

931-DIVISION OF RESOURCES

From: Terry Driver  
Las Vegas District

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BUR. OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
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NEVADA STATE OFFICE

## Proposal

The proposed action is to reduce the wild horse population on the USAF Tactical Fighter Weapons Training Center Range (Nellis Range Complex) which includes the Nevada Wild Horse Range (NWHR). The Nellis Range Complex (NRC) covers approximately 1.9 million acres and included within the NRC in the NWHR which covers approximately 394 thousand acres. This reduction will leave a viable population of 2,000 wild horses on the NWHR, a unique area established in 1962 for a unique purpose. To accomplish this goal, all the wild horses on the Nellis Range Complex outside the NWHR will be removed. In addition, the number of the wild horses on the NWHR will be adjusted. To retain the viable population of 2,000 wild horses on the NWHR, 3,500 to 4,500 wild horses will be removed from the NRC.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

### Gather Area

The gather area is the USAF Tactical Fighter Weapons Training Center Range approximately 40 miles Southeast of Tonopah, Nevada (map attached). The gathering operation will take place in Goldfield/Mudflat, Cactus Flat/Gold Flat, Stonewall Mountain, and Kawich areas with other small gatherings in isolated areas on the Range Complex, priority based on funding.

### Existing Situation

In March 1984, the Bureau of Land Management, with the aid of the U.S. Air Force, conducted the most recent census on the U.S. Air Force Tactical Fighter Weapons Training Center Range which includes the NWHR. Of the 4,890 (actual count) wild horses counted, over half the population roam off the NWHR. A situation also exists with very limited perennial water sources available for the wild horses especially during summer months. The BLM is responsible for the vegetation soils, wild horses, and wildlife habitat on the Nellis Range Complex. The decision to remove horses from this area is based on concerns of various governmental and state agencies, Consultation and Coordination (C&C) committee members, other public comments, and proposed bureau planning documents.

REMOVAL PROCESSSummary

Under the NWHR HMAP the C&C Committee recommended an initial management level of 2,000 wild horses. Therefore, approximately 3,500 to 4,500 head of wild horses will be removed from within the gather area. Once captured, the horses will be transported to a BLM operated or approved adoption preparation facility, to avoid stress to the animals.

Removal Methods

Any and all access or removal actions on the NRC, whether on the ground or in the air, will be coordinated with and approved by the USAF which is responsible for the NRC, a controlled access area based on its primary use.

The BLM would be responsible for the capture, care, temporary holding of wild horses and their transportation to the adoption preparation facility.

The capture operation would utilize water and/or bait capture methods and/or helicopters, if necessary, to gather horses.

Capture facilities may be portable or permanent as long as they are approved by the BLM and USAF representatives.

If helicopter gathering is utilized to capture wild horses, then no gathering will be allowed between March 1 and June 30, due to foaling period. Only the BLM may contract for the use of helicopters to assist in capturing wild horses.

Capture locations and the time of gathering will be determined by Bureau of Land Management and USAF representatives.

The Bureau of Land Management will provide for brand inspector services, veterinarian services (if necessary), and a BLM representative to assure capture is being conducted in accordance with applicable regulations.

Due to the number of wild horses identified in this plan to be removed, this plan will remain in effect until all animals are gathered down to appropriate management level and placed in adoption centers.

Justification

Justification for removal is based on a consultation and coordination process and is supported by Public Law 92-195.

Wild horses exist on areas outside and adjacent to the Nevada Wild Horse Range which was established as a sanctuary in 1962 for wild horses, which is secondary to the purpose of the withdrawal. Horses existing outside of the Nevada Wild Horse Range have been identified to be removed. The NWHR is partially within and adjacent to the Tonopah Test Range. Ground and air access are controlled by the USAF based on the primary use of the NRC. Monitoring studies cannot be conducted in the Tonopah Test Range because of the inherent danger and security restrictions. In addition, wild horses and burros have been identified to be completely removed from Stonewall Mountain to optimize habitat for the existing bighorn sheep population.

Currently, the management of wild horses in the NRC range is undergoing a Consultation and Coordination (C&C) process. The C&C Committee is made up of various interest groups and government agencies who have an interest in the well-being of wild horses and wildlife on the NRC. The C&C Committee, after visiting parts of the NRC and analyzing existing data have recommended that wild horses be managed only on the Nevada Wild Horse Range and that horses outside the Nevada Wild Horse Range be removed.

Analysis of monitoring studies on the Nevada Wild Horse Range will be used to determine what the future management numbers of wild horses will be. Future removals will be based on the results of these monitoring studies.

#### Brand Inspector

The services of the State Brand Inspector will be obtained and all inspections will comply with the procedures set forth in Instruction Memorandum NV-83-26, which outlines the procedure for processing private horses captured during removal operations.

