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Bureau of Land Management

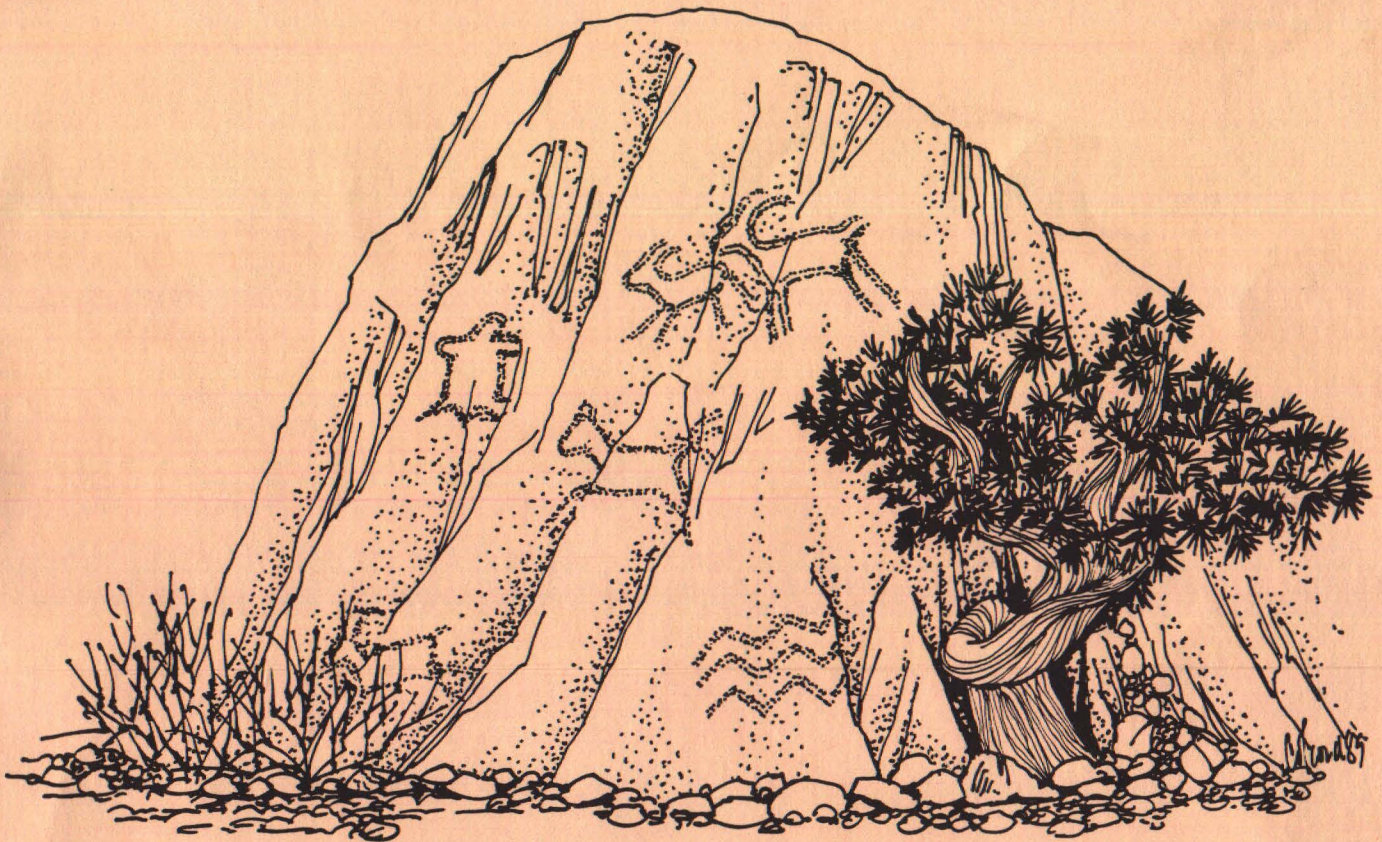
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January, 1990



Nellis Air Force Range Proposed Resource Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement





United States Department of the Interior

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TAKE
PRIDE IN
AMERICA

IN REPLY REFER TO:
1610 (NV-053)

January 29, 1990

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review and use is the Nellis Air Force Range Proposed Resource Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRP/FEIS). This plan outlines the proposed management actions for the 2.2 million acres of withdrawn public lands on the Nellis Air Force Range, Caliente Resource Area, Las Vegas District, Nevada.

The Nellis Air Force Range PRP/FEIS has been printed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. This plan is presented in an abbreviated format and must be used in conjunction with the Draft Resource Plan. This document contains a summary of the alternatives and environmental impacts from the draft document, an overview of the planning process and the planning issues, the proposed resource plan, revisions and errata to the draft, written and verbal comments received during public review of the draft plan, and responses to the public issues raised.

The Proposed Resource Plan may be protested by any person who participated in the planning process and who has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval of the plan. A protest may raise only those issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process (see 43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.5-2). Protests must be filed with the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, 18th and C Streets, N.W., Washington D.C. 20240, no later than March 2, 1990 (within thirty (30) days after release of this document) and should contain the following information:

- . The name, mailing address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest.
- . A statement of the issue or issues being protested.
- . A statement of the part or parts of the document being protested.
- . A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues previously submitted during the planning process by the protesting party, or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the records.
- . A short, concise statement explaining precisely why the BLM's Nevada State Director's decision is wrong.

After the 30-day protest period, a record of decision (ROD) and an approved resource plan will be issued. Approval will be withheld on any portion of the plan under protest until the final action has been completed on any such protest.

Sincerely yours,

Edward F. Spang
State Director, Nevada

**PROPOSED RESOURCE PLAN
AND FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

for the

**NELLIS AIR FORCE RANGE
PLANNING AREA**

Prepared by the
**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
LAS VEGAS DISTRICT**


**Edward F. Spang
Nevada State Director**

The proposed resource plan is the long-range plan to manage approximately 2.2 million acres of public land within the Nellis Air Force Range Planning Area. The plan, which describes and analyzes the options for management of natural resources of the withdrawn public lands in Nye, Lincoln, and Clark counties, Nevada, has been prepared in response to the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986 (PL 99-606). These lands have been withdrawn for use as a high-hazard military weapons training and testing area; management options are, therefore, limited and the Proposed Resource Plan reflects those limitations imposed by military use of the planning area. An integral environmental impact statement assesses the environmental consequences of the plan.

This document is both the proposed resource plan and the final environmental impact statement. The final resource plan will be approved by the State Director and published in a record of decision (ROD) following public review of this document.

For further information contact: Roger Alexander, Bureau of Land Management, Las Vegas District Office, P.O. Box 26569, Las Vegas, NV. 89126, or telephone (702) 646-8800.

Date this final statement was made available to the Environmental Protection Agency and to the Public: January 29, 1990.

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SUMMARY

SUMMARY

The Nellis Air Force Range Proposed Resource Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRP/FEIS) is designed to provide overall management direction for 2,209,326 acres of withdrawn lands within Clark, Nye and Lincoln Counties in southern Nevada. The planning area is located in the Caliente Resource Area of the Bureau of Land Management's Las Vegas District, Las Vegas, Nevada. The need for the Resource Plan resulted from the passage of the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986, as amended by Public Law (PL) 100-338, which withdrew the land for military purposes.

The PRP/FEIS is prepared as a single planning document to address the intensity of BLM resource management on the Nellis Air Force Range. Two alternatives were considered in detail: Alternative A (No Action Alternative) represented a continuation of current management direction within the framework of present laws and regulations, including existing Memoranda of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements. The No Action Alternative provided a baseline for the comparison of the environmental effects of the other alternatives. Alternative B, the Proposed Resource Plan, would direct management attention toward improving rangeland vegetative conditions and wildlife habitat by achieving and maintaining a thriving ecological balance for the wild horse population on the planning area.

The components of the two alternatives are summarized in Table S-1; the Proposed Resource Plan is further described in Chapter 2.

TABLE S-1
SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES

RESOURCES	MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES	ALTERNATIVE A NO ACTION	ALTERNATIVE B PROPOSED PLAN
LANDS			
ROWS	Issue ROWs.	Same	Same
Disposals	No lands available.	Same	Same
Authorizations	Issue authorizations.	Same	Same
ACCESS	Closed to public access. Access authorized on controlled basis.	Same Same	Same Same
MINERALS			
Mining	Valid existing rights recognized.	Same	Same
Oil/Gas Leases	No new locations/no new leasing.	Same	Same
SOIL, WATER, AIR			
Soils	Improve/Maintain.	Same	Same
Water	Meet standards.	Same	Same
Air	Meet standards.	Same	Same
VEGETATION	Protect T&E species.	Same	Same
	-	-	Develop riparian plan.
	-	-	If necessary, build up to 50 miles fence.
FORESTRY	Products not available due to access restrictions.	Same	Same
WILDLIFE	Protect T&E species. Consult with NDOW & USFWS. Authorize predator control.	Same Same Same	Same Same Same
	-	-	Develop 20 waters
	-	-	If necessary, build up to 30 miles allot. bdry. fence
	-	-	If necessary, build up to 125 miles fence for NWHR
WILD HORSES	Manage according to Five- Party Agreement.	Same	Same
	-	Wild horses will remain at current numbers.	Achieve and maintain a thriving ecological balance
	-	Relocate wild horses.	Remove all wild horses outside NWHR.
	-	Develop at least 6 waters.	Same
	-	Remove all burros.	Same

TABLE S-1
SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES (CONTINUED)

RESOURCES	MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES	ALTERNATIVE A NO ACTION	ALTERNATIVE B PROPOSED PLAN
WILD HORSES (CONTINUED)	-	-	Amend NWHR HMAP, as necessary.
	-	-	If necessary, fence up to 75 miles Nellis boundary.
	-	-	If necessary, fence up to 125 miles of NWHR boundary.
LIVESTOCK GRAZING	Continue at authorized levels on Bald Mtn. Allot.	Same	Same
CULTURAL RESOURCES	Protect cultural resources as mandated by legislation, Federal regulations and Executive Orders.	Same	Same
VISUAL RESOURCES	Manage in accordance with Class III, IV requirements, where applicable.	Same	Manage in accordance with Interim Class II and IV requirements, where applicable.
RECREATION	Access restricts recreation. Possible bighorn hunting Stonewall Mtn.	Same	Same
WILDERNESS	No areas meet criteria.	Same	Same
NATURAL AREAS/ ACECs	Timber Mtn. Caldera National Natural Landmark Area.	Same	Same
	No ACECs.	Same	Designate Timber Mtn Caldera National Natural Landmark as an ACEC.
FIRE MANAGEMENT	Existing MOU: control naturally caused fires.	Same	Same
	Assist, upon request, with military caused fires.	Same	Same

TABLE S-2
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

RESOURCE	MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES	ALTERNATIVE A NO ACTION	ALTERNATIVE B PROPOSED PLAN
LANDS			
ROWS	None	Same	Same
Disposals	None	Same	Same
Permits/Leases	None	Same	Same
ACCESS	None	Same	Same
MINERALS	None	Same	Same
SOIL, WATER, AIR	Long-term impacts to soils on 1,726 acres from minerals and lands actions.	Same	Same
	Short-term impacts to water and air quality on 1,726 acres from minerals and lands actions.	Same	Same
	-	Long-term impacts to soils on 1,784,000 acres from wild horses.	Short-term impacts to soils on 394,000 acres from wild horses.
VEGETATION	Long-term impacts on 1,726 acres from minerals and lands actions.	Same	Same
	Short-term impacts on 37,175 acres from livestock grazing.	Same	Same
	-	Long-term impacts on 250 acres of riparian vegetation.	Long-term positive impacts on 250 acres of riparian vegetation and 3,600 acres of upland vegetation from fencing, if constructed.
	-	Long-term impacts on 1,784,000 acres from wild horses.	Short-term impacts on 394,000 acres from wild horses. Long-term positive impacts on 1,390,000 acres by removing wild horses. Short-term impacts on 509 acres from fencing, if constructed.
FORESTRY	None	Same	Same
WILDLIFE HABITAT	Long-term impacts on 1,726 acres of wildlife habitat from minerals and lands actions.	Same	Same
	Long-term impacts to wildlife at water sources utilized by wild horses or livestock.	Long-term impacts to 250 acres of riparian habitat from wild horse grazing.	Long-term positive impacts on 250 acres of riparian habitat from fencing, if constructed.
	-	Long-term impacts on 1,784,000 acres of wildlife habitat from wild horses.	Short-term impacts on 394,000 acres from wild horses.
	-	-	Long-term positive impacts on 1,390,000 acres by removing wild horses.
	-	-	Short-term impacts on 509 acres from fencing, if constructed.

TABLE S-2
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS (CONTINUED)

RESOURCE	MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES	ALTERNATIVE A NO ACTION	ALTERNATIVE A PROPOSED PLAN
WILD HORSES	None	Health and vigor of wild horses would continue to decline on the NWHR. Wild horses would continue to utilize areas outside the NWHR.	Health and vigor of wild horses would improve on the NWHR. Wild horse use would occur only on the NWHR.
LIVESTOCK GRAZING	None	Same	Same
CULTURAL RESOURCES	Non-discretionary minerals actions could impact cultural resources on up to 516 acres.	Same	Same
	Discretionary minerals and lands actions could impact cultural resources on 1,210 acres.	Same	Same
	-	-	Up to 509 acres would be inventoried for cultural resources, if fencing constructed. Determinations of no effect or no adverse effect, through Section 106 consultation, would be made prior to surface disturbing activities.
VISUAL RESOURCES	Long-term impacts on 1,726 acres from minerals and lands activities.	Same	Same
	-	-	Long-term impacts on 509 acres due to fencing, if constructed.
RECREATION	Positive impacts on 16,640 acres due to bighorn sheep hunting.	Same	Same
WILDERNESS	None	Same	Same
NATURAL AREAS	None	Same	Same
ACECs	None	Same	Same
FIRE MANAGEMENT	None	Same	Same
SOCIO-ECONOMICS	None	Same	Same

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this resource plan is to consider what level of natural and cultural resource management will be conducted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on 2,209,326 acres of withdrawn public land within the Nellis Air Force Range. This plan will focus on three key management issues: vegetation, wildlife habitat, and wild horses. The need for this plan resulted from the passage of the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-606), which directed the Secretary of the Interior to develop a management plan for natural and cultural resources on the Nellis Air Force Range within 3 years from the date of enactment of the Military Lands Withdrawal Act (see Appendix A). This Proposed Resource Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRP/FEIS) is being prepared in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the BLM's planning regulations, Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1600 (43 CFR 1600), and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1500).

The Nellis Air Force Range was established by President Roosevelt in 1940 as the Las Vegas Bombing and Gunnery Range. The newly-formed military range partially overlapped what is now known as the Desert National Wildlife Range (created by Executive Order 7373 in 1936 for the protection of resident populations of bighorn sheep). This overlap has resulted in the co-use of a portion of the area by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Air Force (USAF). The co-use area is managed by the USFWS pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 and is, therefore, specifically excluded from consideration in this document (see Map 1)(All maps are located at the end of this Chapter).

During the past half century, two additional Executive Orders, nine Public Land Orders, two Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), and two Public Laws (PL) have transferred management responsibilities for limited portions of the Nellis Range to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and enlarged the

acreage of the Nellis Air Force Range to its current size of 3,035,326 acres.

The impacts of withdrawing the lands for military uses were analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Public Land Withdrawal, Nellis Air Force Bombing Range, Nye, Clark, and Lincoln Counties, Nevada (1981) and the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Groom Mountain Range, Lincoln County, Nevada (1986).

The USAF, USFWS, and the BLM entered into MOUs in 1951 and 1962 to provide for the protection of bighorn sheep and wild horses for the Nellis Air Force Range. These documents have been updated as needed.

Cooperative agreements for the conservation and development of fish and wildlife resources and the protection of wild horses were implemented in 1961, 1963, 1965, 1969, and 1973 (see Appendix C). The Nevada Wild Horse Range, located in the north-central portion of the planning area, is managed for the protection of wild horses and the maintenance of ecologically balanced population levels (see Map 8). In 1977, the USAF, BLM, DOE, USFWS, and Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) signed the Five-Party Cooperative Agreement to provide for the protection, development, and management of natural resources, including fish and wildlife, vegetation, watershed, and wild horses, on the Nellis Air Force Range and the Nevada Test Site (see Appendix B).

Prior to 1987, fire management activities on the Nellis Air Force Range were covered under a Reciprocal Agreement between the BLM and the USAF. After 1987, an MOU was approved to formalize a new Fire Management Reciprocal Agreement which incorporated Congressional direction, as specified in the Military Lands Withdrawal Act (see Appendix E).

On November 6, 1986, the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986 (PL 99-606) withdrew the lands known as the Nellis Air Force Range for military purposes. On June 17, 1988, Public Law 100-338 amended the Military Lands Withdrawal Act (hereinafter referred to as the Act) to include the lands known as the Groom

Mountain Range Addition in the Nellis Air Force Range. The following excerpt from Section 3 (a) of the Act describes how the withdrawn lands are to be managed:

(a) MANAGEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR— (1) During the period of the withdrawal, the Secretary of the Interior shall manage the lands withdrawn under section 1 (except those lands within a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System) pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) and other applicable law, including the Recreation Use of Wildlife Areas Act of 1962 (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.), and this Act. Lands within the Desert National Wildlife Range and the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge shall be managed pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.) and other applicable law. No provision of this Act, except sections 4, 11, and 12, shall apply to the management of the Desert National Wildlife Range or the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge.

(2) To the extent consistent with applicable law and Executive orders, the lands withdrawn under section 1 may be managed in a manner permitting— (A) the continuation of grazing pursuant to applicable law and Executive orders where permitted on the date of enactment of this Act; (B) protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat; (C) control of predatory and other animals; (D) recreation; and (E) the prevention and appropriate suppression of brush and range fires resulting from nonmilitary activities.

(3) (A) All nonmilitary use of such lands, other than the uses described in paragraph (2), shall be subject to such conditions and restrictions as may be necessary to permit the military use of such lands for the purposes specified in or authorized pursuant to this Act. (B) The Secretary of the Interior may issue any lease, easement, right-of-way, or other authorization with respect to the nonmilitary use of such land only with the concurrence of the Secretary of the military department concerned.

