



Nellis

G 6-22-88

IN REPLY REFER TO:

JUN 22 1988

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

CALIENTE RESOURCE AREA

P.O. Box 237

Caliente, Nevada 89008

4700  
(NV-05580.07)

(702) 726-3141

Enclosed for your information is the signed final Nevada Wild Horse Range and Nellis Range Complex, and FY 88 Caliente Resource Area Wild Horse Gathering Plans and associated Environmental Assessment.

Comments on the Draft were reviewed and incorporated into the plans as appropriate.

Thank you for your interest and concern for the well being of wild horses in the Caliente Resource Area.

Sincerely,

*Curtis G. Tucker*

Curtis G. Tucker  
Area Manager

Enclosure: Gathering Plans  
1. NWHR & NRC/EA  
2. FY CRA/EA

NEVADA WILD HORSE RANGE

AND

NELLIS RANGE COMPLEX

GATHERING PLAN #2

Prepared by:

*Phillip C Seegmiller*

Phillip C Seegmiller

Range Con/Wild Horse & Burro Spec.

*5/13/88*

Date

Bureau of Land Management  
Las Vegas District  
Caliente Resource Area  
Caliente, Nevada



## PROPOSAL

The proposed action is to reduce the wild horse population on the USAF Tactical 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 is the NWHR which covers approximately 394 thousand acres. Eventual 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 retain the viable population of 2,000 wild horses on the NWHR, 1800 to 2500 wild horses will eventually be removed from the NRC (this includes total removal of horses outside of the NWHR). However due to limited funding this removal plan only covers the removal of 225 head of excess wild horses.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Gather Area

The gather area is the Nellis Range Complex approximately 40 miles Southeast of Tonopah, Nevada (Map attached). The gathering operation will take place in Cactus Flat/Gold Flat and Kawich Mountain and Valley areas.

### Existing Situation

There has been a wild horse removal every year since 1985 on the NRC. During the spring of 1985, 1425 excess wild horses were removed from the west side of the Kawich Mountain Range, and 77 from the east side of the Range. During the Spring of 1985, 285 excess wild horses were removed from the west side of the Kawich Mountain Range, and 534 excess wild horses and 205 excess wild burros were removed from Stonewall Spring, also removed 224 horses and 28 Burros from wild horse Spring; both areas are on the extreme west side of the Nellis Range Complex boundary. The 1987 excess wild horse round up removed 76 horses from the east side of the Kawich Range, 484 from the west side of the Kawich range 362 from the Breen Creek Reservoir, and 288 were removed from the Pedro Lake area.

The latest wild horse Census was completed during September 1986 at which time there were an estimated 4120 (actual count) wild horses still on the NRC. Of the 4120 counted half roam off the NWHR. The situation also exists with very limited perennial water sources available for the wild horses especially during summer months.

### Justification

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

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.

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.

The C&C committee 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 during the summer of 1984 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.

Under the NWHR HMAP the C&C Committee recommended an initial management level (AML) of 2,000 wild horses. Therefore, approximately 2,120 head of wild horses still need to 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.

Analysis of monitoring studies on the NWHR will be used to determine what the future management numbers of wild horses will be. Future adjustments to the wild horse population will be based on the results of these monitoring studies.

#### REMOVAL PROCESS

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.

Under this gathering plan the BLM will be responsible for the capture, care, temporary holding of approximately 225 wild horses from the gather area, and their transportation to the adoption preparation facility through issuance of gathering Contract.

Prior to any gathering operation the Bureau will provide for a pre-capture analysis to determine the condition of the animals, prevailing temperatures, animal distribution in relation to potential trap location, condition of the soils, condition of the roads, drought conditions, etc. The information from the pre-capture analysis will develop conclusions as to whether the level of activity is likely to cause undue stress to animals and whether such stress would be acceptable to animals if a veterinarian expertise were present, or whether a delay in capture activity is warranted. If it is determined that the capture can proceed with a veterinarian present, the services of a veterinarian will be obtained prior to proceeding with the capture.

The Bureau of Land Management will provide a COR/PI(s) as needed for the capture operation from site selection, corral design, to capture and transportation of animals to Palomino Valley Center.

The capture operation will utilize helicopter capture methods.

The Bureau of Land Management will also provide supervision of the project helicopter during the gathering operation. This will be accomplished by use of an additional helicopter on site to monitor all aspects of the wild horse round-up. In the event an additional helicopter cannot be obtained, other methods will be used to observe the removal operations, including but not limited to, using observers on horseback, observing the helicopter from vehicles and placing stationary observers in strategic locations. The observers will have direct communication with the project helicopter for contract supervision. Observers will be monitoring the rate of movement of horses, distance to be traveled, type of terrain, fences etc.

The contractor's ability to perform will be determined by accessing the adequacy of the contractor's equipment such as traps, trucks, trailers, water troughs, helicopter, handling facilities, etc. prior to issuing the Notice to Proceed to Contractor.

Bidders Tour will be scheduled and conducted by the BLM to make the contractors more aware of type of terrain, condition of animals, condition of roads, trap locations in relation to animal distribution, where fences are located as well as other dangerous barriers.

The contract will be terminated for convenience of the Government when Contract disputes cannot be resolved. In the event the contractor does not perform properly the contractor will be defaulted.

Veterinary services are available in Caliente, Nevada. During the gathering operation provisions will be made to have the veterinarian available if his/her services are needed. 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.

The services of the state brand inspector will be obtained and all inspections will comply with the procedures set forth in Instruction Memorandum NV-85-416, which outlines the procedure for processing private horses captured during removal operations.

This plan will remain in effect until all animals identified in this removal plan are removed and placed in adoption centers. (Anticipated to take place during August and September 1988).

#### REMOVAL METHODS

All capture attempts shall be accomplished through the use of a helicopter. Wing riders may be used if necessary. Roping will not be allowed except to capture orphan foals and wet mares, and this will be done only when necessary, with prior approval by the CDR. Under no circumstances shall animals be tied down for more than one hour. Mare and foal are to be capture together, if both cannot be captured then one or the other will be released to allow them to be reunited at no cost to the government.

The helicopter shall be used in such a manner that bands or herds will remain together as much as possible and foals will not become separated from their mothers.

The rate of movement and distance the animals travel shall not exceed limitations set by the CDR who will consider terrain, physical barriers, weather, condition of the animals and other factors.

It is estimated that 4 trap locations will be required to accomplish the work. General trap locations and holding facilities will be selected by the CDR, specific trap sites (with in the general trap location area) will be selected by the contractor. All trap locations and holding facilities must be approved by the CDR and USAF representatives prior to construction. The contractor may also be required to change or move trap locations as determined by the CDR. All traps and holding facilities not located on public land must have prior written approval of the landowner.

All traps, wings, and holding facilities shall be constructed, maintained and operated to handle the animals in a safe and humane manner. Traps and holding facilities shall be constructed of portable panels, the top of which shall not be less than 72 inches high, and the bottom rail of which shall not be more than 12 inches from ground level. All traps and holding facilities shall be oval or round in design. All loading chute sides shall be fully covered with plywood or like material. The loading chute shall also be a minimum of 6 feet high. All runways shall be a minimum of 20 feet long and a minimum of 6 feet high and shall be covered with plywood or like material a minimum of 1 foot to 5 feet above ground level. Wings shall not be constructed out of barbed wire or other materials injurious to animals and must be approved by the CDR. All crowding pens including the gates leading to the runways shall be covered with a material which prevents the animals from seeing out (plywood, burlap, etc.) and shall be covered a minimum of 1 foot to 5 feet above ground level.

No fence modification will be made without authorization from the CDR. The contractor shall be responsible for restoration of any fence modification which he has made.

When excessive dust conditions occur within or adjacent to the trap or holding facility, the contractor shall be required to wet down the ground with water at such location as directed by the CDR.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to provide security to prevent loss, injury or death of captured animals until delivery to final destination.

The CDR will determine general roundup areas and number of animals within general contract areas as animal concentrations and weather conditions dictate. All traps shall be located so as to provide for the most humane capture of the animals. The specific locations of traps must be approved by the CDR prior to construction.



#### HELICOPTER, PILOT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The contractor must operate in compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 91. Pilots provided by the contractor shall comply with the Contractors Federal Aviation Certificates, applicable regulations of the State of Nevada and shall follow what are recognized as safe flying practices.

When refueling, the helicopter shall remain a distance of at least a 1,000 feet or more from animals, vehicles (other than fuel truck), and personnel not involved in refueling.

The COB shall have the means to communicate with the pilot and be able to direct the use of the gather helicopter at all times. The frequency(s) used for this contract will be assigned by the COB when the government furnished "slip-in" VHF/FM portable radio is used. When a VHF/AM radio is used, the frequency will be 122.925 MHz.

The contractor shall obtain the necessary FCC licenses for the radio system.

The proper operation, service and maintenance of all contractor furnished helicopters is the responsibility of the contractor. The BLM reserves the right to remove from service pilots and helicopters which, in the opinion of the contracting officer or COB violate contract rules, are unsafe or otherwise unsatisfactory. In this event, the contractor will be notified in writing to furnish replacement pilots or helicopters within 48 hours of notification. All such replacements must be approved in advance of operation by the contracting officer or his/her representatives.

On site project inspectors who have clear lines of authority and responsibility as well as the ability to communicate (on site government radios) on a moment's notice with management, the COB, and the Contracting Officer, will be appointed to assure that any contractual problems which may affect the animals or their habitat can be resolved with minimal delay.

#### DISPOSITION AND HUMANE TREATMENT OF HORSES

As soon as practical after entering the capture corral, each group of horses will be inspected and a written log kept identifying condition of animals at time of capture and specific location from which animals came from. Alternate pens, within the holding facility shall be furnished by the contractor to separate mares with small foals, sick and injured animals, and stray animals from the other horses. Where required by the COB, animals shall be sorted as to age, number, size, temperament, sex, and condition when in the holding facility so as to minimize, to the extent possible, injury due to fighting and trampling.

Of primary importance while handling wild horses is their welfare and humane treatment. The COB shall be responsible for determining the need and providing for the treatment of sick or injured animals. The contractor shall restrain sick or injured animals so that they may be provided treatment by the COB. The COB shall also determine if an injured animal must be destroyed and provide for destruction of the animals.

Animals shall be transported to final destination from temporary holding facilities within 24 hours after capture unless prior approval is granted by the CDR for unusual circumstances. Animals shall not be held in traps and/or temporary holding facilities on days when there is no work being conducted except as specified by the CDR.

Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps and/or holding facilities shall be provided fresh clean water by the contractor, in an amount of a minimum of 10 gallons per animal per day. Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps or holding facilities shall be provided good quality hay at the rate of not less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day.

Branded animals, those suspected of being branded, or those are known to be private, will be separated out and handled as outlined in IM 85-416, which is in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

#### DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS

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 for humane euthanasia of wild horses. 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. The Contractor shall dispose of carcasses as directed by the CDR.

#### DISPOSAL OF ANIMALS WHICH ARE DESTROYED DURING THE REMOVAL OPERATION

Carcasses will be disposed of by burial, consumed by fire or left to the environment as outlined by Instruction 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 adhere to the provisions of 43 CFR Part 4700 and be subject to the following reservations and/or restrictions:

All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of animals.

Vehicles shall be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and operated so as to insure that captured animals are transported without undue risk or injury.

Only stocktrailers shall be allowed for transporting animals from traps to temporary holding facilities. Only Bobtail trucks, stocktrailers, or single deck trucks shall be used to haul animals from temporary holding facilities to final destination. Sides or stockracks of transporting vehicles shall be a minimum height of 6 feet 6 inches from vehicle floor and have no openings from the floor to four feet above the floor wider than 2 and 1/2 inches. Single deck trucks with trailers 40 feet or longer shall have two partition gates to separate animals. Trailers less than 40 feet shall have at least one partition gate to separate the animals. The use of double deck trailers is unacceptable and shall not be allowed, unless converted to single deck.

All vehicles used to transport animals to final destination shall be equipped with doors at the rear end of the vehicle. At least one of these rear doors shall be capable of sliding either horizontally or vertically.

Floors of vehicles and loading chute shall be covered and maintained with a non-skid surface such as sand, mineral soil or wood shavings (no fecal material allowed), to prevent the animals from slipping.

The number of animals to be loaded and transported in any vehicle shall be as directed by the COR and may include limitations on numbers according to age, size, sex, temperament and animal condition.

The COR shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, distance to be transported, or other factors when planning for the movement of captured animals. The COR shall provide for any brand and/or inspection services required for the captured animals.

If the COR determines that dust conditions are such that the animals could be endangered during transportation, the contractor will be instructed to adjust speed. The maximum distance over which animals may have to be transported on dirt road is approximately 35 miles per load.

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS

In general, all publicity, formal public contact, and inquiries will be handled 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.

RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL:

Curtis D. Tucker

Area Manager, BLM, Caliente R. A. Caliente, NV

5-23-88

Date

CONCURRENCE:

Ben F. Collins

District Manager, BLM, Las Vegas District Office

6-20-88

Date

APPROVED BY:

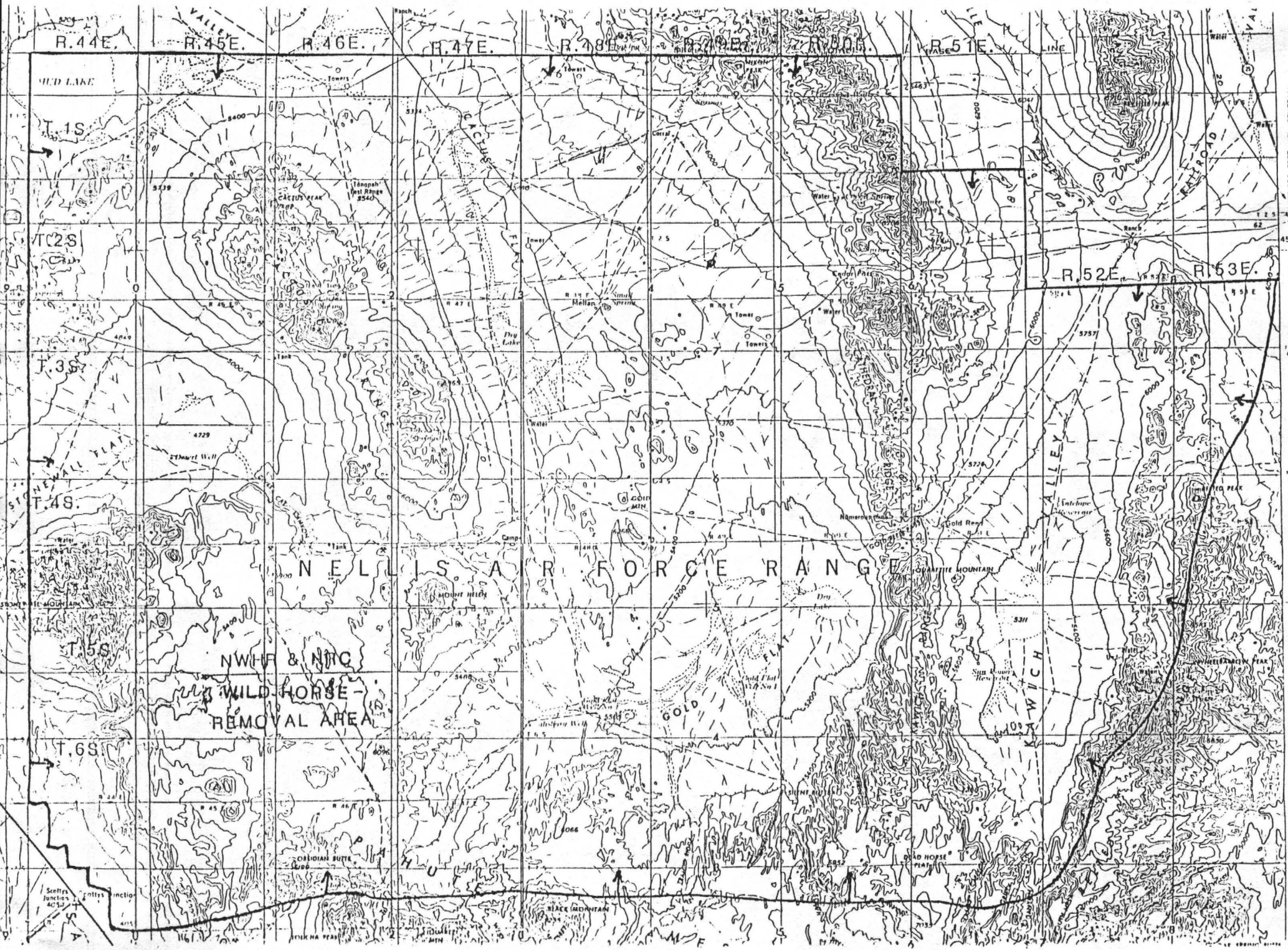
Fred Wolf

Associate State Director, BLM, Nevada State Office

6/10/88

Date





1:100,000 FEET (NEV CENTRAL)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for the

NEVADA WILD HORSE RANGE AND NELLIS RANGE COMPLEX

GATHERING PLAN #2

EA# NV-055-08-13

Prepared by:

*Phillip C. Seegmiller*  
Phillip C. Seegmiller  
Range Con/Wild Horse & Burro Spec.

*5/13/88*  
Date

Bureau of Land Management  
Las Vegas District  
Caliente Resource Area  
Caliente, Nevada

Office: Caliente Resource Area  
Project: NMHR & NRC Gathering Plan #2  
EA #: NV-055-08-13  
(NV-05580.7)

DECISION RECORD/RATIONALE AND FONSI

The proposed action is to reduce the wild horse population on the USAF Tactical Weapons Training Center Range (Nellis Range Complex) which includes the Nevada Wild Horse Range (NMHR) by 225 head based on available funding. The Nellis Range Complex (NRC) covers approximately 1.9 million acres and included within the NRC is the NMHR which covers approximately 394 thousand acres. This reduction will leave a viable population of approximately 3,895 wild horses on the NMHR after reproduction takes place, a unique area established in 1962 for a unique purpose.

The gather area is the Nellis Range Complex approximately 40 miles Southeast of Tonopah, Nevada (Map attached). The gathering operation will take place in Cactus Flat/Gold Flat and Kawich Mountain and Valley areas.

The Environmental Assessment addressed the no action alternative and the proposed action.

The proposed action, as described in the environmental assessment has been found to have no significant environmental impacts on the human environment when conducted with the mitigation provided. Implementation of the proposed action would result in bringing the wild horse population 225 head closer to the AML of 2000.

The proposed action has been found to be in compliance with the NMHR HMAP (1985) Specifically managing for AML and attaining Objective 2, 3, 4, and 6.

All actions are in compliance with P.L. 92-195 and the Bureau of Land Management Planning Process. No Environmental Impact Statement is required. The State Clearing house was contacted through the review and input process.

I hereby approve the proposed action as stated in the environmental assessment (NV-055-08-13) with the identified mitigation and stipulations.

E. Guerrero

Eddie Guerrero  
Environmental Coordinator

5-13-88

Date

Curtis G. Tucker

Curtis G. Tucker  
Area Manager  
Caliente Resource Area

5-23-88

Date

## I. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

### A. Purpose and Need

The purpose of this Environmental Assessment (EA) is to assess the environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives in relation to the human environment.