#### Veterinarian Services

Provisions will be made to have a veterinarian available to the operation within a few hours notice. During the capture operation the nearest full-time veterinary service is Las Vegas, Nevada, approximately 180 miles away from capture site. Also, the veterinarian in Caliente, Nevada, will be available to the roundup operation within a few hours notice.

The Bureau of Land Management's authorized representative or his designee will summon a veterinarian if, in his judgement, veterinary services are required to alleviate suffering of one or more horses, to ensure their well being, or to diagnose and/or treat disease, sickness or injury.

#### DISPOSITION AND HANDLING OF HORSES

##### Provisions for Humane Treatment

The welfare and humane treatment of wild horses will be of primary importance in handling them. Captured wild horses which are seriously injured, obviously sick or lame, or very old, whose condition is such that it is obvious they will not recover will be humanely destroyed at the site by the Bureau of Land Management's authorized officer only, or by a veterinarian if authorized by the Bureau's representative. BLM's authorized officers have been trained by a licensed veterinarian in the state of humane euthanasia of wild horses.

Captured horses will be removed from the capture corrals within ten hours from the time of capture. Water will be available in the holding corral at all times. Horses held for ten hours or more in the holding facility will be provided good quality grass, hay, or mixed alfalfa, and grass hay at the rate of not less than two (2) pounds of hay per 100 pounds of body weight per day.

The Inspection and Identification of Captured Horses

As soon as practical after entering the holding corral, each group of horses will be inspected. The horses will be identified and separated if necessary so as to assure the safety and well being of the captured animals.

Animals which are branded, which are suspected of being branded or which are known to be private, will be separated out and handled as outlined in IM 83-26 which is in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

Destruction of Animals

Should it become necessary during the course of the gather to destroy a horse because of disease, age, or injury it will be the responsibility of the Bureau of Land Management's authorized representative's to destroy the horse in a safe, humane manner. No other individual will be allowed to destroy any captured horse unless the representative has specifically stated (and made reference to in writing) that he will be away from the job site for an extended period of time. During this time, the representative will appoint a qualified individual to take over his responsibilities.

Disposal of Animals Which are Destroyed During the Removal Operation

Carcasses will be disposed of by burial or consumed by fire or left to the environment as outlined by Insturciton Memorandum NV-83-84. This will satisfy State and County sanitary requirements.

Prior to disposal, data which includes the date of death, apparent reason for death, sex, color, age, and freeze mark number (if assigned), will be collected.

Transport of Captured Animals

All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall, under the provisions of 43 CFR 4720.4(b), be subject to the following reservations and/or restrictions:

a. All such transportation shall be in compliance with appropriate state and federal laws and regulations and policies applicable to the humane transportation of horses.

b. Vehicles shall be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and carefully operated so as to ensure that captured animals are transported without undue risk or injury with adequate ventilation and size.

Bobtail trucks, single deck trucks, can be used to haul horses from the capture site to the adoption preparation center. Single deck trucks with trailers 40 feet or longer are required to have two partition gates to separate horses. Trailers less than 40 feet need only one partition gate to separate the horses.

c. Vehicles shall be inspected and approved by a BLM representative prior to use.

d. Where required by the BLM representative, animals shall be sorted as to age, size, temperment, sex, and condition when transporting them so as to minimize, to the extent possible, injury due to fighting and trampling.

e. The BLM representative shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, and distance to be transported when planning for the movement of captured animals. The BLM representative shall provide for any brand and/or health services required for the captured animals.

#### Public Relations

In general, all publicity, formal public contact, and inquiries will be handled by the C&C subcommittee through the Public Affairs Officer, Las Vegas District BLM office.

#### Coordination

The Caliente Resource Area will coordinate with the adoption preparation facility to assure that there is space available in the corrals for the captured horses and that they can be handled humanely and efficiently.

NEVADA WILD HORSE  
AND  
NELLIS RANGE COMPLEX  
GATHERING PLAN

Prepared by: Phillip C. Seaman  
RGE COY/WH&B Specialist, BLM  
Caliente R.A.

