

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10  
5010-104

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

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4041-152  
N-260

TO : Files

DATE: March 19, 1971

FROM : Richard Hopkins and Harry Finlayson

SUBJECT: Meeting with Nye County Commissioners

On January 25, 1971, we received a letter from William P. Beko, Nye County District Attorney, requesting a statement from us on the wild horses on the public lands. On February 19, 1971, we answered this letter and explained three things. First, we said the subject of wild horses was of concern to us; second, that horse numbers were increasing and they were in direct competition on the public lands with livestock and wildlife for available forage; and third, that we believe if horse numbers are not lowered, cattle numbers will have to be reduced to obtain a balance of use in line with the available forage. We told Mr. Beko we would be able to review this situation with him on March 5, 1971, or some other convenient time.

On February 22, 1971, we received a letter from Mr. Beko giving us an appointment with the County Commissioners at 1:30 p.m., March 5, 1971, to review the horse situation.

Attendance at the March 5, 71 meeting included:

- William Beko, Nye County District Attorney
- Rena Bailey, Nye County Clerk
- Andy Eason, Nye County Commissioner
- Bob Ruud                                 "
- Bob Cornell                             "
- Gerald Roberts, Tonopah Times Bonanza, Reporter
- Harry Finlayson, District Manager
- Richard Hopkins, Range Conservationist
- Mr. & Mrs. Joe Fallini
- Robert McQuivey, Fish & Game Agent, Tonopah
- Walter Hanks, District Ranger, Tonopah, U.S.F.S.
- Niel Jensen, Range Conservationist, U.S.F.S.
- Joe Clifford Jr., Arrived an hour and one-half after the meeting started

The commissioners began by asking us if we had any information on horses. They were presented with a data sheet prepared by Robert McQuivey on March 1, 1971, which showed a total of 678 horses in the areas of Ralston, Monitor, Little Fish Lake, Stone Cabin, Reveille and Kawich Valleys. It was explained that this was not a total count and that it included valley bottoms only. Other than that we had no more current information.

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March 19, 1971

Page 2

Andy Eason indicated that the commissioners wanted to do the right thing on this sensitive issue, but they had no information to work with. For a number of years now the commissioners have only issued permits to Fallini and Clifford. He asked us if we felt the horse numbers were excessive. We said we did not know. We explained that there was unauthorized exchange of use on the bombing range between cattle and horses. The cattle are licensed on the area in the winter and they usually go down on the bombing range. The horses are using the public lands adjacent to the bombing range yearround. We explained that if the use privilege on the bombing range was discontinued and the cattle and horses were confined to the areas on the public land adjacent to the range, that there would be too many animals on the range. We also felt horse numbers were increasing.

We asked the commissioners for a copy of their agreement or plan with the Park Service that was mentioned in Mr. Beko's letter of January 25, 1971. Mr. Beko then said they did not have a written agreement but a type of gentlemen's arrangement.

Mr. Eason then asked us if we knew how many horses should be removed and how many should be left in the area. We explained that we did not have enough information at the time to say; however, we did say we would make an inventory of all the resources and available information and try to come up with some recommendations. We explained this would be sometime after July 1. Mr. Eason said this would be good just so they would have something to go on and know what to do.

The commissioners then asked Mr. & Mrs. Fallini about the horses in Reveille Valley. They stated they felt the horse numbers were excessive. Joe said they couldn't stand an increase in horses because they were in competition with cattle for feed. He said they were paying their grazing fees for cattle, not horses. Fallini's also said they did not like people running horses on their range, because they used their corrals and waters when they gathered them. They said most people tear up these improvements that they built and paid for themselves without Government help. They also said in the past inhumane methods were used to gather horses, and they chased and caught colts.

Mr. Finlayson asked Joe how many of the horses on the range were branded. Joe said about 200 head were branded. It should be noted that only 25 are licensed on the Federal Range in Reveille, Silverbow, Stone Cabin and Little Fish Lake Grazing Units. Mr. Finlayson then asked Joe if there were many mustangs on the range. Joe said the horses probably were not mustangs because for years they have kept good studs among the horses to upbreed them.

Joe Clifford came to the meeting later and said there were too many horses on the range. He said they didn't want to go out of the cow business because of the horses. We asked Clifford about the Fish and Game data

March 19, 1971  
Page 3

sheet, and he said they did not count anywhere near all the horses and they even missed 27 Antelope near Stone Cabin Ranch. He said they just counted in the valley bottoms.

Another item that came up in the meeting was the Nye County Dump and the new rifle range near the dump. Both are in trespass and should be applied for under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

James Wolfe, representing Nye County Search and Rescue, (sponsors of the rifle range) and J. V. Caselli, Nye County Surveyor were present at this meeting. Jim understood that all was taken care of concerning the rifle range, and said that he was unaware that their improvements were in trespass. He said he thought it was county land.

Mr. Bako said the county had filed a Recreation and Public Purposes application for 160 acres. Eighty acres were for the dump, forty acres for the gravel pit and forty acres for the rifle range. He presented a copy of an application to us that was supposed to have been filed, but it was not signed.

We advised Mr. Wolfe and the county to contract Clair Christensen, University of Nevada, Reno for their professional help on the application. We explained that the application shown to us was totally unacceptable.

Our comment on the dump site is that the present location is not the most desirable. Parts of the dump can be seen from U. S. Highway 95. A more favorable location would be the basin to the east of the present site and adjacent to the rifle range. If this area was used the dump could not be seen from the public highway.

*Richard L. Hopkins  
Larry H. Funderburk*