Sandia Laboratories, a research and testing company, maintains a headquarters on the Nellis Range Complex in the northern Cactus Flat area. Complaints have been received of optical interference caused by increasing dust pollution in the area. Horses may contribute to this from over utilization of vegetation in certain areas, but not totally. U. S. Air force and Sandia activities, i.e., vehicular traffic, road building, etc., and even dust from planes contribute to dust pollution.

There are occasional vehicle/horse collisions on the Range Complex. These result in death to the horse and damage to the vehicle. Although there have been no human injuries, there is the potential for a human death to occur from some future collision.

Competition for forage, and in some instances water, during critical times of the year may stress wildlife populations.

There has been a wild horse removal every year since 1985 on the Nellis Range Complex (NRC). During the spring of 1985, 1425 excess wild horses were removed from the west side of the Kawich Mountain Range, and 77 from the east side of the Range. During the Spring of 1985, 285 excess wild horses were removed from the west side of the Kawich Mountain Range, and 534 excess wild horses and 205 excess wild burros were removed from Stonewall Spring, also removed 224 horses and 28 Burros from wild horse Spring; both areas are on the extreme west side of the Nellis Range Complex boundary. The 1987 Excess wild horse round up removed 76 horses from the east side of the Kawich Range, 484 from the west side of the Kawich range 362 from the Breen Creek Reservoir, and 288 were removed from the Pedro Lake area.

Thus over the last 3 years 3988 excess wild horses have been removed from the NRC. To reach AML there is a need to remove approximately 2,120 more excess wild horses.

The latest wild horse Census was completed during September 1986 at which time there were an estimated 4120 (actual count) wild horses still on the NRC. Of the 4120 counted half roam off the Nevada Wild Horse Range (NWHR).

The situation also exists with very limited perennial water sources available for the wild horses especially during summer months.

Also Utilization levels since 1985; Summaries for the Moderate, Heavy, and Severe categories, have decreased from 56% of the area to 49% respectively for the 1,137,417 acres that have been studied.



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

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.

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.

The C&C committee 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 during the summer of 1984 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.

Under the Nevada Wild Horse Range (NWHR) Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP) the C&C Committee recommended an initial management level of 2,000 wild horses.

Analysis of monitoring studies on the NWHR will be used to determine what the future management numbers of wild horses will be. Future adjustment to the wild horse population will be based on the results of these monitoring studies.

## II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

This section of the environmental assessment identifies one alternative and the proposed action considered in meeting the Caliente Resource Area objective of maintaining wild horse use at appropriate management levels (until monitoring indicates a need for change) and maintaining wild horse use in designated HMA's, and solving problems around populated areas.

### A. No Action Alternative

Management would remain the same, wild horse populations would be allowed to increase unchecked.

## E. Proposed Action/Mitigation

The proposed action is to reduce the wild horse population on the USAF Tactical Weapons Training Center Range (Nellis Range Complex) which includes the Nevada Wild Horse Range (NWR) by 225 head based on available funding. The Nellis Range Complex (NRC) covers approximately 1.9 million acres and included within the NRC is the NWR which covers approximately 394 thousand acres. This reduction will leave a viable population of approximately 3,895 wild horses on the NWR after reproduction takes place, a unique area established in 1962 for a unique purpose.

### 1. Gather Area

The gather area is the Nellis Range Complex approximately 40 miles Southeast of Tonopah, Nevada (Map attached). The gathering operation will take place in Cactus Flat/Gold Flat and Kawich Mountain and Valley areas.

### 2. REMOVAL PROCESS

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 ELM will be responsible for the capture, care, temporary holding of approximately 225 wild horses from the gather area, and their transportation to the adoption preparation facility through issuance of gathering Contract.

Prior to any gathering operation the Bureau will provide for a pre-capture analysis to determine the condition of the animals, prevailing temperatures, animal distribution in relation to potential trap location, condition of the soils, condition of the roads, drought conditions, etc. The information from the pre-capture analysis will develop conclusions as to whether the level of activity is likely to cause undue stress to animals and whether such stress would be acceptable to animals if a veterinarian expertise were present, or whether a delay in capture activity is warranted. If it is determined that the capture can proceed with a veterinarian present, the services of a veterinarian will be obtained prior to proceeding with the capture.

The Bureau of Land Management will provide a CCR/PI(s) as needed for the capture operation from site selection, corral design, to capture and transportation of animals to Palomino Valley Center.

The capture operation will utilize helicopter capture methods.

The Bureau of Land Management will also provide supervision of the project helicopter during the gathering operation. This will be accomplished by use of an additional helicopter on site to monitor all aspects of the wild horse round-up. In the event an additional helicopter cannot be obtained, other methods will be used to observe the removal operations, including but not limited to, using observers on horseback, observing the helicopter from vehicles and placing stationary observers in strategic locations. The observers will have direct communication with the project helicopter for contract supervision. Observers will be monitoring the rate of movement of horses, distance to be traveled, type of terrain, fences etc.

The Bureau of Land Management will provide a COR/PI(s) as needed for the capture operation from site selection, corral design, to capture and transportation of animals to Palomino Valley Center.

Bidders Tour will be scheduled and conducted by the BLM to allow contractors to determine type of terrain, condition of animals, condition of roads, potential trap locations in relation to animal distribution, where fences are located as well as other dangerous barriers.

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This plan will remain in effect until all animals identified in this removal plan are removed and placed in adoption centers. (Anticipated to take place during August and September 1988).

3. REMOVAL METHODS

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The helicopter shall be used in such a manner that bands or herds will remain together as much as possible and foals will not become separated from their mothers.

The rate of movement and distance the animals travel shall not exceed limitations set by the COR who will consider terrain, physical barriers, weather, condition of the animals and other factors.

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On site project inspectors who have clear lines of authority and responsibility as well as the ability to communicate (on site government radios) on a moment's notice with management, the CDR, and the Contracting Officer, will be appointed to assure that any contractual problems which may affect the animals or their habitat can be resolved with minimal delay.

5. DISPOSITION AND HUMANE TREATMENT OF HORSES

As soon as practical after entering the capture corral, each group of horses will be inspected and a written log kept identifying condition of animals at time of capture and specific location from which animals came from. Alternate pens, within the holding facility shall be furnished by the contractor to separate mares with small foals, sick and injured animals, and stray animals from the other horses. Where required by the CDR, animals shall be sorted as to age, number, size, temperament, sex, and condition when in the holding facility so as to minimize, to the extent possible, injury due to fighting and trampling.

Of primary importance while handling wild horses is their welfare and humane treatment. The CDR shall be responsible for determining the need and providing for the treatment of sick or injured animals. The contractor shall restrain sick or injured animals so that they may be provided treatment by the CDR. The CDR shall also determine if an injured animal must be destroyed and provide for destruction of the animals.

Animals shall be transported to final destination from temporary holding facilities within 24 hours after capture unless prior approval is granted by the CDR for unusual circumstances. Animals shall not be held in traps and/or temporary holding facilities on days when there is no work being conducted except as specified by the CDR.

Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps and/or holding facilities shall be provided fresh clean water by the contractor, in an amount of a minimum of 10 gallons per animal per day. Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps or holding facilities shall be provided good quality hay at the rate of not less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day.

Branded animals, those suspected of being branded, or those are known to be private, will be separated out and handled as outlined in IM 85-416, which is in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

6. DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS

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 for humane euthanasia of wild horses.

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. The Contractor shall dispose of carcasses as directed by the COR.

7. DISPOSAL OF ANIMALS WHICH ARE DESTROYED DURING THE REMOVAL OPERATION

Carcasses will be disposed of by burial, consumed by fire or left to the environment as outlined by Instruction 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.

8. TRANSPORT OF CAPTURED ANIMALS

All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall adhere to the provisions of 43 CFR Part 4700 and be subject to the following reservations and/or restrictions:

All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of animals.

Vehicles shall be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and operated so as to insure that captured animals are transported without undue risk or injury.

Only stocktrailers shall be allowed for transporting animals from traps to temporary holding facilities. Only Bobtail trucks, stocktrailers, or single deck trucks shall be used to haul animals from temporary holding facilities to final destination. Sides or stockracks of transporting vehicles shall be a minimum height of 6 feet 6 inches from vehicle floor and have no openings from the floor to four feet above the floor wider than 2 and 1/2 inches. Single deck trucks with trailers

40 feet or longer shall have two partition gates to separate animals. Trailers less than 40 feet shall have at least one partition gate to separate the animals. The use of double deck trailers is unacceptable and shall not be allowed, unless converted to single deck trailer.

All vehicles used to transport animals to final destination shall be equipped with doors at the rear end of the vehicle. At least one of these rear doors shall be capable of sliding either horizontally or vertically.

Floors of vehicles and loading chute shall be covered and maintained with a non-skid surface such as sand, mineral soil or wood shavings (no fecal material allowed), to prevent the animals from slipping.

The number of animals to be loaded and transported in any vehicle shall be as directed by the CDR and may include limitations on numbers according to age, size, sex, temperament and animal condition.

The CDR shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, distance to be transported, or other factors when planning for the movement of captured animals. The CDR shall provide for any brand and/or inspection services required for the captured animals.

If the CDR determines that dust conditions are such that the animals could be endangered during transportation, the contractor will be instructed to adjust speed. The maximum distance over which animals may have to be transported on dirt road is approximately 35 miles per load.

### III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Current wild horse populations, based on recent aerial census, is 4120 (Sept 1986) animals within the HMA. Actual population is estimated to be higher than this level. The overall health of these animals appears to be good, though, during drier periods without precipitation the wild horses are greatly stressed from lack of sufficient available water.

The NRC supports several wildlife species; deer, antelope, desert bighorn, several different predators, and a host of non-game animals. Little emphasis has been placed on data collection particularly due to the controlled access on the NRC because of its primary purpose.

There are no know threatened/endangered plant or animal species in the identified wild horse HMA or gathering areas. However, there are three candidate species within the area: Asclepias eastwoodiana; category 2, Sclerocactus polyancistrus; category 2, and Astragalus beatleyae; category 2, (Federal Register Vol. 45, No. 242 and Vol. 48, No 229). Astragalus beatleyae is also listed critical endangered by Nevada State statutes NRS 527.270.

The gather area varies from flat (sandy to rocky valleys), to precipitous bushy and forested Mountains.

A variety of vegetation communities exist within the gather area. These vegetation types are shadscale, big sage, low sage, rabbitbrush, pinyon-juniper, and joshua. Within these vegetation communities are key areas with selected key species which are sensitive to change as a result of management techniques due to the fact that they receive greater amounts of use by grazing animals. Based on the use these key areas receive, they may serve as indicators to measure the success of the proposed management actions.

Cultural, historical sites and endangered or threatened candidate species have been identified in roundup area.

Site specific Cultural Resource and Threatened/Endangered Flora and Fauna Survey(s) will be completed at each capture site prior to the temporary construction of such site.

If previously undiscovered cultural resources should be found during actual construction activities, the Authorized Officer will require activities for that area to be temporarily halted by issuing a stop order until the resource(s) can be inspected and appropriate surveys or salvage operations are completed by a qualified cultural resources professional, at which time a Notice to Proceed will be issued.

The following environmental assessment mandatory elements would not be affected by the proposed action and alternative as previously described:

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern             | 6. Wastes, Hazardous or Solid      |
| 2. Cultural, Historical, and Paleontological Resources | 7. Water, Drinking/ Ground/Quality |
| 3. Endangered or Threatened Species                    | 8. Wetlands                        |
| 4. Farm Lands  | 9. Wild and Scenic Rivers          |
| 5. Flood Plain   | 10. Wilderness                     |

#### IV. IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

##### A. Nellis Range Complex

##### 1. Air Quality

Proposed Action: Reduction of horse numbers on the NRC, over the long term, would create positive impacts to the soils and forage resource by allowing for vegetative regrowth. Positive impacts to Sandia Laboratories would also be realized through decreased dust pollution.

No action alternative: Increased amounts of dust pollution would be expected to continue to interfere with Sandia Labs operation.



2. Wild Horses

No action alternative: Collisions between horses and Vehicles can also be expected to increase, with the injury or death of personnel being a possible result.

Proposed Action: Reduction of wild horse numbers would reduce the frequency of vehicle/horse collisions on the NRC in the short as well as long term.

B. Threatened/Endangered Species

No action Alternative: Competition on the candidate species within the wild horse use areas would be expected to increase.

Proposed Action: The candidate threatened/endangered plant species should benefit from a reduction in grazing pressure. Hence the impact should be beneficial in the long term.

C. Vegetation

No action alternative: Competition for forage resources within wild horse use areas would be expected to increase, affecting the desirable vegetative component, and condition of all animals. Productivity in this area would be expected to continue to deteriorate, while horse populations increased. It is expected that horse populations would increase beyond the support capability of the range resource and would crash. These impacts would be negative to the entire ecology of the area. Increasing over utilization of the range could lead to irreversible damage to this resource. Animals lost to mass population die-off would be irretrievable. Increasing competition between horses and other wildlife species could lead to a loss of wildlife from its habitat.

Proposed Action: Some destruction of vegetation in the area of capture sites and temporary holding facilities will probably occur as well as some soil disturbance during capture operations. The rangeland vegetation will respond favorably in the short and long term due to the reduction in grazing pressure. Forage availability is expected to increase, utilization levels will decrease and vegetation trend should improve.

(This assumes a static level of use of the area by other herbivores.) Also, a decrease in dust pollution should result with an increase in vegetation cover due to reduced grazing pressure in the long term.

There will be no known adverse impacts to the vegetation based on the proposed action. No irreversible or irretrievable commitments of any of the vegetative resources will occur due to the proposed action.

**D. Wildlife**

No Action Alternative: Increased competition for forage between horses and big game wildlife species would probably be realized.

Proposed Action: Wildlife species (i.e., deer, antelope, desert bighorn and other wildlife species) should benefit in the short term from decreased competition for space and forage. Competition between wildlife species and other grazing animals will be reduced due to an improvement in vegetation conditions. Increases in wildlife species are expected to occur as a result of the proposed action, especially over the long term.

**E. Wild Horses and Burros**

No Action Alternative: Horse loss due to capture operations would not occur. The general ecology of the area would continue to be adversely impacted by increasing horse populations. Horse loss would occur due to population collapse after habitat is destroyed or from lack of water sufficient for wild horses under high population density.

Proposed Action: The proposed action will impact wild horse and burro habitat, as well as wild horse and burro populations. Vegetation will improve in the HMA over the long term. Maintenance of waters on the NWR will improve water availability to the horses as well as wildlife.

The initial adjustment of population numbers will result in a positive impact to the wild horses remaining on the NWR over the short term. This impact should result in healthier horses with an increased productivity. However, during the performance of the proposed action the animals remaining will be possibly displaced from the known home ranges in to adjacent areas. This will require them time to adjust after gathering operation is completed.

Unavoidable impacts in the form of injuries and death (less than 2%) to the animals being removed may occur during the removal process. The change in life style of the animals captured will also be an unavoidable impact.

F. Cultural Resources

No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts under the no action alternative.

Proposed Action: Disturbance of cultural resource sites may occur during capture operations. Archaeological inventories will be conducted at trap sites prior to construction.

G. Soils

No Action Alternative: Increased competition on forage may decrease density of vegetation exposing more soil to the forces of erosion factors.

Proposed Action: Under the proposed action soils would be disturbed at capture locations. In the long-term as available forage increase, soils should become more stable.

H. Other Resources

There will be no impacts under the no action alternative or proposed Action to the following resources: Minerals, Realty, Forestry, Recreation, Wilderness, Livestock Grazing, and Visual Resources.

V. STANDARD MITIGATION MEASURES AND STIPULATIONS

Each capture site will have a Cultural Resource Survey and a Threatened and Endangered Species Survey conducted prior to field work. Also site locations will be selected to avoid T & E Species.



## VI. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The Nevada Wild Horse Range and Nellis Range Complex Gathering Plan #2 and this EA were available for review by all interested persons, groups, and organizations, the Consultation and Coordination Committee members, and the Five Party Cooperative Agreement Committee members, etc. for a period of 30 days. Comments were reviewed for consideration into the Gathering Plan. These documents also went through intensive internal review (Nevada State Office, Las Vegas District Office, and Caliente Resource Area Office) with comments being incorporated into the plans as appropriate. Comments were received from Wyoming Advocates for Animals, Animal Protection Institute of America, Department of Energy, Office of Community Services, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Specialists involved in the review are as follows:

Eddie Guerrero	Wildlife Biologist/Environmental Coordinator, Caliente Resource Area
Terry Smith	Range Conservationist, Caliente Resource Area
Mike Neff	Range Conservationist, Caliente Resource Area
Larry Lacy	Range Tech/Minerals, Caliente Resource Area
Cory Bodman	Soils Scientist, Caliente Resource Area
Larry Johnson	Forester, Caliente Resource Area
Tim Murphy	Supervisory Range Conservationist, Caliente Resource Area
Bob Stager	Range Conservationist (WH & B Specialist), LVDO
Joe Ross	Assistant District Manager, Resource, LVDO
Terry Driver	Range Conservationist (WH & B Specialist), SRA
Milton Frei	Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, NSO

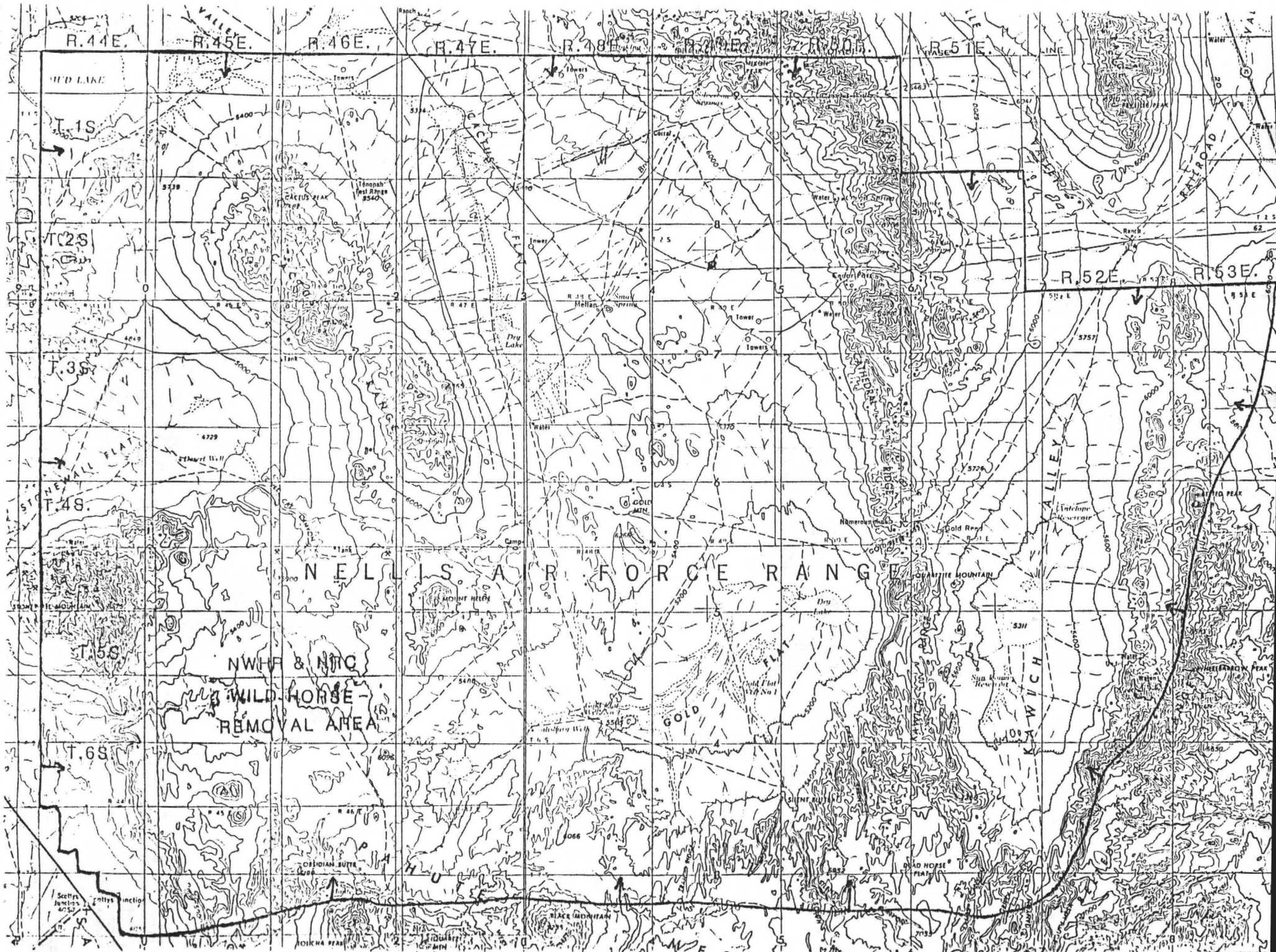
## VII. DISCUSSION OF NON-CONCURRENCE

Non-Concurrence was received from Animal Protection Institute of America, they stated that they could not support the proposed action without more detailed information. A copy of the wild horse portion of the Land Use Plan and the Coordinated Resource Management and Planning Committee minutes was forwarded to them.

