

# **Donald A. Molde, M.D.**

3290 Penfield Circle  
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**July 5, 2009**

**Chris Mayer  
Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist  
Egan Field Office  
Bureau of Land Management, HC 33  
BOX 33500  
Ely, Nevada 89301**

**Regarding: 4720 (NVL01000)**

**Dear Mr. Mayer**

**Two days ago, I drove through the center of the White River Herd Area on the road that goes from State Highway 318 across Wells Station Summit and on to Currant. I had planned to drive the Timber Mountain Pass road as well, but since habitat conditions appear so lush throughout the White River Valley, I did not cross the Seaman Herd Area, believing that the conditions which I had viewed on the White River Herd Area would be representative of those found on the Seaman Herd Area.**

**On my drive, the ground conditions were breathtakingly beautiful, with greenness, sprouting new vegetation, and lushness. Given what wild horses have to live with in Western Nevada, these conditions represented a remarkably comfortable-looking environment for wild horses which live in that Herd Area.**

**I saw fewer than a dozen wild horses during the 30-mile drive, and the road contained very little in the way of horse droppings....mostly on the west side of Wells Station Summit. I did not observe any “trailing” areas, or areas where “excessive utilization” might be said to occur, since this area looks marvelous compared to Western Nevada wild horse areas. I did note that areas where water might have occurred in the past did seem a bit dry.**

**Speaking of water, I note that the BLM claims an absence of water as a primary reason for horse removal. Yet, it appears that in the last 10 years, close to 700 horses were removed from the White River Herd Area, and the current census of animals is estimated at a very modest 168 animals. Clearly, there is water available for that Herd Area. If the BLM**

doesn't know where it is, the horses apparently do, since they have been successful in living on that very large Herd Area for years.

I did not see any cows, though it appeared that cattle grazing had occurred there recently, for example, at Hardy Springs. While that may not be in the Herd Area, it suggested to me that ranchers have had their livestock nearby, and probably on the Herd Area.

I send this letter, then, with a large question for myself as to why horse removal is necessary on the White River Herd Area now. Vegetation conditions now are remarkably good, and the large size of the Herd Area compared to the small number of horses estimated to be in attendance, does not warrant horse removal based upon current conditions in my view.

Of course, there are lots of other unanswered questions as well in terms of future plans for livestock use in the Herd Area, wildlife usage (big game species populations, except for mule deer, are at all-time high levels), how much of the damage alleged to be by horses may actually be due to cattle use in the past, etc.

I would wonder if this planned horse removal is nothing more than a politically-inspired action rather than something related to on-the-ground conditions since my admittedly brief look at the center of the Horse Area would not suggest need for a zeroing out of horses in that area at this time.

I would hope you have the capacity to reconsider this decision.

Sincerely

Don Molde  
Reno, Nevada