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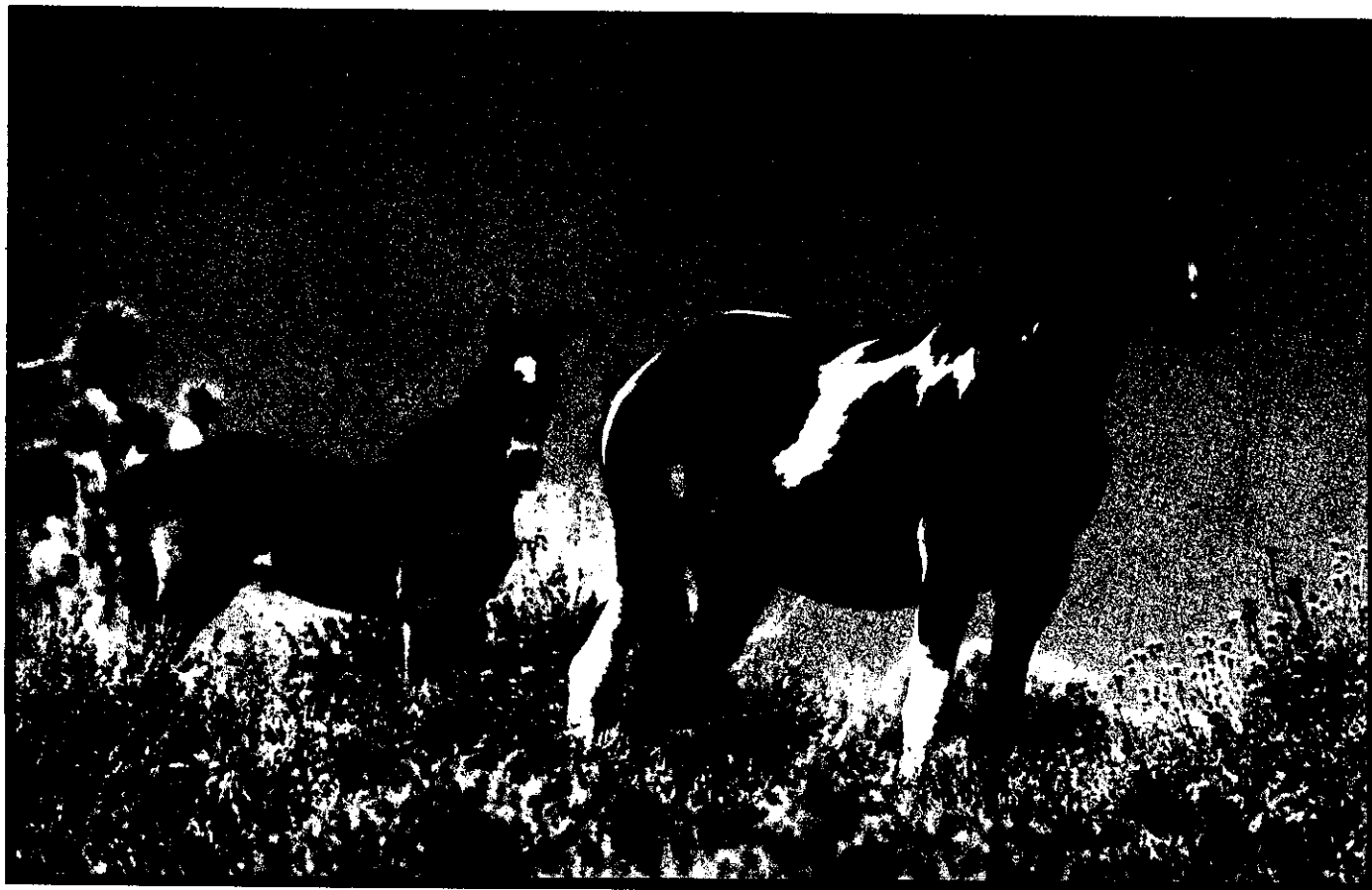
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NEVADA COMMISSION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES



PLAN OF GOALS, STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRESERVATION & PROTECTION OF THE WILD HORSES FOR THE STATE OF NEVADA

JANUARY 1999
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SUBMITTED BY: Cathy Barcomb

Kenny C. Guinn, Governor
STATE OF NEVADA



NEVADA STATE

PLAN OF GOALS,

STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE PRESERVATION & PROTECTION

