

## Attachment 1. Range and Wild Horse Assessment



Forest  
Service

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**File Code:** 2260  
**Route To:**

**Date:** 4/27/2018

**Subject:** Cold Creek Range Condition and Wild Horse Assessment

**To:** File

On April 11, 2018, I met Tabitha Romero, BLM Southern Nevada District WHB Specialist, at Cold Creek, NV to assess wild horse body conditions on the Spring Mountain Wild Horse and Burro Territory.

We visited the Cold Creek Ponds, Willow Creek and the town of Cold Creek. We found 14 horses. There were 3 horses near Indian Ridge, 2 at the Cold Creek Ponds, 2 behind the town of Cold Creek and 7 right off the Cold Creek Road. All were rated as a BCS of 3 or less. Whenever we exited our vehicle, the horses would readily approach us to see if we had food to give them.

I returned to the area on April 12, 2018. I conducted 6 utilization transects and assessed body conditions of any horses I found. I saw one dead burro on the northbound side of Highway 95 on the way to Cold Creek. It appeared to have been hit by a vehicle.

I conducted 5 upland utilization transects. Use on herbaceous and shrub species was 90% at all sites. There were no forage species present on much of the landscape. When I found horses, they were trying to eat red brome grasses that were already grazed to the ground. I conducted a riparian utilization and streambank alteration transect along the creek between the Cold Creek Ponds. Herbaceous utilization was 90%, shrub utilization was 70%, stubble height was less than 1 inch and streambank alteration was 90%.

I found horses in 7 additional locations. All were rated as a BCS of 3 or less. I found a band of 12 head in the burn scar above Cold Creek. I observed 3 fights among this band over forage. Between April 11 and April 12, I observed 40 different horses. I found fresh horse sign in additional areas but was unable to locate more horses.

Utilization surveys conducted over the past 3 to 4 years have shown that key forage is not present in many parts of the Cold Creek area and that the remaining forage is being utilized from heavy to severe levels. Continued presence of wild horses within this area will further degrade range conditions to a wider extent than already observed.

BLM conducted census flights over the Cold Creek area during the week of April 23, 2018. They found approximately 200 horses in poor body condition between Cold Creek and Gold Spring.



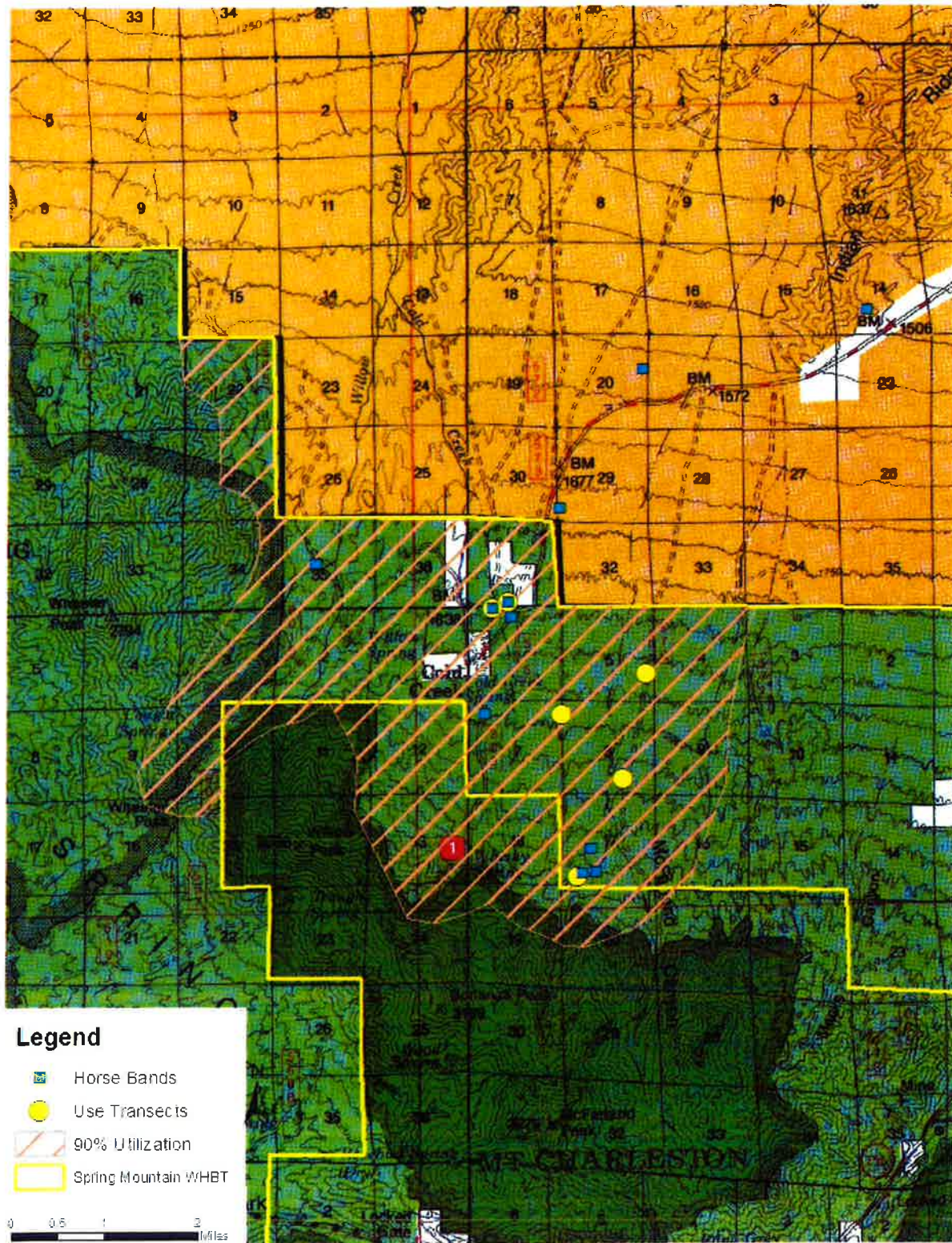
The Spring Mountain Wild Horse and Burro Territory (WHBT) is overpopulated and the range is incapable of supporting wild horses. Horse body conditions will continue to deteriorate due to the lack of forage. As temperatures warm up, body conditions will deteriorate at a more rapid pace. An emergency situation exists where individual wild horses will suffer and die if action is not taken to remove the animals from the range.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rixey R. Jenkins".

