



**United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Surprise Field Office
602 Cressler Street
Cedarville, California 96104



In Reply Refer To:
6500/6800/8500 (CA-370) P

February 23, 2012

**NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION
LANDS IN WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS**

STATE: Nevada

COUNTY: Washoe

FIELD OFFICE: Surprise Field Office
602 Cressler
Cedarville, California 96104

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS: Wall Canyon WSA (CA-020-805)

PROPOSED ACTION: **Installation of a fence and water pipeline within the Wall Canyon WSA**

Background

The Surprise Field Office has proposed an enclosure project that would entail building a fence and providing off-site water at Pinto Springs in Washoe County, Nevada. The project would include fencing that would create an enclosure, and installation of a pipeline and trough. The enclosure is proposed for the enhancement and functionality of the spring and riparian area by keeping livestock off the site area. A 2010 riparian assessment rated Pinto Springs as functional at risk and rest would enable it to return to a natural condition and enhance wilderness values. The Pinto Springs riparian protection fence would protect important native wildlife species including sage grouse, pronghorn antelope and pygmy rabbit habitat.

Project activities would be located in SEC 33, T39.5N, R20 E, about 5 miles SE of Boulder Reservoir and around the eastern boundary of the Wall Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA), see attached map.

Description of the Proposed Action

A portion of Pinto Springs is already fenced and is currently used as a riparian pasture for livestock gathering and holding purposes. The new fence would be a standard four strand barbed wire fence with the smooth bottom wire 20 inches off the ground to facilitate pronghorn use. Rock jacks would be used for corners when feasible. The proposed fence would tie into existing fence and natural barriers, i.e. rock rims. A fencing contractor would build the majority of the enclosure that is outside the Wall Canyon WSA; however, approximately 900 linear feet of the fence would be built within the wilderness study area boundaries.

The contractor will not drive any vehicles or equipment into the WSA. All work will be conducted on foot or utilizing pack stock. All tools will be washed at a location off site to prevent the spread of noxious weeds into the project area.

Off-site water would be developed to provide a watering source for wildlife, cattle and horses outside of the enclosure. This off-site water would include a trough, springbox and a buried 1.5" pipeline. The trough and a portion of the pipeline would be located outside the wilderness study area; however, the springbox and approximately 300 linear feet of buried pipeline would be located within the WSA. This off-site water is needed not only for the overall health of the riparian but also to enhance wilderness characteristics in the existing riparian and spring sources that are currently at risk due to heavy use. This enclosure would be evaluated for use as a riparian pasture for livestock in the future once downcutting has stopped, proper functioning conditions (PFC) have been met, and an interdisciplinary team has evaluated improvements in soil cover, vegetation community composition and desired levels of use. The proposed action meets the non-impairment criteria outlined in the BLM wilderness handbook H8550-1 section 3 C. This explains that the new, permanent livestock developments may be approved if they truly enhance wilderness characteristics and the developments are substantially unnoticeable.

The improvements would enhance wilderness characteristics since it would provide rest on the spring from livestock use. Rest would allow grasses to regenerate to a height that would lead to healthy riparian conditions that show little to no impacts from livestock. This would enhance the overall naturalness of the spring. The impacts from human intrusions (springbox, fence and buried pipeline) would be minimal due to their proximity to the road and other common intrusions. The improvements are actually located within an existing fence that is within the WSA. The springbox would be painted camouflage after the installation to mitigate the visual effect on the spring. The buried pipeline disturbed area would re-vegetate and would be substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor. The trough itself is located outside of the WSA and would also be camouflaged.

Other alternatives analyzed but not selected:

BLM analyzed four other alternatives for placement of the off-site water. These alternatives included using a different spring source, piping water upstream, and providing off-site water in another location. All of these alternatives were not selected due to these alternatives causing more resource damage than the proposed action, lack of spring source availability, more impacts to the WSA and impacting dense cultural resource sites that are National Register eligible. The proposed action was selected since it would cause minimal impacts to supplemental resources and wilderness characteristics as well as was the best engineered design for the needs. It is estimated that the portion of the project within the wilderness study area will take 2-3 days to complete.

