



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Winnemucca Field Office
5100 East Winnemucca Boulevard
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445
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SEP 20 2005

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
BUDGET AND PLANNING DIVISION

In Reply Refer To:

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(NOPA-NV-020-05-03)

SEP 21 2005

NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION LANDS IN WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

STATE: Nevada

COUNTY: Humboldt and Pershing Counties

FIELD OFFICE: Winnemucca Field Office
5100 East Winnemucca Blvd.
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS: Selenite Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and Mount Limbo WSA

PROPOSED ACTION: Preparation of an Environmental Assessment to remove excess wild horses and burros from the Blue Wing Complex Herd Management Areas.

Background

The Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 and various other legislation requires protection, management, and control of wild free-roaming horses and burros on public lands at population levels that assure a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple use relationship. Through the planning process, which includes extensive public participation, the areas where horses and burros can be managed as a component of the public lands have been designated as Herd Management Areas (HMAs). Those areas where wild horses and burros will not be managed as a component of the public lands have been designated as Herd Areas (HAs). In 1989, the District Court ruled that the BLM must set appropriate management levels (AMLs) through the monitoring process in lieu of estimated 1971 population levels. The Winnemucca Field Office has used local monitoring data to set management levels for livestock, wild horses, wild burros, and wildlife through the allotment evaluation/multiple use decision (MUD) process.

Six HMAs and three HAs are included in the proposed Blue Wing Complex Horse and Burro Gather – Blue Wing Mountains HMA (NV-217), Kamma Mountains HMA (NV- 214), Lava Beds HMA (NV-215), Nightingale Mountains HMA (NV-219), Seven Troughs HMA (NV-216), Shawave Mountains HMA (NV-218), Antelope Range HA (NV-211), Trinity Range HA (NV-232), and Selenite Range HA (NV-212). The Mount Limbo and Selenite Mountains WSAs are located in the Selenite Range HA. The south half of the Blue Wing Complex was last gathered in September 2003 and the north half of the Blue Wing Complex was last gathered in August 1998. During the September 2003 gather of the South Blue Wing Complex, horses moved out of the designated capture area into the north half of the Blue Wing Complex. As a result less than an adequate number of animals were removed from the South Blue Wing Complex to reduce the population to within the AML range. The proposed gather would reduce herd numbers in the entire complex to within the AML range in an attempt to coincide with the calculated carrying capacity of the land and achieve a thriving natural ecological balance. It would also allow BLM to collect data on herd characteristics and determine herd health.

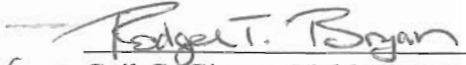
Description of the Proposed Action

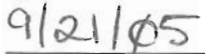
BLM proposes to gather approximately 642 wild horses and 282 burros of the estimated 807 wild horses and 320 burros present, and remove approximately 459 horses and 270 burros from the six HMAs and three HAs listed above to reduce population numbers to within the established AML range of 333 to 553 head of wild horses and 55 to 90 head of burros. BLM would also collect baseline genetic data; determine sex and age ratios; calculate reproduction and survival rates; record herd characteristics; and classify animal health by condition class. The proposed gather schedule identifies a start date of approximately November 1, 2005. Gather operations should run between three and four weeks in length.

Gather operations in the WSAs would use a helicopter to herd the wild horses and burros to portable corrals located outside of the WSAs, where they would be captured. Landing of aircraft and use of other motorized vehicles would not be authorized within the WSAs.

