



United States Department of the Interior



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NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION **Lands in Wilderness and Wilderness Study Area**

STATE: Nevada

COUNTY: Pershing County

OFFICE: Humboldt River Field Office
Winnemucca District
5100 East Winnemucca Blvd.
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

WILDERNESS AREA: Black Rock Desert Wilderness N74461

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS: Selenite NV-020-200
Mt. Limbo NV-020-201

PROPOSED ACTION: Blue Wing Complex Gather

Background

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing a Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) analyzing the impacts of a proposed wild horse and burro (WH&B) gather within the Blue Wing Complex (Complex). The gather area is comprised of the Kamma Mountains Herd Management Area (HMA), Blue Wing Mountains HMA, Lava Beds HMA, Seven Troughs Range HMA, Shawave HMA and adjacent areas. A portion of the Black Rock Desert Wilderness and all of the Selenite and Mt. Limbo Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are located within the Complex. The Complex configuration was based on the HMAs that would be managed under the proposed action, and areas where WH&B have been observed outside of the HMAs. The area just north of Jungo Road, including the Black Rock Desert Wilderness, is included in the gather area to allow for indirect gather activities such as helicopter use to retrieve any wild horses and burros that may disperse from planned gather operations. Descriptions of the wilderness and WSAs are located in Chapter 3 of the EA.

Under the provisions of Section 1333(a) of the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act, the

BLM is obligated to manage WH&Bs in a manner that is designed to achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance on the public lands. Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) are intended to meet this goal. WH&B populations within the Complex have exceeded established AMLs, therefore the BLM is proposing an action to reach and maintain the established AML. If the WSAs were to be excluded from the gather activities, BLM would not be able to meet its goal.

Description of the Proposed Action

The BLM proposed actions include gather methods involving the use of field darting, water/bait trapping, and helicopter drive trapping. Trap sites and holding corrals are not proposed to be located within the Black Rock Desert Wilderness or WSAs. The specific dates of the gather are unknown at this time. The EA analyzes four action alternatives and a no action alternative summarized as follows:

- Alternative A: fertility control and/or spaying, with or without gathers over a 20 year-time frame to reach low AML. Once low AML is achieved, fertility control would continue to be used to maintain AML.
- Alternative B: multiple gathers and removals of WH&Bs, with fertility control and/or spaying/gelding over a 20 year time frame. Once low AML is achieved, subsequent gathers and removals of WH&Bs and/or fertility control measures would be conducted to maintain AML.
- Alternative C: one-time WH&B removal with fertility control over a 30 day time frame. Once low AML is achieved, subsequent WH&B gathers and/or fertility control would be conducted to maintain AML.
- Alternative D: one-time WH&B gather and removal to low AML within a 30 day time frame.
- Alternative E: no action, this is included in the EA for comparative purposes. Under this Alternative AML would not be achieved.


Gather activities would be temporary. Increased vehicle and foot traffic, construction of holding/trap sites, and the establishment of public viewing sites may lead to some surface disturbance. However, vehicles would be required to remain on designated existing routes. No holding or trap sites would be situated in the Black Rock Desert Wilderness or either of the WSAs. The opportunities for solitude may be temporarily impacted during helicopter flights if the helicopter traverses these areas. No other impairments to the wilderness character of the Black Rock Desert Wilderness or the wilderness suitability of the WSAs are anticipated from the proposed action or any of the action alternatives.

Location

The PEA is available through the BLM's NEPA Register located at: <http://bit.ly/2iYWG7j>. Please send comments to Samantha Gooch, Humboldt River Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, within 30 days of the date of this letter. Comments may be submitted via e-mail to [BLM NV Blue Wing Complex EA@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_NV_Blue_Wing_Complex_EA@blm.gov) with "Blue Wing" in the subject line, or via U.S. mail to the address in the header of this letter.