OF WILD HORSES FOR THE STATE OF NEVADA

JANUARY 1999

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INTRODUCTION

This Plan of Goals, Strategies and Recommendations For The Preservation and Protection of Wild Horses for the State of Nevada ("Nevada Plan" or "Plan") represents the culmination of a one year project by the members of the Nevada Commission For The Preservation of Wild Horses ("Commission"). The Commission's role is to act as the advisor to the Nevada Legislature on the subject of wild horses and is the state agency with a legislative mandate to advocate the protection and preservation of wild horses on federal lands under a multiple use concept. The Commission has continually posed this question: "How can the State of Nevada promote the preservation and protection of wild horses, at the same time recognizing that wild horses are under the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government?" This Nevada Plan is the Commission's advise and counsel to the Nevada Legislature as to how best to preserve and protect the wild horses, under a multiple use concept, in the best interests of the citizens of the State of Nevada.

The Commission conducted public hearings throughout the State of Nevada, held public workshop sessions, conducted countless interviews, received and reviewed piles of correspondences and e-mail messages from the public. The Commission then conducted two public forum workshops for consensus building on issues of greatest importance to Nevadans. The results of those public forums are summarized in Section 5 and are set out in full in Appendix C. The Commission has limitations of funding and staff, and would not be able to implement all the excellent suggestions which came out of the public forums. Also, many of the ideas suggested would have required the Commission to overstep its authority as a state agency.

The Commission has taken a selective approach. Section 5 of the Plan presents the issues identified as the most critical to Nevadans, as identified during the public forums. The Commission then expanded upon those issues, and attempted to set out those goals and recommendations which it believes are realistic and obtainable within its legislative authority and administrative capabilities.

In developing this Plan the Commission has also drawn heavily upon the excellent reports prepared by others which have preceded this Plan. Particularly helpful have been the 1986 and 1992 Reports prepared by the Federal Wild Horse And Burro Advisory Boards. In many ways we consider this Plan as another building block on the foundation established by the excellent work of the two Federal Advisory Boards. At this writing a third Advisory Board is in session considering many of the issues discussed in this Plan.

The Commission also reviewed the many federally sponsored reports, including the Culp Report, Pierson Report, and the numerous reports prepared by federal agencies such as the General Accounting Office, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Inspector General, and the Bureau of Land Management. After a review of this extensive body of written materials, most of which is critical of many aspects of the federal wild horse program, the Commission has resisted the temptation to turn this Nevada Plan into a "BLM bashing" document.

Rather than criticism, the Commission has turned its attention to possible solutions and proposed changes based upon ideas that it hopes will receive a consensus of support. Again, the recommendations of the Federal Advisory Boards and the reports from federal agencies contain many excellent ideas for changes that would greatly improve the existing programs. Therefore, rather than trying to re-invent the wheel, the Commission has built on many of the excellent ideas which appear in these reports.

Once the Commission turned its attention to solutions, we are met with the reality that federal law is preemptive on the subject of wild horses. In our various public workshops it required constant reminders to the public that the exclusive jurisdiction over wild horses on federal lands is with the federal government. Therefore, the Commission cannot write a "management" plan for wild horses on federal lands in the State of Nevada. That responsibility rests with the United States Congress and the federal agencies authorized to carry out legislative mandates. Nevertheless, the Commission is not deterred from making recommendations, and this Plan contains recommendations for changes to the federal wild horse program which the Commission believes are in the best interest of the citizens of the State of Nevada. In this way, the Commission is similar to the Federal Advisory Board in that it can only recommend, it does not have the legislative power to change existing federal law, federal regulation or BLM policy.

The Commission was greatly aided in its work by numerous people only a few of whom are mentioned here. The laboring oar in drafting the Nevada Plan was carried by Terry Retterer of Nevada Ecological Consulting, Inc., Reno, Nevada. Terry Retterer was particularly suited for this task, having served for many years as a wildlife biologist for the Nevada Department of Wildlife and has been instrumental in the drafting of many wildlife and habitat management plans. Retterer's work would not be possible without the cooperation of Bureau of Land Management-Nevada State Office, including Bob Abbey, State Director, Dan Rathbun, Deputy State Director, Terry Woosley and Maxine Shane, Nevada Program Office, Bob Mitchell, National Program Office, and Mark O'Brien and Marcus Egge for preparation of the Nevada wild horse distribution map. All of the BLM officials graciously devoted many hours of their time to interviews and in supplying pertinent information. Special mention must be made of the many BLM horse specialists and field personnel who assisted the Commission members on its numerous field trips and who candidly pointed out the many strengths and weaknesses in existing BLM programs and policy.

