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| United States | Forest | Toiyabe National Forest | 2881 S. Valley View, #16 |
| Department of | Service | Spring Mountains | Las Vegas, NV 89102 |
| Agriculture | | National Recreation Area | (702) 873-8800 |

Reply to: 2260/1950

Date: October 16, 1995

Wild Horse Organized Assistance
 ATTN: Dawn Lappin
 15640 Sylvester Rd
 Reno, NV 89511

Dear Dawn:

Enclosed are the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Spring Mountain Territory wild horse gather. The decision is to gather problem and excess wild horses, using the age and sex selective removal strategy. Since no substantive comments were received during the formal scoping period, the decision is non-appealable pursuant to 36 CFR 215.8(a)(3).

If you have any questions or concerns about this decision or the non-appealable aspect of the decision, please call me at 873-8800.

Sincerely,

SARA MAYBEN
 Ecologist



Caring for the Land and Serving People





DECISION NOTICE

Spring Mountain Wild Horse Gather

Toiyabe National Forest
Spring Mountains National Recreation Area
Clark County, Nevada

An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to evaluate a capture/removal of problem wild horses using areas outside the designated wild horse territory and capture/removal of excess wild horses from the Lucky Strike and Mt. Stirling/Wallace Canyon Herd Units of the Spring Mountain Territory. The capture/removal would occur during a two week period beginning December, 1995 through January, 1996.

It is my decision to adopt Alternative 2, Capture/removal of problem and excess wild horses. The excess wild horses will be selectively removed based upon sex and age. This alternative is consistent with the Toiyabe National Forest Plan, the Clark County Management Framework Plan, and the Clark County Grazing Impact Statement and Record of Decision. It also meets wild horse management objectives of these plans and resolves the following issues identified in the EA: problem wild horses will no longer degrade the fragile environment of the Mt. Charleston Wilderness, will no longer be safety hazards in highly populated areas; wild horses will no longer graze on private property; wild horse populations will be reduced to Appropriate Management Levels (AML) as determined by current resources; and selective removal for sex and age allows the population to maintain AML over an extended period of time.

A Biological Assessment and a Heritage Resource survey will be completed prior to construction of any trap sites or holding corrals. All trap sites and holding corrals will be located outside heritage resource sites. Every effort will be made to locate trap sites and holding corrals outside desert tortoise habitat (above 4500 feet elevation). If this is not possible, a qualified biologist will survey the trap sites and holding corrals for desert tortoise sign, including burrows. No desert tortoise sign or burrows will be located within the trap sites or holding corrals. Therefore, this action is not likely to adversely effect desert tortoise. Informal consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service will be completed prior to any action on the ground.

The following alternatives were considered but not chosen because they did not resolve the issues of concern. Alternative 1, No Action (No capture/removal of problem or excess wild horses) was not chosen because it does not meet the Toiyabe National Forest Plan objectives for the Mt. Charleston Wilderness, Area 11 (Lee and Kyle Canyons), and wild horse management as identified in the Toiyabe National Forest Plan, Clark County Management Framework and Plan and the Clark County Grazing Impact Statement and Record of Decision. Alternative 3 (Capture/removal of problem wild horses and excess wild horses with selective removal by age only) was not chosen because it does not allow the population to maintain itself at AML for an extended period of time. Alternative 4 (Capture/removal of problem wild horses only) was not chosen because it does not address the problem of excess wild horses. The details of all of the alternatives may be found in the Environmental Assessment.





Telephone scoping, with parties that responded to the 1992 wild horse and burro gather and removal, began August 25, 1995 by the Forest Service to determine issues and concerns related to the proposed action. Twelve individuals were contacted representing 5 agencies, 5 organizations, and 2 individuals.

This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215. Beginning September 12, we provided a 30-day period for public comment on the EA. We received no expression of interest in this project prior to the close of the comment period, and scoping identified no major concerns with the preferred alternative. My decision is to approve the preferred alternative identified in the public notice. Therefore, pursuant to 36 CFR 215.8(a)(3), this decision is not subject to appeal, and implementation may begin immediately following publication of the legal notice.

Alan Pinkerton
Assistant Forest Supervisor
Spring Mountains National Recreation Area
2881 S. Valley View, Suite 16
Las Vegas, NV 89102

10/13/95

Date





FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Spring Mountain Wild Horse Gather

It is my decision, based upon the Environmental Assessment, that this is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. This determination is based upon the rationale that significant criteria, as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.27) are not being met. The following rationale was used to determine that significant impacts were not present for each criteria mentioned in 40 CFR 1508.27.

The short-term and long-term impacts, as disclosed, are not considered significant upon the human environment. The reduction of animals will provide for long-term improvement in the condition of the wild horses and in the vegetative community. All this will contribute to a thriving natural ecological balance. A thriving ecological balance contributes to a quality human environment.

There are no significant impacts to public health or safety.

There is no significant, irreversible commitment of resources or irretrievable loss of cultural resources, park land, prime rangelands, wetlands, or floodplains, or wild and scenic rivers.

There are no known effects on the human environment that are likely to be uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

This action will not set a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor will it represent a decision in principle about the future.

The cumulative impacts resulting from implementation of the selected alternative will not be significant.

There will be no known adverse effects on districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, there is no effect on significant scientific resources.

There are no significant effects on Threatened or Endangered species, and no adverse effects to sensitive species, as determined through analysis.

The actions do not threaten a violation of Federal, State, or Local Law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

For further information, please contact George Perkins or Alan Pinkerton at the address below or telephone (702) 873-8800.

Alan Pinkerton
Assistant Forest Supervisor
2881 S. Valley View, Ste. 16
Las Vegas, NV 89102

10/13/95

Date