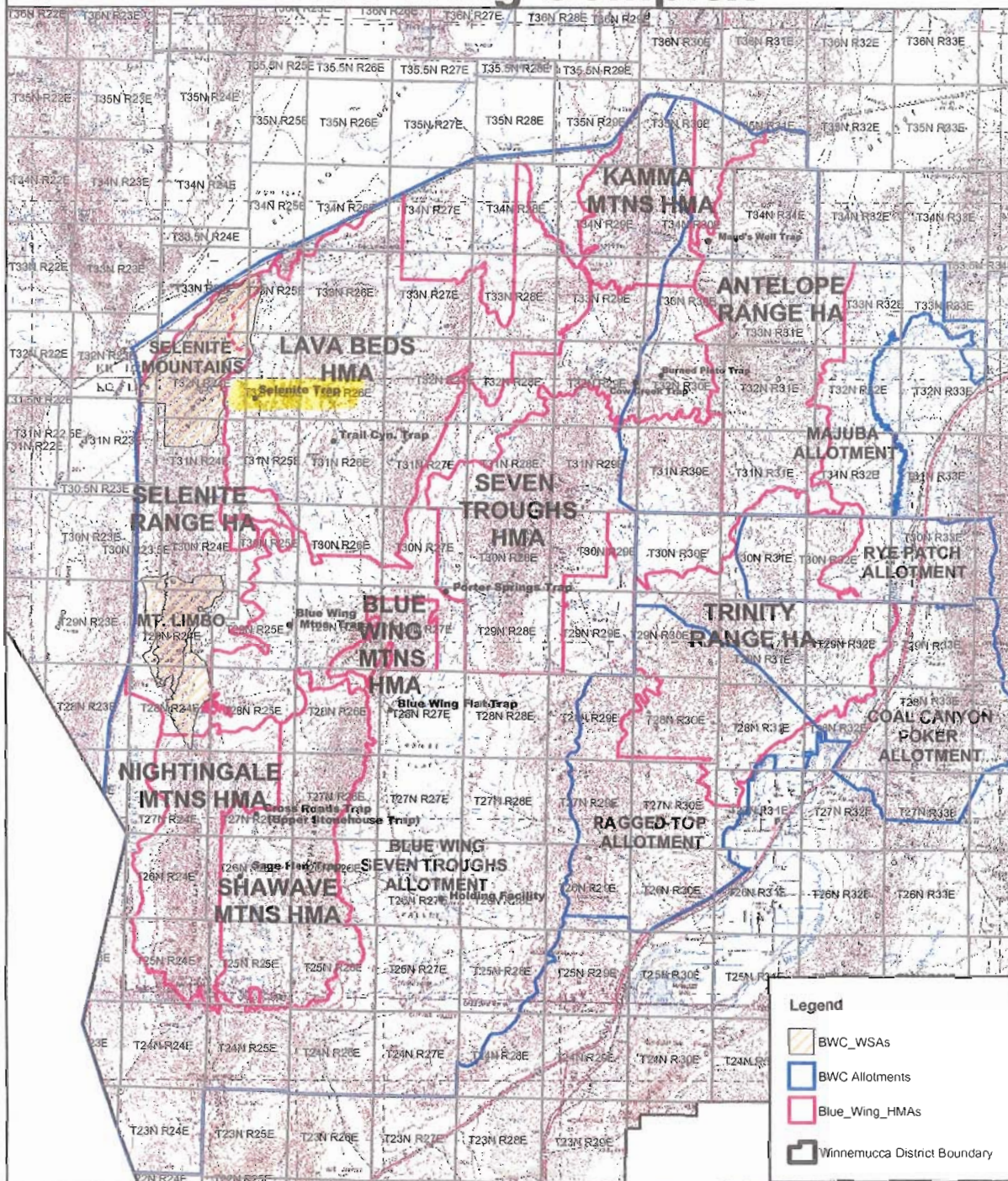
A Gather Plan/Environmental Assessment will be prepared.

Please send comments on the proposed action to Gail Givens, Field Manager, at the address above within the comment period of September 25th and October 25th, 2005.