Section 3(b) requires the Secretary of the appropriate military department to determine which lands require closure to public use due to military operations, public safety or national security. Prior to the initiation of formal planning, the Air Force was consulted to discuss closure to public uses and limitations on the management of natural and cultural resources. Verbal

determinations on these issues were made and are reflected in the planning criteria, discussed later in this chapter.

Section 12(a) requires the Secretary of the Interior, with the concurrence of the Secretary of the appropriate military department, to determine which of the withdrawn lands may be considered for opening to the operation of the Mining Law of 1872, the Mineral Lands Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands of 1947, the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970, or any one or more of such Acts. The Air Force has been consulted concerning which lands could be considered for opening to operation of the above acts. Written documentation of their determination has not been obtained by the BLM, but verbal determinations were made and these are reflected in the planning criteria discussed later in this chapter.

LOCATION AND LAND STATUS

The Nellis Air Force Range is located in south-central Nevada in Clark, Lincoln and Nye counties (see Map 2). The withdrawn area encompasses 3,035,326 acres, of which 826,000 acres are administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the Desert National Wildlife Range. Included within the Nellis Range are approximately 123 acres of private lands (patented mining claims)(see Map 4).

The Planning Area addressed in this document contains 2,209,326 acres of public land located within the boundaries of the Nellis Air Force Range (see Map 2).

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

The planning process is designed to enable BLM to address the issues and concerns of the public, while complying with the laws and policies established by Congress and the Executive Branch of the Federal Government. The development of the Nellis Air Force Range PRP/FEIS was a part of nine basic planning steps that emphasize the role of public participation at several key stages. The nine planning steps are as follows:

Step 1: Identification of Issues

Issues drive the resource management planning process and indicate specific concerns which the BLM or the public may have regarding the planning area. An issue is defined as an opportunity, conflict, or

problem pertaining to the management of public lands and associated resources. Identification of the issues orients the planning process so that the efforts of interdisciplinary analysis and documentation are directed toward resolution of the issues.

Issue identification for the Nellis Air Force Range DRP/DEIS was initiated by BLM managers and specialists, in consultation with the participating agencies of the Five-Party Cooperative Agreement. A Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register, inviting the public and other federal and state agencies to participate in the planning process. Scoping meetings were held in Alamo, Tonopah, and Las Vegas, Nevada to receive public input. The following are the issues that were considered in the Draft Resource Plan:

Issue 1. Vegetation

What vegetation condition(s) is(are) desirable? What management actions are needed to obtain or maintain that condition? What special management actions are needed to protect threatened and endangered plant species?

Issue 2. Wildlife Habitat

What are the wildlife habitat objectives for existing wildlife species? What areas require habitat management plans? What special management actions are needed to protect threatened and endangered animal species?

Issue 3. Wild Horse and Burro Management

Are the current objectives of the Nevada Wild Horse Range Herd Management Area Plan adequate?

The following uses were considered as potential issues but were not selected for detailed analysis due to the constraints imposed by the withdrawal legislation and military use of the area: prevention and suppression of brush and range fires, livestock grazing, minerals, management of the Desert National Wildlife Range, control of predatory and other animals, public access, recreation, rights-of-way, utility corridors, and cultural resources. For a detailed discussion of these topics, see the Nellis Air Force Range Resource Plan Pre-Planning Contract, available in Caliente Resource Area or the Las Vegas District offices of the BLM.

Step 2: Development of Planning Criteria

After the issues were identified, planning criteria were formulated to guide the development of the resource plan. The criteria were derived from laws, Executive Orders, regulations, planning principles, BLM National and State office guidance, consultation with the Air Force, public involvement, and resource information. The criteria helped to set the standards for data collection, to establish alternatives to be examined, and to select the preferred alternative and final plan. Planning criteria ensure that the plan is tailored to the issues and that unneeded data collection and analysis are avoided. The planning criteria for this resource plan are as follows:

- A. Recognize that the lands on the Nellis Air Force Range are reserved for use by the Secretary of the Air Force: 1. as an armament and high-hazard testing area; 2. for training for aerial gunnery, rocketry, electronic warfare, and tactical maneuvering and air support; and 3. subject to other defense-related purposes consistent with the purposes specified in the Act.
- B. The Nellis Air Force Range Resource Plan will not address access per se, but will address the extent to which access restrictions and limitations have a bearing on the resource management issues identified for analysis in this resource plan.
- C. An MOU between the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of the Air Force will be prepared to implement the resource plan. This MOU will stipulate that the Director of the BLM is to provide assistance in the suppression of fires resulting from the military use of lands withdrawn, if requested by the Secretary of the military department concerned.
- D. Lands within the Desert National Wildlife Range will be managed in accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, and other applicable law and will not be changed or modified by this resource plan.
- E. Relegate site-specific resource management direction to the existing activity plan (e.g. Nevada Wild Horse Range Herd Management Area Plan and Environmental Assessment).
- F. Apply the principles set forth in the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of November 6, 1986 (PL 99-606).

- G. Use a systematic interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, social, and environmental aspects of public land management.
- H. Rely on available inventories of the lands withdrawn by PL 99-606 (identified as the Nellis Air Force Range), their resources, and other values to reach sound management decisions.
- I. Give consideration to present and potential uses of the lands withdrawn by PL 99-606, as defined in the Act.
- J. Consider impacts of uses on adjacent or nearby non-Federal lands and on non-public land surface over federally-owned minerals.
- K. Weigh long-term benefits and detriments against short-term benefits and detriments.
- L. Comply fully with applicable pollution control laws, including Federal and State air, water, noise, or other pollution standards or implementation plans, consistent with the stated purpose of the Nellis Range withdrawal.
- M. Coordinate BLM resource inventory, planning, and management activities with the resource planning and management programs of other Federal departments and agencies, State and local governments, and Indian tribes to the extent consistent with the laws governing the administration of the lands withdrawn by PL 99-606, as defined in the Act.

Step 3: Inventory and Data Collection

Using the planning criteria (item H), as described in Step 2 above, and given the access restrictions and time constraints, it was determined that existing inventories, while limited, were adequate for the purposes of this plan.

Step 4: Analysis of the Management Situation

The Management Situation Analysis (MSA) is a deliberate assessment of the current situation. It includes a description of current BLM management guidance, a discussion of existing problems and opportunities for solving them, and a consolidation of existing data that is needed to analyze and resolve the identified issues. Generally speaking, the MSA is incorporated into the Resource Plan as the Affected Environment, Continuing Management Guidance, and Alternatives. The MSA for the Nellis Resource Plan is

available for review at the Caliente Resource Area and the Las Vegas District offices of the BLM.

Step 5: Formulation of Alternatives

On the basis of the issues, planning criteria, and concerns raised during scoping, two comprehensive alternatives were developed for management's consideration. The No Action alternative is required by law and represents a continuation of present activities. The other alternative strives to resolve the issues, while emphasizing a different level of management intensity. Other alternatives were initially considered but were eliminated from detailed analysis. These other alternatives are listed in Chapter 2, of the DRP/EIS with a discussion of why they were not considered further.

Step 6: Estimation of Effects of Alternatives

In accordance with NEPA, the physical, biological, social, and economic effects of implementing each of the alternatives were estimated to allow for a comparative evaluation of impacts. A general analysis of the issues and concerns for the planning area was completed (see Chapter 4 of the DRP/EIS); site-specific environmental assessments (EAs) will be prepared for specific projects and proposals on a project-specific basis.

Step 7: Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Analysis of the issues, the resources affected, and the management restrictions imposed by the military uses of the withdrawn lands resulted in the selection of Alternative B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative was designed to protect natural resources and to improve resource conditions, within the constraints imposed by the military use of the withdrawn lands.

Based on (a) the issues and concerns identified through the planning process; (b) information obtained from public meetings and letters; (c) formal coordination and consultation with other agencies; (d) decision criteria developed and considered by management; and (e) impact analyses of the alternatives, the Caliente Area Manager and the Las Vegas District Manager recommended a Preferred Alternative to the Nevada State Director, who reviewed and approved the selection. The Commander, Tactical Fighter Weapons Center, Nellis Air Force Base, also reviewed the analysis and concurred with this selection. After the selection and approval of the Preferred Alternative, the DRP/DEIS was distributed to the public, including other government agencies and

interest groups, for a 90 day review and comment period that ended on September 1, 1989.

Step 8: Selection of the Proposed Plan

Following completion of the public review and comment period, the Las Vegas District Manager has recommended a proposed plan to the BLM State Director for approval. Based on an evaluation of public comments, the BLM and USAF reassessed and made minor changes to the preferred alternative to meet management needs. After reviewing the recommended proposed plan, the BLM Nevada State Director has filed the Proposed Resource Plan and Final EIS (PRP/FEIS) with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and distributed the document to the public.

The Governor of the State of Nevada will be given a 60-day consistency review, allowing the State to determine whether the PRP/FEIS is consistent with State and local Government plans and policies. This review of the PRP/FEIS will begin when the Governor receives copies of the document.

A 30-day protest and appeal period begins when the PRP/FEIS is filed with EPA. If no protests are received during this time, the BLM State Director, after conferring with the Commander, Tactical Fighter Weapons Center, Nellis Air Force Base, will approve the plan and publish a Record of Decision (ROD). If protests are received, the BLM Director will resolve those protests before the plan is approved and the ROD published.

Implementation of the resource plan will then take place. Section 3(e) of the Act directs BLM and the Air Force to enter into an MOU to implement the resource plan. This MOU will establish the policies, procedures, and responsibilities for coordination and cooperation between the BLM and the Air Force.

Prior to the initiation of specific resource projects and proposals, site-specific EAs will analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed activities. Mitigation measures will be developed and incorporated as special stipulations into authorization permits.

Step 9: Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementing MOU will include intervals and standards for monitoring and evaluation as established in this resource plan. The intervals will not exceed 5 years. Monitoring and evaluation will be

used (a) to determine the effectiveness of the resource plan in resolving the issues; (b) to ensure that mitigation measures are satisfactory; (c) to verify that the assumptions used in the assessment of impacts are correct; (d) to ascertain whether there have been changes in related plans of other Federal, State or local Governments; and (e) to determine whether or not implementation of the resource plan is achieving the desired results. Any information gained will be incorporated into future planning, including any amendments or revisions to the resource Plan.

At least every five years, BLM will determine, with the concurrence of the Air Force, which public lands are suitable for opening to the mining and mineral leasing laws, as per Section 12 of the Act. If further decontamination of the lands is required (as per Section 7 of the Act) to allow expanded nonmilitary uses, an amendment that addresses possible management changes to this plan will be completed.

CONFORMANCE STATEMENT

Prior to being incorporated by legislative action into the Nellis Air Force Range, the Groom Mountain Range addition (89,600 acres) was managed in accordance with the Caliente Management Framework Plan (MFP). The Caliente MFP was maintained in 1988 to adjust its boundaries to exclude the Groom Mountain Range withdrawal area. Only those decisions pertaining to livestock grazing and visual resource management for the Groom Mountain portion will be carried forward in this resource plan.

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS

There are no known inconsistencies between any of the alternatives and the officially approved and adopted resource-related policies and programs of other Federal agencies, State, and local Governments. Existing BLM land use plans that cover lands contiguous to the planning area include the Clark County Management Framework Plan (MFP), Caliente MFP, Tonopah MFP, and the Esmeralda-Southern Nye Resource Management Plan (RMP).

The Desert National Wildlife Range Refuge Management Plan addresses resource management on lands administered by the USFWS. These lands are located both within and adjacent to the planning area. The USFWS administered lands within the Nellis Range (co-use area) will continue to be managed

pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966.

Continuing coordination and consultation will take place during the 30 day protest period following

distribution of the PRP/FEIS and prior to distribution of the Approved Resource Plan and ROD. As previously noted, the Governor of Nevada will have 60 days to review the Proposed Plan to determine consistency with State plans.

ADMINISTERED
BY CALIFORNIA

**WINNEMUCCA
DISTRICT**

**ELKO
DISTRICT**

**CARSON CITY
DISTRICT**

**BATTLE
MOUNTAIN
DISTRICT**

**ELY
DISTRICT**


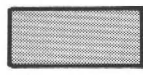
MAP # 1

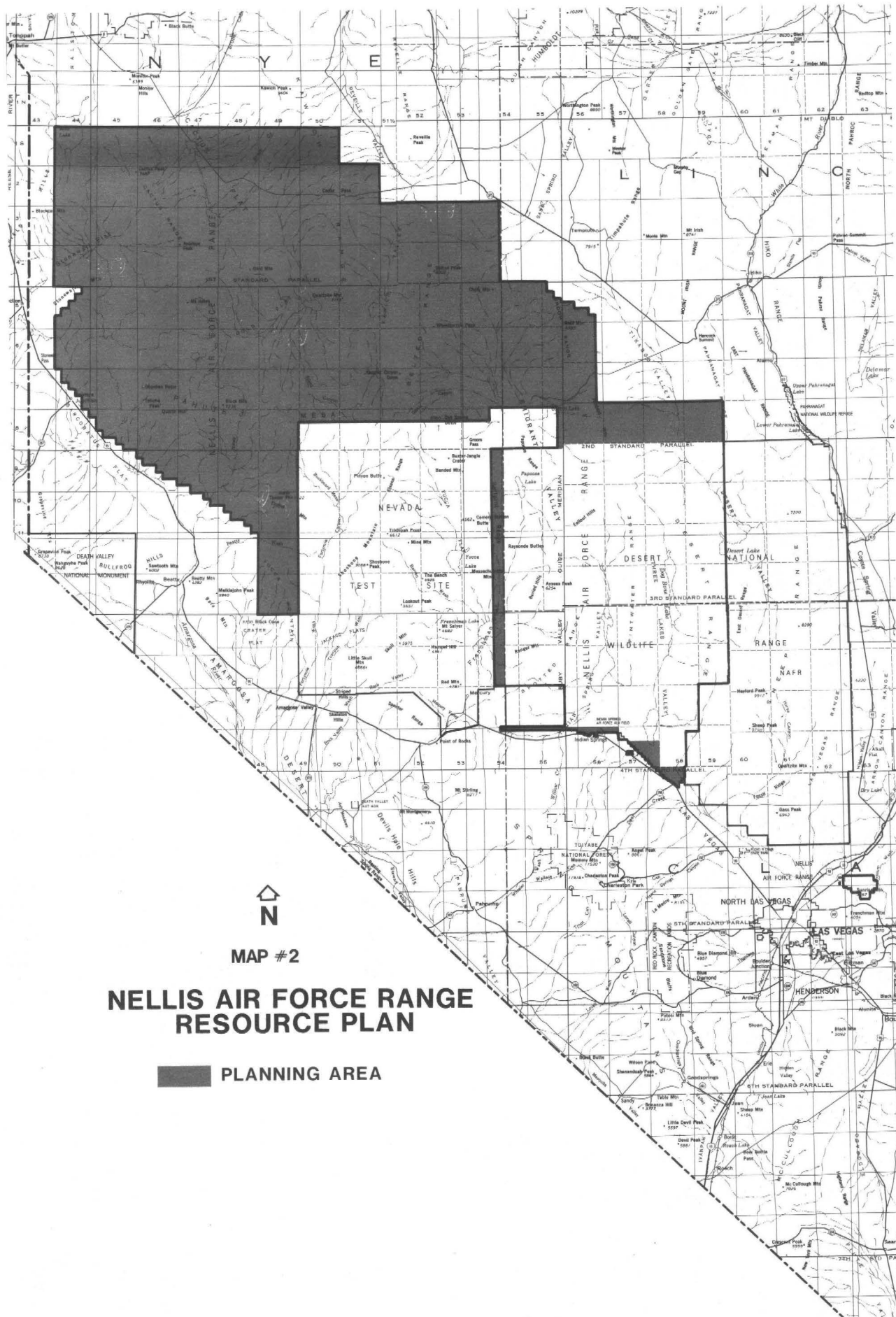
LAS VEGAS DISTRICT

**NEVADA
TEST
SITE**

**(OVERLAP
AREA)
DESERT
NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
RANGE**

**LAS VEGAS
DISTRICT**

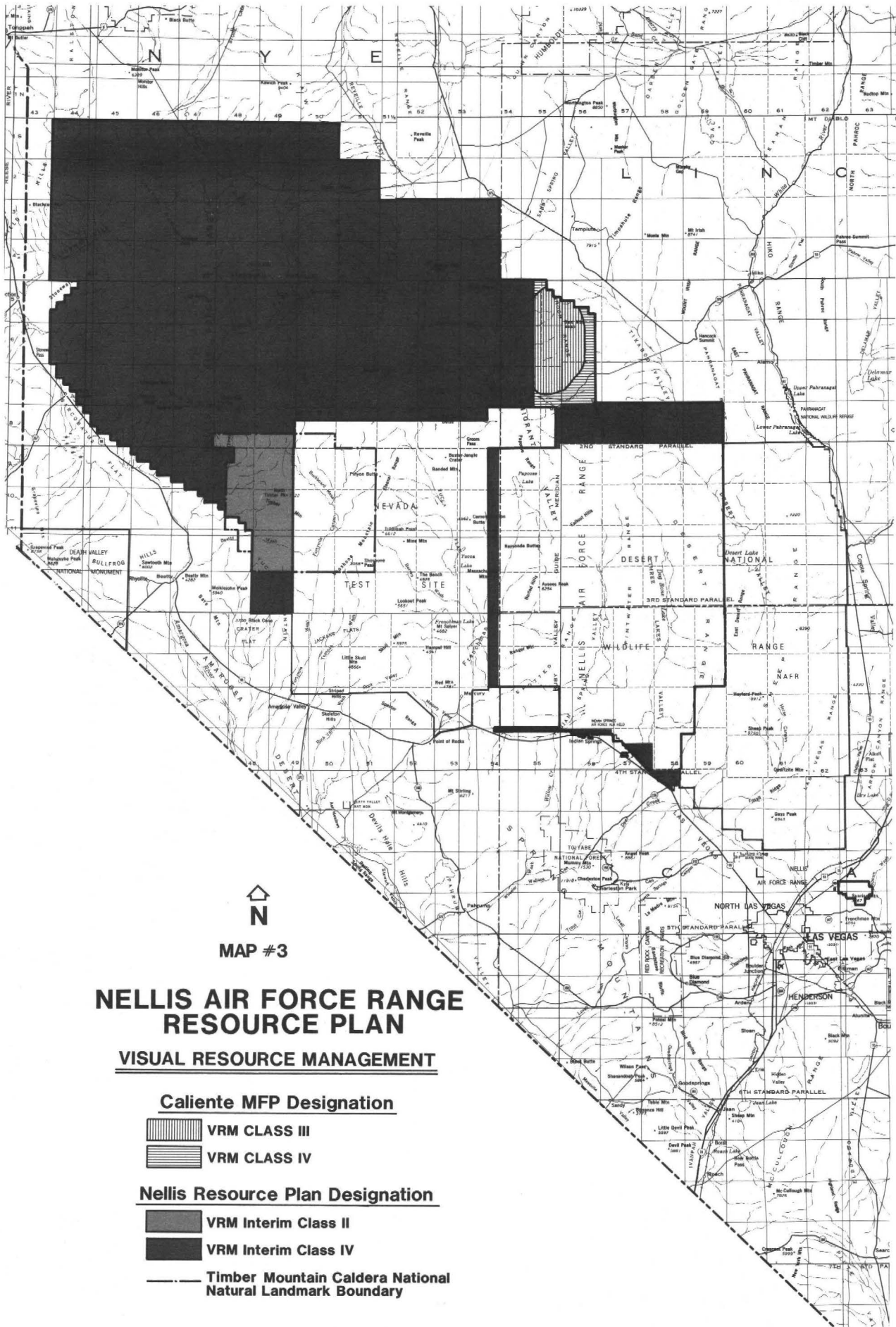
-  **Nellis Air Force Range
Resource Plan**
-  **Overlap Area is the part of the
Nellis Air Force Range that will not
be covered by this Plan.**



