish an "affected interest" status.

Regardless of the above situation, however, I would like to address your concerns. The plan is, by necessity, limited to two alternatives. The primary use of the planning area is, by law, for military purposes; almost all other uses are allowed at the discretion of the Air Force (see Section 3 of the Military Lands Withdrawal Act on page A-2 of the Draft RP/EIS), thus limiting the Bureau's management options.

The confusion over the "wild horse boundary issue" appears to be a misunderstanding. The Nevada Wild Horse Range (NWHR) is still in existence, and has been, continuously, since its inception in 1962. The boundaries of the NWHR were originally established by cooperative agreement between the BLM and Air Force in 1962; the size of the NWHR was reduced from 435,000 acres to approximately 394,000 acres by a cooperative agreement between BLM and the Air Force in 1965. The 1973 cooperative agreement between BLM and the Air Force did not modify the boundary of the NWHR nor did it abolish the NWHR; the 1973 agreement did, however, re-define the two agencies' responsibilities under the Wild, Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971. As shown on Map 8 in the Draft RP/EIS, the NWHR is located within, but is not identical to, the 1971 horse use area.

BLM's Wildlife 2000 plan is a statement of policy, and as such, generally applies to all BLM-administered lands. In some situations, however, a policy is not applicable due to other constraints on land use; this is especially true where lands have been withdrawn for other purposes such as military use.