U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

# Management Evaluation Report

Antelope and Triple B Complexes

October 2024

**PREPARING OFFICE**

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Bristlecone/Wells Field Office

**Antelope and Triple B Complexes Herd Management Area Plan**
**Management Evaluation**
**October 2024**

## RELATIONSHIP TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, OR PLANS

The current Resource Management Plans (RMPs), laws, regulations, and policies, as outlined below, set forth management goals and objectives and reaffirm Appropriate Management Level (AML) for the Herd Management Areas (HMAs) and Wild Horse Territories (WHTs) within the Complex.

2008 Ely RMP:

- **Goal:** "Maintain and manage healthy, self-sustaining wild horse herds inside herd management areas within appropriate management levels to ensure a thriving natural ecological balance while preserving a multiple-use relationship with other uses and resources."
- **Objective:** "To maintain wild horse herds at appropriate management levels within herd management areas where sufficient habitat resources exist to sustain healthy populations at those levels."

Proposed Wells Resource Management Plan and FEIS US DOI 1983 (Wells RMP), approved July 16, 1985

- **Objective**: Improve and maintain a sufficient, quality and diversity of habitat and forage for livestock, wildlife and wild horses through natural regeneration and/or artificial methods.
- **Objective:** Improve the vegetation resource by providing for the physiological needs of key management species.
- **Objective:** Reduce soil erosion and enhance watershed values by increasing ground cover and little and density of stabilizing riparian vegetation.
- **Objective:** Improve and maintain the condition of aquatic and riparian habitat.
- **Objective:** Improve the health and productivity of wild horses by maintaining a natural ecological balance of wild horses on public lands.
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Nevada and Northeastern California Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment (ARMPA; BLM 2015)

- **Management Decision:**
    - MD WHB 2: Manage herd management areas (HMAs) in Greater sage-grouse (GRSG) habitat within established AML ranges to achieve and maintain GRSG habitat objectives.
    - MD WHB 4: Prioritize gathers and population growth suppression techniques in HMAs in GRSG habitat, unless removals are necessary in other areas to address higher priority environmental issues, including herd health impacts. Place higher priority on herd areas not allocated as HMAs and occupied by wild horses and burros in SFA, followed by PHMAs.
    - MD WHB 7: Develop or amend herd mazement area plans (HMAPs) to incorporate GRSG habitat objectives and management consideration for all HMAs within GRSG habitat, with emphasis placed on SFA and PHMAs outside of SFA.
    - MD WHB 8: Consider removals or exclusion of WHB during or immediately

following emergency situations (such as fire, floods, and drought) to facilitate meeting GRSG habitat objectives where HMAs overlap with GRSG habitat.

Wells RMP Wild Horse Amendment and Decision Record, approved August 1993 (US DOI 1993) (WRMPWHA).

- **Objective:** To manage wild horses only on areas where request for removals will not hinder management.
- **Objective:** To manage wild horses within HMAs and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance consistent with other resource issues.
- **Objective:** To combine portions of the wild horse herd areas are horses intermix between herd areas.
- **Management Determinations:** Management determinations for each HMA are outlined in Table 1 and shown on Map 2, page 6 of the Wells Resource Area Wild Horse Amendment.
    1. Delineate four HMAs as follows:
       Antelope Valley
       Goshute
       Maverick-Medicine
       Spruce-Pequop
    2. Combine the east portion of the Cherry Creek Herd Area (44 percent of the total herd area) with the Antelope Valley and the west portion of the Cherry Creek Herd Area (56 percent) with the Maverick-Medicine HMA.
    3. Remove all wild horses from checkerboard areas, which include all of the Toano Herd Area and portions of the Goshute and Spruce-Pequop Herd Areas.
    4. Remove sufficient wild horses to attain the initial herd size and maintain populations at a level which will maintain a thriving natural ecological balance consistent with other resource values.
    5. Develop eight water sources to improve wild horse distribution, modify approximately one mile of existing fence so as not to impede wild-free roaming behavior, and construct approximately eighteen miles of new fences to prevent the return of wild horses to checkerboard land patterns.
    6. Adjustments will be based on monitoring and grazing allotment evaluations,
    7. Utilization of key forage species by wild horses in areas used in common will not exceed an average of ten percent prior to entry by livestock.
    8. Utilization by all grazing animals will not exceed 55 percent on key forage species by March 31st on winter range.

1986 Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan:

- **Goal # 20**: "Manage the Cherry Springs, Monte Cristo, and Quinn Wild Horse Territories in accordance with the Wild Horse and Burro Act and the approved territory plans."
- **Standards and Guidelines:** "Manage wild free-roaming horses and burros to population levels compatible with the resource capabilities and needs."

Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA):
FLPMA generally requires that an action under consideration be in conformance with the applicable BLM land use plan(s), and be consistent with other federal, state, and local laws and policies to the maximum extent possible.

Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (WFRHBA)
The statute requires the BLM to protect the range from deterioration associated with overpopulation (16 U.S.C. § 1333(b)(2)) and defines excess animals as wild and free-roaming horses and burros that must be removed from an area in order in order to preserve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship in that area (16 U.S.C. § 1332(f)). It also directs the BLM to maintain a current inventory of wild free-roaming horses and burros on public lands. The purpose of the inventory shall be to: make determinations as to whether and where an overpopulation exists and whether action should be taken to remove excess animals; determine appropriate management levels or wild free-roaming horses and burros on these areas of public land; and determine whether appropriate managements should be achieved by the removal or destruction of excess animals, or other options (such as sterilization, or natural control on population levels) (16 U.S.C. § 1333(b)(1)).