MAP #2

NELLIS AIR FORCE RANGE RESOURCE PLAN

 PLANNING AREA



MAP #3




NELLIS AIR FORCE RANGE RESOURCE PLAN

VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Caliente MFP Designation

-  VRM CLASS III
-  VRM CLASS IV

Nellis Resource Plan Designation

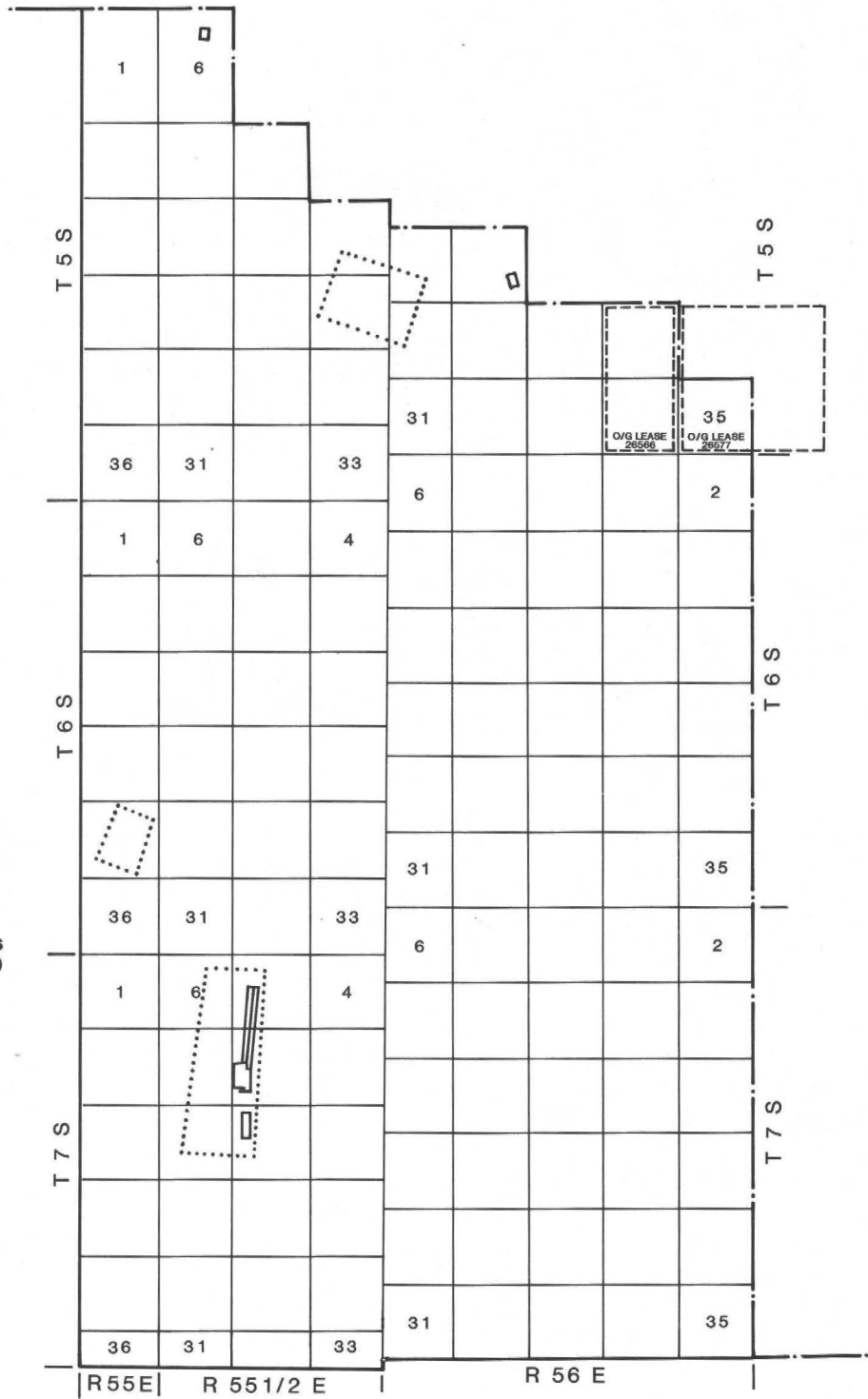
-  VRM Interim Class II
-  VRM Interim Class IV
-  Timber Mountain Caldera National Natural Landmark Boundary

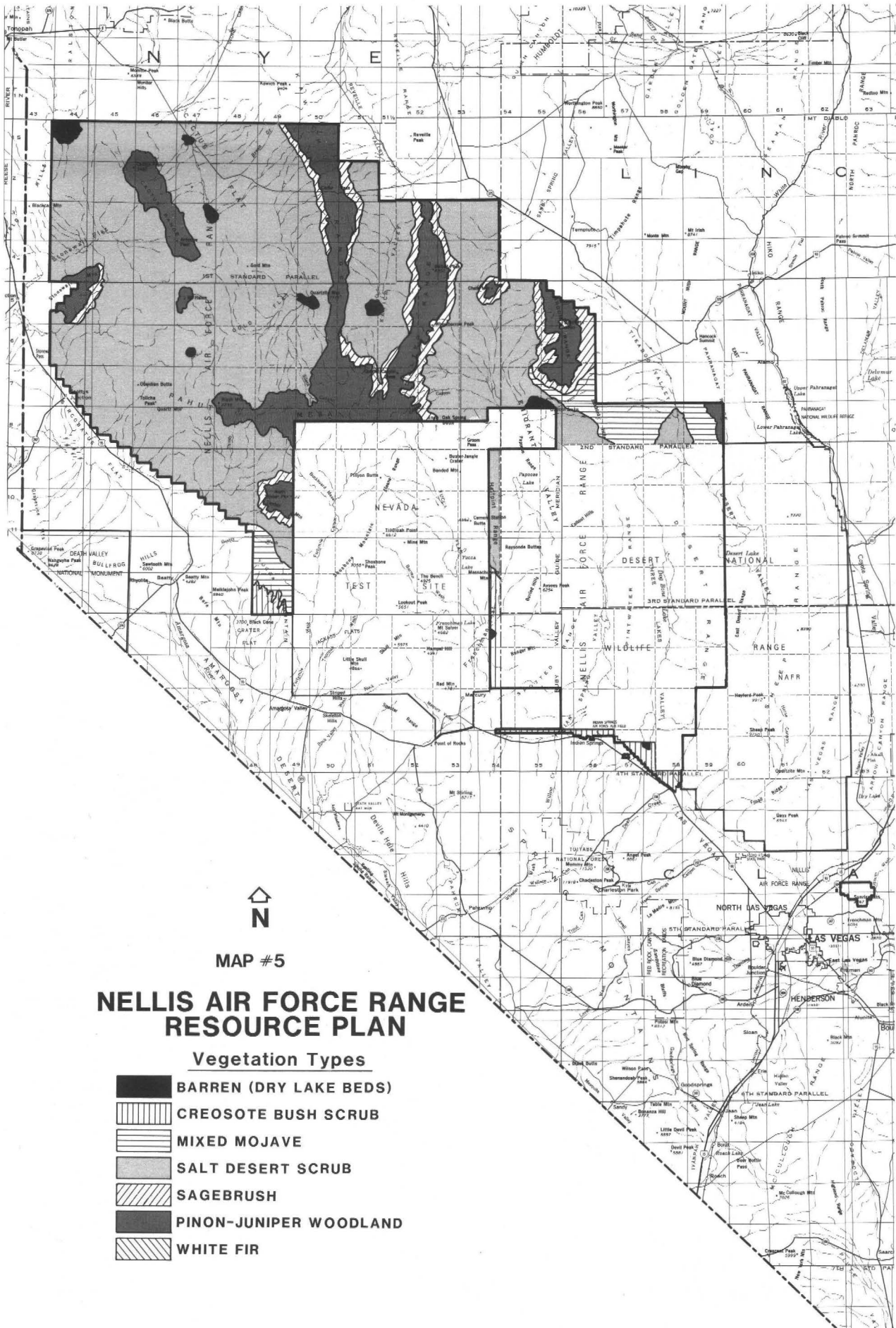


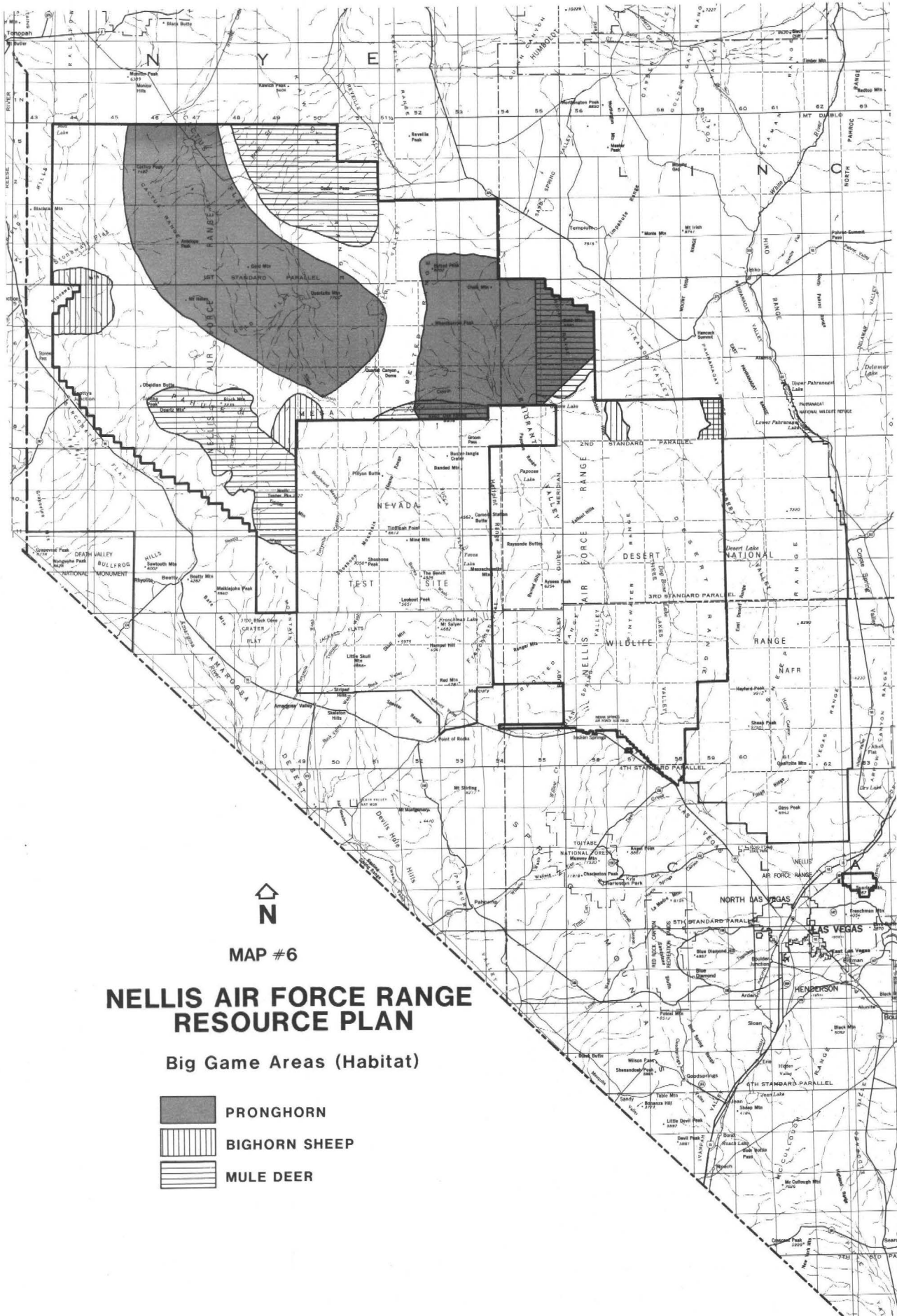
MAP #4

MINERALS

- Withdrawal Boundary
- - - O/G Leases
- Patented Mining Claims
- Unpatented Mining Claims (APPROX. LOCATION)





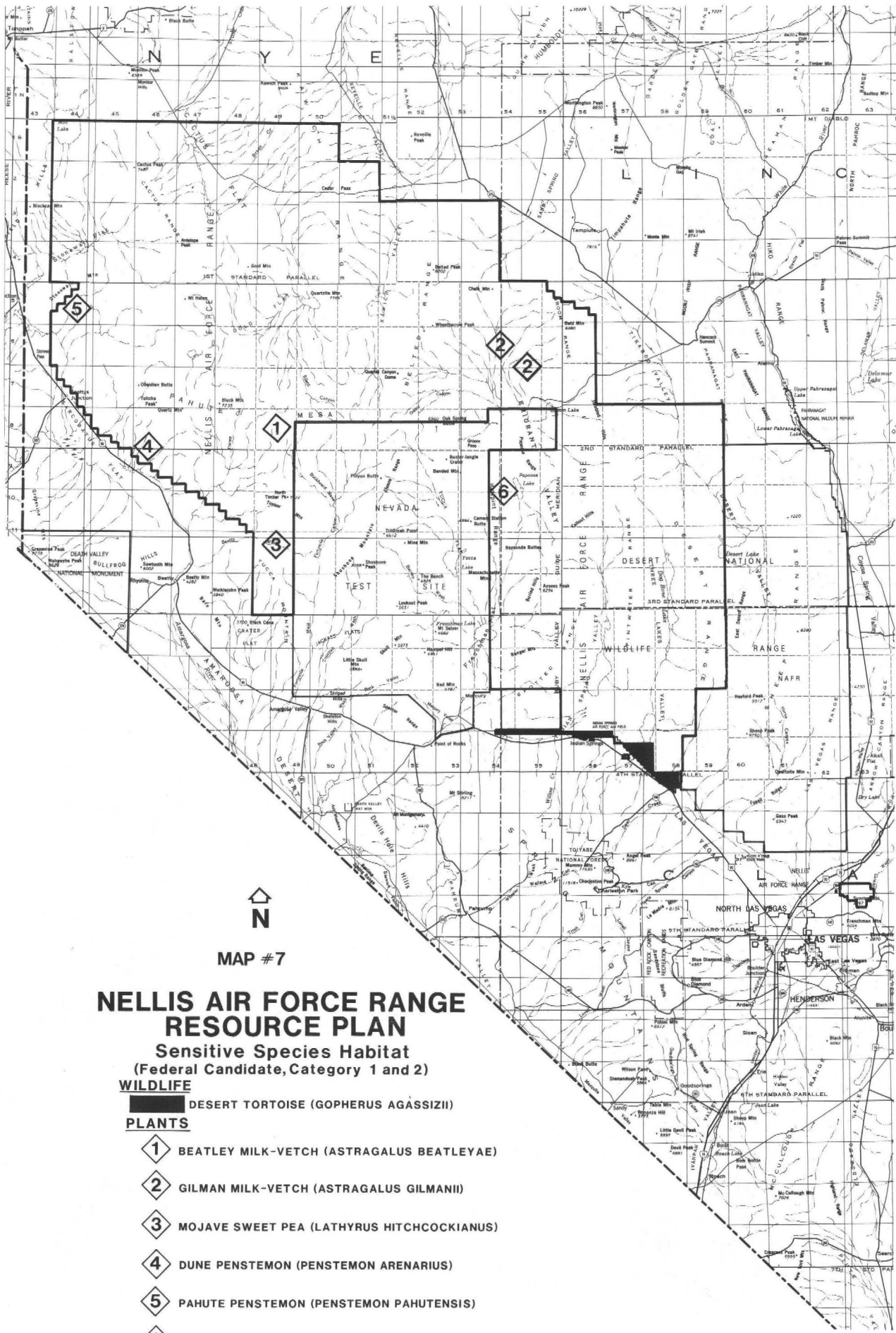


MAP #6

NELLIS AIR FORCE RANGE RESOURCE PLAN

Big Game Areas (Habitat)

