



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



Caliente Resource Area Office  
P.O. Box 237  
Caliente, Nevada 89008

4710  
NWHR Monitoring File  
(NV 055.07)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Area Manager *CRD*

FROM: WH&B Specialist

SUBJECT: Nevada Wild Horse Range (NWHR) Water Concerns

The water situation on the NWHR has been a nationally known concern for many years. During the past spring, the Caliente Resource Area and Las Vegas District staffs replaced and repaired three water pipelines within the NWHR. The majority of the work was completed on the Rose Spring Pipeline between the Middle and Lower Troughs. This work involved replacing 3 1/2 miles of pipe. Work was also done on the spring sources for the Tunnel Spring and Cedar Wells Pipelines. At the completion of the project this past June, there was water available at all water troughs to some degree (present capacity of the springs).

On 08/17/94, I spoke with Joe Altavilla, Range Liaison for Nellis Range, about the water situation and he had some important information. Over the past several weeks, the water availability at the water sources has decreased to a point that the horses are consuming the water as fast as it comes out the pipelines into the troughs. The high temperatures that southern Nevada has been receiving since last spring has put an additional hardship on the horses and available water supply. At Silver Bow Ranch trough (Breen Creek pipeline), there are approximately 250-400 horses watering at the trough and 100 or more horses watering at the source. These horses are quickly consuming any available water.

The serious news was that the newly replaced Rose Spring Pipeline was basically dry. An estimated quart and half of water was coming through the line. Joe stated that there were no visible breaks in the line so he was unsure of the cause of the shortage of water.

On 08/18/94, I traveled to the NWHR to observe the water problem first-hand. Joe and I visited the Breen Creek area first. There were approximately 45 horses at the Silver Bow Ranch trough watering out of the overflow pond. It was at that time that Joe told me that water was being hauled to the horses against USAF decisions. Two foal carcasses were observed at the trough site.

We then traveled to the Breen Creek source and found approximately 75-100 horses in this area. These were the first horses that I have personally observed watering here in over a year. These animals are beginning to show signs reduced condition due to the water shortage. There were three or four small seeps that the horses were watering from.

Tunnel Spring and Corral Spring was our next stop. Tunnel Spring was flowing a small amount of

water (approx. 1 pint per minute) and the trough was empty. This source only supports a small number of horses and antelope. Corral Spring has two troughs. The upper trough was dry and the lower trough was full. This source flows approximately one half gallon per minute. These two sources tend to be a last resort for the main body of horses because it is so far from favorable feeding areas.

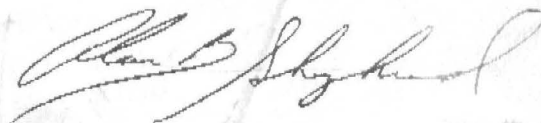
The Rose Spring pipeline was our last stop of the trip. We started at the middle trough where we started with the replacement of the pipeline last June. Approximately one quart to a quart and half of water was coming into the trough each minute. Once the valve was opened to the lower troughs (3 1/2 miles away) no water entered the middle trough. This flow is drastic change from the 2 1/2 gallons a minute recorded in late June at the completion of the pipeline replacement. Joe and I traveled the pipeline route towards the spring source and found no broken pipe along the way. The ground around the spring source (located in a mine shaft) was moist so water is still available. The only explanation I can come up with for the reduction of flow is that the collection box has been damaged by the tunnel (mine shaft) caving in on it. The pipeline from the source to the middle trough may have some blockage but water can be held flowing through the pipeline at the air vent along the route.

As it has been stated above, there is a developing water concern within the NWHR. The situation has to be addressed in order to not have the earlier water experiences of the late 1980's and early 1990's happening again. We are at a point of horse management where we are making strides toward achieving the AML and having a healthy horse herd and habitat for them. The following are my recommendations for this situation.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Coordinate with CRA and LVDO Operations staff for maintenance of the Rose Spring Pipeline between the spring source and the middle trough. Procure the needed funding through the Nevada State Office (NSO) and/or National Program Office.
2. Coordinate with NSO on gather schedule. See if it is possible to move the scheduled January gather to an earlier date. Limiting factors is finding scheduling date that works with USAF training missions and I am scheduled to be in Washington, D.C. with a Range Reform detail from 9/12 to 10/08.

cc: NV-960  
NV-053  
Nev. Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses  
Wild Horse Organized Assistance (WHOA)





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**FAX TRANSMITTAL  
SHEET**

DATE: 8/22/94

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DELIVER TO: Dawn Loppin

OFFICE CODE:

FROM: Alan Shepherd

OFFICE CODE: NV-055

NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING TRANSMITTAL SHEET): 3

**FAX OPERATOR: PLEASE CALL (702) 726-8100 IF FAX IS NOT PROPERLY TRANSMITTED OR READABLE. THANK YOU!**

COMMENTS: Dawn Loppin, Here is a copy of a 8/18/94 monitoring trip to NWHR. Please read and give me a call.

Thanks  
Alan