BLM Regulations at 43 C.F.R. Part 4700
- 43 C.F.R. § 4700.0-6 (a): Wild horses shall be managed as self-sustaining populations of healthy animals in balance with other uses and the productive capacity of their habitat (emphasis added).
- 43 C.F.R. § 4710.4: Management of wild horses and burros shall be undertaken with the objective of limiting the animals' distribution to herd areas. Management shall be at the minimum level necessary to attain the objectives identified in approved land use plans and herd management area plans.
- 43 C.F.R. § 4720.1: Upon examination of current information and a determination by the authorized officer that an excess of wild horses or burros exists, the authorized officer shall remove the excess animals immediately…
- 43 C.F.R. § 4720.2: Upon written request from a private landowner……the Authorized Officer shall remove stray wild horses and burros from private lands as soon as practicable.
- 43 C.F.R. § 4740.1(a): Motor vehicles and aircraft may be used by the authorized officer in all phases of the administration of the Act, except that no motor vehicle or aircraft, other than helicopters, shall be used for the purpose of herding or chasing wild horses or burros for capture or destruction. All such use shall be conducted in a humane manner. (b) Before using helicopters or motor vehicles in the management of wild horses or burros, the authorized officer shall conduct a public hearing in the area where such use is to be made.

USFS Regulations at 36 C.F.R. Part 222
- 36 C.F.R. § 222.60 (a) Authority. The Chief, Forest Service, shall protect, manage, and control wild free-roaming horses and burros on lands of the National Forest System and shall maintain vigilance for the welfare of wild free-roaming horses and burros that wander or migrate from the National Forest System. If these animals also use lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management as a part of their habitat, the Chief, Forest Service, shall

cooperate to the fullest extent with the Department of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management in administering the animals.

- 36 C.F.R. § 222.61 (a) (1) Administer wild free-roaming horses and burros and their progeny on the National Forest System in the areas where they now occur (wild horse and burro territory) to maintain a thriving ecological balance considering them an integral component of the multiple use resources, and regulating their population and accompanying need for forage and habitat in correlation with uses recognized under the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 (70 Stat. 215; 16 U.S.C. 528-531)
- 36 C.F.R. § 222.64 (a) Prior to using helicopters in capture operations and/or using motor vehicles for the purpose of transporting captured animals, a public meeting will be held in the proximity of the territory where the capture operation is proposed. (b) Helicopters may be used in all phases of the administration of the Act including, but not limited to, inventory, observation, surveillance, and capture operations... (c) Fixed-wing aircraft may be used for inventory, observation, and surveillance purposes necessary in administering the Act… (d) Motor vehicles may be used in the administration of the Act except that such vehicles shall not be used for driving or chasing wild horses or burros in capture operations. Motor vehicles may also be used for the purpose of transporting captured animals…
- 36 C.F.R. § 222.66 Owners of land upon which wild free-roaming horses and burros have strayed from the National Forest System may request their removal by calling the nearest office of either the Forest Service or Federal Marshall.
- 36 C.F.R. § 222.69 (a) The Chief, Forest Service, shall, when he determines over-population of wild horses and burros exists and removal is required, take immediate necessary action to remove excess animals from that particular territory. Such action shall be taken until all excess animals have been removed so as to restore a thriving natural ecological balance to the range and protect the range from deterioration associated with over-population.

## INTRODUCTION

The Antelope Complex includes the Antelope, Antelope Valley, Goshute and Spruce-Pequop Herd Management Areas (HMAs). The Triple B Complex includes the Triple B, Maverick-Medicine, and Antelope Valley West of Highway 93 HMAs and the Cherry Springs Wild Horse Territory (WHT). The Complexes are located in portions of White Pine and Elko counties and lie within the Ely and Elko Bureau of Land Management Districts as well as the United States Forest Service (USFS) Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The Antelope Complex is approximately 1,183,340 acres and the Triple B Complex is approximately 1,632,324 acres for a total of 2,815,664 acres.

The Antelope and Triple B Complexes are within the Great Basin physiographic region, which is one of the largest deserts in the world. The Great Basin is effectively cut off from the westerly flow of Pacific moisture. Orographic uplift of crossing air masses by the Sierra and the Cascades provides cooling and precipitates much of the moisture out. The result is a Dry Steppe cold climate classification for most of the Great Basin. The climate is typical of middle latitude, semi-arid lands where evaporation potential exceeds precipitation throughout the year. Annual precipitation normally ranges from approximately five to seven inches on the valley bottoms to 16 to 18 inches on the mountain peaks. Most of this precipitation comes in the form of snow occurring primarily in the winter and spring with the summers being quite dry. Temperatures range from greater than 90 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer months to minus 15 degrees or colder in the mountains in the winter. The Complexes are characterized by long wide valleys and long narrow steep mountain peaks covered with heavy pinyon juniper woodlands. On many of the low hills and ridges that are scattered throughout the area, the soils are underlain by bedrock. Elevations within the Complexes range from approximately 5,000 feet to over 10,200 feet.