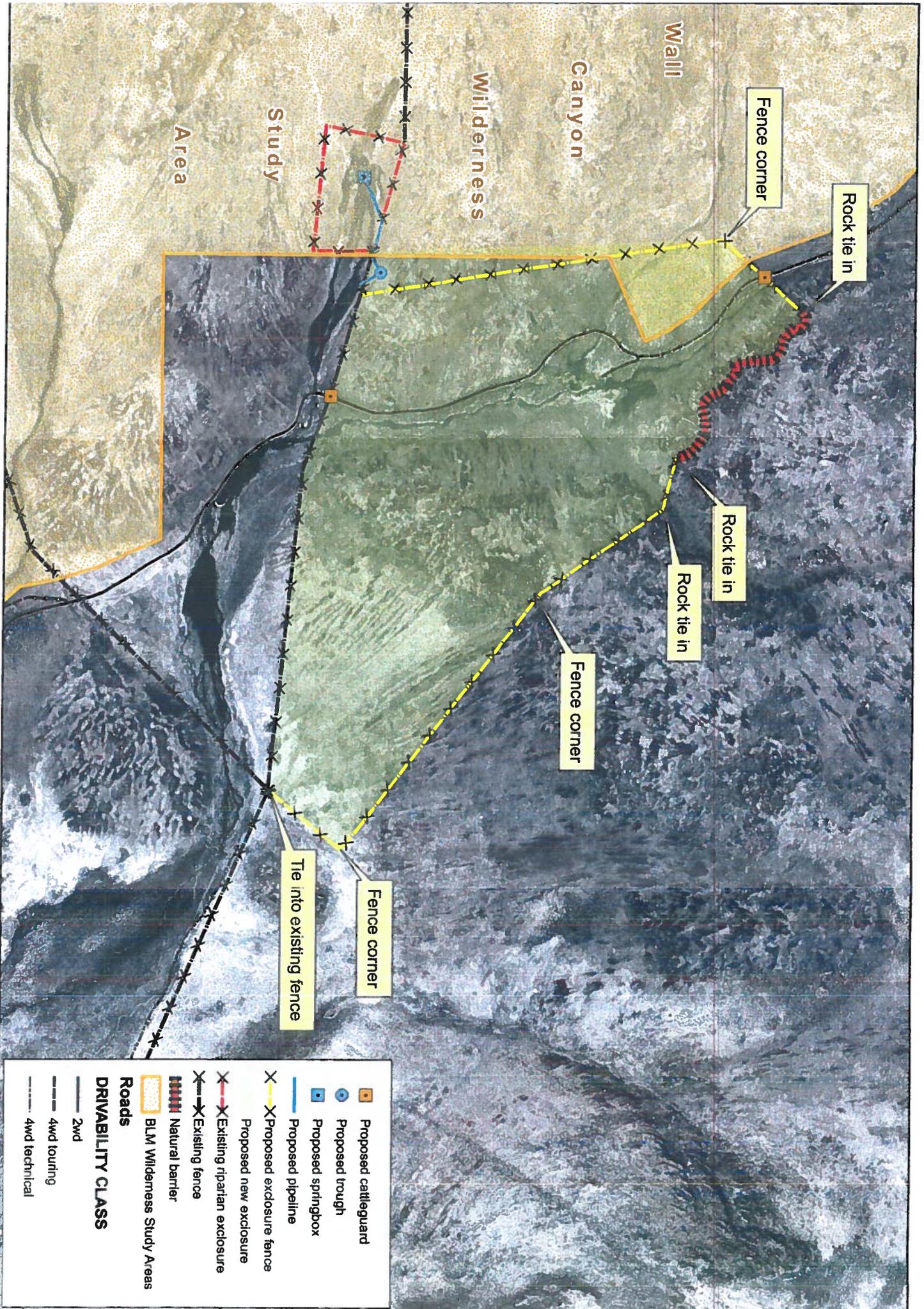
Send comments on the project to Allen Bollschweiler, Surprise Field Office Manager at the address above before March 25, 2012.



Allen Bollschweiler
Surprise Field Office Manager



Proposed Pinto Springs Project



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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
 SUPPLY FIELD OFFICE
 2201 27TH AVENUE
 DENVER, CO 80202
 www.blm.gov
 Data Provided: 2/22/2012

-  Proposed cattleguard
 -  Proposed trough
 -  Proposed springbox
 -  Proposed pipeline
 -  Proposed exclosure fence
 -  Proposed new exclosure
 -  Existing riparian exclosure
 -  Existing fence
 -  Natural barrier
 -  BLM Wilderness Study Areas
- ROADS**
- DRIVABILITY CLASS**
-  2wd
 -  4wd touring
 -  4wd technical