



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Tuscarora Field Office  
3900 East Idaho Street  
Elko, Nevada 89801  
<https://www.blm.gov/office/elko-district-office>

In Reply Refer To:  
4130 (NVE02000)

January 31, 2020

Nevada Gold Mines LLC  
Attn: Joel Donalson, Director of Rangelands  
1655 Mountain City Hwy.  
Elko, NV 89801

Dear Interested Public,

The Bureau of Land Management, Tuscarora Field Office (TFO) has completed the Final Land Health Evaluation for the Horseshoe and Scotts Gulch Allotments as well as a draft (unsigned) Standards for Rangeland Health Determination (SD) for the Horseshoe and Scotts Gulch Allotments; the TFO is seeking public input on both the SD and the proposed term grazing permit renewal for the Horseshoe and Scotts Gulch allotments. These allotments were selected as one of the demonstration projects for the BLM's outcome-based grazing (OBG) authorization initiative. The flexibility that would be allowed under the OBG projects would demonstrate management practices that BLM managers and livestock operators can use to respond to changing, on-the-ground conditions such as wildfires, high precipitation years, and/or drought. This would better ensure healthy rangelands, high-quality wildlife habitat, and economically sustainable ranching operations.

The Horseshoe and Scotts Gulch allotments have been severely impacted by wildfire over the last 20 years. This has led to a dominance of cheatgrass and other invasive annual plants in both allotments and a reduction of native perennial grasses and shrubs. The term permit renewal would allow for more flexible grazing to target cheatgrass areas during the appropriate times of year to assist in control of the invasive. Seeding may also be required to establish perennial grasses back into the ecosystem. The purpose for the action is to renew a grazing permit that would facilitate flexible and effective grazing management to control the invasion of cheatgrass and increase desirable plant species in the area increasing the quality of wildlife habitat and forage.

Public comments received in response to this solicitation will be used to identify potential environmental issues related to the proposed action and to identify alternatives that will also fulfill the purpose of and need for the project.

## **Alternatives**

The preliminary alternatives being considered include:

- The BLM would renew the term grazing permit with outcome based grazing objectives.

- The BLM would renew the term grazing permit with traditional terms and conditions.
- The BLM would renew the term grazing permit with the same terms and conditions as currently on the allotments.
- The BLM would not renew the term grazing permit.

At this time, the TFO is initiating a 15-day public scoping period and welcomes the submission of any comments, data, or information on these allotments the public would like the BLM to consider. This scoping period serves to satisfy the requirement for consultation, cooperation, and coordination found at 43 CFR 4130.3-3.

Comments, monitoring data or other information may be mailed to the above address, e-mailed to WellsFO\_NEPA@blm.gov, or faxed to (775) 753-0347. All comments, data, or information must be received within 15 days from the posted date of this letter. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment (including your personal identifying information) may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

For more information, please visit the project website: <https://go.usa.gov/xVJGx>.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at [m1peters@blm.gov](mailto:m1peters@blm.gov) or call (775) 753-0200.

Sincerely,

/s/ Melanie A. Peterson

Melanie A. Peterson  
Field Manager  
Tuscarora Field Office

cc:

Carl Slagowski  
Congressman Mark Amodei  
Elko County Board of County Commissioners  
Eureka County Dept. of Natural Resources  
Eureka County District Attorney  
Jerry Todd  
Jim Baumann  
Kathy Gregg  
Ken Conley  
Laurel Marshall  
Lenny Fiorenzi  
Natural Resources Mgmt. Advisory Commission

Nevada Cattlemen's Association  
Nevada Department of Agriculture  
Nevada Department of Wildlife  
Resource Concepts, Inc.  
State of Nevada Clearinghouse  
Steve Foree  
Sustainable Grazing Coalition  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Western Landowners Alliance  
Western Watersheds Project  
Wild Horse Education  
Wildlands Defense  
Y2 Consultants