## WILD HORSES

Wild horses can be found throughout the Complexes at different times of the year. Typically, wild horses remain at upper elevations during the summer as long as the forage and water last. As these resources are depleted, or when snow drives them down (as early as September in some years), they move off the mountains and into the valleys. Here they exist on grasses such as Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa Secunda*), Needle-and-thread grass (*hesperostipia comata*), and Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenodes*). In addition to grasses, wild horses in the region have adapted to a diet of some shrubs including winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*) and saltbush (*Atriplex sp.*). However, as populations increase wild horses spend more time in the valleys. Water is very limited throughout the Complexes. Primary sources include seeps, springs and livestock wells. In northeastern and eastern Nevada, wild horses foal in the spring, mostly during the months of April and May. This coincides with spring green-up affording the most nutritious forage to nursing mares and foals.

The Antelope Complex has an AML range of 427-789 wild horses and the Triple B Complex has an AML range of 472-889. The combined project area (Antelope and Triple B Complexes) has an AML range of 899-1,678. Portions of the Complexes located in the Ely District were established through Final Multiple Use Decisions and reaffirmed through the 2008 Ely District Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision (ROD). Portions of the complexes

located in the Elko District were established through Final Multiple Use Decisions and the Wells Resource Management Plan Wild Horse Amendment (WRMPWHA). The Cherry Springs WHT AML was established by the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest through the Cherry Spring Wild Horse Territory Management Plan. These decisions established AMLs designed to maintain healthy wild horse populations and rangelands over the long-term based on monitoring data and in-depth analysis of habitat suitability.

The 2008 Ely RMP combined three existing HMAs (Buck and Bald, Butte, and Cherry Creek HMAs) into the Triple B HMA. The decision to combine all, or portions of the three HMAs was due to the historical interchange of wild horses between the three HMAs and was also based on an in-depth analysis of habitat suitability and monitoring data as set forth in the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement, Table 3.8-2 and Page 4.8-2. The 2007 EIS evaluated each herd management area for five essential habitat components and herd characteristics: forage, water, cover, space, and reproductive viability. Through this analysis and the subsequent Final RMP and Record of Decision (ROD), the boundaries of the Triple B HMA were established to ensure sufficient habitat for wild horses, and an AML of 250-518 wild horses was established to achieve a thriving natural ecological balance and rangeland health.

The 2008 Ely RMP re-affirmed long-term management of wild horses within the Antelope HMA through the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement, Table 3.8-2 and Page 4.8-2. The 2007 EIS evaluated the herd management area for five essential habitat components and herd characteristics: forage, water, cover, space, and reproductive viability. Through this analysis and the subsequent Final RMP and Record of Decision (ROD), the boundaries of the Antelope HMA were reaffirmed to ensure sufficient habitat for wild horses, and an AML of 150-324 wild horses was reviewed and set to achieve a thriving natural ecological balance and rangeland health.

The 1993 WRMPWHA established the four HMAs as follows: Antelope Valley, Goshute, Maverick-Medicine and Spruce-Pequop. In addition, it established baseline AMLs of 240 wild horses for the Antelope Valley HMA, 160 wild horses for the Goshute HMA, 389 wild horses for the Maverick-Medicine HMA and 82 wild horses for the Spruce-Pequop HMA. The WRMPWHA stated that adjustments would be based on monitoring and grazing allotment evaluations. The baseline AML for the Antelope Valley, Goshute and Spruce-Pequop HMAs was established at 155-259 wild horses through a combination of the 1994 Antelope Valley Final Multiple Use Decision (FMUD), the 1998 Badlands FMUD, the 1998 Spruce FMUD, the 2001 Maverick-Medicine Complex FMUD, the 2001 Sheep Allotment Complex FMUD and the 2002 Big Springs FMUD. In the Maverick-Medicine HMA the WRMPWHA established a baseline AML of 389 wild horses, which was adjusted to 166-276 wild horses through a combination of the 1998 Spruce FMUD, the 1994 West Cherry Creek Allotment FMUD, and the 2001 Maverick-Medicine Complex FMUD. The wild horses from The Maverick-Medicine HMA travel back and forth across the Elko and White Pine County line, mixing with the wild horses from the Triple B HMA. They also move back and forth mixing with wild horses from the western portion of the Antelope Valley HMA west of U.S. Highway 93. The population within this HMA can fluctuate depending on the seasonal movement of the wild horses.

**Tables 1 and 2** show the current approximate HMA acreage, AML range, wild horse populations, and wild horse use within the Antelope and Triple B Complexes. The Antelope and Triple B HMAs are managed by the Ely District's Bristlecone FO and the Antelope Valley, Goshute, Spruce-Pequop and Maverick Medicine HMAs are managed by the Elko District's Wells FO. The Cherry Springs WHT is in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and is managed in accordance with an Interagency Agreement between the BLM and USFS.