Rixey R Jenkins  
HTNF Range Program Manager

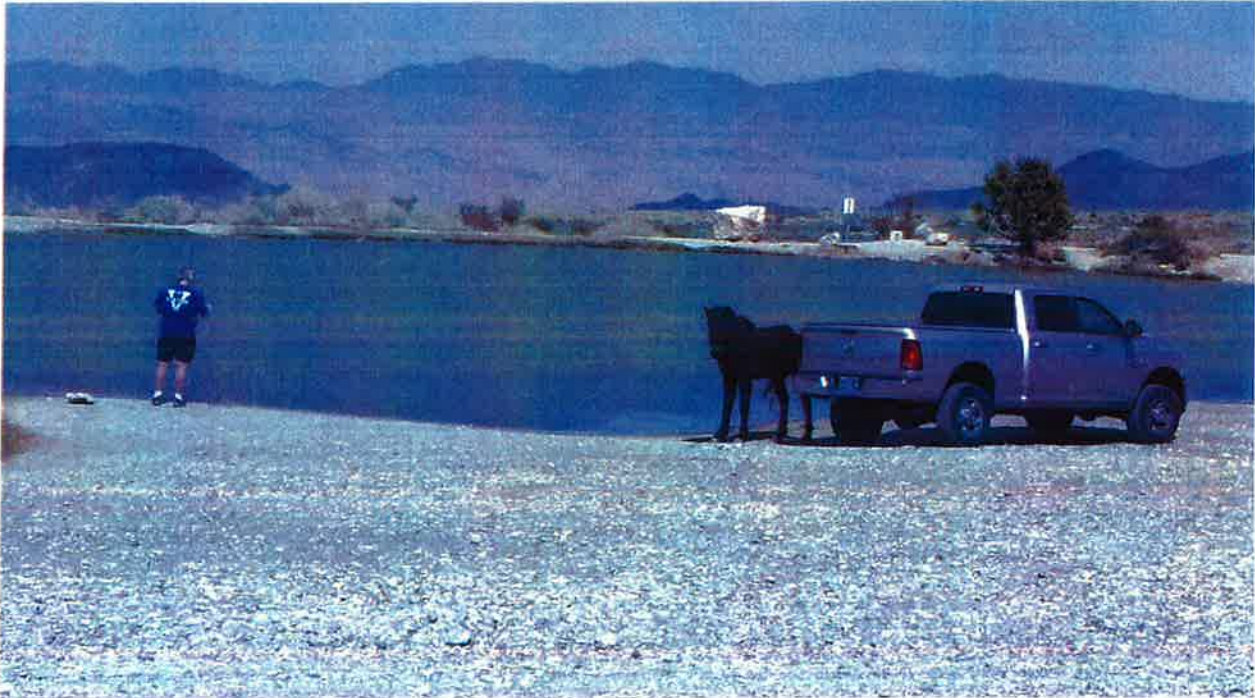
Enclosures: Use Map, Pictures

# Utilization Map of the Spring Mountain WHBT.





Mare with BCS 1.5



Stud harassing a fisherman for food



Joshua tree damage caused by wild horses



Annual red brome grass. Typical forage conditions in the Cold Creek area.



Mare with BCS 1.5



Stud with BCS 1.5



All accessible riparian vegetation along Cold Creek has been grazed to the ground.



Cold Creek between the ponds. Riparian vegetation has been heavily used.