for Gail G. Givens, Field Manager


Date

Blue Wing Complex



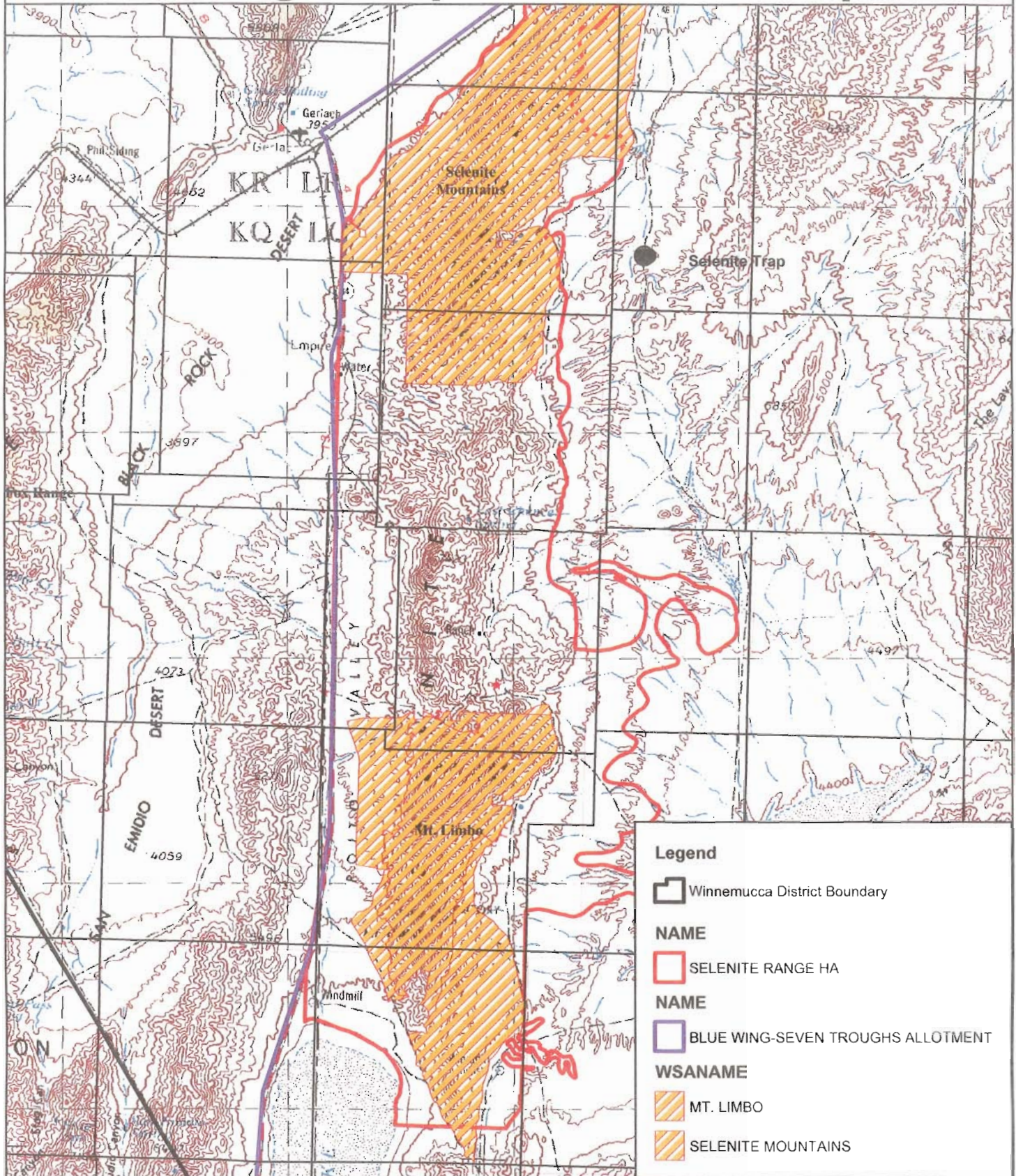
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June 3, 2003








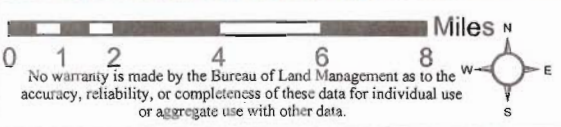
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Blue Wing Complex Selenite Trap Site



Legend

-  Winnemucca District Boundary
- NAME**
-  SELENITE RANGE HA
- NAME**
-  BLUE WING-SEVEN TROUGHS ALLOTMENT
- WSANAME**
-  MT. LIMBO
-  SELENITE MOUNTAINS



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September 15, 2005