Also, Non-Concurrence was received from Wyoming Advocates for Animals. They felt that it was not the horses that are causing damage to the Public Resource but "Livestock and poor management practices are. There is, therefore, no reason whatever for the Caliente Resource Area to go forward with and gathering plan". There is no livestock grazing on the NWR. The Bureau of Land Management response was that we are implementing our Activity Plan and managing horses at the Appropriate Management Level. This will be the Status Quo until vegetative monitoring indicates a change in management is necessary. When this happens in wild horse areas the interested groups will be involved in the review process.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATION

The implementation of the Nevada Wild Horse Range and Nellis Range Complex Gathering Plan #2 is recommended for approval with the mitigation and the concurrence by the above specialists.



FY88 CALIENTE R. A.

WILD HORSE

GATHERING PLAN

Prepared by:

*Philip C. Seegmiller*

Philip C. Seegmiller  
Range Con/Wild Horse & Burro Spec.

*5/13/88*

Date

Bureau of Land Management  
Las Vegas District

Caliente Resource Area  
Caliente, Nevada

PROPOSAL

The purpose of this removal (gathering) plan is to outline the methods and procedures to be used in removing excess wild horses from the Caliente Resource Area. This may be accomplished by removing horses that exist outside of Herd Management Areas (HMA's), and those horses from HMA's where the Appropriate Management Level (AML) is being exceeded. This plan also identifies removal of horses that are causing damage to the private property (destroying lawns and gardens and fields) of the citizens of the communities of Caliente and Caselton. This removal will remove from public lands approximately 100 wild horses. In addition three head of wild horses with collars on will be captured, collars removed, and wild horses and associated band members released back into area where they were captured.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gather Area

Excess wild horses are to be removed from the following areas as follows:

Horses outside of HMAs boundaries:

Removal of excess wild horses from outside of designated Herd Management Areas will take place in the Delamar, Boulder Springs, Pioche, Highland Peak, Crossroads, Barclay, and Simpson Grazing Allotments located in the Caliente Resource Area (map attached).

(Horses in the Pioche and Highland Peak grazing Allotments are also causing problems in and around the community of Caselton).

HMAs where AML is being exceeded:

Excess wild horses will be removed from the Miller Flat Area (map attached). Excess wild horses will be removed down to the Appropriate management level as identified in the Miller Flat Herd Management Area Plan.

Excess wild horses will also be removed from the Clover Creek, and Cottonwood HMA's bringing the population of wild horses down to the initial Appropriate Management Level identified through the Coordinated Resource Management and Planning process using the guidance established in the Caliente Resource Land Use Plan for determining desirable numbers for HMA's (map attached).

Within the Cottonwood HMA lies the Clover Mountain Wilderness Study Area.

HMA's where there are problem animals:

Horses that are causing problems around the community of Caliente (foraging in the hay fields and gardens on the private property) will also be removed during this removal process. This will affect the clover Creek and Little Mountain HMA's (map attached).



### Justification

The decision to remove these animals from this area is based on concerns of State Agencies, Coordinated Resource Management and Planning Committee Members, other public comments, and Bureau planning documents, and wild horse activities plans.

Justification for removal is based on the Final MFP Step III Decisions approved by the State Director on November 12, 1981 and confirmed by the Director, BLM, on February 26, 1982, and 43 C.F.R. 4710.4 "which states that wild horse management shall be undertaken with the objective of limiting the animals distribution to herd areas. . .", and is supported by Public Law 92-195. Also Herd Management Area Plans, through public involvement, have established an Appropriate Management Level (AML) for wild horse numbers with in each HMA. This AML number should be managed for until monitoring indicates a change population Level is appropriate.

### REMOVAL PROCESS

Under this gathering plan the BLM will be responsible for the capture, care, temporary holding of approximately 100 wild horses from the gather area, and their transportation to the adoption preparation facility through issuance of gathering contract.

Prior to any gathering operation the Bureau will provide for a pre-capture analysis to determine the condition of the animals, prevailing temperatures, animal distribution in relation to potential trap location, condition of the soils, condition of the roads, drought conditions, etc. The information from the pre-capture analysis will develop conclusions as to whether the level of activity is likely to cause undue stress to animals and whether such stress would be acceptable to animals if a veterinarian expertise were present, or whether a delay in capture activity is warranted. If it is determined that the capture can proceed with a veterinarian present, the services of a veterinarian will be obtained prior to proceeding with the capture.

The Bureau of Land Management will provide a COR/PI(s) as needed for the capture operation from site selection, corral design, to capture and transportation of animals to Palomino Valley Center.

The capture operation will utilize helicopter capture methods.

The Bureau of Land Management will also provide supervision of the project helicopter during the gathering operation. This will be accomplished by use of an additional helicopter on site to monitor all aspects of the wild horse round-up. In the event an additional helicopter cannot be obtained, other methods will be used to observe the removal operations, including but not limited to, using observers on horseback, observing the helicopter from vehicles and placing stationary observers in strategic locations. The observers will have direct communication with the project helicopter for contract supervision. Observers will be monitoring the rate of movement of horses, distance to be traveled, type of terrain, fences etc.

The terrain in the removal area varies from flat but rocky to precipitous bushy and forested areas.

### Existing Situation

Horses either have established home ranges outside of existing Herd Management Areas and/or have exceeded the Appropriate Management Level established (Through public involvement) for specific HMA's. Thus they are competing with other ungulates for Forage, Water, Space and Cover, etc., or they are causing problems in local communities. For current numbers and numbers to be removed see table 1 below.

Table 1

<u>Gather Area</u>	<u>AML</u>	<u>Last Census #</u>	<u>Number in excess of AML</u>
Delamar/Boulder springs Allotments	0	N/A	20
Picche/ Highland Peak Allotment	0	N/A	15
Crossroads/Barclay Allotments	0	N/A	10
Simpson Allotment	0	N/A	5
Caliente Problem animals (Little Mtn HMA)	*	54	10**
Miller Flat HMA	50	71	21
Clover Creek HMA	9	26	17
Clover Mountain HMA	55	84	29
Total Number of Animals that needs to be removed			127

\*AML to be established through monitoring, last census conducted during July, 1983 resulted in 54 head of horses counted.

\*\*Removal number necessary to help resolve concerns of private land owners in area, and doesn't reflect number to reach AML.

Hence approximately 50 excess wild horses need to be removed from areas outside existing HMA's. Also 10 head of horses need to be removed that are causing problems around the community of Caliente. Approximately 67 head of excess wild horses need to be removed from within HMAs to bring wild horses numbers down to the AML for that HMA. However, the number of horses to be removed under this removal plan is approximately 100 head of excess horses.

The contractor's ability to perform will be determined by accessing the adequacy of the contractor's equipment such as traps, trucks, trailers, water troughs, helicopter, handling facilities, etc. prior to issuing the Notice to Proceed to Contractor.

Bidders Tour will be scheduled and conducted by the BLM to make the contractors more aware of type of terrain, condition of animals, condition of roads, trap locations in relation to animal distribution, where fences are located as well as other dangerous barriers.

The contract will be terminated for convenience of the Government when Contract disputes cannot be resolved. In the event the contractor does not perform properly the contractor will be defaulted.

Veterinary services are available in Caliente, Nevada. 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.

The services of the state brand inspector will be obtained and all inspections will comply with the procedures set forth in Instruction Memorandum NV-85-416, which outlines the procedure for processing private horses captured during removal operations.

As specified in the Delamar and Miller Flat HMAP horses of the dun color, if possible, would not be removed during a removal process. Also no pinto horses will be removed from gather areas nor will any of the collared horses be removed. Wild Horses of the colors specified will be released back on to the area from which they were captured with a follow up check to evaluate the effect of the release on the animals within the first 72 hours following release.

This plan will remain in effect until all animals identified in this removal plan are removed and placed in adoption centers. (Anticipated to take place during August and September 1988).

#### REMOVAL METHODS

All capture attempts shall be accomplished Through the use of a helicopter. Wing riders may be used if necessary. Roping will not be allowed except to capture orphan foals and wet mares, and this will be done only when necessary, with prior approval by the CCR. Under no circumstances shall animals be tied down for more than one hour. Mare and foal are to be capture together, if both cannot be captured then one or the other will be released to allow them to be reunited at no cost to the government.

The helicopter shall be used in such a manner that bands or herds will remain together as much as possible and foals will not become separated from their mothers.

The rate of movement and distance the animals travel shall not exceed limitations set by the CCR who will consider terrain, physical barriers, weather, condition of the animals and other factors.

It is estimated that 15 trap locations will be required to accomplish the work. General trap locations and holding facilities will be selected by the COR, specific trap sites (with in the general trap location area) will be selected by the contractor. All trap locations and holding facilities must be approved by the COR prior to construction. The contractor may also be required to change or move trap locations as determined by the COR. All traps and holding facilities not located on public land must have prior written approval of the landowner.

All traps, wings, and holding facilities shall be constructed, maintained and operated to handle the animals in a safe and humane manner. Traps and holding facilities shall be constructed of portable panels, the top of which shall not be less than 72 inches high, and the bottom rail of which shall not be more than 12 inches from ground level. All traps and holding facilities shall be oval or round in design. All loading chute sides shall be fully covered with plywood or like material. The loading chute shall also be a minimum of 6 feet high. All runways shall be a minimum of 20 feet long and a minimum of 6 feet high and shall be covered with plywood or like material a minimum of 1 foot to 5 feet above ground level. Wings shall not be constructed out of barbed wire or other materials injurious to animals and must be approved by the COR. All crowding pens including the gates leading to the runways shall be covered with a material which prevents the animals from seeing out (plywood, burlap, etc.) and shall be covered a minimum of 1 foot to 5 feet above ground level.

No fence modification will be made without authorization from the COR. The contractor shall be responsible for restoration of any fence modification which he has made.

When excessive dust conditions occur within or adjacent to the trap or holding facility, the contractor shall be required to wet down the ground with water at such location as directed by the COR.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to provide security to prevent loss, injury or death of captured animals until delivery to final destination.

The COR will determine general roundup areas and number of animals within general contract areas as animal concentrations and weather conditions dictate. All traps shall be located so as to provide for the most humane capture of the animals. The specific locations of traps need to be approved by the COR prior to construction.

#### HELICOPTER, PILOT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The contractor must operate in compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 91. Pilots provided by the contractor shall comply with the Contractors Federal Aviation Certificates, applicable regulations of the State of Nevada and shall follow what are recognized as safe flying practices.

When refueling, the helicopter shall remain a distance of at least a 1,000 feet or more from animals, vehicles (other than fuel truck), and personnel not involved in refueling.



The CDR shall have the means to communicate with the pilot and be able to direct the use of the gather helicopter at all times. The frequency(s) used for this contract will be assigned by the CDR when the government furnished "slip-in" VHF/FM portable radio is used. When a VHF/AM radio is used, the frequency will be 122.925 MHz.

The contractor shall obtain the necessary FCC licenses for the radio system.

The proper operation, service and maintenance of all contractor furnished helicopters is the responsibility of the contractor. The ELM reserves the right to remove from service pilots and helicopters which, in the opinion of the contracting officer or CDR violate contract rules, are unsafe or otherwise unsatisfactory. In this event, the contractor will be notified in writing to furnish replacement pilots or helicopters within 48 hours of notification. All such replacements must be approved in advance of operation by the contracting officer or his/her representatives.

On site project inspectors who have clear lines of authority and responsibility as well as the ability to communicate (on site government radios) on a moment's notice with management, the CDR, and the Contracting Officer, will be appointed to assure that any contractual problems which may affect the animals or their habitat can be resolved with minimal delay.

#### DISPOSITION AND HUMANE TREATMENT OF HORSES

As soon as practical after entering the capture corral, each group of horses will be inspected and a written log kept identifying condition of animals at time of capture and specific location from which animals came from. Alternate pens, within the holding facility shall be furnished by the contractor to separate mares with small foals, sick and injured animals, and stray animals from the other horses. Where required by the CDR, animals shall be sorted as to age, number, size, temperament, sex, and condition when in the holding facility so as to minimize, to the extent possible, injury due to fighting and trampling.

Of primary importance while handling wild horses is their welfare and humane treatment. The CDR shall be responsible for determining the need and providing for the treatment of sick or injured animals. The contractor shall restrain sick or injured animals so that they may be provided treatment by the CDR. The CDR shall also determine if an injured animal must be destroyed and provide for destruction of the animals.

Animals shall be transported to final destination from temporary holding facilities within 24 hours after capture unless prior approval is granted by the CDR for unusual circumstances. Animals shall not be held in traps and/or temporary holding facilities on days when there is no work being conducted except as specified by the CDR.

Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps and/or holding facilities shall be provided fresh clean water by the contractor, in an amount of a minimum of 10 gallons per animal per day. Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps or holding facilities shall be provided good quality hay at the rate of not less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day.

Branded animals, those suspected of being branded, or unbranded animals known to be private, will be separated out and handled as outlined in IM 85-416, which is in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

#### DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS

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 for humane euthanasia of wild horses. 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. The Contractor shall dispose of carcasses as directed by the COR.

#### DISPOSAL OF ANIMALS WHICH ARE DESTROYED DURING THE REMOVAL OPERATION

Carcasses will be disposed of by burial, consumed by fire or left to the environment as outlined by Instruction 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 adhere to the provisions of 43 CFR Part 4700 and be subject to the following reservations and/or restrictions:

All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of animals.

Vehicles shall be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and operated so as to insure that captured animals are transported without undue risk or injury.

Only stocktrailers shall be allowed for transporting animals from traps to temporary holding facilities. Only Bobtail trucks, stocktrailers, or single deck trucks shall be used to haul animals from temporary holding facilities to final destination. Sides or stockracks of transporting vehicles shall be a minimum height of 6 feet 6 inches from vehicle floor and have no openings from the floor to four feet above the floor wider than 2 and 1/2 inches. Single deck trucks with trailers 40 feet or longer shall have two partition gates to separate animals. Trailers less than 40 feet shall have at least one partition gate to separate the animals. The use of double deck trailers is unacceptable and shall not be allowed, unless converted to a single deck.

All vehicles used to transport animals to final destination shall be equipped with doors at the rear end of the vehicle. At least one of these rear doors shall be capable of sliding either horizontally or vertically.

Floors of vehicles and loading chute shall be covered and maintained with a non-skid surface such as sand, mineral soil or wood shavings (no fecal material allowed), to prevent the animals from slipping.

The number of animals to be loaded and transported in any vehicle shall be as directed by the COR and may include limitations on numbers according to age, size, sex, temperament and animal condition.

The COR shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, distance to be transported, or other factors when planning for the movement of captured animals. The COR shall provide for any brand and/or inspection services required for the captured animals.

If the COR determines that dust conditions are such that the animals could be endangered during transportation, the contractor will be instructed to adjust speed. The maximum distance over which animals may have to be transported on dirt road is approximately 35 miles per load.

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS

In general, all publicity, formal public contact, and inquiries will be handled 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.

#### RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL:

Curtis D. Tucker

Area Manager, BLM, Caliente R. A. Caliente, NV

5-23-88

Date

#### CONCURRENCE:

Ben F. Collins

District Manager, BLM, Las Vegas District Office

6-20-88

Date

#### APPROVED BY:

Fred Woy

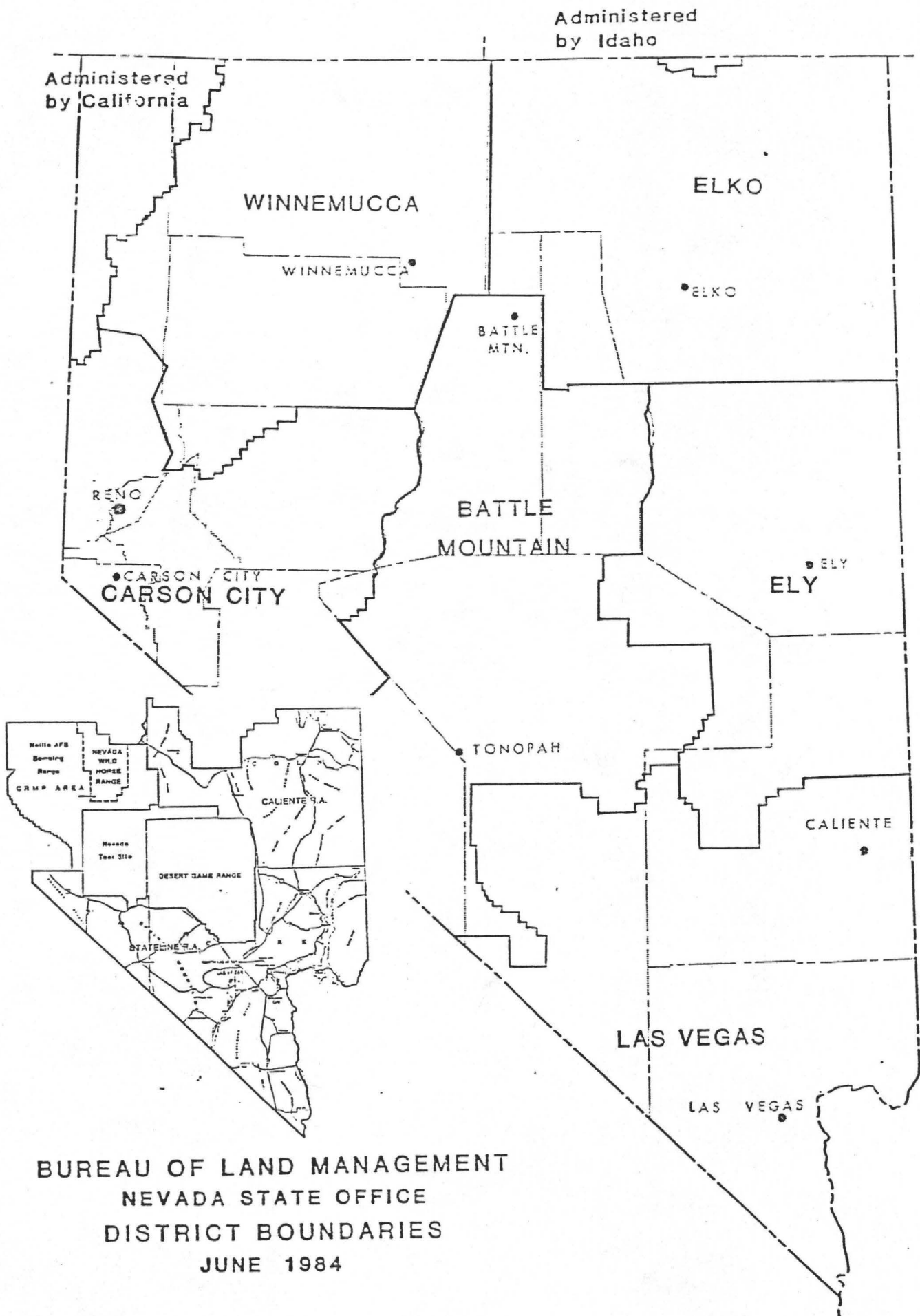
Associate State Director, BLM, Nevada State Office

6/10/88

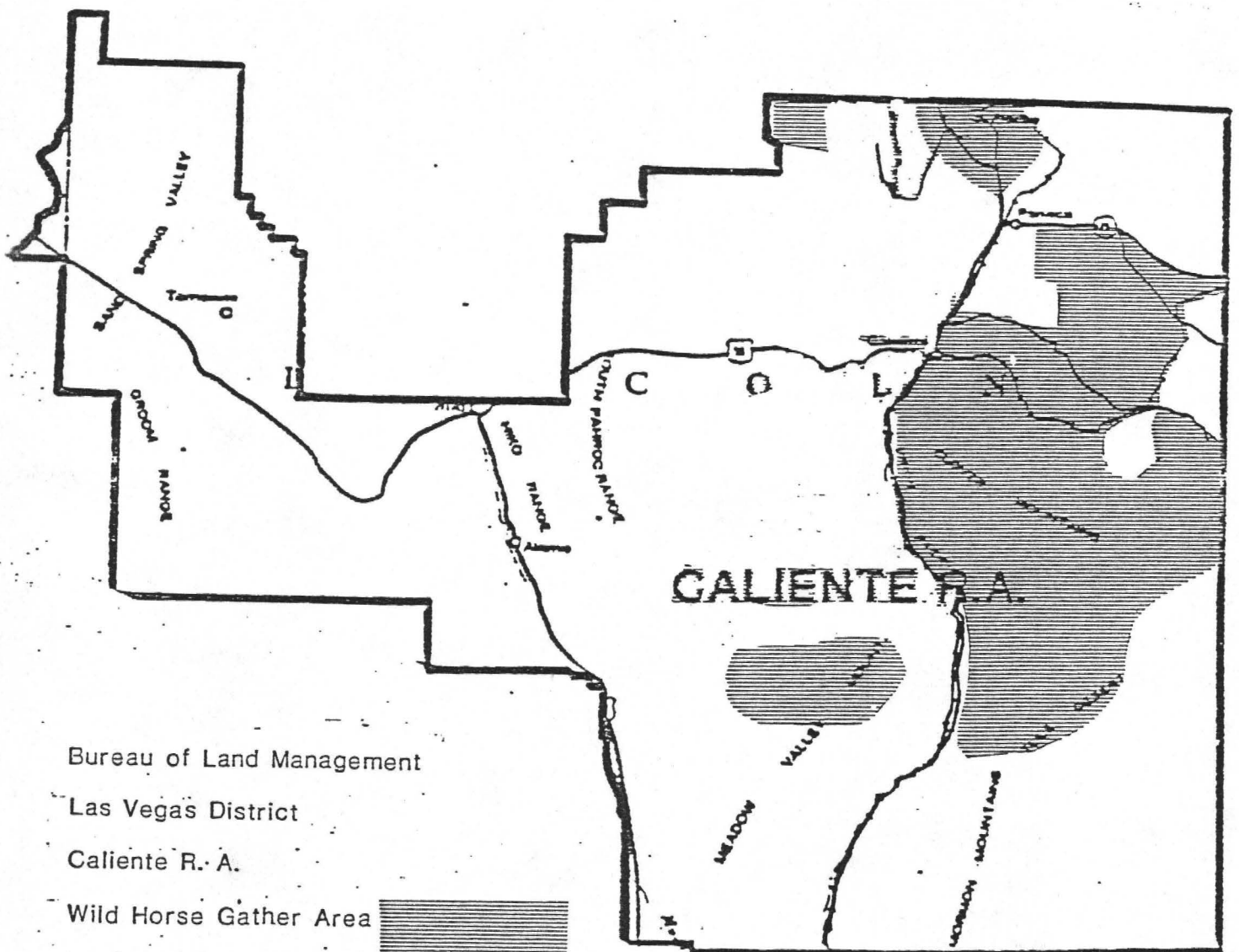
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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
 NEVADA STATE OFFICE  
 DISTRICT BOUNDARIES  
 JUNE 1984



Bureau of Land Management

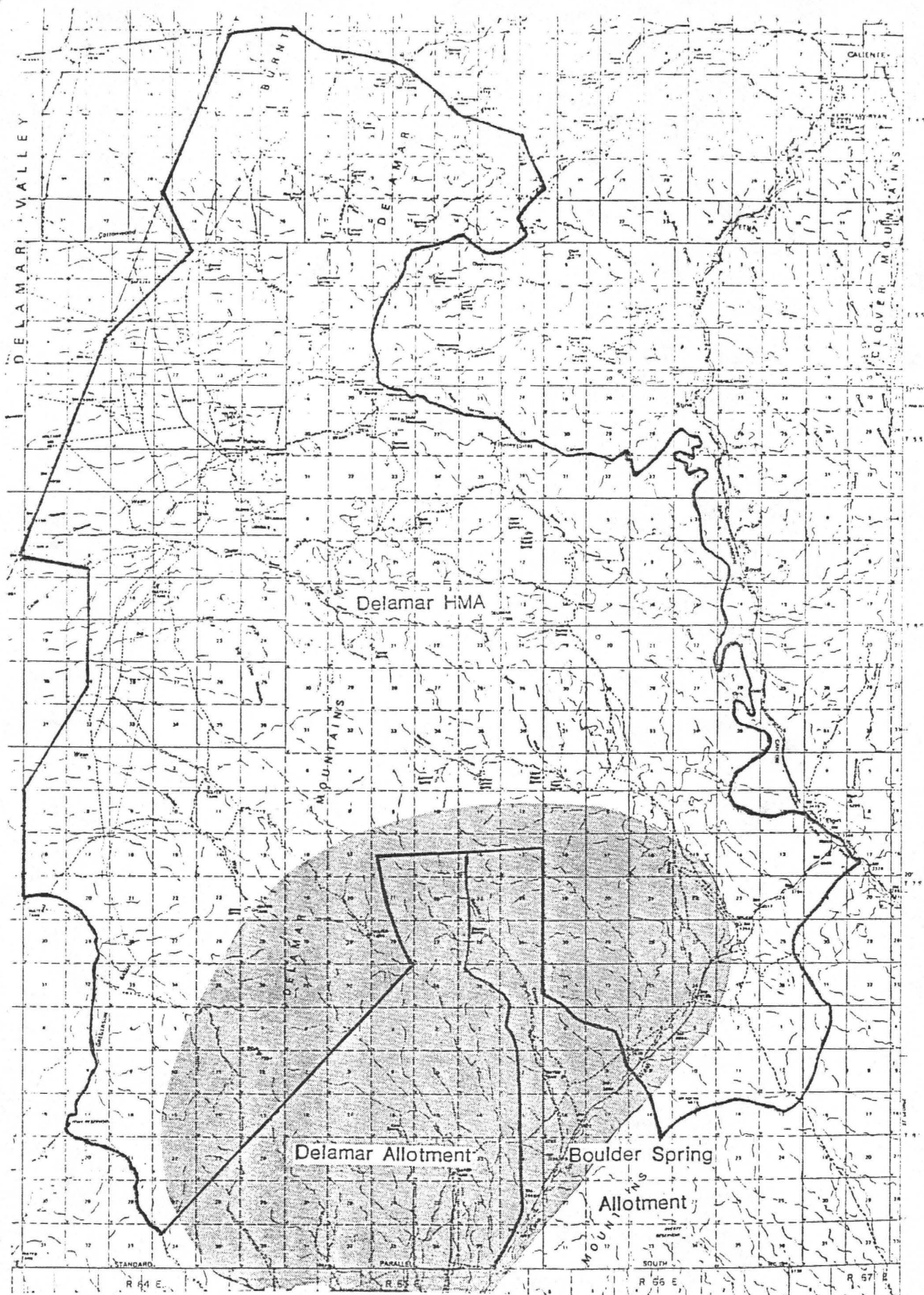
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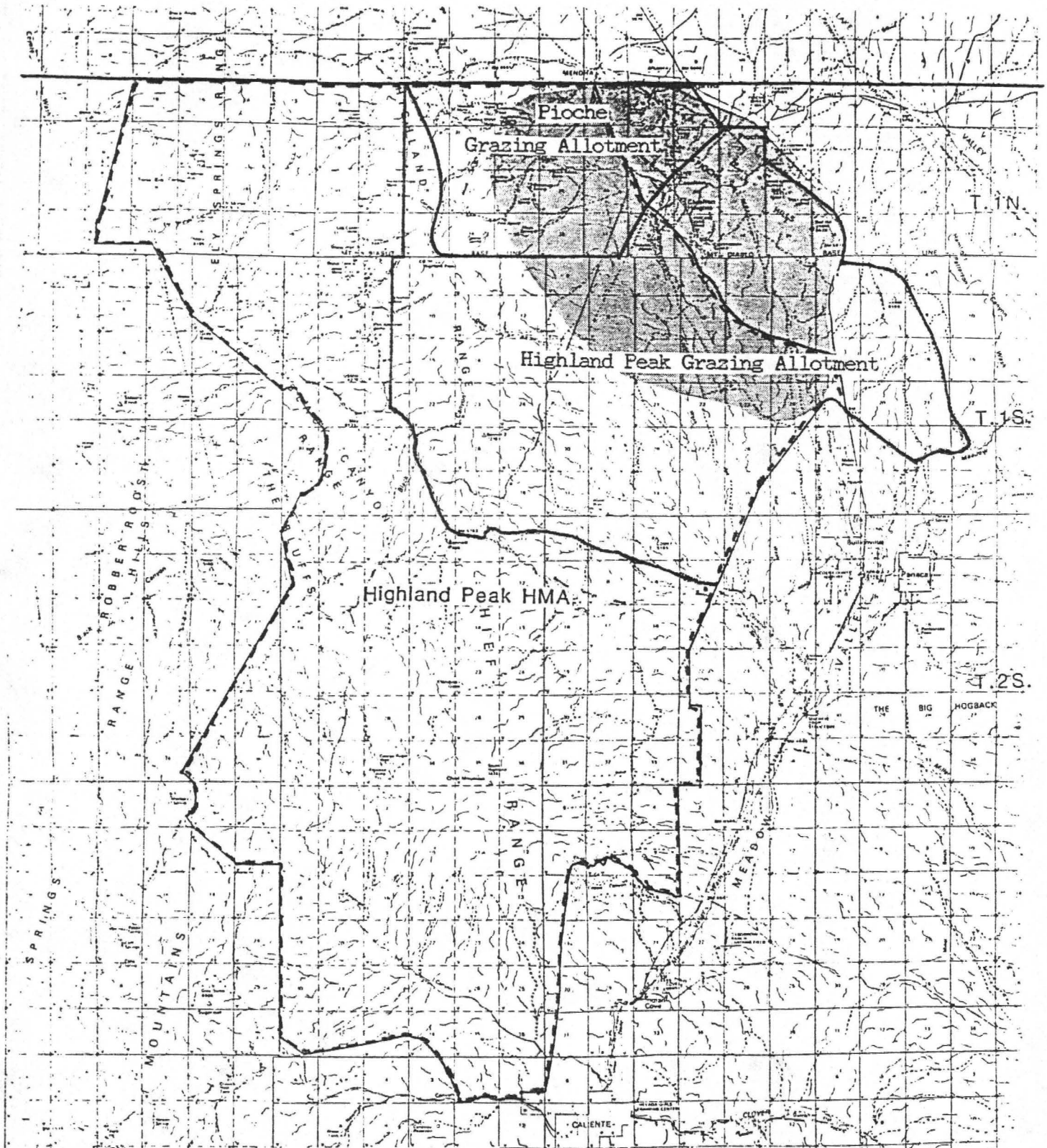
Wild Horse Gather Area





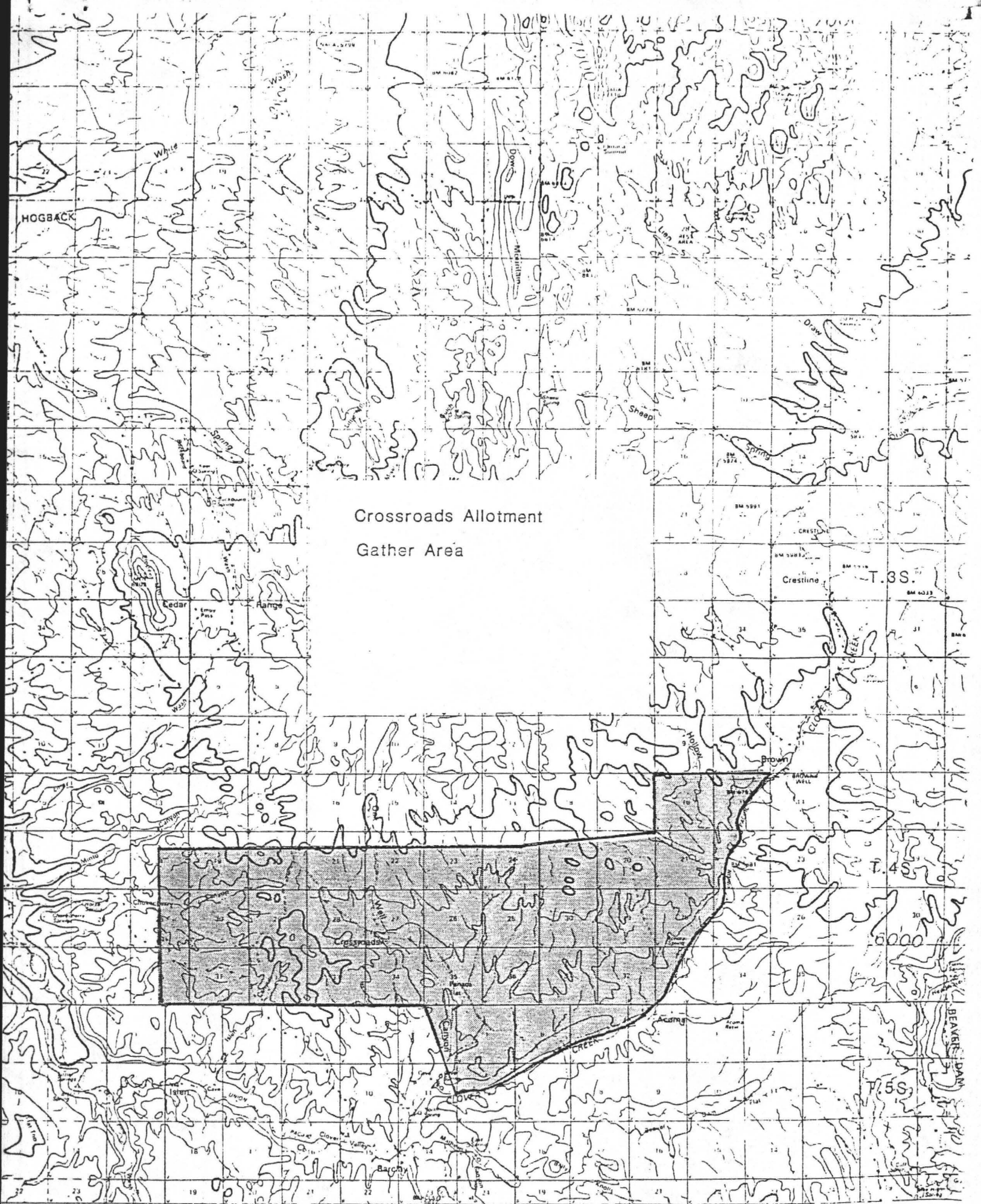


Delamar HMA  
&  
Boulder Spring & Delamar Allotments  
Gather Area



Highland Peak HMA  
Gather Area





Crossroads Allotment  
Gather Area

HOGBACK

Ledar Range

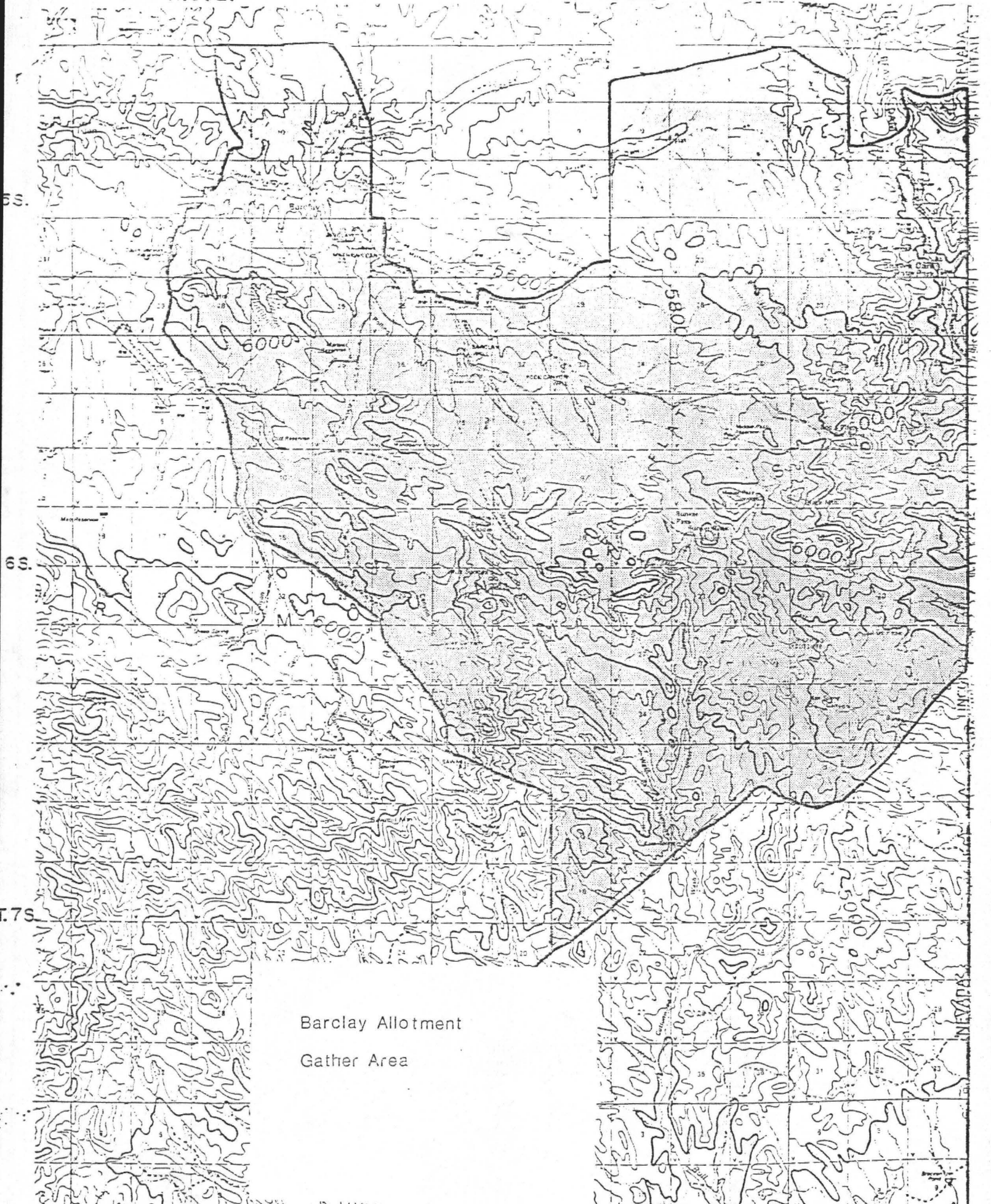
Crestline T. 3S.