- PRONGHORN
- BIGHORN SHEEP
- MULE DEER




 MAP #7

NELLIS AIR FORCE RANGE RESOURCE PLAN

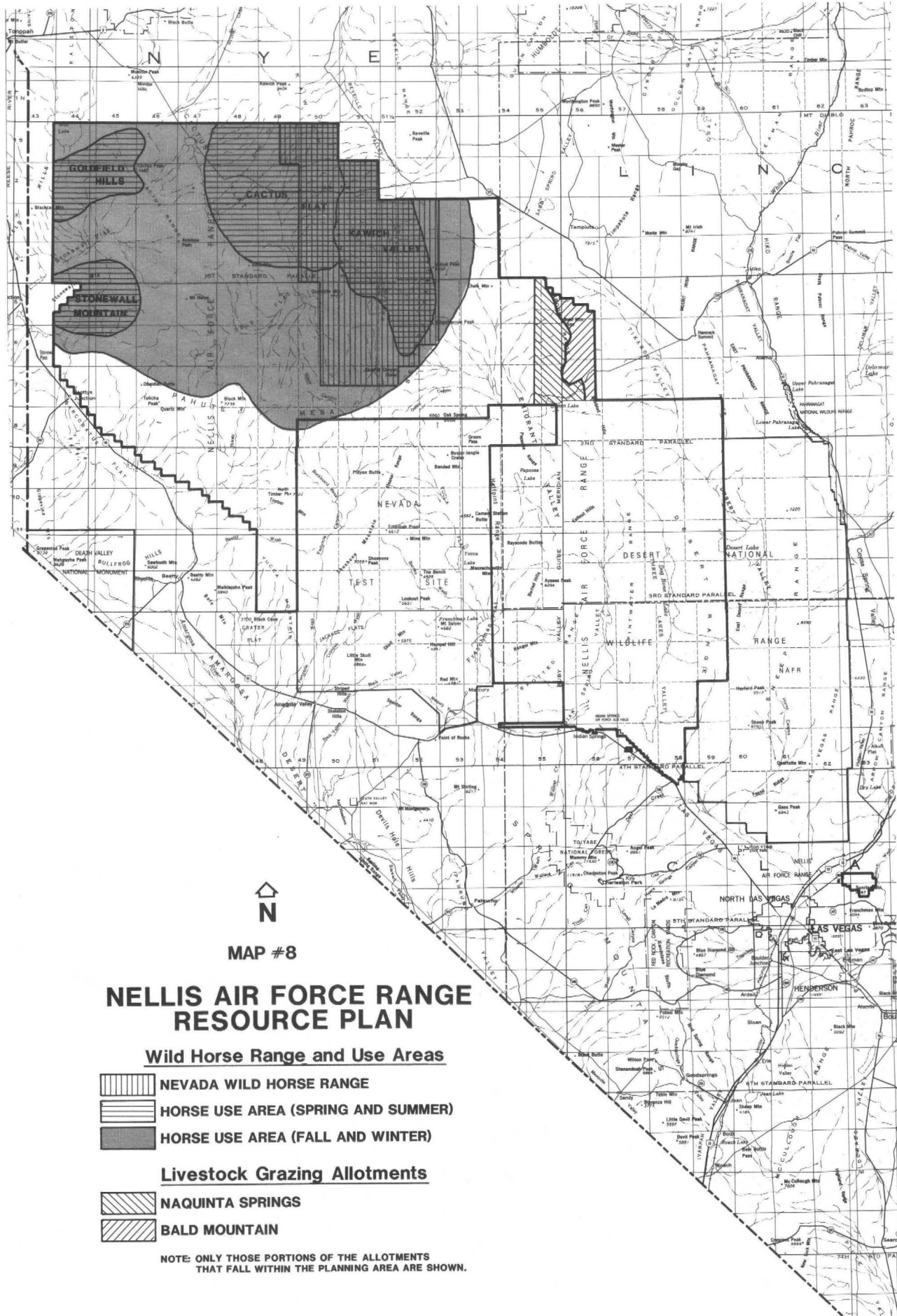
Sensitive Species Habitat
(Federal Candidate, Category 1 and 2)

WILDLIFE

 DESERT TORTOISE (*GOPHERUS AGASSIZII*)

PLANTS

-  BEATLEY MILK-VETCH (*ASTRAGALUS BEATLEYAE*)
-  GILMAN MILK-VETCH (*ASTRAGALUS GILMANII*)
-  MOJAVE SWEET PEA (*LATHYRUS HITCHCOCKIANUS*)
-  DUNE PENSTEMON (*PENSTEMON ARENARIUS*)
-  PAHUTE PENSTEMON (*PENSTEMON PAHUTENSIS*)
-  BEATLEY PHACELIA (*PHACELIA BEATLEYAE*)





MAP #8

NELLIS AIR FORCE RANGE RESOURCE PLAN

Wild Horse Range and Use Areas

-  NEVADA WILD HORSE RANGE
-  HORSE USE AREA (SPRING AND SUMMER)
-  HORSE USE AREA (FALL AND WINTER)

Livestock Grazing Allotments

-  NAQUINTA SPRINGS
-  BALD MOUNTAIN

NOTE: ONLY THOSE PORTIONS OF THE ALLOTMENTS
THAT FALL WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA ARE SHOWN.

CHAPTER 2

PROPOSED RESOURCE PLAN

CHAPTER 2

PROPOSED RESOURCE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the overall Goal for the Nellis Air Force Range Proposed Resource Plan. It also outlines the Objectives, Management Direction, and Management Actions for the three resource issues (Vegetation, Wildlife Habitat, and Wild Horses), as well as for Visual Resources and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Management Guidance Common to all Alternatives for all natural resources is also discussed, as are methods for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the resource plan.

PROPOSED RESOURCE PLAN

Goal: Develop a resource plan that directs management attention toward improving rangeland vegetative conditions, managing wildlife habitat to sustain viable wildlife populations, and achieving a thriving ecological balance for wild horses. This plan outlines the protection of visual resource values and proposes to designate a portion of the Timber Mountain Caldera National Natural Landmark as an area of critical environmental concern.

ISSUE 1: VEGETATION

Objectives:

To maintain existing species diversity and composition at existing ecological stages, except in disturbed and riparian areas.

To protect and, if necessary, to improve or restore the condition of riparian areas.

To maintain a static to upward apparent trend in vegetation characteristics through control of grazing pressure.

To limit utilization of key forage plant species at a level not to exceed the allowable use factors.

Management Direction:

1. Use species native to the area for any revegetation efforts.

2. Restrict surface-disturbing activities in special status plant species habitat or riparian areas.

3. Continue to develop and maintain permanent water sources on the Nevada Wild Horse Range to achieve proper distribution of horses and utilization of forage.

4. Develop and maintain water sources on the Bald Mountain grazing allotment to achieve proper distribution of livestock and utilization of forage.

5. Use fencing only when monitoring demonstrates that other management practices are not successful in achieving the identified objectives.

6. Protect and enhance riparian habitat areas on the Nevada Wild Horse Range and on the Bald Mountain grazing allotment.

7. Monitor vegetation resources on the planning area to determine the effectiveness of management actions.

Management Actions:

1. Develop activity plans for riparian areas throughout the planning area.

2. If monitoring demonstrates that the above-listed management practices are not successful in protecting and/or restoring the productivity of riparian areas, construct and maintain up to 50 miles of fence to exclude wild horses and livestock from riparian areas.

ISSUE 2: WILDLIFE HABITAT

Objectives:

To manage wildlife habitat (exclusive of the Nevada Wild Horse Range and the Bald Mountain grazing allotment) for maximum wildlife value.

To manage wildlife habitat within the Nevada Wild Horse Range and the Bald Mountain grazing allotment to sustain viable wildlife populations.

To protect threatened and endangered wildlife and their habitat.

Management Direction:

1. Forage outside the boundaries of the Nevada Wild Horse Range and the Bald Mountain grazing allotment will be managed for wildlife.
2. Continue to reserve forage for wildlife in the Bald Mountain grazing allotment at current levels (370 animal unit months (AUMs) for deer).
3. Forage on the Nevada Wild Horse Range will be managed to achieve and maintain a thriving ecological balance.
4. Provide permanent water sources for wildlife on the Nevada Wild Horse Range and the Bald Mountain grazing allotment.
5. Conduct monitoring as a joint effort, in conjunction with the Air Force and the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

Management Actions:

1. Develop and maintain up to 20 water sources for wildlife within the Nevada Wild Horse Range and the Bald Mountain grazing allotment.
2. If monitoring indicates the need, build and maintain up to 30 miles of boundary fence on the Bald Mountain grazing allotment to prevent livestock from drifting off the allotment.

ISSUE 3: WILD HORSES

Objectives:

To maintain and manage populations of wild, free-roaming horses only on the Nevada Wild Horse Range.

To maintain the Nellis Air Force Range as a burro-free area.

To achieve a thriving ecological balance consistent with other resource values.

Management Direction:

1. Follow the recommendation of the 1985 consultation and coordination committee for an initial

management number of 2000 wild horses (see Appendix D, page D-8, of the Nellis Air Force Range Draft Resource Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (1989)).

2. Adjust wild horses numbers to achieve a thriving ecological balance using data obtained from monitoring and, if available, other sources.

3. Develop and implement a gathering plan for the removal of all wild horses outside the Nevada Wild Horse Range Herd Management Area.

4. Continue to conduct annual censuses to determine wild horse populations on the Nevada Wild Horse Range and the remainder of the planning area.

5. Continue to conduct gatherings, relocations and removals to enhance color markings in specified areas.

6. Continue to monitor the physical condition of wild horses.

7. Continue to conduct studies to determine productivity, survival, sex ratios, age structure, seasonal movement, and home ranges.

8. Continue to develop and maintain permanent water sources on the Nevada Wild Horse Range.

9. Continue to conduct vegetation trend and utilization studies.

10. Use fencing only when monitoring demonstrates that other management practices are not successful in achieving the identified objectives.

Management Actions:

1. Conduct gatherings to achieve a thriving ecological balance on the Nevada Wild Horse Range.

2. Conduct gatherings to remove wild horses outside the boundaries of the Nevada Wild Horse Range.

3. Develop or improve water sources on the Nevada Wild Horse Range, including, but not limited to, the following springs: Cedar Wells, Upper and Lower Corral, Silverbow, Rose, Tunnel, and Cedar Springs.

4. Remove all burros from the planning area.

5. Amend the Nevada Wild Horse Range HMAP to conform with this resource plan.

6. If monitoring demonstrates that the above management practices are not successful in preventing wild horse use outside of the Nevada Wild Horse Range, build and maintain up to 125 miles of boundary fence on the Nevada Wild Horse Range.

7. If monitoring demonstrates that the above management practices are not preventing wild horses and burros from moving onto the planning area from adjacent lands, build and maintain up to 75 miles of fence to selectively fence the boundary of the planning area.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Objectives:

To maintain the integrity of visual resources in natural areas.

To protect visual resources in the planning area while allowing for development.

Management Direction:

1. Assign visual resource management (VRM) classes in accordance with BLM guidance and policy.
2. Ensure all actions initiated or authorized by BLM are in compliance with VRM guidelines.

Management Actions:

1. Designate the Timber Mountain Caldera National Natural Landmark as a VRM Interim Class II area.
2. Designate the remainder of the planning area as VRM Interim Class IV.

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Objective:

To protect officially recognized natural areas.

Management Direction:

1. All officially recognized natural areas will be designated as ACECs.
2. All ACECs will be managed primarily for their natural values.

Management Action:

1. Designate the portion of the Timber Mountain Caldera National Natural Landmark located within the planning area as an ACEC.

MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

This section describes resource management guidance that is applicable to and, therefore, common to all alternatives. Continuing management guidance includes laws, Executive Orders, regulations, Memoranda of Understanding, Cooperative Agreements, Department of the Interior manuals, BLM manuals, BLM Instruction Memoranda, and other management prescriptions and practices which will not change or be proposed for change within this plan.

LANDS PROGRAM

Rights-of-way

BLM will continue to recognize valid existing rights in the planning area. Existing rights-of-way (ROWs) consist of two highway rights-of-way, one minerals material site, three power transmission lines, and one telephone and telegraph line, all located near the Indian Springs Auxiliary Air Field. In addition, the Department of Energy (DOE) holds an 18,700 acre ROW for the Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Study.

Lands within the planning area will continue to be available for right-of-way use. BLM will, however, issue ROWs for nonmilitary uses only with the concurrence of the Secretary of the Air Force. These ROW applications will be analyzed on a case-by-case, site-specific basis; natural and cultural values will be protected through avoidance or mitigation.

Utility corridors will not be designated within the planning area. The Air Force has indicated that utility corridors are not compatible with the identified military uses of the Nellis Air Force Range.

Disposals

No lands in the planning area will be made available for disposal as these lands do not meet FLPMA Section 203 sales or other disposal criteria. The Secretary of the Air Force has indicated that any

disposals on the Nellis Range would conflict with military uses of the withdrawn land.

Land Use Authorizations

Lands within the planning area will continue to be available, on a limited basis, for some land use authorizations. Nonmilitary land use authorizations, such as leases and permits, will be issued only with the concurrence of the Secretary of the Air Force. Any land use authorizations will be analyzed on a case-by-case, site-specific basis; natural and cultural values will be protected through avoidance or mitigation.

ACCESS

The Nellis Air Force Range will remain closed to the general public; the Secretary of the Air Force is authorized by the Act to close the Nellis Range for security or safety reasons. Access to the planning area is permitted by the Air Force for specific purposes and is subject to security clearance, scheduling, and safety constraints.

MINERALS

Pursuant to PL 99-606, the Nellis Air Force Range is withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining laws and the mineral leasing and the geothermal leasing laws. The Air Force has concluded that no lands within the Nellis Range are suitable for opening to mineral exploration and development. Such use would 1) interfere with the primary use of these lands for military purposes, 2) present unacceptable health, safety, and welfare concerns for the public, and 3) not conform with national security needs. The military uses of the Nellis Air Force Range include: conducting weapons systems testing, training for electronic warfare, tactical maneuvering, and air support, including air-to-ground and targeting activities and nuclear testing. Many national defense programs are carried out on or over the Nellis Range which preclude public use of the surface and subsurface resources; the opening of the area to mineral exploration and development at this time would seriously compromise these programs. With the exception of claims in the Groom Mountain Range addition, the Air Force has compensated owners of valid patented or unpatented mining claims on the Nellis Range by securing leases for valid claims or by purchasing such claims outright at fair market value.

In November, 1991 and every 5 years thereafter, BLM will, with Air Force concurrence, determine which, if

any, of the withdrawn public lands can be considered for opening under the operation of the Mining Law of 1872, the Mineral Lands Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands of 1947, the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970, or any one or more of such Acts.

Valid existing rights will continue to be recognized. At the time of the withdrawal, 25 unpatented mining claims and all or portions of two oil and gas leases were located within the Nellis Air Force Range. If any of the valid existing rights are eliminated by relinquishment, expiration, or purchase by the Air Force, the rights will revert to the United States. As authorized by the Act, the lands will remain closed to subsequent entry.

SOIL, WATER, and AIR RESOURCES

Soil, water, and air resources will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as a part of project level planning. Such evaluation will consider the significance of the proposed project and the sensitivity of soil, water, and air resources in the affected area. Stipulations will be attached, as appropriate, to ensure compliance with the mandates of soil, water, and air resource management and protection.

Soils

Soils will be managed to maintain or improve rangeland productivity and to minimize present and potential wind and water erosion. No comprehensive soil surveys have been conducted on the Nellis Range; therefore, all soils data will be gathered on a case-by-case basis, in response to site-specific actions, or will be inferred from similar sites that have been surveyed. Soils data will be used in planning, support, and implementation of resource activities.

Water Resources

Water quality will be maintained or improved in accordance with Federal and State standards. Consultations will be undertaken with state agencies for proposed projects that may significantly affect water quality. BLM will apply for appropriative water rights with the State of Nevada for use in the wild horse, wildlife, and livestock programs.

Air

All BLM and BLM authorized activities will be managed to prevent air quality deterioration beyond the thresholds established by the Nevada Ambient Air Quality Standards.

VEGETATION

Vegetation management objectives specific to the Nevada Wild Horse Range and the Bald Mountain grazing allotment are described under the Wild Horse and Livestock Grazing issues (see Proposed Resource Plan section above).

All BLM actions will be evaluated for potential impacts to Federal and State threatened and endangered species. Consultations with the Nevada Department of Forestry or the USFWS will be undertaken as required by applicable law. Protection of Federal Category 1 and 2 species (see Glossary for definitions of these categories) will be considered in all BLM authorized or initiated activities.

FORESTRY

The planning area will not be available for the management of forest products. Safety and security constraints imposed by the military use of the Nellis Air Force Range preclude access for timber management activities.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

All BLM actions will be evaluated for potential impacts to Federal and State threatened and endangered species. Consultations with the Nevada Department of Wildlife or the USFWS will be undertaken as required by applicable law. Protection of Federal Category 1 and 2 species will be considered in all BLM authorized or initiated activities.

Predator control will be authorized, as required, through the District Animal Damage Control Plan (ADC), in coordination with BLM, Air Force, the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Wildlife habitat management in the planning area will be conducted in accordance with the principles of the Five-Party Cooperative Agreement (see Appendix B in the DRP/EIS). It is anticipated that the existing agreement will be revised as a result of this resource plan.

WILD HORSES

BLM will manage wild horses on the Nellis Air Force Range in accordance with the principles of the Five-Party Cooperative Agreement (see Appendix B in the DRP/EIS). It is anticipated that the existing

agreement will be revised to incorporate the objectives, direction, and actions resulting from this resource plan.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

The Nellis Air Force Range will continue to be closed to livestock grazing except in those areas where it was authorized at the time of the withdrawal. Management of grazing will be in accordance with the Record of Decision for the Caliente Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and the Caliente Management Framework Plan (MFP). The Caliente Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) defines management guidelines for the implementation of these decisions, which considered the recommendations for individual allotments provided by a Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP) team.

Two grazing allotments are affected by the withdrawal: the Naquinta Springs allotment (52,425 acres) is entirely within the planning area and 37,175 acres of the Bald Mountain allotment (269,723 total acres) are contained within the Nellis Air Force Range (see Map 8).

The Caliente EIS identified 1,058 AUMs as being available for livestock on the Naquinta Springs allotment. The Caliente MFP, however, did not allocate any forage for livestock on this allotment. The CRMP recommendation concurred with the MFP. At the time of the withdrawal, the Naquinta Springs allotment was inactive and no preference was attached to the allotment. In accordance with the withdrawal legislation, the Naquinta Springs allotment will be closed to all livestock grazing.

The Bald Mountain allotment is categorized as a maintenance allotment. The present range condition is considered satisfactory with moderate to high resource production potential and production near that potential. Other criteria for this category state that there are no serious resource conflicts or controversy, that opportunities for positive economic return from public investment may exist, and that present management appears satisfactory. The maintenance category assigns a medium priority for Allotment Management Plan (AMP) development.

The Caliente RPS identifies 5,811 AUMs of forage available for cattle on the Bald Mountain allotment; approximately 800 AUMs are on the Nellis Range portion of the allotment. The identified season of use is from June 1 to March 31. Livestock management

objectives are to maintain forage production at current levels and to continue a static or upward trend in ecological condition. Identified range improvements needed to achieve proper management for the entire allotment include one well, 8 miles of pipeline, two spring developments, four corrals, and 800 acres of vegetative manipulation by controlled burning.