**Table 1. Antelope Complex Characteristics**

| **Herd Management Area** | **Total Acres Private/Public land** | **AML Range** | **Current Population Estimate** (Includes 2024 Foal Crop) | **Estimated Wild Horse Use** (AUMs) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Antelope | 331,000 | 150-324 | 1,153 | 13,836 |
| Antelope Valley | 463, 540 | 155-259 | 1,148 | 13,776 |
| Goshute | 250,800 | 73-124 | 1,507 | 18,084 |
| Spruce-Pequop | 138,000 | 57-82 | 1,912 | 22,944 |
| Total | 1,183,340 | 427-789 | 5,720 | 68, 640 |

**Table 2. Triple B Complex Characteristics**

| **Herd Management Area** | **Total Acres Private/Public land** | **AML Range** | **Current Population Estimate** (Includes 2024 Foal Crop) | **Current Estimated Wild Horse Use** (AUMs) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Triple B | 1,225,000 | 250-518 | 2,050 | 24,600 |
| Maverick-Medicine | 286,460 | 166-276 | 1,250 | 15,000 |
| Antelope Valley West of U.S. Highway 93 | 97,070 | 16-27 | 19 | 228 |
| Cherry Springs WHT | 23,794 | 40-68 | 16 | 192 |
| Total | 1,632,324 | 472-889 | 3,335 | 33,384 |

**Tables 3-6** show wild horse population estimates and removals by year. The 1993 WRMPWHA established the Antelope, Goshute, Spruce-Pequop, Maverick-Medicine HMAs and incorporated portions the Elko District's portion of the Cherry Creek HA into the Antelope Valley and Maverick-Medicine HMAs. The 2008 Ely RMP established the Antelope HMA and the Triple B HMA, combining the Buck and Bald, Butte and Cherry Creek HAs. In the last decade, population inventory flights have been conducted in the Complexes every two to three years. During population inventory flights, population, foaling rates, distribution, and herd health data are collected. Due to the wild horse movement within the Complexes and depending on the conditions on the ground when the flight is performed, wild horse numbers increase or decrease from year to year in each individual HMA.

## Table 3. Triple B Complex Population Estimates and Removals 1971-2007

| | Buck and Bald HA AML 423 799,500 Acres | | Butte HA AML 95 427,800 Acres | | Cherry Creek HA AML 0 35,000 Acres | | Maverick-Medicine HA/HMA AML 166-276 286,460 Acres | | Cherry Springs WHT AML 40-68 23,794 Acres | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** |
| 1971 | 155 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1972 | 282* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1973 | 126 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 62* | 0 |
| 1974 | 318 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 34 |
| 1975 | 301* | 0 | 276* | 0 | 117* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1976 | 303 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1977 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1978 | 260 | 0 | 307* | 0 | 33* | 0 | 186 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1979 | | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1980 | 1,086* | 489 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 286 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1981 | 755* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 308 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1982 | 1,185* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1983 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 103 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1984 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 282 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1985 | 1,089* | 0 | - | 0 | 0* | 0 | 224 | 0 | 33* | 0 |
| 1986 | - | 347 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1987 | 1,081* | 0 | 202* | 0 | 16* | 0 | - | 47 | - | 0 |
| 1988 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1989 | 1,012* | 338 | 238* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1990 | - | 0 | 272* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1991 | 1,281* | 0 | 318 | 0 | - | 0 | 188 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1992 | 1,281* | 0 | 318* | 0 | - | 0 | 589 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1993[1] | 1,353* | 0 | 527* | 195 | - | 0 | 340 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1994 | 1,047* | 562 | 223* | 70 | - | 0 | 256 | 175 | - | 0 |
| 1995 | 676* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 375 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1996 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1997 | 1,471* | 1,045 | 215* | 133 | - | 0 | 696 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1998 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 675 | 0 | 63* | 0 |
| 1999 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2000 | 761* | 0 | 178* | 0 | - | 0 | 849 | 0 | 47* | 0 |
| 2001 | - | 667 | - | 149 | - | 0 | - | 801 | - | 28 |
| 2002 | 331* | 0 | 76* | 0 | 5* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2003 | 383 | 0 | 86 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2004 | 460 | 0 | 103 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2005 | 552* | 586 | 124 | 182 | 4 | 0 | 1,084 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2006 | - | 210 | - | 132 | - | 14 | 1,100 | 827 | - | 0 |
| 2007 | 350 | 0 | 80 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 190 | 0 | - | 0 |
| **Avg** | **716** | | **221** | | **22** | | **437** | | **48** | |

* Notes years that an inventory flight was conducted. Due to reporting numbers at the first of the year and flying later, the inventory numbers from the flights are generally represented the following year.