1/17/85  
Date

Recommend to Members of Five-Party Agreement:

Ernest Reed Chairman C&C Committee, Sierra Club

Harold Y. Rappin Secretary C&C Committee, Wild Horse Organized Assistance

John Young Vice Chairman C&C Committee, Nevada Wildlife Federation

Greg H. Cook Vice Chairman C&C Committee, Clark County Game Management Board

Harold J. Smith Vice Chairman C&C Committee, National Wild Horse Association

David Franklin 1/28/85 Vice Chairman C&C Committee, HSSN Humane Society of Southern Nevada

James Allen Vice Chairman C&C Committee, Fraternity of Desert Bighorn

Recommended for Approval:

R.H. Wolfe Area Manager, BLM CRA 1/17/85 Date

Joseph K. Stupich Commander 554 Operations Support Wing Nellis AFB, NV JAN 24 1985 Date

Robert L. Loden Regional Director U.S. Dept. of Interior U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 1/31/85 Date

John Knalchen Director Nevada Dept. of Wildlife 2/6/85 Date

Thomas R. Clark Manager Department of Energy Nevada Operations Office 2/5/85 Date

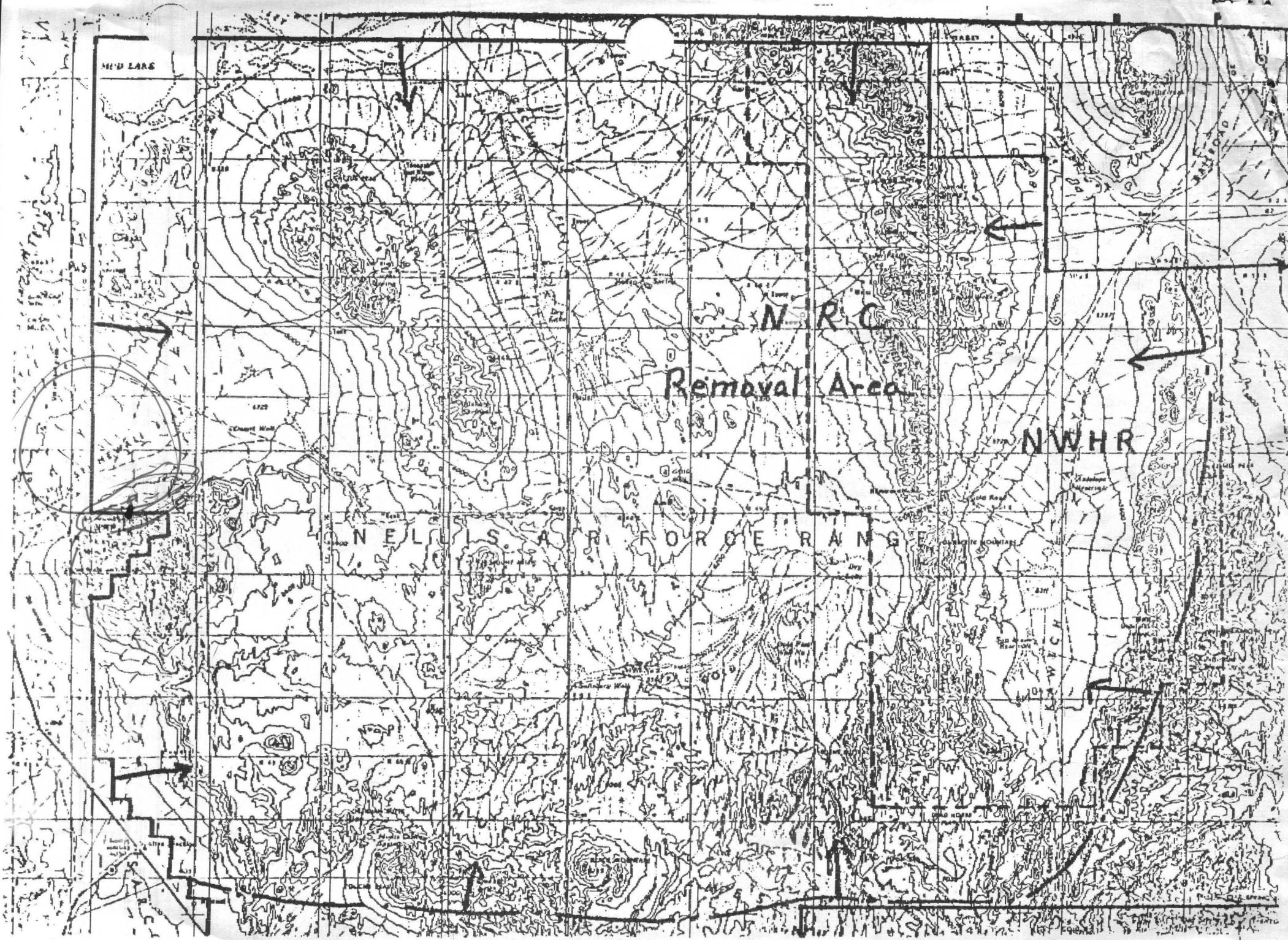
APPROVED BY: Ken Owen  
District Manager  
Las Vegas District

FEB. 7, 1985  
Date

CONCURRENCE: [Signature]  
State Director  
Nevada State Office

3/18/85  
Date





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