Monitoring of grazing use and its impacts is conducted on a periodic basis and includes data collection on the utilization of key forage species, actual livestock use, precipitation, and ecological status and condition. This monitoring data will undergo periodic analysis and interpretation to determine the effectiveness of management actions and to assess changes in resource conditions. Further actions to mitigate impacts will be recommended as needed.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources will be managed to conserve and protect the full array of archeological, historical, paleontological, natural history, and socio-cultural resources present in the planning area. Access restrictions on the Nellis Air Force Range restrict management of these resources for their information potential or public values.

Federal laws such as the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) as amended, the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, the Archeological Resources Act of 1979 (ARPA), the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (AIRFA), FLPMA (1976), and Executive Order 11593 (1971) provide for the protection and management of cultural resources. These laws are implemented through Federal regulations, which provide guidance for the operational procedures of the Cultural Resource Program in meeting the requirements of the law.

The BLM undertakes and maintains a cultural resource inventory for all BLM administered land. These inventories are categorized into three classes: Class I, existing inventory and literature search; Class II, sampling field inventory with all sample units inventoried at Class III standards; and Class III, intensive field inventory. Except under certain specific conditions, set forth in the BLM Cultural Resource Manual and under a programmatic Memorandum of Agreement (NSO-196) between the BLM and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Class III inventory is required prior to any BLM authorized or initiated surface disturbing activity.

Cultural resources identified as a result of inventory are evaluated under the criteria of eligibility of the National Register of Historic Places (36 CFR 60.4). Sites determined to meet these eligibility criteria are nominated for inclusion on the National Register; special measures are developed and implemented to protect to these resources. Potential project-related impacts to significant sites are mitigated through avoidance or the Section 106 consultation process between the BLM, the SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP).

Paleontological resources are protected under FLPMA and managed through the issuance of research and scientific use permits.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Visual resources in the Groom Mountain Range addition will continue to be managed in accordance with visual resource management (VRM) Class III and IV guidelines, as identified in the Caliente MFP (See Map 3). Visual resource management actions specific to the Proposed Resource Plan are discussed above.

RECREATION

Access restrictions on the Nellis Air Force Range preclude all unrestricted recreational opportunities in the planning area. Should negotiations currently underway between the Air Force and the Nevada Department of Wildlife conclude in the opening of a 26 square mile area on Stonewall Mountain for limited access bighorn sheep hunting, this area will be managed for its recreational hunting potential.

WILDERNESS

FLPMA requires that BLM conduct inventories on public lands under its jurisdiction to determine roadless areas and islands which may have wilderness characteristics. An evaluation of the Nellis Range was conducted in 1978 with representatives of Sierra Club, Nevada Outdoor Recreation Association, University of Nevada-Reno Recreation Department, and Friends of Nevada Wilderness. The lands encompassed by the Groom Range Addition were inventoried during the Nevada statewide inventory, conducted in 1979. As a result of these evaluations, it was determined that the Nellis Range did not contain any land that met the minimum criteria for consideration as a wilderness study area; therefore, no wilderness study areas have been recommended for further study within the planning area (U.S.DOI, BLM/USAF, 1981:2-36).

Identified wilderness study areas within the Desert National Wildlife Range are under the sole jurisdiction and management of the USFWS (Public Land Order 4079); discussion of these lands and their management is beyond the scope of this document.

NATURAL AREAS

The Timber Mountain Caldera National Natural Landmark was designated in 1973. No decision will be made in this plan regarding the designation of additional Research Natural Areas, Outstanding Natural Areas or Natural Hazard Areas within the planning area; military use of the withdrawn lands restricts access and special use management to the extent that any additional designations would be premature. This option will become viable should any of the planning area be proposed for return to general public use.

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

There are no designated areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) in the planning area. The ACEC proposal is discussed in the Proposed Resource Plan (see above).

FIRE MANAGEMENT

BLM will conduct fire management activities on the Nellis Range in accordance with the Fire Management Reciprocal Agreement between the USAF and BLM (see Appendix C in the DRP/EIS). This agreement was updated in 1987 to incorporate management directions mandated by Congress in PL 99-606. Under this agreement, the BLM is authorized to conduct appropriate pre-suppression and suppression actions in the event of timber-brush and range fires resulting from non-military activities. The Secretary of the Military is also empowered by this MOU to request firefighting assistance from the BLM on fires resulting from military activities and permitted to transfer compensatory funds from the Department of the Air Force to the Bureau of Land Management.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOURCE PLAN

Following the approval of the resource plan, the BLM and the Air Force will enter into an MOU to implement the plan. This MOU will establish the policies, procedures, and responsibilities for coordination and cooperation between the BLM and the Air Force.

Standard Operating Procedures

The following actions will be taken during the implementation stage of the plan to mitigate the impact of the management actions:

- 1) All management actions will require an environmental analysis prior to implementation. If, through the environmental assessment process, it is determined that significant impacts would occur that cannot be mitigated, the action will be modified or abandoned.
- 2) Permanent roads will not be constructed to project sites. Use will be made of existing access, off-road travel, or temporary roads which would be rehabilitated after construction activities are completed.
- 3) Cultural resource protection will require compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, Section 101 (b) (4) of the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969, and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978.

Prior to project approval, intensive field inventories will be conducted at project sites. If cultural or paleontological sites are found, every effort will be made to avoid adverse impacts. However, where this is not possible, the BLM will consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in accordance with the MOU between the BLM and the Council, dated January 14, 1980.

- 4) All actions will be in compliance with the BLM's visual resource management procedures. For any project that would have a visual contrast rating in excess of the recommended maximum for the visual class zone in which it is proposed, the visual contrast will be considered significant and the need for mitigation measures will be examined.
- 5) The construction of fences, if necessary, will conform with the objectives and specification in BLM Manual 1737 to assure minimization of impacts to wildlife, wild horses, and visual resources.
- 6) If constructed, fences located in or around wild horse use areas will be flagged or otherwise marked for one year after construction to make them more visible to horses.

7) Wild horse gathering procedures will be designated so that captured animals are hauled in a safe, humane manner, death loss of captured is limited to less than 2 percent, and roundups do not occur six weeks before and after the peak foaling season.

8) The clearing of vegetation from project sites will be restricted to the minimum amount necessary.

9) All disturbed areas will be rehabilitated using plant species native to the area, where such action is necessary and practical, to replace ground cover and prevent erosion.

10) Long-term air quality will be protected as all BLM and BLM authorized activities must be designed to prevent air quality deterioration in excess of the established thresholds specified in the Nevada Ambient Air Quality Standards.

11) Spring improvement projects will be fenced and water will be piped away from the source to a trough or pond if necessary. Water will also be left at the spring source to create riparian vegetation for wildlife.

12) Bird ramps will be constructed at all watering troughs.

13) Water will be left available for wildlife at all developed spring sites.

14) Endangered species protection will require compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended. Prior to initiating or authorizing any activities which may affect a threatened or endangered species, the BLM will consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE RESOURCE PLAN

This resource plan will be monitored and evaluated at five year intervals to determine if there is sufficient cause to warrant revision or amendment. The evaluation will consist of a review of the issues, objectives, and management actions. The review will determine if these components are meeting the needs of management and define necessary changes as appropriate.

CHAPTER 3

REVISIONS AND ERRATA

CHAPTER 3

REVISIONS AND ERRATA

INTRODUCTION

This section contains revisions to the text of the Nellis Air Force Range Draft RP/EIS. It also contains errata of sections not reprinted in this final. Paragraphs referred to in the Draft RP/EIS are numbered consecutively, beginning with the first complete paragraph of each page.

SUMMARY

The last sentence of the second paragraph on page S-1 is changed to read, "Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative, would direct management attention toward improving rangeland vegetative conditions and wildlife habitat by achieving and maintaining a thriving ecological balance for the wild horse population on the planning area."

Table S-1 on page S-2 is changed as follows: Under Alternative A for wild horses, "Gather horses to AMLs" is changed to "Wild horses would remain at current numbers", and under Alternative B for wild horses, the second "Same" is changed to "Achieve and maintain a thriving ecological balance".

CHAPTER 1

No revisions or errata.

CHAPTER 2

Add the following new sentence at the end of the eighth paragraph on page 2-1; "In addition, DOE holds an 18,700 acre right-of-way for the Yucca Mountain Project Site Characterization Study."

The first sentence of the ninth paragraph on page 2-7 is changed to read, "This alternative would direct management attention toward improving rangeland vegetative conditions and wildlife habitat by achieving and maintaining a thriving ecological balance for the wild horse population on the planning area."

The second sentence of the twenty-first paragraph on page 2-7 is changed to read, "These plans would include measures to protect and/or restore riparian areas, including, but not limited to, the removal of all

wild horses in excess of the initial management number; the immediate removal of all wild horses outside of the Nevada Wild Horse Range; and the manipulation of wild horse and livestock distribution through the use of water sources."

Paragraph 6 on page 2-8 is changed to read, "Forage on the Nevada Wild Horse Range will be managed to achieve and maintain a thriving ecological balance."

Paragraph 13 on page 2-8 is changed to read, "Follow the recommendation of the 1985 consultation and coordination committee for an initial management number of 2000 wild horses."

Paragraph 14 on page 2-8 is changed to read, "Adjust wild horse numbers to achieve a thriving ecological balance using data obtained from monitoring and, if available, other sources."

Paragraph 15 on page 2-8 is changed to read, "Develop and implement a gathering plan for the removal of all wild horses outside of the Nevada Wild Horse Range."

Paragraph 23 on page 2-8 is changed to read, "Conduct gatherings, relocations, and removals to achieve a thriving ecological balance on the Nevada Wild Horse Range."

Paragraph 24 on page 2-8 is changed to read, "Conduct gatherings to remove wild horses found outside the boundaries of the Nevada Wild Horse Range."

Add the following new paragraph after paragraph 5 on page 2-11; "14) Endangered species protection will require compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended. Prior to initiating or authorizing any activities which may affect a threatened or endangered species, the Bureau will consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service."

CHAPTER 3

The first sentence of the second paragraph on page 3-7 is changed to read, "One federally listed threatened or endangered species, the desert tortoise, is expected to occur within the planning area."

In the third sentence of the second paragraph on page 3-7, "Appendix F" is changed to "Appendix G".

The third paragraph on page 3-7 is changed to read, "The desert tortoise was listed as an endangered species on August 4, 1989 under the emergency authority of the USFWS. On October 13, 1989, the USFWS officially proposed to list the desert tortoise on a permanent basis upon expiration of the emergency listing. Critical habitat has not been designated. Desert tortoise habitat is generally expected to occur below the 4000 feet elevation contour in the Mojave desert biome within the planning area. Desert tortoises are known to occur on the Nevada Test Site immediately adjacent to the planning area."

The fifth sentence of the sixth paragraph on page 3-7 is changed to read, "The BLM and USAF have been conducting aerial censuses since 1976; the latest aerial census (conducted in July 1989) resulted in a population count of approximately 6,400 wild horses."

The sixth sentence of the sixth paragraph on page 3-7 is deleted.

The seventh sentence of the sixth paragraph on page 3-7 is changed to read, "This represents a population 220 percent in excess of the initial management level of 2000 wild horses recommended by the Coordination and Consultation Committee that assisted in the preparation of the Nevada Wild Horse Range Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP)."

CHAPTER 4

Add the following new paragraph after paragraph 13 on page 4-1; "Activities related to the Yucca Mountain Project Site Characterization Study, right-of-way will result in approximately 450 acres of surface disturbance (assuming 330 drill holes at one-half acre per drill site and 117 miles of road at a 20 foot width). If the site characterization process indicates that conditions are suitable for development of the nuclear waste repository, the entire 18,700 acres contained within the right-of-way could eventually be withdrawn."

Add the following new sentence after the first sentence of the second paragraph on page 4-3; "Activities related to the Yucca Mountain Project Site Characterization Plan right-of-way would result in approximately 450 acres of surface disturbance."

Add the following new sentence after the second sentence of the fifth paragraph on page 4-3; "Activities

related to the Yucca Mountain Project Site Characterization Study right-of-way would result in approximately 450 acres of surface disturbance."

Add the following new sentence after the first sentence of the sixth paragraph on page 4-4; "Activities related to the Yucca Mountain Project Site Characterization Study right-of-way would result in approximately 450 acres of surface disturbance."

The first sentence of the twelfth paragraph on page 4-5 is changed to read, "Construction and maintenance on eight existing and six future rights-of-way would disturb up to 610 acres."

Add the following new sentence after the last sentence of the seventh paragraph on page 4-6; "Activities related to the Yucca Mountain Project Site Characterization Study right-of-way would result in approximately 450 acres of surface disturbance."

The acreage figure in the eleventh paragraph on page 4-6 is changed from "2,276" to "2,726".

In the first sentence of the fifth paragraph on page 4-7, "six rights-of-way" is changed to "eight rights-of-way".

The acreage figure in the first sentence of the sixth paragraph on page 4-7 is changed from "38,451" to "38,901".

The acreage figure in the first sentence of the tenth paragraph on page 4-7 is changed from "58,174" to "58,624".

The second sentence in the 12th paragraph on page 4-7 is changed to read, "Wild horse numbers, which currently exceed the initial management number by 220 percent, would continue to degrade the vegetative resource, particularly in the vicinity of water sources."

The number "5,000" in the first sentence of the second paragraph on page 4-8 is changed to "6,400".

The fourth sentence of the fourth paragraph on page 4-8 is changed to read, "The wild horse population is currently 220 percent in excess of the initial management number; impacts could thus occur throughout the 1,784,000 acres of the Nellis Air Force Range currently being used by wild horses."

The third sentence of the ninth paragraph on page 4-8 is changed to read, "With wild horse numbers currently 4,400 head in excess of the initial management number, it is projected that an additional

1,390,000 acres (63 percent) of the planning area would continue to be utilized by wild horse herds."

The third sentence of the second paragraph on page 4-9 is changed to read, "Failure to achieve the initial management number would result in the continued expansion of the wild horse population."

The first sentence of the fifth paragraph on page 4-9 is changed to read, "If wild horse numbers are allowed to continue to exceed the initial management number by 220 percent or more, long-term productivity on 81 percent (1,784,00 acres) of the planning area would be sacrificed due to overgrazing."

The fourth sentence of the seventh paragraph on page 4-9 is changed to read, "Wild horse numbers are estimated at 6,400 head, 220 percent in excess of initial management number; the resulting overuse of available forage continues to degrade the ecological condition on 81 percent (1,784,000 acres) of the planning area."

The acreage figure in the first sentence of the eighth paragraph on page 4-9 is changed from "58,174" to "58,624".

The acreage figure in the third sentence of the eighth paragraph on page 4-9 is changed from "1,399" to "1,849".

The fifth sentence of the ninth paragraph on page 4-9 is changed to read, "Wild horses would continue to expand their range beyond the identified use areas, potentially impacting public and private lands adjacent to the planning area."

The fifth paragraph on page 4-10 is changed to read, "A reduction in wild horse numbers to the initial management number would relieve grazing pressure on the Nevada Wild Horse Range, thus allowing vegetation on 394,000 acres to recover from past overuse."

The seventh paragraph on page 4-10 is changed to read, "A limited number of wild horses would be expected to stray off the Nevada Wild Horse Range over time in response to changing forage conditions and water availability; these wild horses would be removed on an as-needed basis and would have little or no impact outside of the Nevada Wild Horse Range."

The third paragraph on page 4-11 is changed to read, "A reduction in wild horse numbers to the initial

management number would relieve grazing pressure on the Nevada Wild Horse Range, thus allowing wildlife habitat on 394,000 acres to improve in ecological condition."

The fifth paragraph on page 4-11 is changed to read, "Over time, a limited number of wild horses would be expected to stray off the Nevada Wild Horse Range over time in response to changing forage conditions and water availability; these wild horses would be removed on an as-needed basis and would have little or no impact outside of the Nevada Wild Horse Range."

The acreage figure in the first sentence of the eleventh paragraph on page 4-11 is changed from "4,000" to "4,400".

The third sentence of the eleventh paragraph on page 4-11 is changed to read, "Two areas currently used by wild horses would be entirely eliminated, as would a portion of a third area."

The first paragraph on page 4-12 is deleted.

In the second sentence of the ninth paragraph on page 4-12, "4,000" is changed to "4,400".

In the first sentence of the second paragraph on page 4-13, "4,000" is changed to "4,400".

The third paragraph on page 4-13 should end with the phrase "...increase the cumulative impacts." and the fourth paragraph should begin with "Alternative B...".

In the first sentence of the fourth paragraph on page 4-13, "50 percent" is changed to "220 percent".

In the second sentence of the fourth paragraph on page 4-13, "4,000" is changed to "4,400".

In the first sentence of the fifth paragraph on page 4-13, "38,574" is changed to "39,024".

In the first sentence of the sixth paragraph on page 4-13, "1,399" is changed to "1,849".

CHAPTER 5

On page 5-3, add "Nevada Wild Horse Commission" to State Agencies.

On page 5-4, delete "Nevada Wild Horse Commission" from Other Organizations.

CHAPTER 4

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

CHAPTER 4

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the consultation and coordination conducted in the preparation of the Nellis Air Force Range Proposed Resource Plan/ Final Environmental Impact Statement. In the course of preparing this document, formal and informal efforts have been made to involve the public, other Federal agencies, and State and local Governments in the planning process. Several points of public involvement are mandated by regulations; numerous other actions were taken to further involve the public.

Prior to the actual writing of the document, an involved process of data gathering and other preparatory activities occurred. This process included data assembly, public participation, interagency coordination, and preparation of a Management Situation Analysis (MSA). The MSA, as well as documentation of consultation and coordination efforts, are on file in the Las Vegas District Office. Consultation and coordination with agencies, organizations, and individuals occurred in a variety of ways throughout the planning process. A complete mailing list of those contacted throughout the planning process is also on file in the Las Vegas District Office.

SCOPING

The public participation process began in July, 1988 with the publication of a Notice of Intent to prepare a Resource Plan in the Federal Register (Volume 53, No. 131, Friday, July 8, 1988, page 25694).