T. 4S

T. 5S

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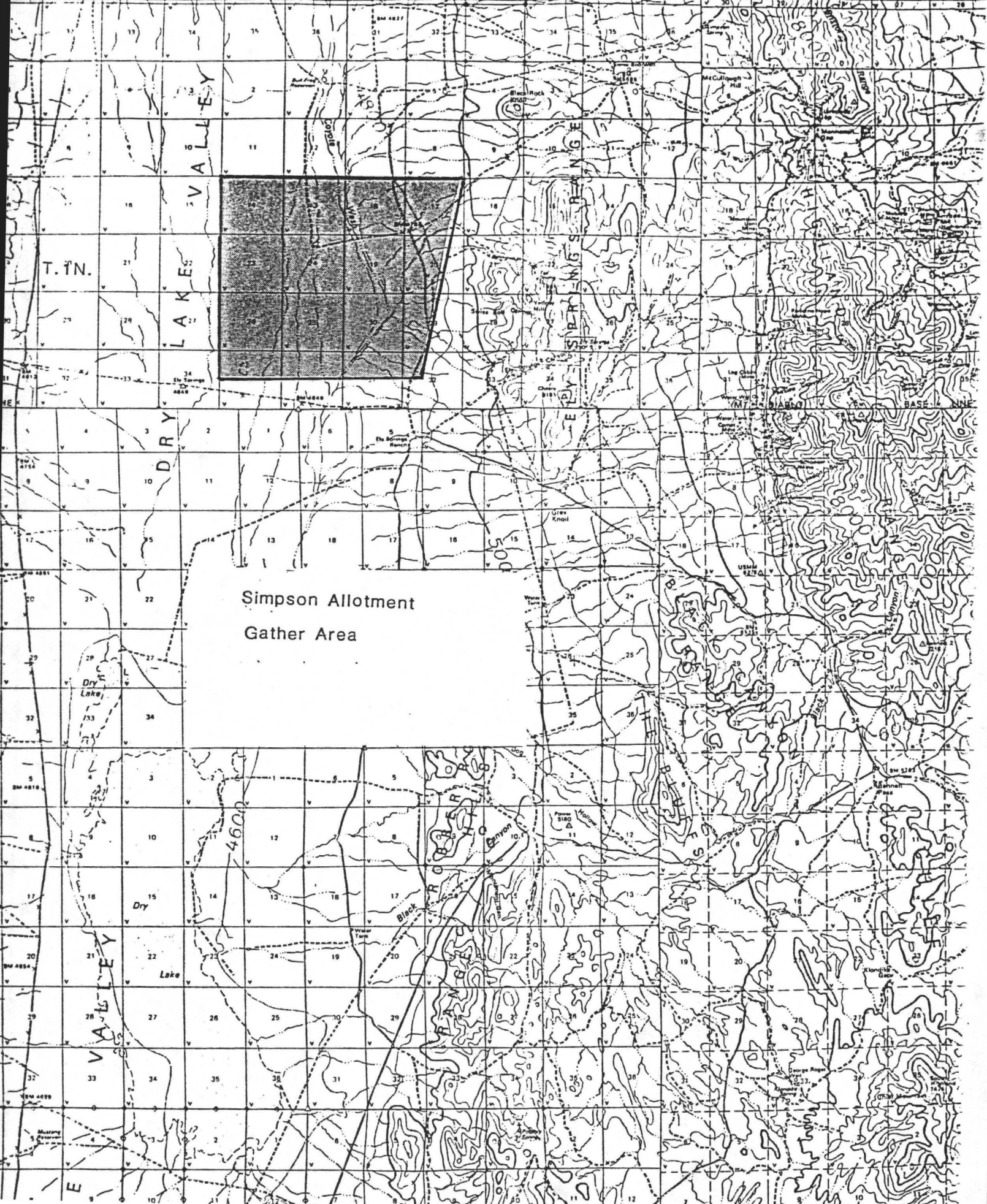
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Barclay Allotment

Gather Area





Simpson Allotment  
Gather Area

4600

Black Canyon

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Sullivan

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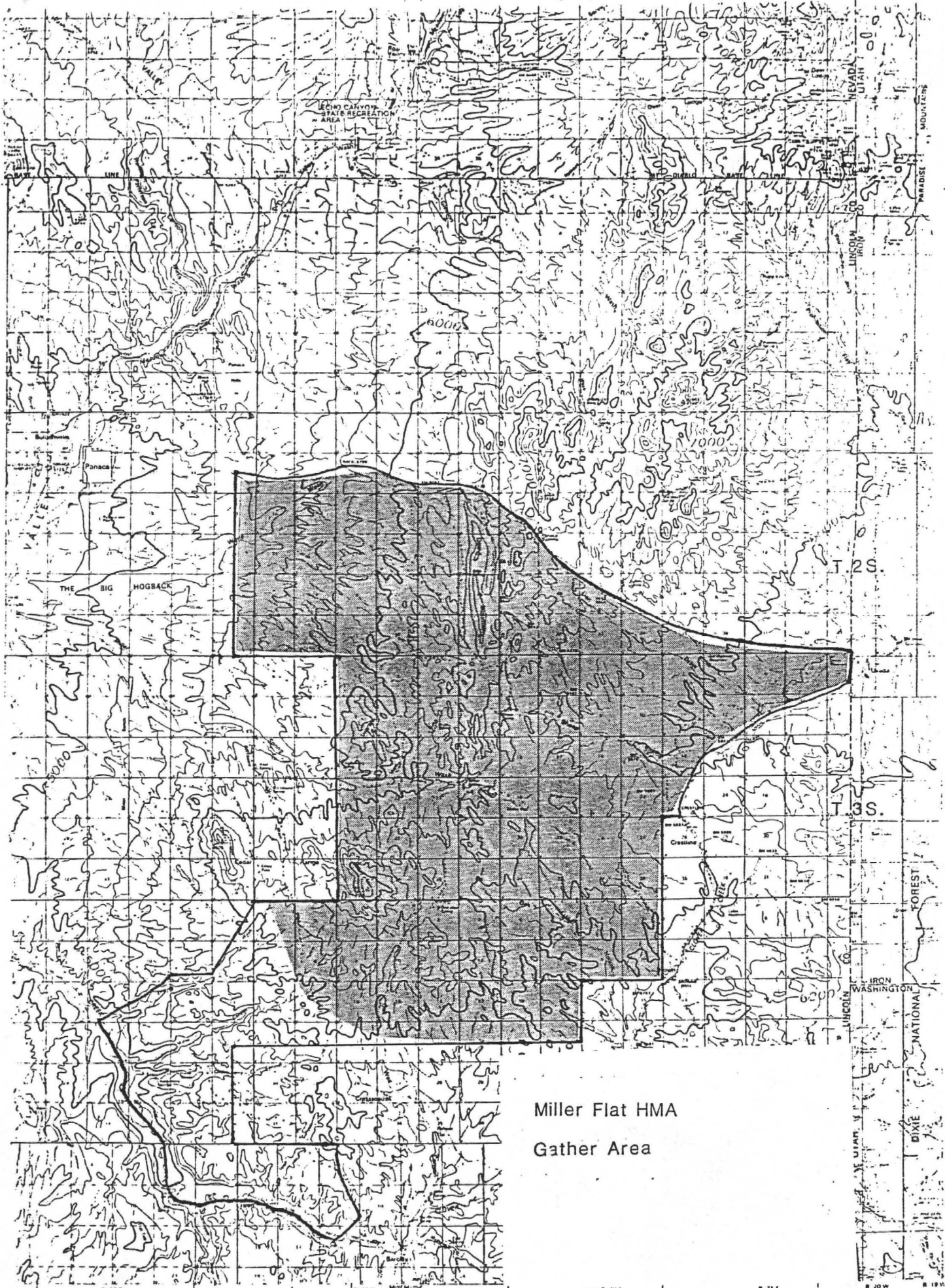
George Rogers

Water Mill

USDA

Simpson



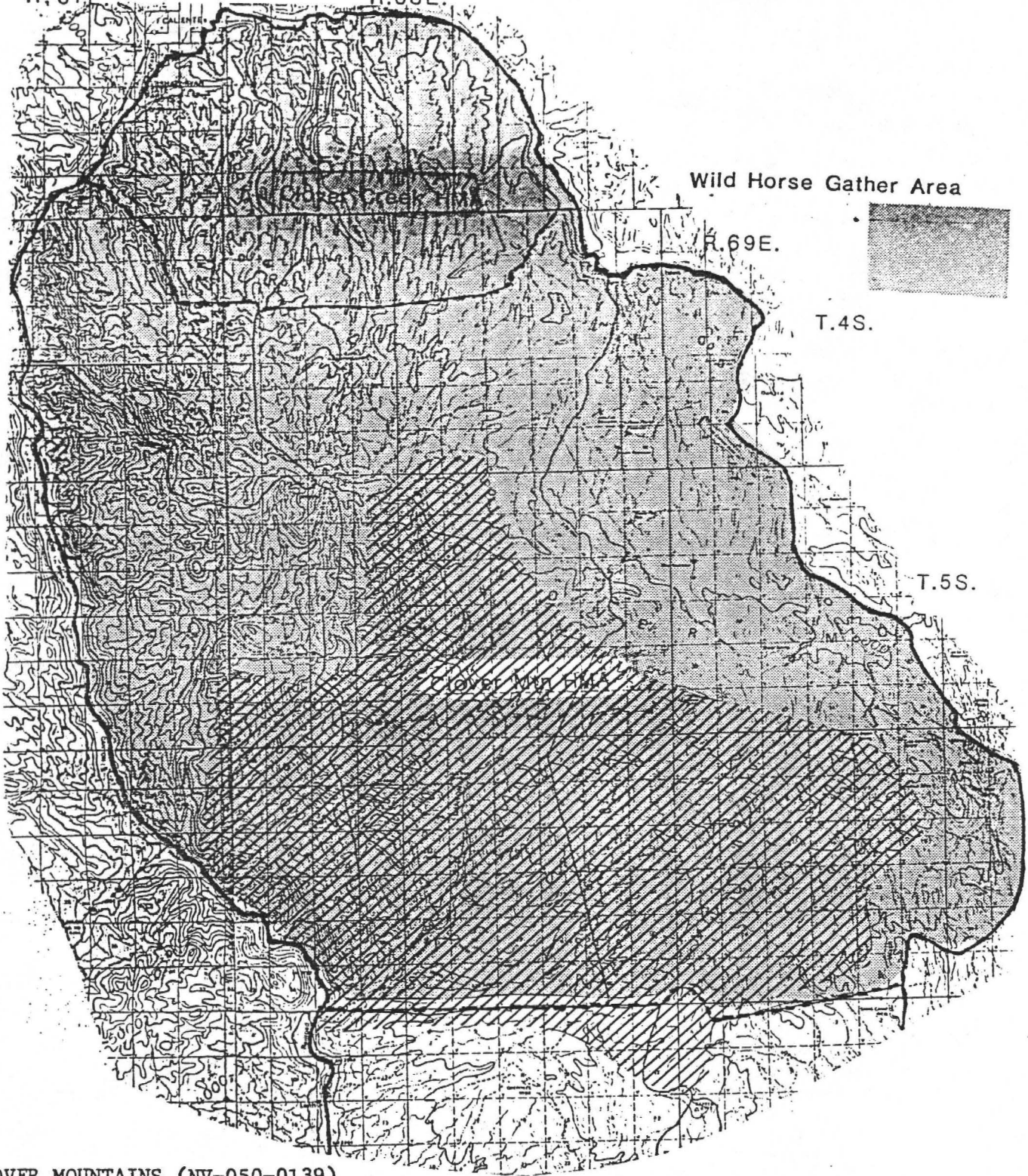


Miller Flat HMA  
Gather Area

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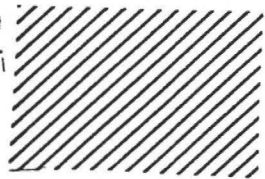
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Wild Horse Gather Area

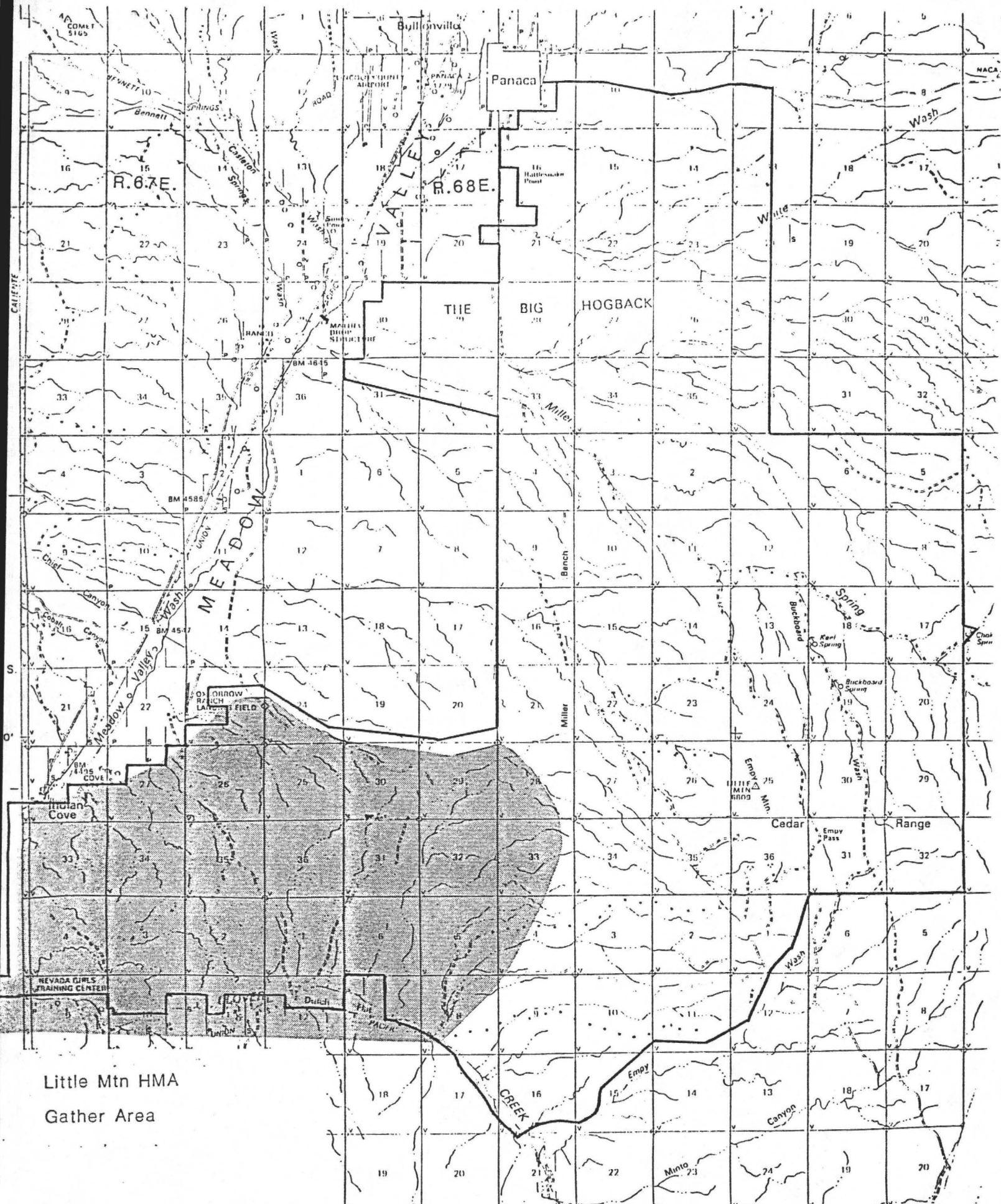


CLOVER MOUNTAINS (NV-050-0139)

Wilderness Study Area







Little Mtn HMA  
Gather Area

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for the

FY88 CALIENTE R. A. WILD HORSE

GATHERING PLAN

EA# NV-055-08-14

Prepared by:

*Phillip C. Seegmiller*  
Phillip C. Seegmiller  
Range Con/Wild Horse & Burro Spec.

*5/13/88*  
Date

Bureau of Land Management  
Las Vegas District  
Caliente Resource Area  
Caliente, Nevada

I. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

A. Purpose and Need

The purpose of this Environmental Assessment (EA) is to assess the environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives in relation to the human environment.

Horses either have established home ranges outside of existing Herd Management Areas (HMA) and/or have exceeded the Appropriate Management Level (AML) established (Through public involvement) for specific HMA's. Thus they are competing with other ungulates for forage, water, space and cover, etc., or they are causing problems in local communities (damage to lawns gardens and fields).

