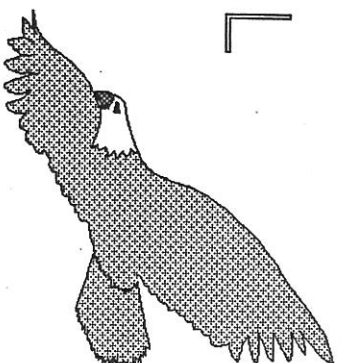
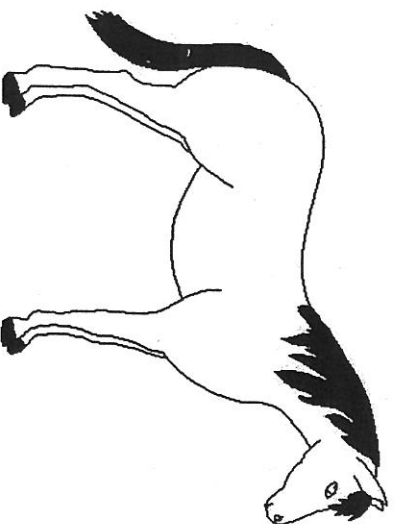


-EXHIBIT 6-

WILD HORSE GATHERING
AND
REMOVAL



BITNER, HIGH ROCK, NUT
MOUNTAIN, AND WALL CANYON
HERD MANAGEMENT AREAS



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
SURPRISE RESOURCE AREA

JUNE 22, 1993

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**WILD HORSE GATHERING AND REMOVAL
BITNER, HIGH ROCK, NUT MOUNTAIN, AND WALL CANYON
HERD MANAGEMENT AREAS
SURPRISE RESOURCE AREA**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CA-028-93-03

BACKGROUND

The Proposed Action would occur on the Surprise Resource Area, Cowhead/Massacre Planning Unit, Washoe County, Nevada.

The Proposed Action is subject to the Cowhead/Massacre Management Framework Plan 3 (MFP), and has been reviewed for conformance with the MFP (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM MS 1617.3). Actions on four Herd Management Areas (HMA) are evaluated. For the High Rock HMA East of Canyon Home Range the proposed action is in conformance with sub-unit 1; Decision #3 as amended on 11/3/83 and Decision #7. For the Bitter, Nut Mountain, and Wall Canyon HMAs the proposed action is in conformance with Sub-unit 2; Decisions #4 and #15. The proposed action complies with the resource management goals for the High Rock Canyon area and the utilization standards for the other areas.

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

BITNER, NUT MOUNTAIN, AND WALL CANYON HMAs

An analysis of the current monitoring data, utilization mapping, 1992 wild horse counts, and the most recent trend data, found that there were excess wild horses on the four HMAs. With the current numbers, on the Bitter, Nut Mountain, and Wall Canyon HMAs a thriving natural ecological balance could not be maintained.

HIGH ROCK HMA, EAST OF CANYON HOME RANGE

The 11/3/83 amendment to the MFP referring to the High Rock sub-unit (sub-unit 1) states in part, when additional forage becomes available, "allocations will only be made to wildlife and non-consumptive uses for the canyon bottoms and east of the canyon."

Through the EIS and MFP processes the primary resource values in the High Rock area were determined to be scenic, cultural, historical, wildlife, and primitiveness. Sub-unit 1; Decision # 6 states, "manage all ecological sites within Subunit 1 to achieve site potential." Grazing by livestock and wild horses was determined to be detrimental to the primary values and Decision #6. Livestock grazing was ended in 1984. A small number of wild horses was determined to be compatible with these values and Decision #6. The Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP) set the management level at 30 - 40 wild horses on the East of Canyon Home Range. 1992 counts found 55 wild horses in High Rock and east of the canyon.

DEFINITION

Site Potential Part of ecological theory is that we can predict what plant community will exist in a specific setting in the absence of disturbances. This plant community, which will take some number of years after the last disturbance to develop, will have a stable species composition for many years. This assemblage of plant species is called site potential.

The process for arriving at the recommended wild horse management levels conforms with BLM Instructional Memo No. 90-30 (IM 90-30) issued October 12, 1989.

PROPOSED ACTION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

Gather wild horses on the Bitter, Nut Mountain, Wall Canyon HMAs to the minimum recommended management levels. Gather wild horses on the High Rock HMA, East of Canyon Home Range, and reduce their numbers to the minimum number set in the MFP. Each HMA will be gathered to the minimum management level and allowed to increase to the maximum management level before further analysis.

Table 1. Herd Management Areas and Wild Horse Population Levels.

HMA	Recommended	1992	1993	Approximate
	Management Levels	Census	Projection	Number to be Removed
Bitter	15 - 25	40	48	33
Nut Mountain	30 - 55	52	62	32
Wall Canyon	15 - 25	78	94	79
High Rock	30 - 40	55	66	36
East of Canyon Home Range				

These herds would also be restructured at this gather. Herd integrity will be carefully preserved. The goal is that only horse which are four years old and younger will be removed. Younger horses are more adoptable, so they cost BLM less for holding and maintenance.

DEFINITIONS

Base Herd is the reproductive horses returned to a herd management area following a gather. In Susanville District, this number is the minimum management level.

Structured Herd Management is: Gathering as many horses from a herd management area as practical. Selecting horses for return to the HMA which are five years old and older and appear capable of propagating offspring which are well adapted to the herd's habitat. Selecting younger horses needed to complete the "base herd" for return to the herd management area. At subsequent gathers replacing "base herd" horses that have died with horses four years old and younger either from the herd or from other wild horse herds.

Structured herd management was developed by the Susanville District. It is analogous to, but more detailed than, the general BLM policy of selective removal.

Herd Integrity is choosing horses for the "base herd" which reflect existing characteristics in the herd that have made it well adapted to its habitat.

For specifics of the gather see the "Helicopter Gathering Plan for Wild Horses in the Bitter, Wall Canyon, Nut Mountain and High Rock Herd Management Areas," (appendix 1).