[1] Maverick-Medicine HMA established

**Table 4. Triple B Complex Population Estimates and Removals 2008-2024**

| | **Triple B HMA** AML 250-518 1,225,000 Acres | | **Maverick-Medicine HMA** AML 166-276 286,460 Acres | | **Cherry Springs WHT** AML 40-68 23,794 Acres | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** |
| 2008 | 568* | 0 | 228* | 0 | 17 | 0 |
| 2009 | 667 | 0 | 675 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2010 | 1,217* | 0 | 863* | 0 | 62* | 0 |
| 2011 | 1,461 | 1,045 | 553 | 220 | - | 0 |
| 2012 | 498 | 0 | 489 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2013 | 598* | 0 | 586 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2014 | 1,311* | 69 | 763* | 0 | 44* | 0 |
| 2015 | 1,393 | 53** | 910 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2016 | 1,702* | 181 | 1,155* | 0 | 53* | 0 |
| 2017 | 2,042 | 0 | 1,309 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2018 | 1,514* | 894 | 781* | 467 | 0* | 0 |
| 2019 | 1,363 | 454** | 1,652 | 350** | - | 0 |
| 2020 | 1,030* | 331** | 1,640* | 60 | 1 | 0 |
| 2021 | 1,236 | 0 | 1,896 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2022 | 1,224* | 975 | 2,275* | 906 | 1 | 0 |
| 2023 | 1,409* | 0 | 1,848 | 0 | 13* | 0 |
| 2024 | 1,708 | 0 | 1,042 | 109** | - | 0 |
| **Avg** | **1,160** | | **1,059** | | **25** | |

* Notes years that an inventory flight was conducted. Due to reporting numbers at the first of the year and flying later, the inventory numbers from the flights are generally represented the following year.

** Notes years an emergency gather was conducted due to lack of forage and/or water.

**Table 5. Antelope Complex Population Estimates and Removals by Year 1971-2007**

| | Antelope HA AML 150-324 331,000 Acres | | Antelope Valley HA/HMA AML 155-259 463,540 Acres | | Goshute HA/HMA AML 74-123 250,800 Acres | | Spruce-Pequop HA/HMA AML 57-82 138,000 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** |
| 1971 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1972 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1973 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1974 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1975 | 275* | 0 | 722*1 | 0 | 722*1 | 0 | 322*1 | 0 |
| 1976 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1977 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1978 | 149* | 41** | 449* | 0 | 129* | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1979 | 425* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1980 | 167 | 711 | 191* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1981 | - | 0 | 164* | 0 | 120* | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1982 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1983 | - | 0 | 249* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1984 | - | 0 | 249 | 0 | 214 | 0 | 44 | 0 |
| 1985 | 451* | 0 | 267* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1986 | - | 107 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1987 | 782* | 58 | 366* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1988 | 528* | 552 | 131* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1989 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1990 | 574* | 412 | 418* | 0 | 229* | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1991 | 331* | 225 | 350* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1992 | 468* | 269 | 576* | 0 | 201* | 0 | 129* | 0 |
| 1993[2] | 217* | 0 | 327* | 0 | 251* | 106 | 171* | 46 |
| 1994 | 231* | 83 | 392* | 0 | 256* | 0 | 99* | 0 |
| 1995 | - | 0 | 308 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1996 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 214 | - | 0 |
| 1997 | 799* | 0 | 441* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1998 | 739* | 429 | 427* | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1999 | - | 0 | 434 | 275 | 166 | 128 | 300 | 322 |
| 2000 | 592* | 0 | 745* | 76** | 370 | 0 | 217* | 0 |
| 2001 | 710 | 0 | 809 | 693 | 541 | 481 | 463* | 446 |
| 2002 | 351* | 658 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2003 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2004 | 620 | 0 | 670 | 450 | 200 | 391 | 200 | 131 |
| 2005 | 160 | 440 | 159 | 0 | 74 | 0 | 49 | 0 |
| 2006 | 190 | 0 | 200 | 0 | 90 | 0 | 60 | 0 |
| 2007 | 230* | 441** | 240* | 407 | 108 | 0 | 72 | 0 |
| **Avg** | **428** | | **387** | | **245** | | **177** | |

* Notes years that an inventory flight was conducted. Due to reporting numbers at the first of the year and flying later, the inventory numbers from the flights are generally represented the following year.

**Notes years an emergency gather was conducted due to lack of water or forage.

[1] 1975 inventory flights show wild horses by allotments. 722 wild horses were observed in the areas that would become the Antelope Valley, Goshute, and Spruce Pequop HAs.

[2] The Antelope Valley, Goshute, and Spruce-Pequop HMAs were established.

**Table 6. Antelope Complex Population Estimates and Removals by Year 2008-2024**

| | **Antelope HMA** AML 150-324 331,000 Acres | | **Antelope Valley HMA** AML 155-259 463,540 Acres | | **Goshute HMA** AML74-123 250,800 Acres | | **Spruce-Pequop HMA** AML 57-82 138,000 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** | **Pop Est** | **Removal** |
| 2008 | 372 | 0 | 309 | 0 | 194 | 0 | 144 | 0 |
| 2009 | 447 | 0 | 371* | 0 | 233* | 0 | 173* | 0 |
| 2010 | 438* | 0 | 620* | 0 | 399* | 0 | 313* | 0 |
| 2011 | 390 | 253 | 519 | 466 | 113 | 459 | 423 | 90 |
| 2012 | 344* | 124** | 608* | 56** | 136* | 0 | 508* | 0 |
| 2013 | 413* | 0 | 662* | 0 | 398* | 0 | 380* | 0 |
| 2014 | 616 | 0 | 792 | 0 | 523 | 0 | 493 | 0 |
| 2015 | 802* | 31 | 1,013* | 0 | 668* | 0 | 789* | 295** |
| 2016 | 1,033 | 0 | 1,100 | 0 | 904 | 62** | 1,021 | 51** |
| 2017 | 1,240* | 0 | 1,320* | 96** | 1,015* | 0 | 1,170* | 0 |
| 2018 | 1,830 | 0 | 1,755 | 1,166** | 1,429 | 0 | 1,523 | 370 |
| 2019 | 1,750* | 478 | 964* | 500** | 1,579* | 132 | 1,457* | 0 |
| 2020 | 2,100 | 0 | 953 | 54** | 1,895 | 0 | 1,748 | 0 |
| 2021 | 570* | 1,100 | 1,077* | 353** | 2,256* | 450** | 2,097* | 300** |
| 2022 | 1,420 | 0 | 939 | 19** | 2,144 | 125 | 2,110 | 0 |
| 2023 | 1,416* | 1,136 | 1,120* | 354 | 2,572* | 469 | 3,160* | 1,140 |
| 2024 | 961* | 0 | 957* | 0 | 1,256* | 0 | 1,593* | 0 |
| **Avg** | **950** | | **887** | | **1,042** | | **1,123** | |