On July 12, 1988, a scoping report was sent to approximately 250 individuals, State and Federal agencies, units of local Government, organizations, and members of private industry. This report summarized the planning issues, planning criteria, management, and resource concerns identified by BLM Managers and Resource Specialists. The public was asked to evaluate the issues, planning criteria, and management concerns and to identify any additional issues, criteria or concerns that should be addressed in the resource plan.

After distributing scoping reports, the District hosted three public meetings. These meetings were held on

July 26, 1988 at the Lincoln County Annex in Alamo, Nevada; on July 27, 1988 at the Tonopah Convention Center in Tonopah, Nevada; and on July 28, 1988 at the BLM Las Vegas District Office in Las Vegas, Nevada. BLM personnel were available to explain the planning process and issues, and to discuss the concerns of those in attendance. A total of 15 people attended the three meetings. Concerns raised at these meetings included impacts to riparian areas and springs from wild horses, impacts to desert tortoise habitat, access for management, cultural resource protection, recreational hunting, wildlife poaching, reclamation of disturbed areas, and fire suppression activities. In addition to the general public, a number of special interest groups, including the Sierra Club, the Motorcycle Racing Association of Nevada and the Nevada Council of Professional Archaeologists, were represented. Six individuals submitted written comments during the meetings (summarized below).

During the 30-day comment period which ended August 12, 1988, seven comment forms and 18 letters were received, for a total of 25 responses. One response was from an individual, nine were from organizations, two were from local governmental entities, nine from Nevada State agencies, and four were from Federal agencies. A summary and discussion of the comments follows; the letters and comment forms are on file in the Las Vegas District Office and are available for public review.

Comments were divided into nine general categories: wild horses, vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, cultural resources, access, minerals, inventories, wilderness study areas and roadless areas, and impacts from military uses.

Four comments were received concerning the management of wild horses on the Nellis Air Force Range. The comments suggested management strategies for wild horses that ranged from maintaining the current policies, as stated in the existing HMAP, to expanding the Nevada Wild Horse Range to encompass the 1971 use area. These concerns were addressed in Chapters 2 and 4 of the Draft RP/EIS.

Twelve comments dealt with the maintenance of the natural diversity of the planning area, the identification, protection, and enhancement of unusual or sensitive

vegetation communities, the protection of threatened and endangered plants, and the restoration of disturbed areas. Discussion of these concerns can be found in Chapters 1, 2, and 4 of the Draft RP/EIS.

Wildlife and wildlife habitat issues were identified in ten comments. Areas of concern included the protection of wildlife habitat (big-game concentration areas, raptor nesting areas, and wetlands), the management of population levels, and the protection of threatened and endangered species. These topics were discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 of the Draft RP/EIS.

Cultural resource protection was the focus of four comments. Management of cultural resources is mandated by law; management direction is summarized in the Management Guidance Common to All Alternatives section of Chapter 2 of the Draft RP/EIS.

The need for increased access to the Nellis Air Force Range was proposed in five comments. The Air Force has restricted access to the withdrawn lands for security and safety reasons. As stated in the planning criteria, public access will not be addressed in this document. Existing administrative procedures permit resource management personnel to gain controlled access to the planning area.

Two comments were received that addressed the potential opening of the Nellis Air Force Range for mineral exploration and development. At this time, the Air Force has indicated that security and safety factors necessitate the continued closure of the entire withdrawn area to mineral activities. Mineral related activities were discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of the Draft RP/EIS.

Four comments suggested the need for additional inventories of threatened and endangered species and cultural resources on the planning area. As identified in the planning criteria, time constraints and a perceived lack of conflicting uses on the withdrawn lands determined the use of existing data in the preparation of this resource plan. The status of wilderness study areas and roadless areas within and adjacent to the planning area was addressed in two comments. This concern was discussed in Chapter 2 of the Draft RP/EIS.

The majority of comments (14) expressed concerns about the impacts to natural and cultural resources that may result from military activities on the Nellis Air Force Range. This resource plan is limited in its

scope to those resources over which the BLM has management authority. Therefore, no discussion of military activities on the withdrawn lands is included in this document. Military uses of the Nellis Air Force Range and the impacts resulting from those uses were analyzed in Environmental Impact Statements (1981, 1986), completed prior to the withdrawal of area.

MILITARY INVOLVEMENT AND COORDINATION

The Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986, Public Law 99-606, withdrew the Nellis Air Force Range and other military installations for military purposes. Section 3 of the Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to manage the Nellis Air Force Range under the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976 and to prepare a management plan by November of 1989. The plan is to be developed after consultation with the Secretary of the military department concerned (Nellis Air Force Range). Section 12 of the Act required the Secretary of the Interior to determine, with concurrence of the Secretary of the military department, which public and acquired lands could be opened for operation of mining and mineral laws.

Contacts with staff of the 554th Range Group, Nellis Air Force Base, were made throughout the preparation of the draft document. The Air Force participated in the scoping process and was represented at the scoping meetings. Nellis Air Force Range officials reviewed and provided official comments on the Management Situation Analysis, formulation of the alternatives and on the Preliminary Draft RP/EIS. Informal reviews of various sections of this document were also conducted by the Nellis Air Force Range Staff and the Range Commander.

CONSULTATION

As mandated by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, consultation between the BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is required prior to the implementation of any Bureau initiated or authorized project which may affect any Federally threatened, endangered or sensitive plant or animal species (or their habitat).

The Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW) has been contacted concerning State listed threatened and endangered wildlife and plant species. This resource plan is consistent with legislation protecting State

listed species. Coordination and consultation with the State will be continued throughout the planning process and during implementation.

The BLM cultural resource management program operates in accordance with 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 800, which outline specific procedures for consultation between the BLM and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)(NSO-196) between the SHPO, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the BLM Nevada State Office became effective on May 28,1985. This MOA coordinates the provisions of 36 CFR 800 with existing BLM procedures, emphasizing the BLM planning system. The MOA also incorporates mechanisms for information exchange between BLM and the SHPO, establishes reporting standards, and defines those undertakings and activities requiring or not requiring consultation.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND MEETINGS

A Notice of Availability for the Nellis Air Force Range Draft Resource Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and filing of the Draft with the Environmental Protection Agency were published in the Federal Register on June 1 and 2, 1989, respectively. The Notice also announced the schedule of three public meetings held in Alamo, NV, Tonopah, NV, and Las Vegas, NV on July 18,19, and 20, 1989, respectively. September 1, 1989 was identified in the Notice as the ending date of the 90-day public comment period.

A news release was sent to the statewide list of media sources announcing the availability of the Draft, the dates, locations, and times of the public meetings, and the ending date of the public comment period. A subsequent news release was issued just prior to the public meetings.

A total of 14 people attended the three scheduled meetings; all 14 attended the meeting in Las Vegas. A request was received for an additional public meeting in Caliente, NV. The Caliente meeting was held on August 7, 1989; nobody attended this meeting.

The transcript of the Las Vegas meeting is included at the end of this chapter, along with responses to oral comments.

PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE DRAFT

The Nellis Air Force Range Draft RP/EIS was sent to all individuals, agencies, and groups who expressed an interest in the planning process. Copies of the Draft RP/EIS were also sent to local agencies and organizations, and are available for review at the libraries and BLM offices included in the following list. Anyone else wishing a copy of the Draft RP/EIS may receive one by calling or writing the BLM Las Vegas District Office at P.O. Box 26569, Las Vegas, NV 89126, (702)646-8800.

Congressional Delegation

U.S. Senator Richard Bryan
U.S. Senator Harry Reid
U.S. Congressman James Bilbray
U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Vucanovich

Federal Agencies

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Department of Agriculture
 Forest Service
 Soil Conservation Service
 Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Department of Defense
 Army Corps of Engineers
 Assistant Secretary of the Air Force
 LEEV/Bolling Air Force Base
 Nellis Air Force Base
Department of Energy
 Western Area Power Administration
Department of the Interior
 Bureau of Indian Affairs
 Bureau of Mines
 Bureau of Reclamation
 Fish and Wildlife Service
 Geological Survey
 National Park Service
 Office of Environmental Project Review
Environmental Protection Agency

State Agencies

Cooperative Extension Services
Nevada Department of Wildlife
Nevada State Clearinghouse
Office of the Governor

State Senators and Assemblymen (Clark, Esmeralda,
Lincoln, Nye Counties)
University of Nevada, Reno and Las Vegas
Desert Research Institute
Fleischman College of Agriculture
Center for Business and Economic Research
Department of Biological Sciences
Mackay School of Mines
Nevada Bureau of Mines
Renewable Natural Resource Center
Nevada State Historical Society
Nevada Wild Horse Commission

Local Government

Citizens Advisory Councils/Town Boards (10)
City of Mesquite
Clark County Commission
Clark County Dept. of Comprehensive Planning
Clark County Extension Agent
Clark County Conservation District/Soil
Clark County Southern Nevada Museum
County Game Management Boards (3)
Esmeralda County Commission
Henderson Planning Department
Lincoln County Commission
Lincoln County Conservation District
Las Vegas City Manager
Mayor of Boulder City
Mayor of Caliente
Mayor of Henderson
Mayor of Las Vegas
Mayor of North Las Vegas
North Las Vegas Planning Department
Nye County Commission
Pioche Chamber of Commerce

Native American Councils

Las Vegas Indian Center
Las Vegas Tribal Council
Pahrump Paiutes
Western Shoshone National Council

Other Organizations

American Curly Bashkir Reg.
American Horse Protection Association
American Humane Society
American Wild Horse and Burro Foundation
Animal Protection Institute
Archeo-Nevada Society
Central Nevada Newspapers

Defenders of Wildlife
Desert Bighorn Council
Desert Fishes Council
Desert Tortoise Council
Ducks Unlimited
Earth First
Ecology Ctr. of So. CA.
Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn
Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Funds for Animals, Inc.
Humane Society of Southern Nevada
International Society for the Protection of Wild Horses
and Burros
Lincoln County Sportsman's Association
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
Minerals Exploration Coalition
Motor Cycle Racing Association of Nevada
Mountain States Legal Foundation
Multiple Use Adv. Board on Federal Land Laws
National Mustang Association
National Wild Horse Association
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature Conservancy
Nevada Archeological Association
Nevada Cattleman's Association
Nevada Conservation Forum
Nevada Council of Professional Archaeologists
Nevada Federation of Animal Protection Organizations
Nevada Mining Association
Nevada Outdoor Recreation Association
Nevada Open Land Organized Council
Nevada Organization for Wildlife
Nevada Public Land Users Association
Nevada Wildlife Commission
Nevada Wildlife Federation
Northern Nevada Native Plant Society
Nevada Off-Highway Users Council
Off-Road-Vehicle Groups (various)
Public Lands Institute
Public Resource Association
Reno Newspapers
Sagebrush Alliance
Save the Mustangs
Sierra Club
Soil Conservation Society
Southern Nevada Environmental Forum
The Wildlife Society
The Wilderness Society
Wild Horse and Burro Committee for the National
Academy of Sciences
Wild Horse Organized Assistance
Wyoming Advocates for Animals

Public Libraries

Beatty Community Library
323 Montgomery
Beatty, NV. 89002

Blue Diamond Library
P.O. Box 40
Blue Diamond, NV.89004

Boulder City Library
539 California Ave.
Boulder City, NV. 89005

Bunkerville Library
P.O. Box 10
Bunkerville, NV. 89007

Charleston Heights Library
800 Brush Street
Las Vegas, NV. 89107

Clark County Community College
Learning Resource Center
3200 E. Cheyenne Ave.
North Las Vegas, NV. 89030

Clark County Library
1401 E. Flamingo Rd.
Las Vegas, NV. 89109

DOI Nat. Resources Library
Serials Branch-GE
18th & C Streets,NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Elko County Library
720 Court Street
Elko, NV. 89801

Esmeralda County Public Library
County Courthouse
Goldfield, NV. 89013

Goodsprings Library
P.O. Box 667
Goodsprings, NV. 89109

Henderson Library
55 Water Street
Henderson, NV. 89015

Indian Springs Library
P.O. Box 628
Indian Springs, NV. 89018

Lander County Library
Battle Mountain,NV. 89820

Lincoln County Library
Caliente, NV. 89008

Lincoln County Library
P.O. Box 248
Pioche, NV. 89043

Mineral County Public Library
P.O. Box 1397
Hawthorne, NV. 89415

Moapa Valley Library
P.O. Box 387
Overton, NV. 89040

Mt. Charleston Public Library
P.O. Box 269
S.R. 89038
Mt. Charleston, NV. 89101

North Las Vegas Library
2300 Civic Center
North Las Vegas, NV. 89030

Nye County Library
P.O. Box 153
Tonopah, NV. 89049

Pahrump Public Library
Pahrump,NV. 89041

State of Nevada Library
Library Bldg.
Capitol Complex
Carson City, NV. 89701

Sunrise Public Library
100 N. Nellis Blvd.
Las Vegas, NV. 89110
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

James R. Dickinson Library
Government Documents Dept.
4505 S. Maryland Pkwy.
Las Vegas, NV. 89154

University of Nevada, Reno
Getchell Library
Government Publications Dept.
Reno, NV. 89507

Virgin Valley Library
P.O. Box 113
Mesquite, NV. 89024

Washoe County Library
Documents Dept.
P.O. Box 2151
Reno, NV 89505

White Pine County Library
Courthouse Plaza
Ely, NV. 89301

Bureau of Land Management Offices

Arizona Strip District Office
196 East Tabernacle
St. George, Utah 84770

Battle Mountain District Office
North 2nd and South Scott Streets
Battle Mountain, NV 89820

Caliente Resource Area Office
Caliente, NV 89008

Carson City District Office
1050 E. William Street
Carson City, NV. 89801

Elko District Office
2002 Idaho Street
Elko, NV. 89801

Ely District Office
Star Route 5, Box 1
Ely, NV. 89301

Las Vegas District Office
4765 West Vegas Drive
Las Vegas, NV. 89126

Tonopah Resource Area Office
102 Old Radar Base Rd.
Tonopah, NV. 89049

Winnemucca District Office
704 E. 4th Street
Winnemucca, NV. 89445

**AVAILABILITY OF THE PROPOSED
PLAN AND FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT**

This document has been mailed to all those who received copies of the Draft RP/EIS, as well as those who commented on the Draft RP/EIS. A Federal Register Notice and news releases have been issued to inform the public of the availability of this document. A limited number of copies are available upon request from the Las Vegas District Office. Review copies are available at the listed BLM Offices and Public libraries.

TESTIMONY FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings were held in Alamo, NV; Tonopah, NV; and Las Vegas, NV on July 18, 19, and 20, 1989, respectively. A news release was sent to the statewide list of media sources announcing the availability of the Draft and the dates, locations, and times of the public meetings. A subsequent news release was issued just prior to the public meetings.

A total of 14 people attended the three scheduled meetings; all 14 attended the meeting in Las Vegas. A request was received for an additional public meeting in Caliente, Nevada. The Caliente meeting was held on August 7, 1989. No one attended this meeting.

The transcript of the Las Vegas meeting and responses to oral comments are included at the end of this chapter (see pages 4-8 to 4-20).

Public comments were given by the individuals listed below at the Las Vegas meeting:

Chris Brown,	Citizen's Alert
Keith Brink,	U.S. Wild Horse and Burro Foundation
Dave Tattum,	National Wild Horse Association
Ken Struthers,	Nevada Wildlife Federation
Dart Anthony,	Humane Society of Southern Nevada
Barbara Eskildsen,	Nevada Wild Horse Association

**WRITTEN COMMENTS AND RESPONSES
ON THE DRAFT RESOURCE PLAN AND
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Six written comment letters were received during the 90 day public review period. Each of these letters were reviewed and all substantive comments which questioned facts or analysis or commented on issues discussed in the Draft Resource Plan, have been evaluated and responded to in this document.

All letters received during the 90 day comment period have been printed (see pages 4-22 to 4-39). The responses to the written comments are presented adjacent to the letters. Each response is given a number which corresponds to numbered paragraphs or sections in the actual letter. To find the BLM response to any particular section, look for the bold number directly to the left of the statement. The following is an index to the comment letters:

<u>LETTER NO.</u>	<u>COMMENTOR</u>
1	USFWS - Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Las Vegas, NV.
2	Nevada Department of Wildlife, Nevada State Clearinghouse, Carson City, NV.
3	Nevada State Hydraulic Engr., Nv. State Clearinghouse, Carson City, NV.
4	Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, Nv. State Clearinghouse, Carson City, NV.
5	Committee for the Preservation of Wild Horses, Carson City, NV.
6	Minerals Exploration Coalition, Lakewood, CO.

Public Meeting Transcript

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON JULY 20, 1989 LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Roger Alexander

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen. On behalf of the Bureau of Land Management, I would like to welcome you to the last of three public meetings being held to obtain comments on the Nellis Air Force Range Draft Resource Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.

My name is Roger Alexander and I'm the Planning Coordinator for the BLM in Las Vegas. Also in attendance tonight from the BLM are Ben Collins, the District Manger; Dawna Ferris, archaeologist/writer-editor; Neil Talbot, State Office Planning Coordinator; Terry Driver, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist. Harley Dickensheets from the 554th Range Group, Nellis Air Force Base is also here tonight.

Before we hear your comments, I would like to give a brief overview of the planning process and review the events leading up to tonight's meeting.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to obtain comments on the Nellis Air Force Range Draft Resource Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. This document was prepared in response to Public Law 99-606 as amended which reauthorized the withdrawal of the Nellis Air Force Range and directed BLM to prepared management plan for the withdrawn area. The Draft Resource Plan was released to the public for a 90-day comment period on June 1, 1989. After this public comment period ends, we will prepare a Proposed Resource Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement. This document will address all pertinent comments both oral and written that we receive during the comment period. Following the distribution of the final document, there will be a 30-day waiting period, then we will issue an Approved Resource Plan and Record of Decision. The Draft Resource Plan and Environmental Impact Statement analyzes the options for the management of vegetation, wildlife habitat, wild horses and burros, and cultural resources.

Public Meeting Transcript (cont.)

Roger Alexander (cont.)

It does not analyze the impact resulting from the military uses of the withdrawn area. In addition to these identified issues, BLM policy requires that we address other pertinent resources, such as visual resources, areas of critical environmental concern, timber, livestock grazing, and minerals. As the document was being prepared, it became apparent that the only real options for management were in the wild horse and burro program and even those were very limited. Management of vegetation and wildlife habitat on the Nellis Range is tied into our management of wild horses and burros. And the management of cultural resources is strictly defined by law.