The Commission does not hesitate to acknowledge that the drafting of the Nevada Plan would not have been possible without the driving force of Cathy Barcomb, Administrator for the Commission. Without question, Cathy Barcomb is a walking encyclopedia of the management of wild horses in the State of Nevada. On a national level, Barcomb served on the two federally chartered strategic planning groups which produced the Pierson Report and the Culp Report. Barcomb has also served on many national and state boards and study groups dealing with wild horse issues. Without this historical perspective the drafting of the Nevada Plan could easily have lost focus as to what can be accomplished in a significant way under existing federal laws and regulations. Through this entire process, the Commission was fully supported by The Nevada Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, through its Director, Peter G. Morros, and its

Associate Director, Freeman Johnson.

The Commission members themselves brought a vast amount of expertise in many fields that greatly contributed to the drafting of this Nevada Plan. Dr. Mike Kirk is an equine veterinarian with over 30 years experience and has served on the Commission for many years; another long term member is Mark McGuire whose life long career has been in the field of humane treatment of animals and serves as the wild horse advocate on the Commission; Elaine Letcher, with an extensive educational background in horticulture, represents the public; Gracian Uhalde is a third generation sheep and cattle rancher from Ely, Nevada, who provided the prospective of the ranchers and livestock industry. As an attorney and horse enthusiast, hopefully I added some balance and objectivity to the public sessions and subsequent discussions leading to the drafting of this Nevada Plan.

Frank Cassas, Chairman

Commissioners

Elaine Letcher
Mark McGuire
Dr. Mike Kirk
Gracian Uhalde

*Cover Photo Courtesy of Mary Sue Kunz
Mare and Foal in the Red Rock Area near Las Vegas*

Table of Contents

<u>Sections</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	
1.01 COMMISSION BACKGROUND	
1.1 Nevada Legislative Authority	1
1.2 Commission Mission Statement	2
1.3 Commission's Role Under Federal Laws	2
1.4 Public Participation	2
2.0 LIFE HISTORY	
2.1 Genetic Status	4
2.2 Morphology	4
2.3 Reproduction	5
2.4 Behavior	5
2.5 Food Habits	6
2.6 Migration	7
2.7 Forage Allocation	7
3.0 WILD HORSES IN NEVADA	
3.1 History of Horses in Nevada	9
3.2 Current Wild Horse Management	14
3.3 Wild Horse Distribution	16
3.4 Wild Horse Population Trends	17
3.5 Adoption Trends	22
4.0 IDENTIFYING ISSUES IN THE WILD HORSE PROGRAM	
4.1 Federal Reports-Issues and Recommendations	26
4.2 Commission Sponsored Public Forums in Nevada	26
4.2.1 Rangeland Health	28
4.2.2 Herd Management	28
4.4.3 Animal Removal and Placement	29
4.2.4 Funding	29
5.0 COMMISSION'S PLAN OF GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES IN THE STATE OF NEVADA	
5.1 The Role of the Commission	31
5.2 Reduce the Level of Conflict and Open lines Of Communication	32
5.3 Establishing and Maintaining AML	32
5.4 Excess Horses and the Adoption Program	35
5.4.1 Sale Authority	36

5.4.2	Federal Adoption Program	37
5.4.3	Suggestions for a New Federal Adoption Program	37
5.5	Promotion of Tourism and Nevada's Wild Horses	41

6.0	IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMISSION ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO NEVADA LEGISLATURE	45
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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Public Scoping Process	3
Table 2	BLM Program Wide Wild Horse Capture Data for FY's 1988 through 1991	6
Table 3	Nevada 1997 Species Grazing Use and Percent Use by Class of Animal	8
Table 4	Estimated Biennial Wild Horse Populations in Nevada 1974-1996	18
Table 5	Nevada Wild Horse Removals, Adoptions, Compliance Inspections and Titles	25

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	BLM's Nevada HMA Boundary Map	19
Figure 2	FS's Nevada Territories Map	20

APPENDICES

Appendix A	- Mailing List and List of Participants	47
Appendix B	- Issues Identified at Initial Scoping Process	50
Appendix C	- Synopsis of Public Forum	58
	Summary of Public Forum, Recommended Goals & Strategies	67
Appendix D	- Laws and Regulations	80
Appendix E	- BLM Wild Horse Statistics	94
	Nevada BLM Wild Horse Statistics (10/01/98)	95
	Herd Management Areas with 100% AML	98

REFERENCES	89
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GLOSSARY	92
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