* Notes years that an inventory flight was conducted. Due to reporting numbers at the first of the year and flying later, the inventory numbers from the flights are generally represented the following year.

**Notes years an emergency gather was conducted due to lack of water or forage.

## GENETIC DIVERSITY

Antelope

During the 2015 Antelope Complex Gather, the BLM collected hair follicle samples for genetic analysis by E. Gus Cothran. The BLM received those results on February 15th, 2016. In summary, the genetic variability of this herd is above average. Similarity levels show no clear ancestral relationships, and the herd ancestry likely includes some Spanish component based upon the data. The analysis found that current variability levels are good for this herd and no immediate action is recommended, but the herd should be monitored closely due to the high proportion of rare alleles.

Genetic Variants: A total of 70 variants were seen in the Antelope HMA herd which is above the mean for feral herds and slightly below the mean for domestic breeds. Of these, 16 had frequencies below 0.05 which is a high percentage of variants at risk of future loss considering the sample size. Allelic diversity as represented by Ae is somewhat below the average for feral herds while MNA also is under the mean.

Genetic Variation: Observed heterozygosity in the Antelope HMA herd is well above the feral mean while He is just slightly lower than average. Ho is a good bit higher than He. Differences such as this can indicate a recent reduction in population size, within the past few generations, but this is not possible to confirm by DNA data alone.

Genetic Similarity: Overall similarity of the Antelope HMA herd to domestic breeds was about average for feral herds. Highest mean genetic similarity of the Antelope HMA herd was with both the Old-World Iberian breeds and the North American Gaited breeds, however the Antelope HMA herd clusters within a group of South American Spanish breeds.

These results indicate a herd with mixed origins with no clear indication of primary breed type. As with most trees involving feral herds, the tree is somewhat distorted. In comparison to other feral herds from Nevada, there is no herd that is closely similar.

Genetic variability of this herd in general is on the high side but there is a high percentage of variation that is at risk. There is a possibility that this herd has seen a recent loss of population size which would increase the risk to genetic diversity. Genetic similarity results suggest a herd with mixed ancestry but some evidence of Spanish heritage.

Triple B

During the 2011 Triple B Complex Gather, the BLM collected hair follicle samples for genetic analysis by E. Gus Cothran. The BLM received the results May 21, 2014. In summary, the genetic similarity to domestic breeds was about average. The herd had mixed origins with no clear indication of primary breed type, but the highest mean genetic similarity was with Oriental and Arabian Breeds followed by the Old-World Iberian breeds. The analysis found that

variability levels are high enough that no action is needed at this time, but it should be monitored if it is known that the herd size has seen a recent decline.

Genetic Variants: A total of 76 variants were seen in the Maverick Medicine HMA herd which is above the mean for feral herds and slightly below the mean for domestic breeds. Of these, 16 had frequencies below 0.05 which is right at the feral average variants at risk of future loss. Allelic diversity as represented by Ae is somewhat higher than the average for feral herds while MNA is greater than the mean for feral, but slightly lower than for domestic horse breeds.

Genetic Variation: Observed heterozygosity in the Maverick Medicine HMA herd is well above the feral mean while He is only slightly higher than average. Ho is a good bit higher than He. Differences such as this can indicate a recent reduction in population size, within the past few generations, but this not possible to confirm by DNA data alone.

Genetic Similarity: Overall similarity of the Maverick Medicine HMA herd to domestic breeds was about average for feral herds. Highest mean genetic similarity of the Maverick Medicine HMA herd was with Oriental and Arabian Breeds, followed by the Old-World Iberian breeds. However, the Maverick Medicine HMA herd clusters almost as an outgroup. These results indicate a herd with mixed origins with no clear indication of primary breed type. As with most trees involving feral herds, the tree is somewhat distorted. In comparison to other feral herds from Nevada, the Maverick Medicine HMA herd clusters most closely with the Saulsbury HMA.

Genetic variability of this herd in general is on the high side but the percentage of variation that is at risk is about normal. There is a possibility that this herd has seen a recent loss of population size which would increase the risk to genetic diversity. Genetic similarity results suggest a herd with mixed ancestry.

## FORAGE UTILIZATION AND USE PATTERN MAPPING

The BLM collects utilization data for Complexes. The tables below show utilization data from 2018-2024. (See Antelope and Triple B Complexes 2017 Gather EA for utilization summary prior to 2018). The key forage species monitored include: Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), Squirreltail grass (*Elymus elymoides*), Needleandthread grass (*Hesperostipa comata*), and Nuttalls saltbush (*Atriplex nuttallii)*.