Because of these limitations, the document analyzes only two alternatives. The proposed action, which is the preferred alternative, and the no action alternative. In case you haven't noticed, we're recording tonight's meeting. This is to ensure that we have an accurate record of your comments and can address them when we prepare the Proposed Resource Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement. The tape will be transcribed and both the tape and the transcript will become part of the official record. To ensure that we get your comments, please speak clearly into the microphone and identify yourself and who you represent, if anybody. Before we hear your comments, does anyone have any questions regarding the planning process or tonight's procedures? O.K., if not, then I'll call the speakers. We have three who would like to speak and I'll call them in the order in which they have arrived tonight. If you please come up to the podium and speak. This has a little built-in microphone. First, is Chris Brown.

Public Meeting Transcript (cont.)

Chris Brown

Boy, I didn't have to wait hardly at all. My name is Chris Brown and I am the Southern Nevada Coordinator for Citizen Alert.

1 - The Draft Plan contains evaluations of wildlife and cultural impacts without any surveys of those resources in the plan. It clearly states that there have been no surveys of wildlife or cultural resources in the planning area; and yet then goes on to say that it will make estimations of those the impacts on those particular resources. It comes out with the evaluations that there are no endangered species and that there will be no significant impact of cultural resources and yet there is no survey of those resources in the plan. We feel that it is not logical nor valid to come up with those conclusions, if there are no surveys; and this plan should not go forth until such surveys are done.

2 - We also question why the Desert National Wildlife Range has been left out. Is this to indicate that the Nellis Air Force Range is going to release the Desert Wildlife Range once again to public use? And if not, if they intend to keep that as part of the Nellis Air Force Range, then we feel that this should be part of the EIS and Range Plan...Range Management Plan.

3 - There is no reference to the impact of ordinance on water or wildlife. And yet, several times in the report it mentions the fact that the primary reason why the public is not allowed to use these lands is because of the military use of them. The chemicals, the possible radioactivity, and other sorts of problems created by the releases of exploded ordinance or other types of weapons, which we're not sure what they are, should be dealt with in this plan. There's potential impacts on both wildlife and water resources. Water resources, of course which may be very important not just for wildlife but for the public in the future of the ordinance that's used on Nellis Air Force Range.

Response to Comments

1. Time, budgetary, and logistical constraints required that the document be prepared using existing data (see planning criteria H., page 1-4). A site-specific analysis is conducted for all BLM-initiated or authorized activities. At the site-specific stage in the process, cultural resources and endangered species inventories are conducted and protective and/or mitigative measures implemented.
2. Section 3.(a) of Public Law 99-606 specifically states that the Desert National Wildlife Range will be managed pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, and is, therefore, exempt from the requirement that a management plan be prepared for the withdrawn area (see page A-2). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prepared the Desert National Wildlife Range Refuge Management Plan in September, 1987.
3. This comment refers either to military-related impacts or mitigation required by Records of Decision for other EIS's. The impacts of withdrawing the lands for military purposes were analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Public Land Withdrawal, Nellis Air Force Bombing Range, Nye, Clark, and Lincoln Counties, Nevada (1981) and the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Groom Mountain Range, Lincoln County, Nevada (1986) and are beyond the scope of this document.

Public Meeting Transcript (cont.)

Chris Brown (cont.)

4 — There's no reference to the effect of lasers or to the types of weapons used on the Air Force Range. We feel this is also missing in the plan, in the sense that lasers have clearly shown negative impact on both the public and on wildlife and previous reports about other weapons, ranges, and we would like to see if in fact lasers are being used on Nellis and what the potential impact especially since parts of the Air Force Range are very close to public highways.

5 — The...another comment we have is that in the Groom Range land grab by the Air Force a number of years ago, there was a promised mitigation of a paved road from Rachel to the Nevada Test Site. That road has not been paved as of this time, and we would like to see the reasons for why the mitigation that was promised has not been carried through.

6 — There is also reference in the plan to opening the Bighorn Sheep Range near, I think it is the Stonewall Range, to hunting. The...yet, it's only mentioned in a few very short paragraphs. There's no reference to the impacts of human beings. The hunters themselves buy weapons, ordinances...the potential danger to them. Nor is there a reference of what the impact those hunter themselves would be on the range in terms of the danger to wildlife or threatened habitat on the range.

7 — And the final comment that we have, is that, Citizen Alert has been active in this state for the last 14 years. And we have even sent representatives to comment on this particular plan in Washington, D.C. in the past. And yet, we are not listed as one of the groups to receive the report, and did not receive a copy of the report mailed to us. We do not understand why the BLM does not consider Citizen Alert to be a community organization deserving of receiving this report in its first form.

Response to Comments (cont.)

- 4-6. These comments refer either to military-related impacts or mitigation required by Records of Decision for other EIS's. The impacts of withdrawing the lands for military purposes were analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Public Land Withdrawal, Nellis Air Force Bombing Range, Nye, Clark, and Lincoln Counties, Nevada (1981) and the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Groom Mountain Range, Lincoln County, Nevada (1986) and are beyond the scope of this document.
7. Both the Southern Nevada Coordinator for Citizen's Alert (Chris Brown) and the Executive Director of Citizen's Alert (Bob Fulkerson) were mailed copies of the document.

Public Meeting Transcript (cont.)

Roger Alexander O.K., thank you Chris, the next speaker is Dart Anthony.

Dart Anthony I'm conceding, it means I'll give up Southern Nevada's time to Mr. Brink, of the U.S. Wild Horse and Burro Foundation, for right now.

Roger Alexander O.K. then we'll just proceed on to Keith Brink.

Keith Brink My name is Keith Brink, I am the Executive Vice-President of the U.S. Wild Horse and Burro Foundation. I have a group of questions that I would like to read that we would like to see answered by the BLM on this study and this activity.

Roger Alexander May I interrupt? Are you going to follow-up with a written submission of your questions also?

Keith Brink I can if you so desire.

Roger Alexander I would appreciate that, sir.

Keith Brink You'll be able to transcribe them from the tape, hopefully, because I'll speak very succinctly, clear-free for your secretary to get them typed.

We would like to have a copy of the BLM's monitoring study for this area, and the amount.

8 - We would like to know the status of your range monitoring studies.

9 - We would like to know what is the carrying capacity of the range in this area.

10 - There is 2.2 million acres of land here. We would like to know what percentage of that is grazable for horses.

11 - What is the water situation?

12 - We would like to know how old is the BLM's range data?

13 - What is the range data used to determine excess animals?

Response to Comments (cont.)

8. Monitoring is conducted in accordance with the Nevada Wild Horse Range (NWHR) Horse Management Area Plan (HMAP) and is contingent on funding, staffing, and other priorities. The most recent aerial census of the Nellis Range was conducted on July 29, 1989; trend and utilization monitoring was not conducted in Fiscal Year 1989.
9. The carrying capacity of the NWHR has not been determined. Wild horses have been allowed to move freely on and off the NWHR in response to water and forage availability. Aerial censuses have, therefore, counted all wild horses in the withdrawn area, not just on the NWHR.
10. The NWHR HMAP identified only the 394,000 acres within the NWHR as being grazable for horses. This acreage represents approximately 18 percent of the 2.2 million acre withdrawn area.
11. The water situation is detailed in the appropriate section of the NWHR HMAP (see Appendix D). Current conditions can change on a day-to-day basis, and no attempt has been made to incorporate those conditions in this document. As a broad generalization, southern Nevada is in the grip of a drought and water supplies are limited.
12. Vegetation trend plots were established in 1986 and are scheduled to be read on a 5 year cycle in 1991. Utilization studies are conducted annually, the most recent having been completed in April, 1988.
13. BLM conducts vegetation trend and utilization studies, precipitation monitoring, and aerial censuses to determine if wild horse numbers are excessive.

Public Meeting Transcript (cont.)

Kieth Brink (cont.)

14 — We are aware that there are some restrictions of access due to security classifications here. How do you gain access to those areas to determine exactly how many animals may be all over this area?

15 — How many trespass cattle are still on this range? When were the cattle last observed out there; compared to your range data studies? If the range data was obtained just after the removal of the grazing cattle, then the range study is inaccurate as the forage hasn't had the time to recover from the devastation of the cattle herds.

16 — What is the current condition of the range?

17 — Are there written analyses of monitoring studies available?

18 — I would like to know, how will the removal be in line with the current IBLA rulings?

19 — Also, we would like to know if there have been any studies done to review the impact of nuclear weaponry that may have been used or radioactive weaponry...let me correct myself...delete nuclear...radioactive weaponry that may have been used on these ranges. It's very common knowledge, anyone can pick up a Janes Book on fighting airplanes and see that the A-10 uses a depleted plutonium round. That would leave some radioactive residue in this area. We need to know what the impact is on the wildlife and forage in that area. That's all I have.

Roger Alexander

Thank you Mr. Brink. The next speaker is David Tattum.

Response to Comments (cont.)

14. Wild horse and burro specialists in the Las Vegas District Office and the Caliente Resource Area Office have security clearances for certain areas on the Nellis Air Force Range (primarily the NWHR); they can also be escorted to other locations within the withdrawn area. In sectors where access is entirely restricted, Air Force personnel who are experienced in counting wild horses conduct the census.
15. Livestock trespass on the NWHR has been virtually eliminated since completion of the north boundary fence in 1979. Authorized livestock grazing was discontinued in 1959 and all grazing permits and leases eliminated by 1965. The vegetation trend plots were established in 1985.
16. Vegetation trend studies are scheduled to be conducted in 1991; utilization studies were last conducted in 1988. Based on the available data, including comparisons with fenced areas excluded from wild horse grazing since 1963, and the professional judgement of BLM range conservationists, wild horse and burro specialists, and wildlife biologists, the condition of the range on the NWHR is poor.
17. Written information documenting monitoring studies on the NWHR is available at the Las Vegas District Office (see Response 8).
18. Future gatherings of wild horses or burros will be in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and IBLA rulings.
19. An analysis of military impacts on the withdrawn area was presented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Public Land Withdrawal, Nellis Air Force Bombing Range, Nye, Clark, and Lincoln Counties, Nevada (1981) and the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Groom Mountain Range, Lincoln County, Nevada (1986). Such analysis is beyond the scope of this document.

Public Meeting Transcript (cont.)

David Tattum

20

I'm David Tattum with the National Wild Horse Association, and basically we have a couple of concerns. Under their existing projects on D-7 in here, they've discussed the water and fencing up at the Test Site. And I noticed under fencing, they're referring to...fiscal...what will be constructed in Fiscal Year 1985, and I assume that the water is the same situation, that they're still working off the basis of four or five years ago, figures that were derived at that time. And that is one of our major concerns, is that we have updated information and that this is an updated plan as to what will have taken place up there. That's about it.

Roger Alexander

Thank you for your comments. Thank everybody for their comments. Those were good comments. And we'll certainly address them in the document. I would like to open it now if anybody else has any questions or comments. Sir?

Ken Struthers

Thank you, I'm Ken Struthers with the Nevada Wildlife Federation. I just like to add one more question on the issue that was brought up by the gentlemen from Citizen Alert on the Groom Range....Groom Mountain Range Withdrawal Area. Also, in that mitigation there was promised some money to replace some quail guzzlers, that money was going to go to the Nevada Department of Wildlife. I like to know if those funds were ever appropriated and paid to the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

Roger Alexander

They were.

Ken Struthers

O.K., thank you.

Roger Alexander

Is there anybody else whose....Dart?

Dart Anthony

I'm Dart Anthony, President of the Humane Society of Southern Nevada. I just had one question, if I could. Once again the Humane Society will be very anxious to know. What new techniques have been or even being considered by the BLM to do wild horse counts in this particular management area?

Response to Comments (cont.)

20. The section referred to in this comment is taken from the Nevada Wild Horse Range Herd Management Area Plan (NWHR HMAP) which was appended to the Draft RP/EIS to provide background information. Only those water sources identified in the NWHR HMAP have been developed.

Public Meeting Transcript (cont.)

Roger Alexander I can't address that right now. I don't know of any new techniques that are being developed. We do helicopter counts primarily.

Dart Anthony I know you have been doing that, but there were...at one meeting that we had there was a referenced to there was some new techniques being considered in conjunction with the U.S. Air Force. And what we would like to know, is to address that issue...has that ever, has that ever borne fruit...I should say, and we would like to hear from that.

Roger Alexander O.K., Dart

Dart Anthony O.K. Thank you.

Roger Alexander Is there anybody else would like to..... make a comment or have any questions? If not, then I would like to thank you for taking the time to attend tonight's meeting. I know it's been a short meeting, but that's....those are the best kind in my book.... Ma'am, did you have a comment?

Barbara Eskildsen I just..... Just to back up for just a second, just a question. I know that it said written or oral tonight, after this is over are you still going to accept oral

Roger Alexander Yes, ma'am the comment.....

Barbara Eskildsen And written.....

Roger Alexander Yes ma'am the comment period is open until September 1st and the address that you want to address your comments to is right up there on the wall. It's the Area Manager, Caliente Resource Area. He's the responsible line manager for this document.....which just takes care of the rest of my paragraph here of speech; I was going to tell you where to do that. Alright, your comments will be addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. We will transcribe them, and answer all of your questions that are pertinent and if not we'll explain why we're not answering them. So I would like to thank you all once again, and that will conclude tonight's meeting.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
DESERT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX
1500 NORTH DECATUR BOULEVARD
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89108

June 1, 1989

Curtis Tucker. Area Manager
Caliente Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 237
Caliente. Nevada 89008

Dear Curtis:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft Nellis Air Force Range Resource Plan and Environmental Statement. Since the plan does not cover or affect the management of that portion of the Nellis Air Force Range on the Desert National Wildlife Range, we have no comment.

Sincerely,

Bob Furlow
Acting Project Leader

Response to Letter 1

No Response Necessary

Comment Letter 2



STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

1100 Valley Road
P.O. Box 10678
Reno, Nevada 89520-0022
(702) 789-0500

BOB MILLER
Acting Governor

WILLIAM A. MOLINI
Director

June 23, 1989

RECEIVED ON
JUN 28 1989
OFFICE OF
COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr. John B. Walker, Coordinator
Nevada State Clearinghouse
Office of Community Services
1100 East William, Suite 118
Carson City, NV 89710

RE: SAI NV #89300006

Dear John:

2-1

The Draft Nellis Air Force Range Resource Plan and EIS have been reviewed by Habitat personnel in Las Vegas. Personnel of the Nevada Department of Wildlife have been involved in the process of this document since its inception. The document has been found to be lacking in wildlife information, impacts to these wildlives and, what, if anything, the Department of Defense intends to accomplish, to protect, to enhance or to promote the wildlife resources of the area. The mission of the military is understood; however, the document has become nothing more that a "paperwork" exercise due to the inability to fund surveys or to allow them even if they were to be financed.

If you need further information or clarification, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM A. MOLINI, DIRECTOR

Terry R. Crawford
Terry R. Crawford
Deputy Director

COP:pw

cc: Region III

Response to Letter 2

2-1 Time, budgetary, and logistical constraints required that the document be prepared using existing data (see planning criteria H., page 1-4). Impacts to wildlife from proposed BLM initiated or authorized activities are analyzed in Chapter 4. The BLM has no jurisdiction over Department of Defense (DOD) activities on the Nellis Air Force Range, and therefore, comments or questions regarding DOD intentions are beyond the scope of this document. The impacts of withdrawing the lands for military purposes were analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Public Land Withdrawal, Nellis Air Force Bombing Range, Nye, Clark, and Lincoln Counties, Nevada (1981) and the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Groom Mountain Range, Lincoln County, Nevada (1986).

Comment Letter 3

NEVADA STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

ADMIN.	
PL III	
PL II	
RW II	
RW I	
TECH	
MA	
MP	
CO	
FILE	

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
1100 EAST WILLIAM, SUITE 118
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89710
885-5187

FROM: John B. Walker, Coordinator

TO:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Governor's Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Nuclear Waste Project Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation and Natural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Prisons | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Job Training Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Service Commission | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director's Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> SOICC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Lands |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> State Communications Board | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation Districts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Taxation | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forestry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Security Department | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic Preservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> UNR-Bureau of Mines | <input type="checkbox"/> and Archeology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aging Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNR Library-Gov. Publications | <input type="checkbox"/> State Parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Division | <input type="checkbox"/> UNR-Dept. of Range, Wildlife, and Forestry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Resources |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legislative Counsel Bureau | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild Horse Commission | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minerals | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wildlife | |

SAI NY # 8930006 PROJECT: Draft EIS - Nellis Air Force Range Resource Management Plan

Attached for review and comment is a copy of the aforementioned project. Please evaluate it with respect to: 1) the program's effect on your plans and programs; 2) the importance of its contribution to State and/or area-wide goals and objectives; and 3) its accord with any applicable laws, orders or regulations with which you are familiar with.

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS NO LATER THAN 6/28/89. Type your comments if applicable, check the appropriate box below and return the form to this office. Please do so even if you have no comment on this project. If you are unable to comment by the prescribed date, please notify this office. Reviewers may substitute this form with agency letterhead. If letterhead is used, please cite the SAI number listed above.

THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY REVIEWING AGENCY:	
<input type="checkbox"/> No comment on this project	<input type="checkbox"/> Conference desired (see below)
<input type="checkbox"/> Proposal supported as written	<input type="checkbox"/> Conditional support (see below)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional information (see below)	<input type="checkbox"/> Disapproval of funding (must specify reason below)
CLEARINGHOUSE NOTES: The scoping for this SAI was undertaken in July 1988.	
AGENCY COMMENTS: (use additional sheets if necessary) There are a number of existing water rights in the area covered by this report. No mention is made of how these water rights are to be protected or possibly acquired.	

3-1

Chita Hall HYDRAULIC ENGINEER 885-4380 6/28/89
Reviewer's Signature Title Phone Date

Response to Letter 3

3-1

Public Law (PL) 99-606 recognizes valid existing rights and makes the withdrawal of the Nellis Air Force Range subject to valid existing rights; water rights that predate the withdrawal are valid existing rights. The BLM has no present intention of acquiring existing water rights in the withdrawn area.