The decision to remove animals from these areas are based on concerns of State Agencies, Coordinated Resource Management and Planning Committee Members, other public comments, and Bureau planning documents, and wild horse activities plans.

Justification for removal is based on the Final MFP Step III Decisions approved by the State Director on November 12, 1981 and confirmed by the Director, BLM, on February 26, 1982, and 43 C.F.R. 4710.4 "which states that wild horse management shall be undertaken with the objective of limiting the animals distribution to herd areas. . .", and is supported by Public Law 92-195. Also Herd Management Area Plans, through public involvement, have established an Appropriate Management Level (AML) for wild horse numbers with in each HMA. This AML number should be managed for until monitoring indicates a need to change the population Levels.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

This section of the environmental assessment identifies one alternative and the proposed action considered in meeting the Caliente Resource Area objective of maintaining wild horse use at appropriate management levels (until monitoring indicates a need for change) and maintaining wild horse use in designated HMA's, and solving problems around populated areas.

A. No Action Alternative

Management would remain the same, wild horse populations would be allowed to increase unchecked.



B. Proposed Action/Mitigation

The proposed action is to remove excess wild horses from the Caliente Resource Area. This may be accomplished by removing horses that exist outside of Herd Management Areas (HMA's), and those horses from HMA's where the Appropriate Management Level is being exceeded, and removal of horses that are causing damage to the private property (destroying lawns and gardens and fields) of the citizens of the communities of Caliente and Caselton. This removal will remove from public lands approximately 100 wild horses. For current numbers and numbers to be removed see table 1 below.

1. Gather Area

a. Horses outside of HMA's boundaries

Removal of excess horses from outside of designated Herd Management Areas will take place in the Delamar, Boulder Springs, Pioche, Highland Peak, Crossroads, Barclay, and Simpson Grazing Allotments located in the Caliente Resource Area (map attached).

(Horses in the Pioche and Highland Peak grazing Allotments are also causing problems, destroying lawns and gardens and fields, in and around the community of Caselton).

b. HMA's where AML is being exceeded:

Excess wild horses will be removed from the Miller Flat Area (map attached). Excess wild horses will be removed down to the initial Appropriate Management Level as identified in the Miller Flat Herd Management Area Plan.

Excess wild horses will also be removed from the Clover Creek and Cottonwood HMA's bringing the population of wild horses down to the Appropriate Management Level identified through the Coordinated Resource Management and Planning process using the guidance established in the Caliente Resource Land Use Plan for determining desirable numbers for HMA's (map attached).

Within the Cottonwood HMA lies the Clover Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA). Gathering operations may take place within the WSA. The impacts from the proposed action would be very minimal because capture corrals would be temporary, less than two weeks. The removal area that is disturbed would be substantially unnoticeable. There wouldn't be a need for reclamation because all corral structures and vehicle access would be in the bottom of major drainage (sand and gravel areas) that are annually disturbed.

c. HMA's where there are problem animals:

Horses that are causing problems, damage to private property, around the community of Caliente will also be removed during this removal process. This will affect the clover Creek and Little Mountain HMA's (map attached).

Table 1

<u>Gather Area</u>	<u>AML</u>	<u>Census #</u>	<u>Removal Number</u>
Delamar/Boulder springs Allotments	0	N/A	20
Pioche/ Highland Peak Allotment	0	N/A	15
Crossroads/Barclay Allotments	0	N/A	10
Simpson Allotment	0	N/A	5
Caliente Problem animals			
Little Mtn HMA	*	54	10**
Miller Flat HMA	50	71	21
Clover Creek HMA	9	26	17
Clover Mountain HMA	55	84	29
Total Number of Animals that needs to be removed			127

\*AML to be established through monitoring, last census conducted during July, 1983 resulted in 54 head of horses counted.

\*\*Removal number necessary to help resolve concerns of private land owners in area, and doesn't reflect number to reach AML.

Hence approximately 50 excess wild horses Need to be removed from areas outside existing HMA's. Also 10 head of horses need to be removed that are causing problems around the community of Caliente. Approximately 67 head of excess wild horses need to be removed from within HMAs to bring wild horses numbers down to the AML for that HMA. However, the number of horses to be removed under this removal plan is approximately 100 head of excess horses.

2. REMOVAL PROCESS

The ELM will be responsible for the capture, care, temporary holding of approximately 100 wild horses from the gather area, and their transportation to the adoption preparation facility through issuance of gathering Contract.

Prior to any gathering operation the Bureau will provide for a pre-capture analysis to determine the condition of the animals, prevailing temperatures, animal distribution in relation to potential trap location, condition of the soils, condition of the roads, drought conditions, etc. The information from the pre-capture analysis will develop conclusions as to whether the level of activity is likely to cause undue stress to animals and whether such stress would be acceptable to animals if a veterinarian expertise were present, or whether a delay in capture activity is warranted. If it is determined that the capture can proceed with a veterinarian present, the services of a veterinarian will be obtained prior to proceeding with the capture.

The Bureau of Land Management will provide a ODR/PI(s) as needed for the capture operation from site selection, corral design, to capture and transportation of animals to Palomino Valley Center.

The capture operation will utilize helicopter capture methods.

The Bureau of Land Management will also provide supervision of the project helicopter during the gathering operation. This will be accomplished by use of an additional helicopter on site to monitor all aspects of the wild horse round-up. In the event an additional helicopter cannot be obtained, other methods will be used to observe the removal operations, including but not limited to, using observers on horseback, observing the helicopter from vehicles and placing stationary observers in strategic locations. The observers will have direct communication with the project helicopter for contract supervision. Observers will be monitoring the rate of movement of horses, distance to be traveled, type of terrain, fences etc.

All equipment used in the capture operation will be inspected by ODR and determined adequate prior to issuing the Notice to Proceed to Contractor.

Bidders Tour will be scheduled and conducted by the ELM to make the contractors more aware of type of terrain, condition of animals, condition of roads, trap locations in relation to animal distribution, where fences are located as well as other dangerous barriers.

The contract will be terminated for convenience of the Government when Contract disputes cannot be resolved. In the event the contractor does not perform properly the contractor will be defaulted.

Veterinary services are available in Caliente, Nevada. 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.

The services of the state brand inspector will be obtained and all inspections will comply with the procedures set forth in Instruction Memorandum NV-85-416, which outlines the procedure for processing private horses captured during removal operations.

As specified in the Delamar and Miller Flat HMAF horses of the dun color, if possible, would not be removed during a removal process. Also no pinto horses will be removed from gather areas nor will any of the collared horses be removed. Wild Horses of the colors specified will be released back on to the area from which they were captured with a follow up check to evaluate the effect of the release on the animals within the first 72 hours following release.

This plan will remain in effect until all animals identified in the removal plan are removed from this area and placed in adoption centers. (Anticipated to take place during August and September 1988).

### 3. REMOVAL METHODS

All capture attempts shall be accomplished through the use of a helicopter. Wing riders may be used if necessary. Roping will not be allowed except to capture orphan foals and wet mares, and this will be done only when necessary, with prior approval by the ODR. Under no circumstances shall animals be tied down for more than one hour. Mare and foal are to be capture together, if both cannot be captured then one or the other will be released to allow them to be reunited at no cost to the government.

The helicopter shall be used in such a manner that bands or herds will remain together as much as possible and foals will not become separated from their mothers. .

The rate of movement and distance the animals travel shall not exceed limitations set by the ODR who will consider terrain, physical barriers, weather, condition of the animals and other factors.

It is estimated that 15 trap locations will be required to accomplish the work. General trap locations and holding facilities will be selected by the CCR, specific trap sites (with in the general trap location area) will be selected by the contractor. All trap locations and holding facilities must be approved by the CCR prior to construction. The contractor may also be required to change or move trap locations as determined by the CCR. All traps and holding facilities not located on public land must have prior written approval of the landowner.

All traps, wings, and holding facilities shall be constructed, maintained and operated to handle the animals in a safe and humane manner. Traps and holding facilities shall be constructed of portable panels, the top of which shall not be less than 72 inches high, and the bottom rail of which shall not be more than 12 inches from ground level. All traps and holding facilities shall be oval or round in design. All loading chute sides shall be fully covered with plywood or like material. The loading chute shall also be a minimum of 6 feet high. All runways shall be a minimum of 20 feet long and a minimum of 6 feet high and shall be covered with plywood or like material a minimum of 1 foot to 5 feet above ground level. Wings shall not be constructed out of barbed wire or other materials injurious to animals and must be approved by the CCR. All crowding pens including the gates leading to the runways shall be covered with a material which prevents the animals from seeing out (plywood, burlap, etc.) and shall be covered a minimum of 1 foot to 5 feet above ground level.

No fence modification will be made without authorization from the CCR. The contractor shall be responsible for restoration of any fence modification which he has made.

When excessive dust conditions occur within or adjacent to the trap or holding facility, the contractor shall be required to wet down the ground with water at such location as directed by the CCR.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to provide security to prevent loss, injury or death of captured animals until delivery to final destination.

The CCR will determine general roundup areas and number of animals within general contract areas as animal concentrations and weather conditions dictate. All traps shall be located so as to provide for the most humane capture of the animals. The specific locations of traps need to be approved by the CCR prior to construction.



4. HELICOPTER, PILOT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The contractor must operate in compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 91. Pilots provided by the contractor shall comply with the Contractors Federal Aviation Certificates, applicable regulations of the State of Nevada and shall follow what are recognized as safe flying practices.

When refueling, the helicopter shall remain a distance of at least a 1,000 feet or more from animals, vehicles (other than fuel truck), and personnel not involved in refueling.

The COR shall have the means to communicate with the pilot and be able to direct the use of the gather helicopter at all times. The frequency(s) used for this contract will be assigned by the COR when the government furnished "slip-in" VHF/FM portable radio is used. When a VHF/AM radio is used, the frequency will be 122.925 MHz.

The contractor shall obtain the necessary FCC licenses for the radio system.

The proper operation, service and maintenance of all contractor furnished helicopters is the responsibility of the contractor. The BLM reserves the right to remove from service pilots and helicopters which, in the opinion of the contracting officer or COR violate contract rules, are unsafe or otherwise unsatisfactory. In this event, the contractor will be notified in writing to furnish replacement pilots or helicopters within 48 hours of notification. All such replacements must be approved in advance of operation by the contracting officer or his/her representatives.

On site project inspectors who have clear lines of authority and responsibility as well as the ability to communicate (on site government radios) on a moment's notice with management, the COR, and the Contracting Officer, will be appointed to assure that any contractual problems which may affect the animals or their habitat can be resolved with minimal delay.

5. DISPOSITION AND HUMANE TREATMENT OF HORSES

As soon as practical after entering the capture corral, each group of horses will be inspected and a written log kept identifying condition of animals at time of capture and specific location from which animals came from. Alternate pens, within the holding facility shall be furnished by the contractor to separate mares with small foals, sick and injured animals, and stray animals from the other horses. Where required by the COR, animals shall be sorted as to age, number, size, temperament, sex, and condition when in the holding facility so as to minimize, to the extent possible, injury due to fighting and trampling.

Of primary importance while handling wild horses is their welfare and humane treatment. The OOR shall be responsible for determining the need and providing for the treatment of sick or injured animals. The contractor shall restrain sick or injured animals so that they may be provided treatment by the OOR. The OOR shall also determine if an injured animal must be destroyed and provide for destruction of the animals.

Animals shall be transported to final destination from temporary holding facilities within 24 hours after capture unless prior approval is granted by the OOR for unusual circumstances. Animals shall not be held in traps and/or temporary holding facilities on days when there is no work being conducted except as specified by the OOR.

Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps and/or holding facilities shall be provided fresh clean water by the contractor, in an amount of a minimum of 10 gallons per animal per day. Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps or holding facilities shall be provided good quality hay at the rate of not less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day.

Branded animals, those suspected of being branded, or unbranded animals known to be private, will be separated out and handled as outlined in IM 85-416, which is in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

#### 6. DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS

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 for humane euthanasia of wild horses. 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. The Contractor shall dispose of carcasses as directed by the OOR.

#### 7. DISPOSAL OF ANIMALS WHICH ARE DESTROYED DURING THE REMOVAL OPERATION

Carcasses will be disposed of by burial, consumed by fire or left to the environment as outlined by Instruction 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.

8. TRANSPORT OF CAPTURED ANIMALS

All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall adhere to the provisions of 43 CFR Part 4700 and be subject to the following reservations and/or restrictions:

All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of animals.

Vehicles shall be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and operated so as to insure that captured animals are transported without undue risk or injury.

Only stocktrailers shall be allowed for transporting animals from traps to temporary holding facilities. Only Bobtail trucks, stocktrailers, or single deck trucks shall be used to haul animals from temporary holding facilities to final destination. Sides or stockracks of transporting vehicles shall be a minimum height of 6 feet 6 inches from vehicle floor and have no openings from the floor to four feet above the floor wider than 2 and 1/2 inches. Single deck trucks with trailers 40 feet or longer shall have two partition gates to separate animals. Trailers less than 40 feet shall have at least one partition gate to separate the animals. The use of double deck trailers is unacceptable and shall not be allowed, unless converted to single deck.

All vehicles used to transport animals to final destination shall be equipped with doors at the rear end of the vehicle. At least one of these rear doors shall be capable of sliding either horizontally or vertically.

Floors of vehicles and loading chute shall be covered and maintained with a non-skid surface such as sand, mineral soil or wood shavings (no fecal material allowed), to prevent the animals from slipping.

The number of animals to be loaded and transported in any vehicle shall be as directed by the DOR and may include limitations on numbers according to age, size, sex, temperament and animal condition.

The COR shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, distance to be transported, or other factors when planning for the movement of captured animals. The COR shall provide for any brand and/or inspection services required for the captured animals.

If the COR determines that dust conditions are such that the animals could be endangered during transportation, the contractor will be instructed to adjust speed. The maximum distance over which animals may have to be transported on dirt road is approximately 35 miles per load.

### III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The gather area varies from flat but rocky to precipitous bushy and forested. Vegetation Varies from Creosotebush to pinyon-juniper with major vegetation zones of blackbrush sagebrush and mountain brush species.

No Cultural, historical sites and endangered or threatened species have been identified in roundup area. Each capture site location will have a Cultural and botanical (T&E) clearance completed prior to the temporary construction of corral panels etc.

The following environmental assessment mandatory elements would not be affected by the proposed action and alternative as previously described:

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Air Quality   | 6. Flood Plain                     |
| 2. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern             | 7. Wastes, Hazardous or Solid      |
| 3. Cultural, Historical, and Paleontological Resources | 8. Water, Drinking/ Ground/Quality |
| 4. Endangered or Threatened Species                    | 9. Wetlands                        |
| 5. Farm Lands  | 10. Wild and Scenic Rivers         |
|  | 11. Wilderness                     |

The Caliente Final Environmental Statement (INT-FES 79-44) discusses in greater detail the affected environment as it relates to wild horse management.

### IV. IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

- A. Livestock Grazing: Under the proposed action, in the short-term as well as the long-term, livestock would realize a beneficial impact as a result of reduced ungulate competition around waters and throughout the grazing allotments as a whole. In time this reduced competition would result in an increase in available forage. There may be short-term impacts as a result of the capture operation where water may not be as accessible to the livestock because of the capture crew's presence.

The impacts from the no action alternative during the short-term would be the same as what occurs now. During the long-term as the wild horse population increases the areas would degrade, available forage would decrease, competition would increase.

- B. Wildlife: Impacts from the proposed action as well as the no action alternative are the same as impacts to livestock.
- C. Wild horses: The impacts from the proposed action would be that a portion and/or all wild horses would be removed from the gather areas. There would be unavoidable impacts in the form of injuries (less than 2% of animals removed) as well as a change in lifestyle for the animals captured. Animals remaining would have to adjust to changes in their environment, i.e. fewer numbers of wild horses in area, possibly new use area to adjust to, etc.

The impacts from the no action alternative would be the same for wild horses as for livestock. In addition, because horses depend upon the range year-round their physical condition would in time be affected, as a result of lack of sufficient water and a deteriorating forage resource.

- D. Minerals: No impacts from proposed action or alternative.
- E. Wilderness: The impacts from the proposed action would be very minimal because capture corrals would be temporary. The removal area that is disturbed would be substantially unnoticeable. There wouldn't be a need for reclamation because all corral structures and vehicle access would be in the bottom of major drainage (sand and gravel areas) that are annually disturbed.

There would be no impacts from the no action alternative.

- F. Realty: No impacts from proposed action or alternative.
- G. Forestry: Under the proposed action reduced ungulate competition would benefit seedling establishment during the short and long-term.

In the long-term the impacts under the no action alternative would tend to result in a general degrading of forage condition which might benefit Forestry as a result of reduced species competition for water and nutrients etc.

- H. Recreation: Under the proposed action the recreation experience might be considered lower for not being able to see as many wild horses within the area. There are no impacts under the no action alternative.
- I. Cultural Resources: Under the proposed action previously undiscovered artifacts may be disturbed during the implementation process. There are no impacts under the no action alternative.



J. Visual Resources: There are no impacts from the proposed action or no action alternative.

K. Soils: Under the proposed action soils would be disturbed at capture locations. In the long-term as available forage increase, soils should become more stable.

The impacts under the alternative would result in greater erosion in the long-term.

L. Threatened/Endangered Flora and Fauna: According to a literature search conducted in the Caliente Resource Area Office and review of Federal and State updates, there are no Federally listed or candidate threatened and/or endangered flora or fauna in the capture area.

#### V. STANDARD MITIGATION MEASURES AND STIPULATIONS

Each capture site will have a Cultural Resource Survey and a Threatened and Endangered Species Survey conducted prior to field work. Also site locations will be selected to avoid T & E Species.

#### VI. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The FY88 Caliente Resource Area Wild Horse Gathering Plan and this EA were available for review by all interested persons, groups, etc. for a period of 30 days. Comments were reviewed for consideration into the Gathering Plan. These documents also went through intensive internal review (Nevada State Office, Las Vegas District Office, and Caliente Resource Area Office) with comments being incorporated into the plans as appropriate. Comments were received from Wyoming Advocates for Animals, Animal Protection Institute of America, Department of Energy, Office of Community Services, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. BLM Specialists involved in the review are as follows:

Eddie Guerrero	Wildlife Biologist/Environmental Coordinator, Caliente Resource Area
Terry Smith	Range Conservationist, Caliente Resource Area
Mike Neff	Range Conservationist, Caliente Resource Area
Larry Lacy	Range Tech/Minerals, Caliente Resource Area
Cory Bodman	Soils Scientist, Caliente Resource Area
Larry Johnson	Forester, Caliente Resource Area
Tim Murphy	Supervisory Range Conservationist, Caliente Resource Area
Bob Stager	Range Conservationist (WH & B Specialist), LVDO
Joe Ross	Assistant District Manager, Resource, LVDO
Terry Driver	Range Conservationist (WH & B Specialist), SRA
Milton Frei	Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, NSO

#### VII. DISCUSSION OF NON-CONCURRENCE

Non-Concurrence was received from Animal Protection Institute of America, they stated that they could not support the proposed action without more detailed information. A copy of the wild horse portion of the Land Use Plan and the Coordinated Resource Management and Planning Committee minutes was forwarded to them.