The 1993 Wells RMPWHA found that the availability of forage in the winter use areas was a limiting factor for wild horses and it was important to provide forage to adequately carry wild horses and livestock through the winter use period without exceeding the utilization objectives of 55% on key grass species and shrub species (this has been since changed to 60% on key grass species and 50% on shrub species). The utilization objectives are in accordance with the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook.

The 1993 Wells RMPWHA established a utilization objective for wild horses grazing on winter use areas, prior to livestock entry which occurs between Nov 1 and Dec 31 had been established

at an average of 10% of current years growth. Limiting wild horse use to 10% prior to entry of livestock should leave enough forage to carry wild horses and livestock through the winter use period and not exceed utilization objectives. This objective is for the Antelope Valley, Goshute, Spruce-Pequop, and Maverick-Medicine HMAs only.

**Tables 7 and 8** show the pre-livestock utilization breakdown.

**Table 7. Pre-livestock Utilization Antelope Complex (Antelope Valley, Goshute, and Spruce-Pequop HMAs)**

| Year | Slight (1-10%)[1] | Slight (11-20%) | Light (21-40%) | Moderate (41-60%) | Heavy (61-80%) | Severe (81-100%) | Site lost |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2018 | 13% | 0% | 38% | 13% | 25% | 6% | 6% |
| 2019 | 44% | 0% | 31% | 0% | 6% | 13% | 6% |
| 2020 | 48% | 0% | 13% | 13% | 10 | 13% | 3% |
| 2021 | 42% | 0% | 25% | 17% | 8% | 4% | 4% |
| 2022 | 47% | 0% | 16% | 26% | 0% | 5% | 5% |
| 2023 | 42% | 35% | 8% | 8% | 4% | 0% | 4% |

**Table 8. Triple B Complex (Maverick-Medicine HMA)**

| Year | Slight (1-10%)[1] | Slight 11%-20%) | Light (21-40%) | Moderate (41-60%) | Heavy (61-80%) | Severe (81-100%) | Site lost |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2018 | 0% | 20% | 20% | 0% | 40% | 20% | |
| 2019 | 0% | 18% | 18% | 18% | 46% | 0% | 0% |
| 2020 | 8% | 0% | 8% | 8% | 31% | 46% | 0% |
| 2021 | 13% | 0% | 13% | 63% | 13% | 0% | 0% |
| 2022 | 67% | 0% | 17% | 8% | 8% | 0% | 0% |
| 2023 | 64% | 0% | 18% | 18% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

**Tables 9 and 10** show wild horse utilization in all HMAs of the Complexes.

**Table 9. Antelope Complex Wild Horse Utilization 2018-2024**

| Year | Slight (1-20%) | Light (21-40%) | Moderate (41-60%) | Heavy (61-80%) | Severe (81-100%) | Site lost[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2018 | 12% | 10% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 3% |
| 2019 | 1%% | 26% | 41% | 15% | 15% | 2% |
| 2020 | 5% | 23% | 36% | 19% | 14% | 3% |
| 2021 | 4% | 22% | 34% | 12% | 24% | 4% |
| 2022 | 12% | 23 | 23% | 21% | 18% | 3% |
| 2023 | 3% | - | - | 12% | 21% | 21% |
| 2024 | 13% | 24% | 41% | 7% | 13% | 2% |

**Table 10. Triple B Complex Wild Horse Utilization 2018-2024**

| Year | Slight (1-20%) | Light (21-40%) | Moderate (41-60%) | Heavy (61-80%) | Severe (81-100%) | Site lost[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2018 | - | - | - | 13% | 88% | - |
| 2019 | - | 13% | 13% | 13% | 63% | - |
| 2020 | - | 20% | 27% | 25% | 27% | - |
| 2021 | - | - | 10% | 10% | 80% | - |
| 2022 | 4% | 4% | 25% | 27% | 39% | - |
| 2023 | 11% | - | - | 11% | 78% | - |
| 2024 | 7% | 16% | 20% | 34% | 23% | 0% |

## RANGELAND HEALTH STANDARDS

Rangeland resources have been and are currently being impacted within the Complexes due to the over-population of wild horses. The BLM has determined that wild horses are a contributing factor to not meeting the Rangeland Health Standards. Monitoring data specific to these Complexes indicates that the excess number of wild horses are contributing to not meeting rangeland health standards. Wild horses and drought are having a significant negative impact on riparian area conditions in the Maverick-Ruby #9 allotment, the Dolly Varden Range, and Goshute Ranges. All of these areas that have not been grazed by livestock for over 20 years. Wild horses were determined to be a casual factor of the non-attainment of the riparian standards for the Goshute Range in the Sheep Allotment Complex Evaluation. The risk of erosion and loss of soil structure in these use areas after repeated disturbance without rest is greater than other use areas without wild horse presence.

## OTHER RESOURCES

### Tribal

There are approximately 1,770 acres of tribal land in the Butte Valley portion of the Maverick-Medicine HMA. The tribal lands are partially fenced. As a result, horses move freely between tribal and BLM land.