Comment Letter 4

BOB MILLER
Acting Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

ROLAND D. WESTERGARD
State Historic Preservation Officer



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ARCHEOLOGY

201 S. Fall Street
Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710
(702) 885-5138

June 26, 1989

MEMORANDUM

TO: John Walker, Office of Community Services
FROM: Alice M. Becker, Staff Archeologist *Alice M. Becker*
SUBJECT: DRAFT EIS - NELLIS AIR FORCE RANGE RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PLAN SAI NV#89300006

The Division has reviewed the draft document and has the follow comments.

4-1 | Page 2-4: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) assures compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as per our memorandum of understanding. The BLM has enjoyed a good relationship with this office in the past but, compliance on the Nellis Range has been lacking for long periods of time. Does BLM henceforth plan to coordinate all Section 106 review rather than the Air Force? How will BLM stay informed of Air Force activity given the nature of work conducted? We request BLM specify the means by which consultation should occur and the names of contacts.

4-2 | Additionally, BLM has other responsibilities in the area. How will the BLM meet Section 110 responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act? How will inventory in areas of restricted access be encouraged; can research be undertaken? How will Native American consultation proceed? How will the BLM ensure public participation?

4-3 | Page 3-8: Livestock and wild horses trampling are minor impacts compared to U.S. Air Force bombing. Will the Air Force or BLM consider impacts of errant bombing or maintenance of targets?

Rangeland improvements will require surveys to identify historic properties in the areas of impact. Reports should be forwarded to this office for review.

If you have any questions regarding these comments please call us.

AMB:emt

Response to Letter 4

- 4-1 BLM will continue to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for all BLM initiated or authorized activities on the Nellis Air Force Range. The Air Force will continue to be responsible for NHPA compliance for all Air Force initiated or authorized activities on the Nellis Air Force Range. No requirements stipulate that the Air Force must inform BLM of its activities on the Nellis Air Force Range; national security concerns often restrict the dissemination of such information. BLM, thus, has no jurisdiction over Air Force activities and has no need to be informed of such activities.
- 4-2 BLM will continue to comply with Section 110 of NHPA, contingent on funding and staffing, for all BLM initiated or authorized activities. Access to the Nellis Air Force Range for BLM employees is at the discretion of the Air Force; inventory and research can occur, but only with Air Force concurrence. Native American consultation and public participation within the planning process for BLM authorized or initiated activities will continue to function in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and policy.
- 4-3 The impacts of military activities, such as bombing and target maintenance, are beyond the scope of the document. Military-related impacts were analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Public Land Withdrawal, Nellis Air Force Bombing Range, Nye, Clark, and Lincoln Counties, Nevada (1981) and the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Groom Mountain Range, Lincoln County, Nevada (1986).

Comment Letter 5

BOB MILLER
Acting Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

TERRI JAY
Executive Director

RECEIVED

89 AUG 15 8:11:05

COMMISSION FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES
STEWART FACILITY
CAPITOL COMPLEX



COMMISSION FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES

Stewart Facility
Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710
(702) 885-5589

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Dawn Lappin
15640 Sylvester Road
Reno, Nevada 89511

Michael Kirk, D.V.M.
P.O. Box 5896
Reno, Nevada 89513

August 9, 1989

Curtis Tucker, Area Manager
Caliente Resource Area
P.O. Box 237
Caliente, Nevada 89008

Dear Mr. Tucker,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Resource Plan and EIS for the Nellis Air Force Range Planning Area. In order to simplify matters, I have referenced comments by page number.

- S-2 Summary of Alternatives - Under wild horses, you state the "No Action Alternative" as gathering horses to the AMLs.
- 5-1 Please explain how gathering horses is no action. Also, in light of the recent IBLA decision, AMLs no longer exist or are no longer applicable as justification for removals.
- 5-2 2-3 Wild Horses - What is the anticipated time frame for revising the Five Party Agreement?
- 5-3 2-6 Wild Horses - A.,1., Did you use the Draft Habitat Evaluation Procedures Users Guide in determining the key areas and key plant species for wild horses?
- 5-4 B.,1., How often and by what method will you monitor the condition of the horses when you have such limited access?
- 5-5 B.,2., Same as preceding question.
- 5-6 B.,3., Same as preceding question.
- B.,6., Please explain what is meant by the Nevada Wild Horse Range, as I have several maps, all from the BLM, and all show a different area for the Wild Horse Range.
- 5-7
- 5-8 Management Direction - 2. With limited access, how will you perform monitoring to justify removals?
- 5-9 4. What is an initial management level?
- 5-10 5. How often and by what method will you monitor the physical condition of the horses?
- 5-11 2-7 Management Direction - 6. Who will perform the studies and how often will field work be conducted?
- ALTERNATIVE B-PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
- 5-12 Goal: In your goal statement, you again mention the appropriate management level. This goal will need to be redefined to conform with the IBLA ruling. Horses will need to be managed to achieve a "thriving ecological balance."

Response to Letter 5

- 5-1 The No Action Alternative, which means continuation of the present level or systems of resource use, is required by Federal Regulation (43 CFR 1610.4-5) when the Bureau of Land Management prepares a land use plan. In this specific instance, it merely restates the goals and objectives of the existing Nevada Wild Horse Range Herd Management Area Plan (NWHR HMAP). As you correctly state, AML's, as used in the past, are no longer sufficient justification for removals.
- 5-2 The Five-Party Agreement will be revised, if necessary, subsequent to issuance of the Approved Resource Plan and Record of Decision.
- 5-3 As stated in V.A.1. on page D-12 (Appendix D,DRP), key areas and key species were determined using the methodology described by the Nevada Range Studies Task Group (Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook, First Edition, 1984).
- 5-4 The condition of the wild horse will be assessed whenever a wild horse and burro specialist is on the NWHR. Physical appearance of the animal, based on the professional judgement of the wild horse and burro specialist, will be used as the indicator of condition (see V.B.a. on page D-13).
- 5-5 Information on productivity, survival, and sex ratios will be gathered every 3 years at minimum. Information on age structure will be collected during gathering operations (see V.B.2., V.B.3., and V.B.4. on pages D-13 and D-14).
- 5-6 Information on seasonal movements and home ranges will be collected as specified in V.B.5. on page D-14.
- 5-7 Map 8 on page 1-14 shows the current boundary of the NWHR, as recognized by BLM.
- 5-8 Access, though restricted and subject to Air Force scheduling constraints, is adequate for management purposes.
- 5-9 An initial management level is a level (number) that is used as the initial (beginning) point upon which to base future decisions. Specific to wild horse management, it is the point at which BLM begins monitoring to determine whether or not the population is in thriving ecological balance.
- 5-10 See Response 5-4.
- 5-11 Studies will be conducted by BLM wild horse and burro specialists. The schedule for conducting the studies is detailed on pages D-12, D-13, and D-14.
- 5-12 The Draft Nellis Air Force Range RP/EIS was written, printed, and distributed to the public prior to the IBLA ruling. As a result of that ruling, the objectives for wild horses have been modified to include a new objective: "To achieve a thriving ecological balance consistent with other resource values." Reference to an appropriate management level (AML) has been omitted from Management Direction Number 1.

Comment Letter 5 (cont.)

Curtis Tucker
August 9, 1989
Page 2

- 5-13 | Management Actions - 1. Please modify this action as
you must have monitoring data in order to determine what is
"excess" and then to justify removals of any horses.
- 5-14 | 2. Fencing riparian areas should be done to protect
the riparian areas. Period. Seeing if removals or reductions of
livestock will help the problem seems like an excuse, when
fencing may prevent removals or reductions from having to be
done.
- 5-15 | 2-8 ISSUE 2: WILDLIFE HABITAT
Management Direction: 1. If all forage outside the
boundaries of the Nevada Horse Range is reserved for wildlife,
then 3., all forage inside the Nevada Wild Horse Range should be
reserved for the maximum number of horses that the forage can
support.
- 5-16 | ISSUE 3: WILD HORSES
Management Direction: 1. In light of the IBLA ruling,
"appropriate management levels" are no longer valid.
- 5-17 | 2. Same as above.
- 5-18 | 3. If you are not planning on fencing the NHR
immediately, then it is not reasonable to expect horses to adhere
to an invisible boundary. Please check BLM guidance for the
definition of a "problem" animal.
- 5-19 | Management Actions: 1. Again, the IBLA prohibits
removals based solely on the appropriate management level. The
number of horses will need to be flexible, based on a thriving
ecological balance.
- 5-20 | 2. See Issue 3, number 3.
- 5-21 | 5. Since the resource plan as proposed, needs
modification to conform with the IBLA ruling, you must modify the
Draft Resource Plan. Then, obviously you would have to amend the
HMAP.
- 5-22 | 6. If your intention is to keep horses on the NWHR,
fencing will have to be addressed.
- 5-23 | 4-9 IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION
WILD HORSES - 2nd paragraph - You state that horses will
become exposed to more hazardous materials when they expand their
range and you site that 61 horses died after drinking
contaminated water. The incident you site was a violation of
federal and state laws and the perpetrators were fined. What
happened was an accident caused by carelessness and ignorance of
the laws. Are you telling us that horses need to be reduced
because otherwise there are going to be more deaths attributed to
carelessness?
- Hazardous materials on the Bombing Range and Test Site must
still be handled according to federal and state standards, so I
request that you delete the portion of the paragraph that refers
to hazardous materials. It is not a justification for reduction.

Response to Letter 5 (cont.)

- 5-13 Comment noted. Reference to an appropriate management level (AML) has been omitted from Management Action Number 1.
- 5-14 The intent of Management Direction 10 is to ensure that fencing which might restrict horse movement is used only after it is demonstrated, through monitoring, that other management practices are not successful.
- 5-15 Wildlife Habitat Management Direction 1 has been rewritten to read "Forage outside the boundaries of the Nevada Wild Horse Range and the Bald Mountain grazing allotment will be managed for wildlife". Wildlife Habitat Management Direction 3 has been reworded as follows: "Forage on the Nevada Wild Horse Range will be managed to achieve and maintain a thriving ecological balance".
- 5-16 Comment noted. See Response 5-12.
- 5-17 Management Direction 2 has been changed to read as follows: "Adjust wild horse numbers to achieve a thriving ecological balance, using data obtained from monitoring and other sources, as available."
- 5-18 It would be unreasonable to expect a wild horse to adhere to an invisible boundary when environmental conditions force that animal to cross the boundary. If, however, the environmental conditions are such that the wild horse need never approach the boundary, a fence may not be necessary in all cases to prevent horse movements from the herd management area (NWHR). The use of the term "problem" animal was incorrect and Management Direction 3 has been reworded to state: "Develop and implement a gathering plan for the removal of all wild horses outside the NWHR herd management area".
- 5-19 Management Action 1 has been rewritten to state: "Conduct gatherings, relocations, and removals to achieve thriving ecological balance on the Nevada Wild Horse Range".
- 5-20 Management Action 2 has been reworded to state: "Conduct gatherings to remove all wild horses outside the boundaries of the Nevada Wild Horse Range".
- 5-21 Comment noted.
- 5-22 The BLM believes that fencing should only be used as a last resort in the management of wild horses. If there is a thriving ecological balance on the NWHR, then wild horses should not need to move off of the NWHR. In this scenario, no fence construction would be required. (See also response 5-14).
- 5-23 There is no intention to justify removals or reductions because of possible exposure to hazardous materials. Wild horse numbers have been allowed to expand to their current level, forcing horses to move off the NWHR in search of forage and water. Many wild horses have thus been exposed to military operations and support activities that do not occur on the NWHR; the cited incident occurred outside of the boundaries of the NWHR.

Comment Letter 5 (cont.)

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- 5-24 ** It is interesting to note, that nowhere in your EIS do you mention that fact that above-ground nuclear testing occurred in the 50's and 60's on the area that is now the Bombing Range and the NWHR. Some of the weapons tested and used on the bombing range also contain radioactive materials.
- 5-24 What kind of monitoring are you doing on the horses that are removed for adoption, to insure that the adopting public is not receiving contaminated horses? Since some of these horses went into the fee-waiver program for slaughter, how did you insure that contaminated horses were not used for human consumption or pet food? How will you address this in the future?
- 5-25 4-9 Cumulative Impacts - Last paragraph - Please clarify, on a detailed map, the difference between the 1962 area for wild horses verses the 1965 and 1971 area.
- 5-26 4-10 IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE B-PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE Vegetation - You state that water can be turned on and off to manipulate wild horse utilization. How will you guarantee that horses won't die using this technique?
- 5-27 4-12 Wild Horses - Delete potentially hazardous substances as per my previous comments from page 4-9.
- 5-28 2nd paragraph - Delete references to AML as per IBLA.
- 5-29 4th paragraph - Please explain how fencing will not significantly impact the free-roaming behavior of the horses.
- 5-30 5-3 Public Review of the Draft - Please be advised that the Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses is a State Agency and not an Organization.
- 5-30 B-2 FIVE PARTY COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
Section I. 4, Have the five-parties met at least yearly? Are minutes of the meetings available to the public? If so, I hereby request copies of minutes of all meetings for the past five years.
- 5-31 B-4 Section V. Bureau Responsibilities - Delete "level determined by the management plan." I fully realize that the appendix is provided for reference only, but in light of the IBLA decision, these pertinent documents should be updated to reflect the changes in wild horse management.
- 5-31 D-2 HMAP - II., B., 1. How can you determine key areas and key species to determine habitat suitability when you have no vegetative inventory, nor is one planned?
- 5-31 D-3 5., a. Wildlife - You state that mountain lions are found throughout the area. Has anyone determined to what extent the mountain lions may impact the wild horses, as is occurring in other parts of the state?

Response to Letter 5 (cont.)

- 5-24 The wild horse adoption program is not a subject for analysis in this Resource Plan. The comments referring to nuclear testing are also outside the scope of this document.
- 5-25 The Nevada Wild Horse Range (NWHR) was established in 1962 and comprised approximately 435,000 acres. In 1965, the NWHR was reduced to approximately 394,000 acres; this boundary has not changed since that date. The Herd Management Area identified in response to the Wild, Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 was the area encompassed by the NWHR as identified in 1965. The 1965 boundary of the NWHR is shown on Map 8, page 1-14, as are the current seasonal wild horse use areas. Adding the boundaries of the 1962 area to Map 8 would not provide additional pertinent information to the Proposed RP/Final EIS.
- 5-26 BLM cannot guarantee that wild horses will not die using this technique.
- 5-27 Comment noted. See Response 5-23.
- 5-28 Comment noted. Reference to AMLs have been deleted.
- 5-29 Wild horse movements within the 394,000 acre NWHR would be unrestricted. Interior fences would not be constructed (with the possible exception of small enclosures in riparian areas) and horses within the NWHR would be free to access any of the 394,000 acres. Assuming that a thriving ecological balance is being maintained within the NWHR, horses would not need to roam off the NWHR. The free-roaming nature of wild horses would, therefore, not be significantly impacted. As noted in Management Direction 10 (page 2-8), the intent is to use fences only when monitoring has demonstrated that other management practices are not successful.
- 5-30 Comment noted and correction made in the Proposed RP/Final EIS.
- 5-31 These comments are not within the scope of this Resource Plan but refer to the Five-Party Cooperative Agreement and the Nevada Wild Horse Range Herd Management Area Plan. These two documents were appended to the Draft Resource Plan for reference purposes only; both will be revised, as necessary, subsequent to the approval of this Resource Plan.

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5-31 | D-7 6. Population Demography - Here you state that rate of increase is 9 per cent. Yet in your capture plans, you state that rate of increase is 20 per cent. What is it?

5-32 | In your document you specify water projects that will benefit the wild horses. Does this include the three spring improvements that REECO was ordered to perform as partial settlement?

At this time, I would like to recommend that you contact the Commission in regards to funding for the proposed water projects. These projects would be something that the Commission would be very interested in looking at, for funding through our grant program.

If we can provide you with information regarding the grant program, please feel free to contact me at the Commission office. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



TERRI JAY
Executive Director

TJ/cb

Response to Letter 5 (cont.)

5-31 See response to Comment 5-31 on page 4-35)

5-32 The REECo situation was not specifically addressed in this document. The springs to be developed by REECo would fall within the parameters of Management Action number 2 of this Resource Plan (see page 2-2).

Comment Letter 6



MINERALS
EXPLORATION
COALITION

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August 29, 1989

Curtis Tucker, Area Manager
Caliente Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 237
Caliente, NV 89008

Dear Mr. Tucker:

This letter constitutes the comments of the Minerals Exploration Coalition (MEC) on the Draft Nellis Air Force Range Resource Plan and Environmental Impact Statement in the Caliente Resource Area, Nevada. The MEC represents companies and individuals engaged in exploring for locatable minerals on federal lands.

MEC worked hard to add Section 12 to the P.L. 99-606, the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986, to allow access to military lands for the purpose of exploring for and producing locatable minerals. All areas of military bases not actively in use or containing hazardous materials should be open to mining.

6-1

We understand the importance and priority of military operations on the Nellis Air Force Range. However, we believe insufficient effort has been made during the planning process to communicate with the mineral industry to work out arrangements whereby access for mineral purposes might be allowed. The decision that no lands are suitable for opening to mineral exploration and development and that the Range be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining laws and mineral leasing and the geothermal leasing laws should be reconsidered.

The report on mineral resources in Appendix H documents that areas of high mineral potential exist within the Range. We would like to pursue the possibility of access to these areas.

6-2

We suggest that a meeting of Air Force, BLM and MEC be held to discuss the possibility of gaining access to some of the mineralized areas in the Nellis Air Force Range for mineral operations.

Sincerely,

John D. Wells
John D. Wells
President

Response to Letter 6

- 6-1 Section 12(a) of PL 99-606 directs the Secretary of the Interior to determine, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Air Force, which of the withdrawn lands are suitable for opening to the operation of the Mining Law of 1872 and other pertinent legislation. Throughout the planning process, the Air Force has indicated that opening any areas on the Nellis Air Force Range to the operation of the various mining and mineral leasing laws would conflict with, and possibly jeopardize, the military mission for which the lands were originally withdrawn. Therefore, BLM did not propose to open any areas on the Nellis Air Force Range at this time. As stated on page 2-9 of the document, "In November, 1991 and every 5 years thereafter, BLM, with the concurrence of the Air Force, will determine which, if any, of the withdrawn public lands can then be considered for opening under the operation of the Mining Law of 1872, the Mineral Lands Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands of 1947, the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970, or any one or more of such Acts."
- 6-2 A copy of your letter has been forwarded to the Air Force for their consideration.