Public comments submitted for this project, including names and addresses of commenters, will be available for public review at the BLM Winnemucca District Office during regular business

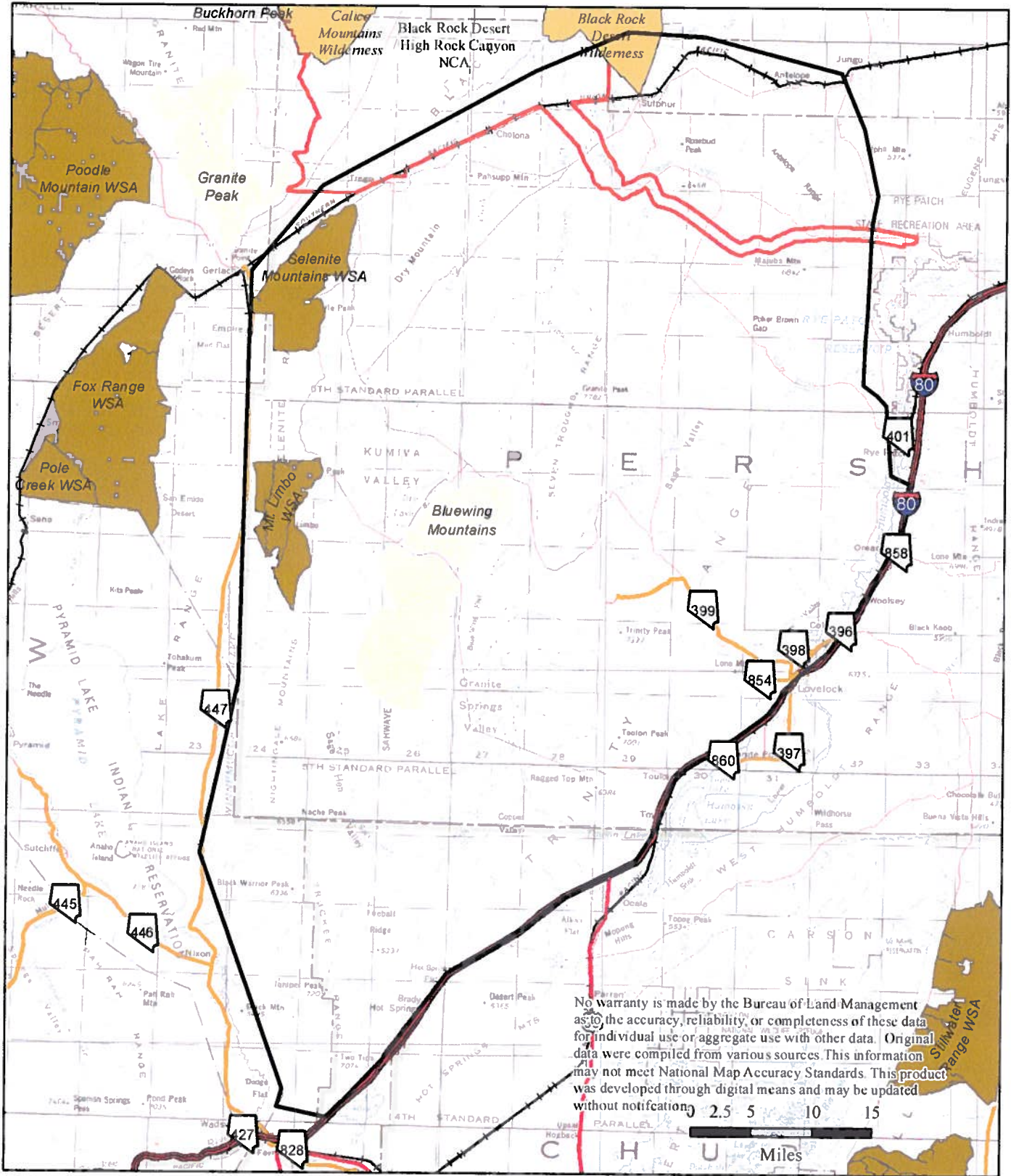
hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment -- including personal identifying information -- may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. If you wish us to withhold your personal information, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses available for public disclosure in their entirety.



Justin B. Drew
District Manager
Winnemucca District










11 JAN 17
Date

Blue Wing Complex & National Landscape Conservation System



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Winnemucca District
 Bureau of Land Management
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-  Gather Area Boundary
-  BLM Wilderness
-  Black Rock NCA
-  BLM Wilderness Study Area
-  Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
-  Transportation
Interstate
-  US Highway
-  State Route
-  Railroad

Date: 8/22/2016