Also, Non-Concurrence was received from Wyoming Advocates for Animals. They felt that it was not the horses that are causing damage to the Public Resource but "Livestock and poor management practices are. There is, therefore, no reason whatever for the Caliente Resource Area to go forward with and gathering plan". The Bureau of Land Management response was that we are implementing our Land Use Plan and managing horses at the Appropriate Management Level as well as maintaining livestock at Authorized Grazing use. This will be the Status Quo until vegetative monitoring indicates a change in management is necessary. When this happens in wild horse areas the interested groups will be involved in the review process.

#### VIII. RECOMMENDATION

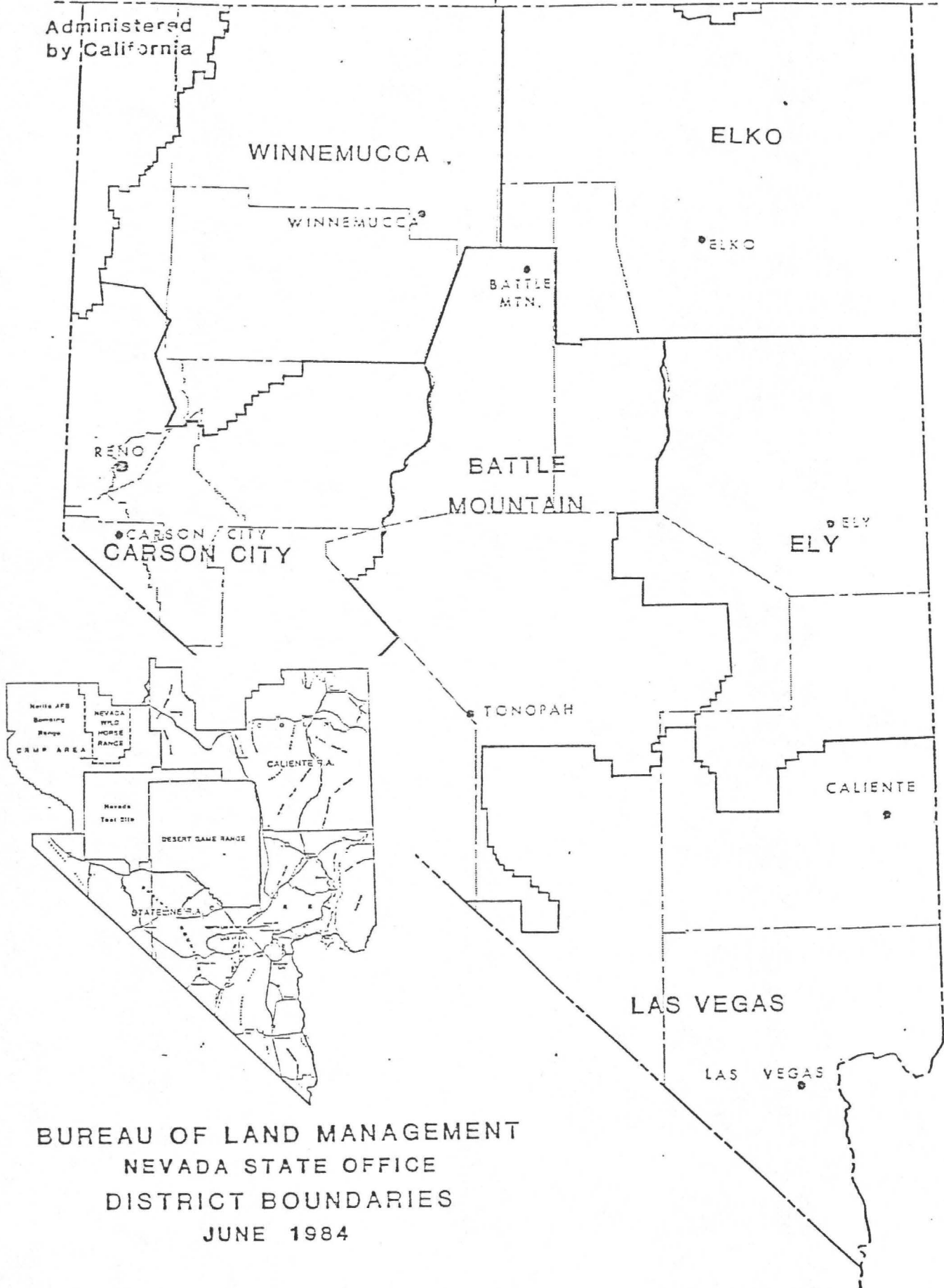
The implementation of the Caliente Resource Area Gathering Plan is recommended for approval with the mitigation and the concurrence by the above specialists.

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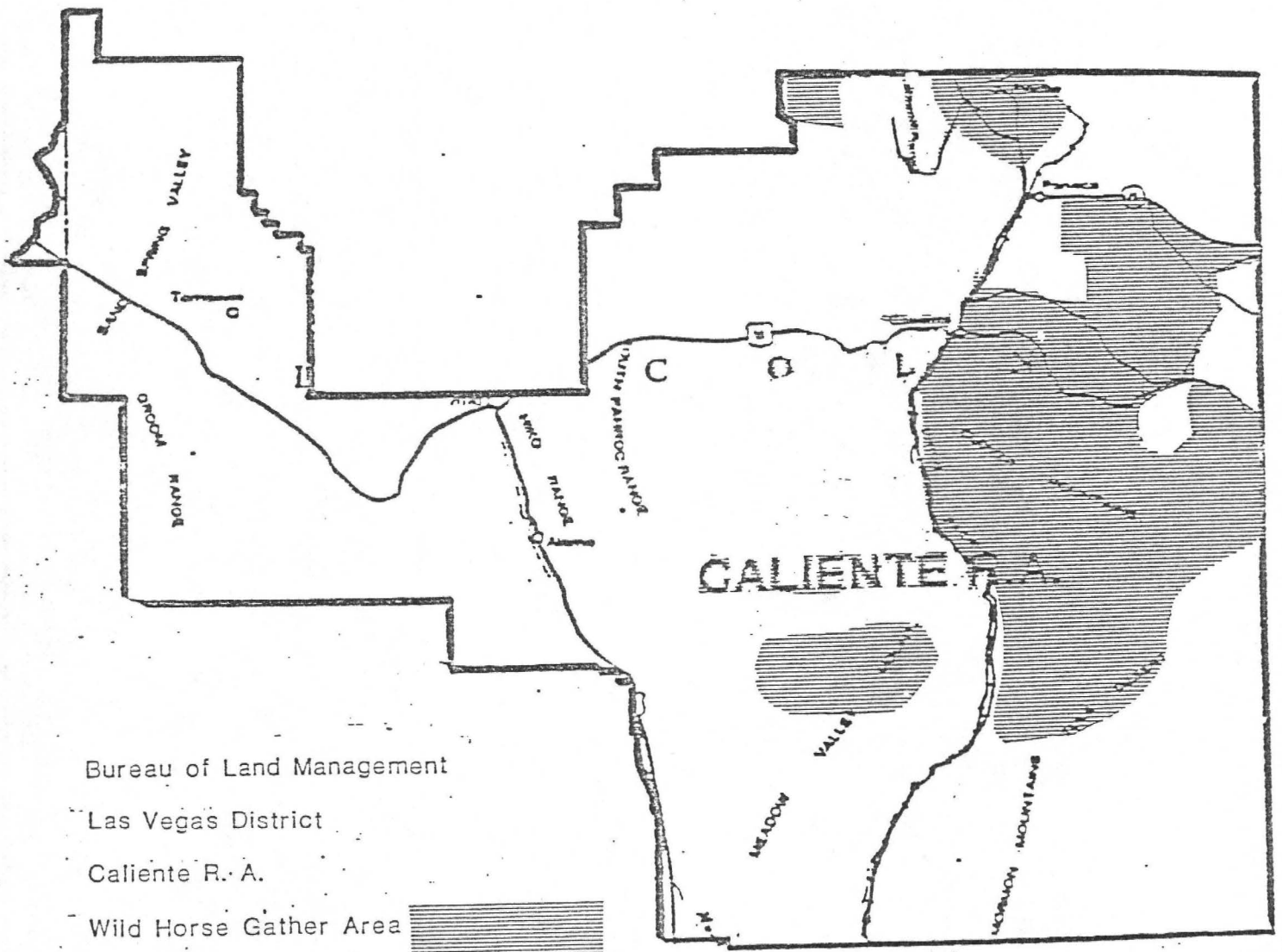
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Administered  
by Idaho

Administered  
by California



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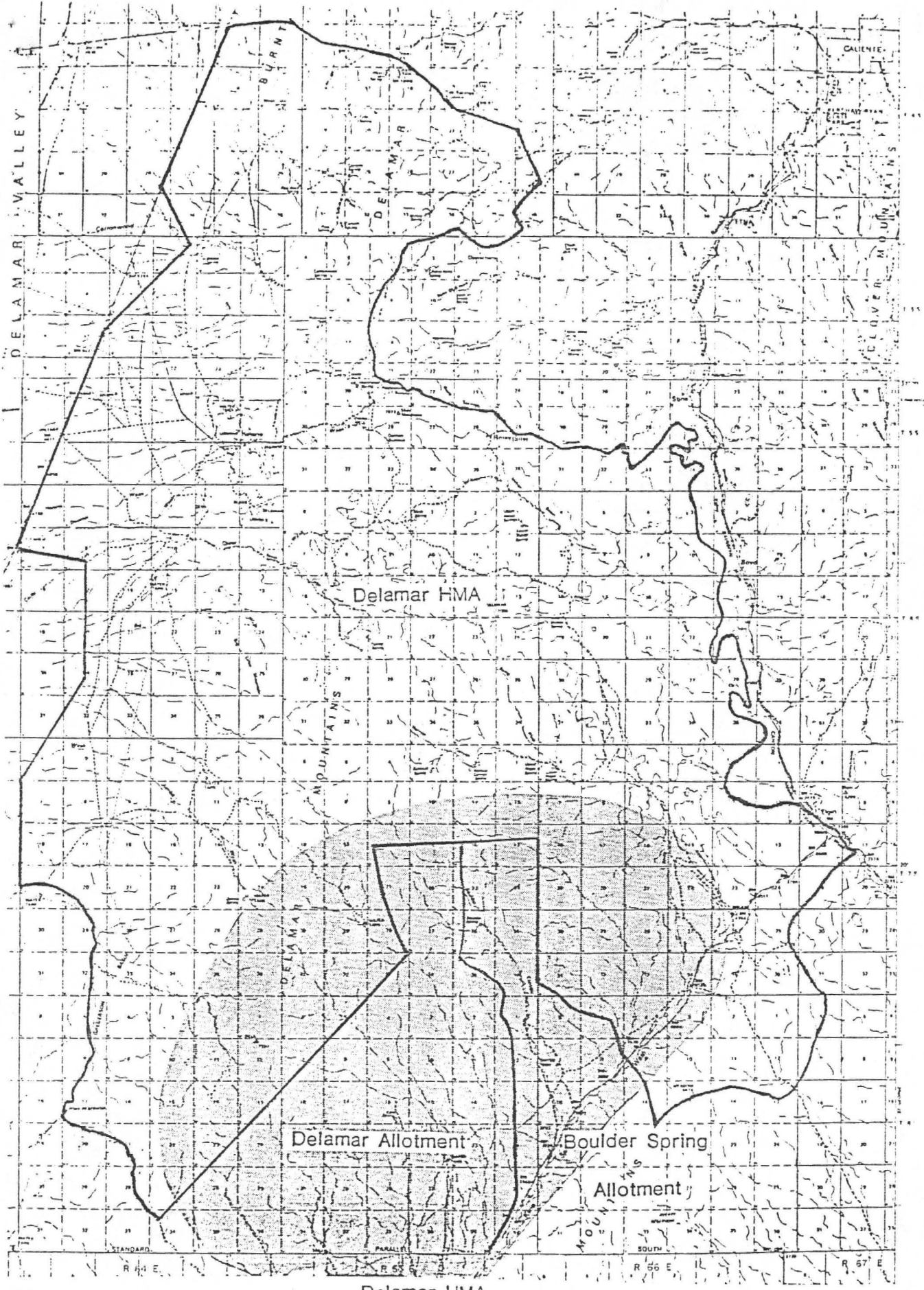
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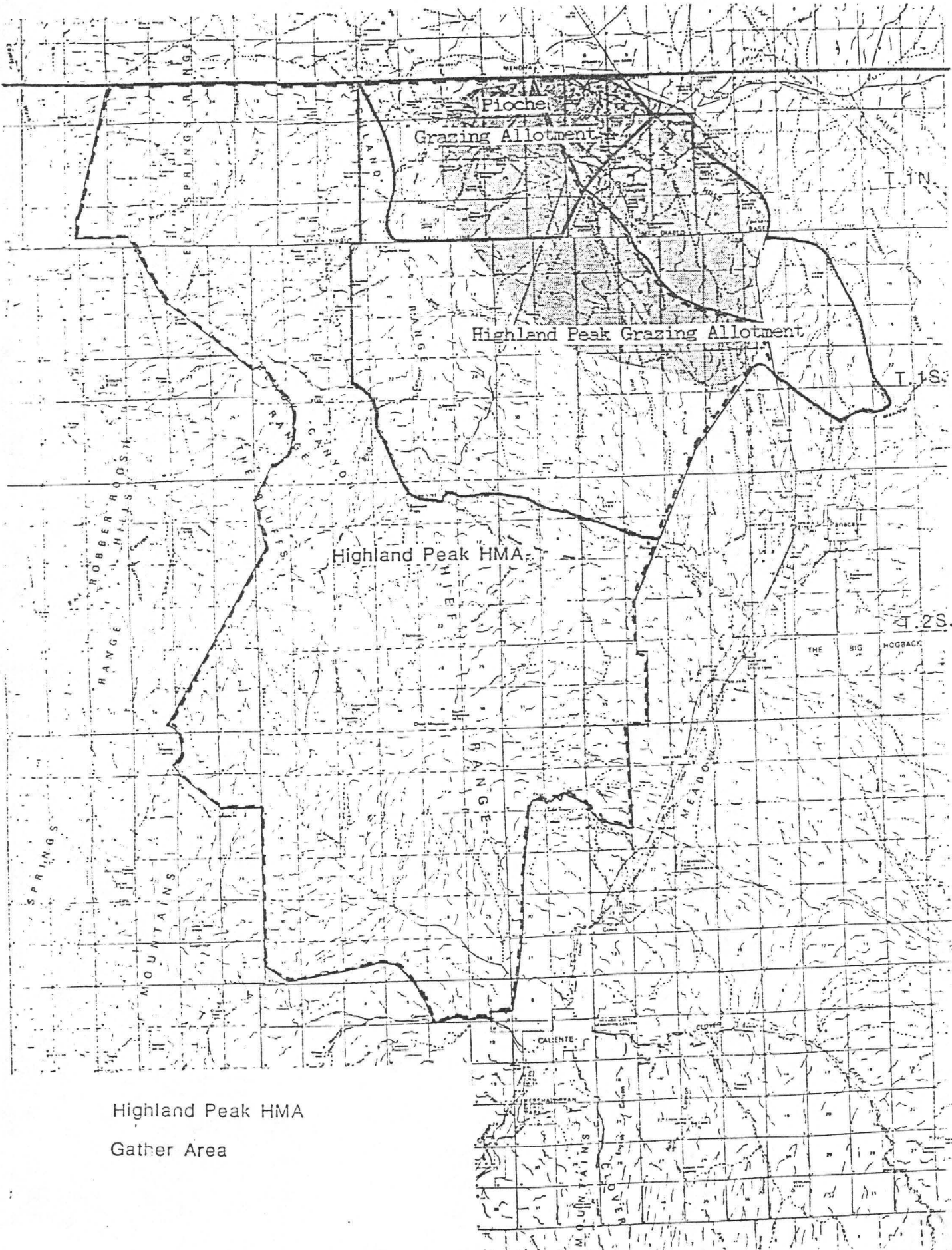
Wild Horse Gather Area





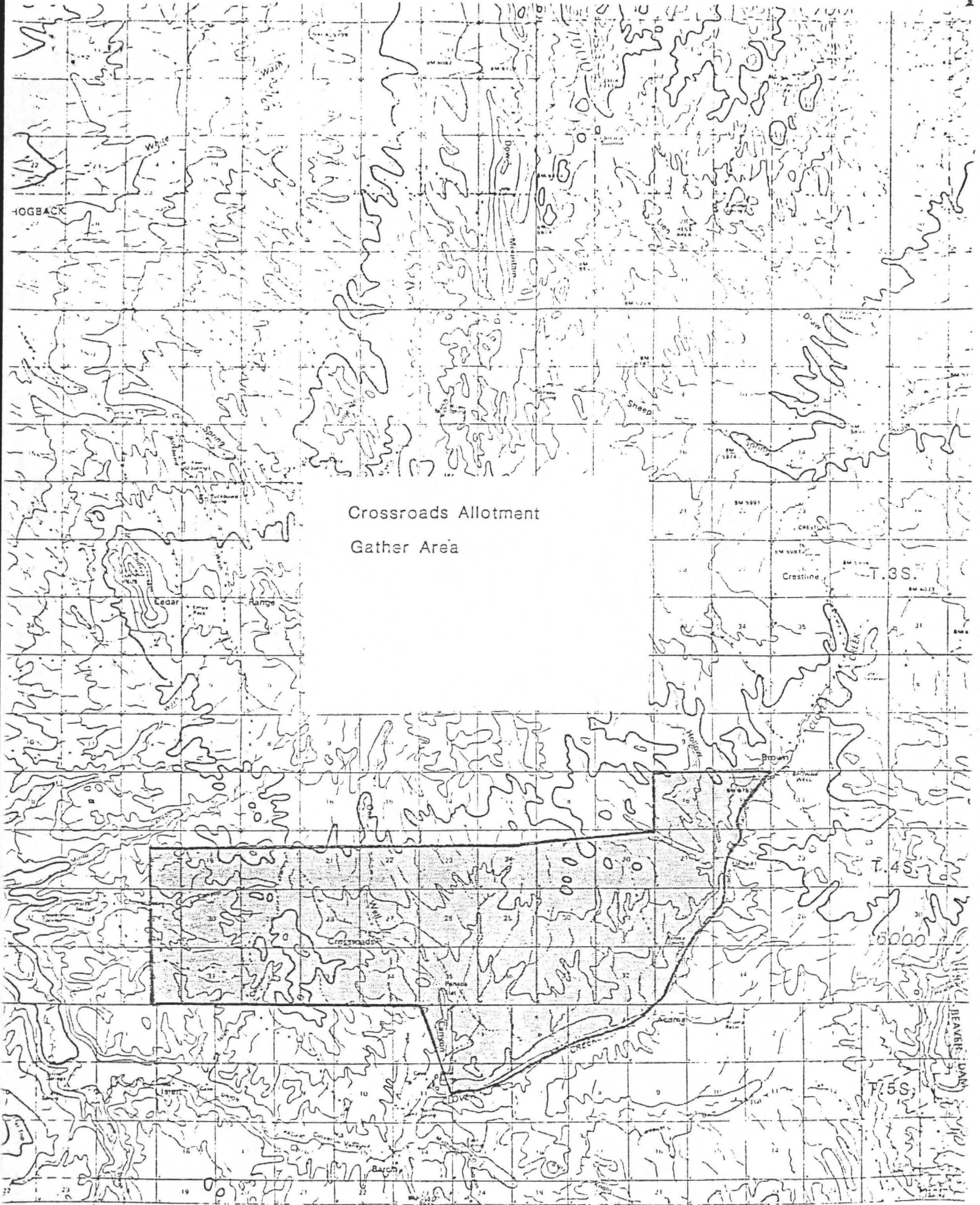


Delamar HMA  
&  
Boulder Spring & Delamar Allotments  
Gather Area



Highland Peak HMA

Gather Area



Crossroads Allotment  
Gather Area

Hogback

Cedar Range

Sheep

Duck

Crestline

T. 3 S.

34

35

31

Brown

T. 4 S.

5000

Crossroads

35

Hogback

Barren

Barren

T. 5 S.

20°

R 59 E

SAINT GEORGE

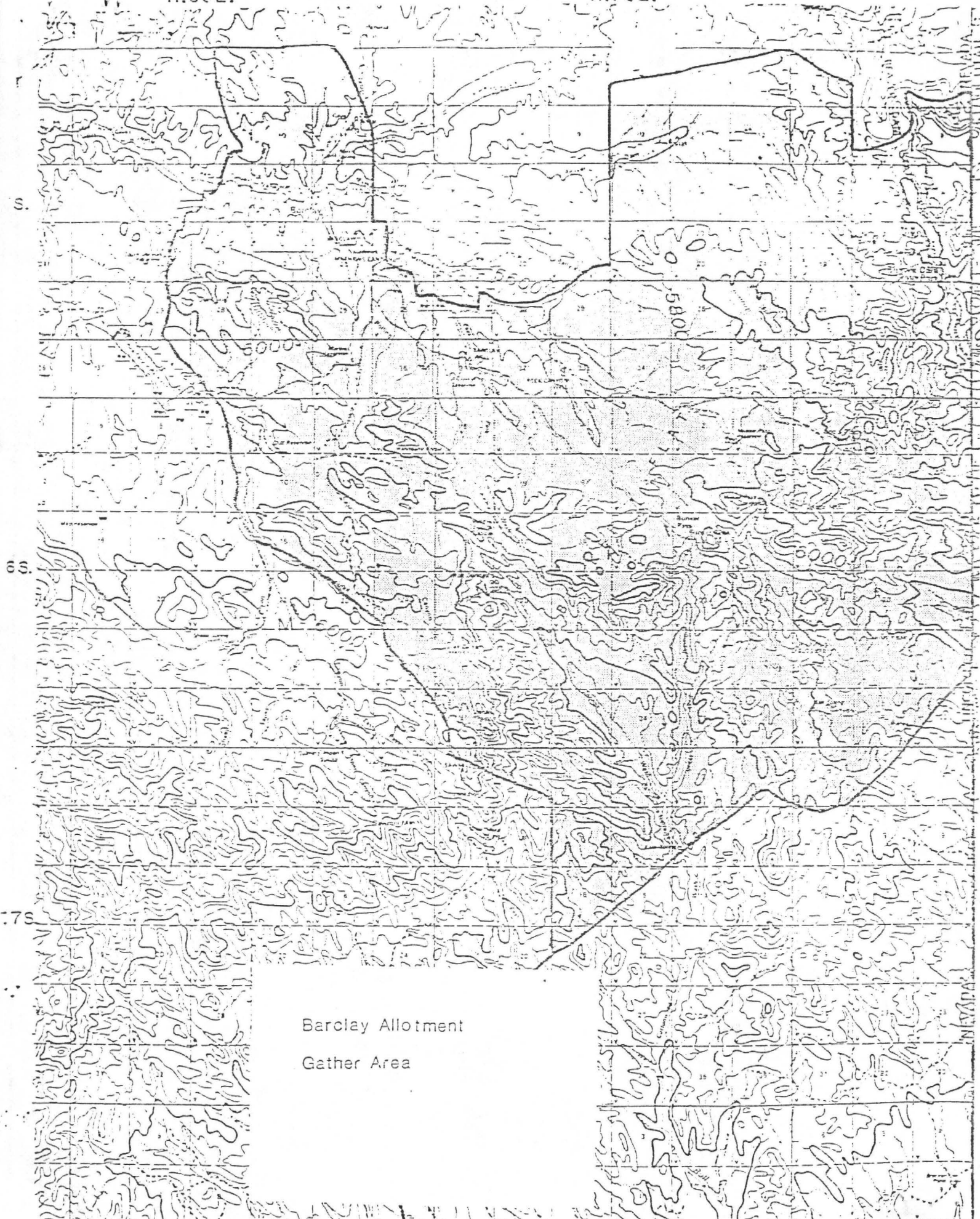
10° R 70 E

R 71 E



R.6SE.

R.7CE.



Barclay Allotment  
Gather Area



Simpson Allotment  
Gather Area

DRY VALLEY  
LAKES

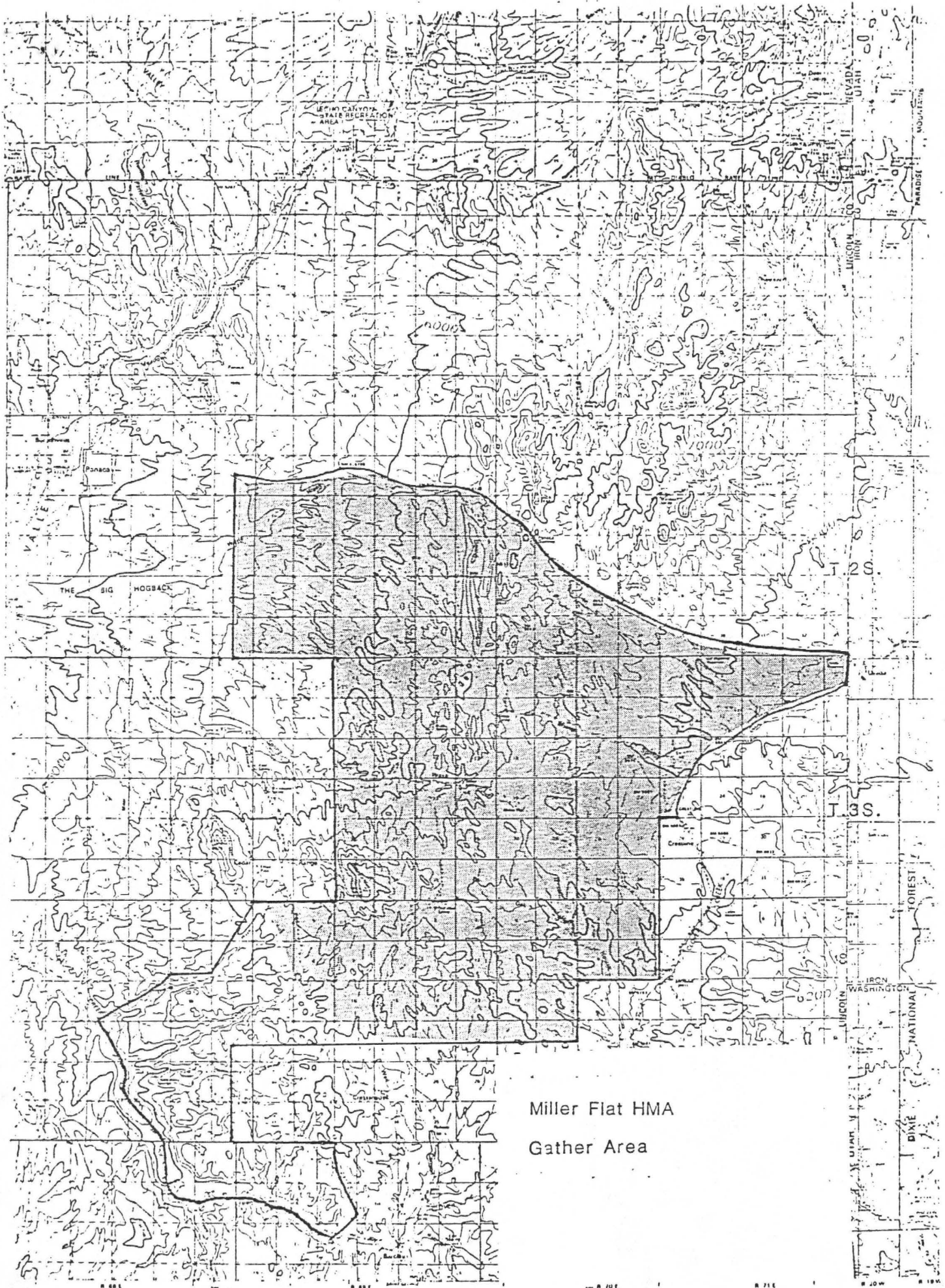
SIMPSON RANGELAND

DRY VALLEY

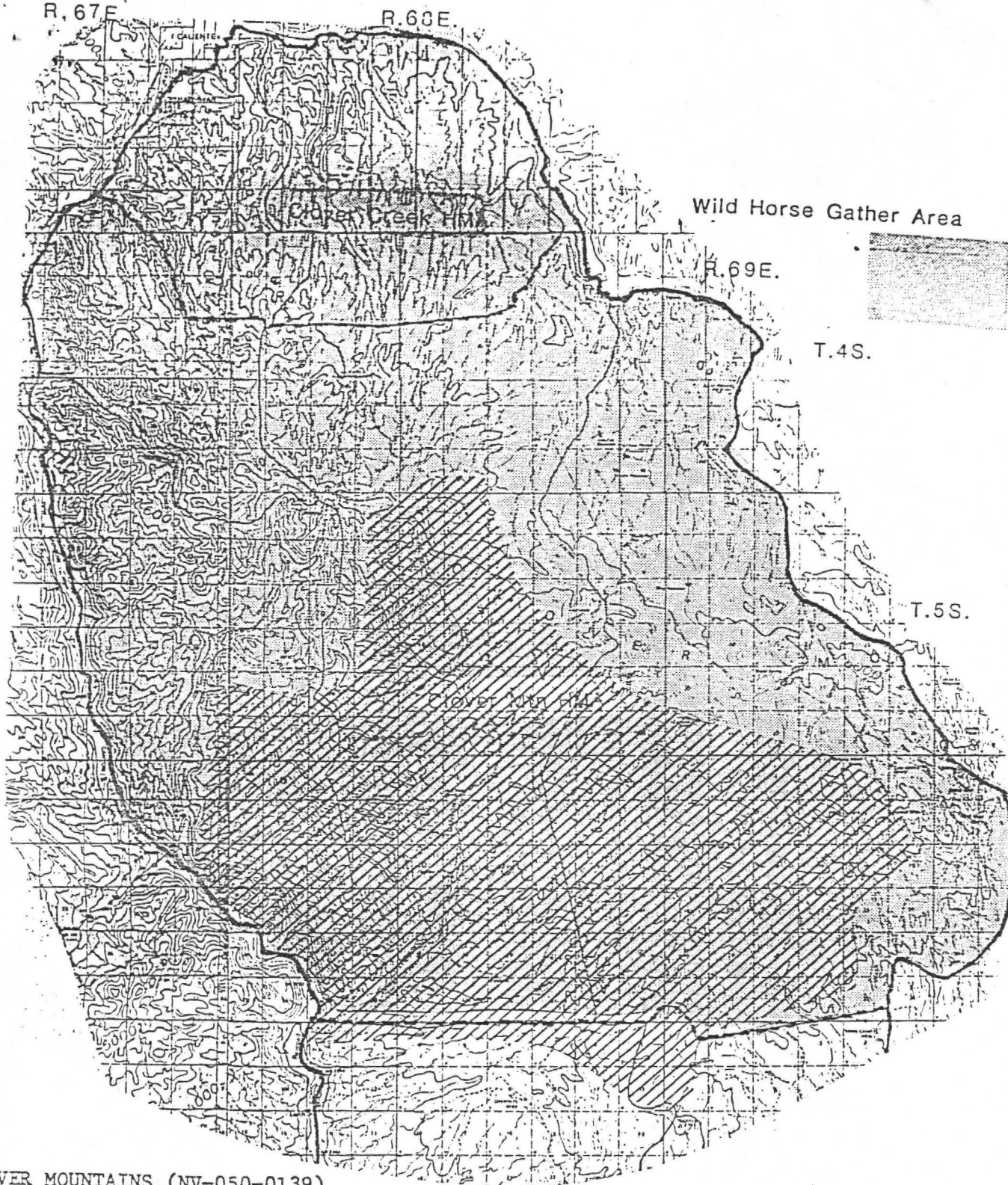
Black River Canyon

SIMPSON RANGELAND

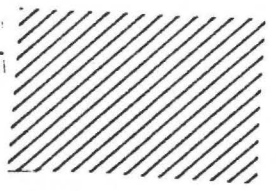




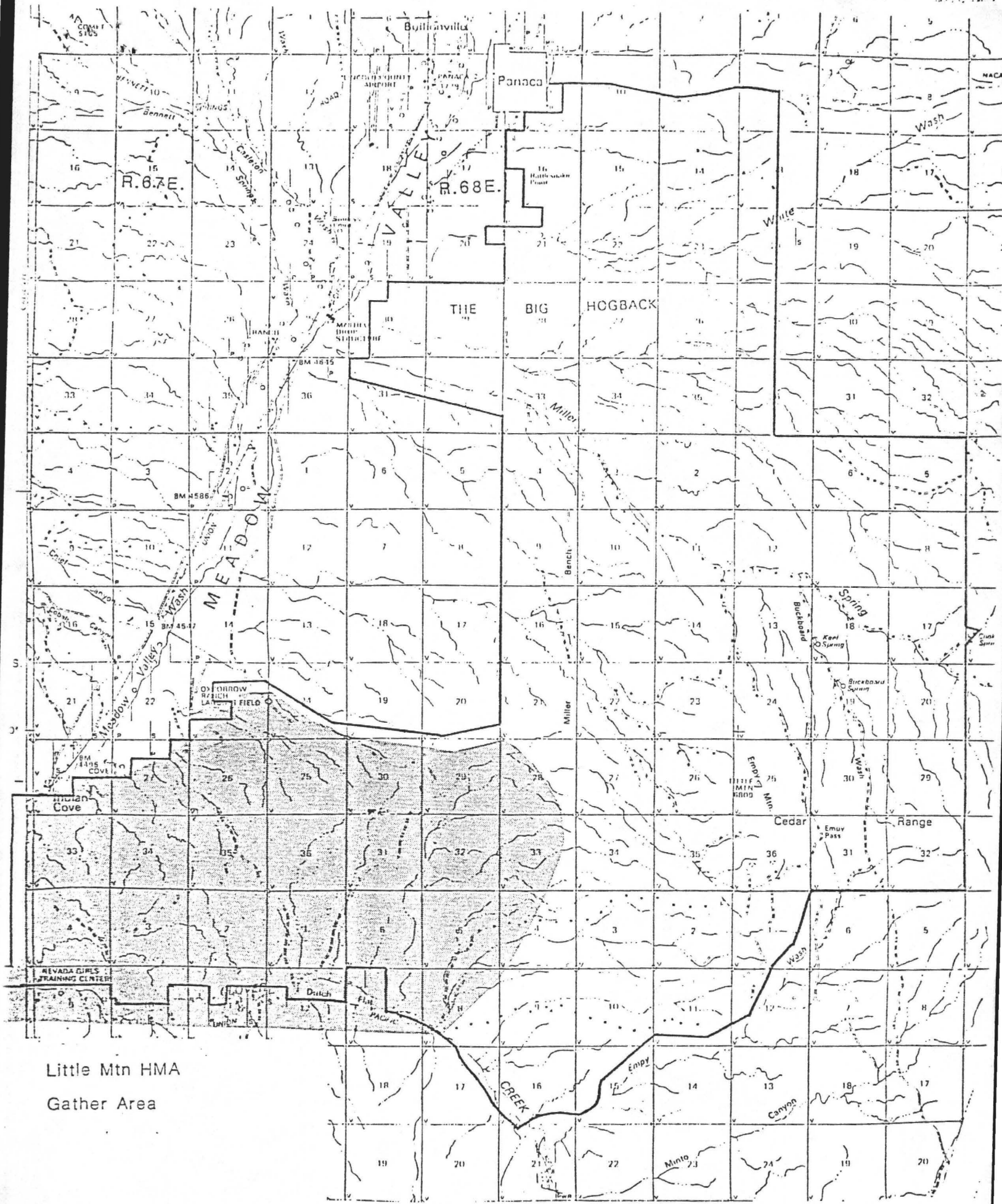
Miller Flat HMA  
Gather Area



CLOVER MOUNTAINS (NV-050-0139)

Wilderness Study Area 





Little Mtn HMA  
Gather Area

Office: Caliente Resource Area  
Project: CRA Wild Horse Gathering Plan  
EA #: NV-055-08-14  
(NV-05580.7)

#### DECISION RECORD/RATIONALE AND FONSI

The proposed action is to remove excess wild horses from the Caliente Resource Area. This may be accomplished by removing horses that exist outside of Herd Management Areas (HMA's), and those horses from HMA's where the Appropriate Management Level is being exceeded, and removal of horses that are causing damage to the private property (destroying lawns and gardens and fields) of the citizens of the communities of Caliente and Caselton. This removal will remove from public lands approximately 100 wild horses.

#### GATHER AREA

Removal of excess horses from outside of designated Herd Management Areas will take place in the Delamar, Boulder Springs, Pioche, Highland Peak, Crossroads, Barclay, and Simpson Grazing Allotments located in the Caliente Resource Area.

Excess wild horses will be removed down to the initial Appropriate Management Level as identified in the Miller Flat Herd Management Area Plan.

Excess wild horses will also be removed from the Clover Creek and Cottonwood HMA's bringing the population of wild horses down to the Appropriate Management Level identified through the Coordinated Resource Management and Planning process.

Horses that are causing problems, damage to private property, around the community of Caliente will also be removed during this removal process. This will affect the clover Creek and Little Mountain HMA's.

The Environmental Assessment addressed the no action alternative and the proposed action.

The proposed action, as described in the environmental assessment has been found to have no significant environmental impacts on the human environment when conducted with the mitigation provided. Implementation of the proposed action would result in bringing the wild horse population to AML in specific HMAs identified in the EA and removing horses that range outside HMA boundaries.

The proposed action has been found to be in compliance with the Caliente Resource Area Land Use Plan Specifically decisions: wild horse 1.1 and wild horse 1.2.



All actions are in compliance with P.L. 92-195 and the Bureau of Land Management Planning Process. No Environmental Impact Statement is required. The State Clearing house was contacted through the review and input process.

I hereby approve the proposed action as stated in the environmental assessment (NV-055-08-14) with the identified mitigation and stipulations.

E. Guerrero

Eddie Guerrero  
Environmental Coordinator

5-16-85

Date

Curtis G. Tucker

Curtis G. Tucker  
Area Manager  
Caliente Resource Area

5-23-85

Date