### Mining

Antelope Complex

Mining has taken place in the general region since the 1860s. There are no active mines within the Antelope Complex. There is mineral exploration occurring in the Dolly Varden, Kinsley and Spruce Mountain ranges. There are expired Notices that have the right to access their project areas for reclamation. Access should not be impeded. Areas should be avoided to prevent setbacks with reclamation. The expired Notices are in the Northern Schell Range and Northern Spring Valley.

Triple B Complex

Mining in the Maverick-Medicine HMA has taken place since the early 1900's. Production in the Mud Springs and Delcer Mining Districts started around 1910 according to the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology Bulletin for Elko County. While there is mineral exploration in the Maverick Range, there is no active mining in the Maverick-Medicine HMA. Kinross Gold's Bald Mountain Mine falls within the Northwestern boundary of the Triple B Complex. The Cherry Creek Range, Northern Egan Range, and accompanying valleys have significant mineral exploration actively occurring.

**Wildlife**

The Complexes consist of diverse vegetation communities providing habitat for a wide array of wildlife species. There is yearlong habitat for mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and Rocky Mountain elk throughout. Additionally, the Complexes have some component of big game crucial winter and summer seasonal habitats. Other major wildlife species throughout the complex include mountain lions, bobcats, badgers, jack rabbits, cottontails and a variety of other upland game birds, small mammals, and reptiles.

The Complexes also provide habitat for numerous BLM Special Status Species. Greater sage-grouse habitat is found throughout the Complexes and overlaps with Priority, General and Other Habitat Management Areas as delineated by the 2022 maintenance action of the ARMPA (BLM 2015). There are numerous leks throughout the area with seasonal habitat consisting of breeding, nesting, early brood-rearing, late brood-rearing and winter. Several of the lek clusters that overlap with the Complexes have reached a hard population trigger in 2023. Other more common special status species include pygmy rabbit, dark kangaroo mouse, relict dace, Newark Valley tui chub and numerous sensitive bird, bat, and reptile species.

**Wildfire**

Fire history within the Antelope and Triple B Complexes is characterized by low to moderate occurrence. Within the past 40 years there have been 106 total fires with 33 large fires (1,000 acres+) and they have been primarily within the pinyon/juniper and woodlands and sagebrush ecological sites. The Goshute Fire is the largest fire in the last 40 years (32,215 acres) and burned on the north end of the Cherry Creek Mountain Range.

Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) analyses were completed for the Newark and Huntington Watersheds Restoration EA and the Long Valley and Ruby Valley Watersheds Restoration EA which covered approximately the west half of the Triple B HMA. FRCC represents the departure of the vegetation from the reference condition (condition prior to European Influence) into 3 classes. FRCC 1 is categorized as being within the historic disturbance regime relating to the reference condition. As a vegetation community progresses towards FRCC 2 and 3 the departure from reference condition increases as does the risk to key ecosystem components and the risk of disturbances (wildfire) occurring outside of the historic disturbance regime. The analysis categorized vegetation by Biophysical Setting Model (BpS) within the overall watersheds. Sagebrush, Salt Desert Scrub and Pinyon/Juniper woodland BpS's that represent the majority of the landscape covered by the analyses within the Antelope and Triple B were categorized as FRCC 2 which places them at moderate risk of losing key ecosystem components.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Since the passage of the WFRHBA, management knowledge regarding wild horse population levels has increased. For example, it has been determined that wild horses are capable of increasing their numbers by 15% to 25% annually, resulting in the doubling of wild horse populations about every 4 years (NRC 2013). This has resulted in the BLM shifting program emphasis beyond just establishing AML and conducting wild horse gathers to include a variety of management actions that further facilitate the achievement and maintenance of viable and stable wild horse populations and a thriving natural ecological balance. Management actions include increasing fertility control, adjusting sex ratio, and collecting genetic baseline data to support genetic health assessments.

The AML is defined as the number of wild horses that can be sustained within a designated HMA which achieves and maintains a thriving natural ecological balance in keeping with the multiple-use management concept for the area. The Complexes have a cumulative AML range of 899-1,678 wild horses which has been established through decisions as outlined in this document.

### Range Resources

As outlined in multiple Standards Determination Documents (SDDs), the allowable use level for native perennial grasses, shrubs and riparian species is 50% of the current year's growth by weight, and 55% for perennial non-native seedings. Utilization will be measured at established key grazing areas or other sites representative of the dominant vegetation. Examples of key species include sandberg bluegrass, needle-and-thread grass, indian ricegrass, winterfat and saltbush. Examples of key riparian species include sedges, rushes, bluegrass species, redtop (bentgrass) and timothy. Wild horses within the Elko district have an allowable use level of 10% of the current year’s growth prior to turnout as identified in the 1993 WRMPWHA.

Since the 2017 Gather EA, the Antelope Complex has had 20-50% heavy and severe use every year and the Triple B Complex as had 52-100% heavy and severe use every year. In 2024 the Antelope Complex utilization levels were 13% slight, 24% light, 41% moderate, 7% heavy,13% severe and 2% of the monitoring sites were lost due key species being unavailable to conduct utilization studies on. In 2024 the Triple Complex utilization levels were 7% slight, 16% light, 20% moderate, 34% heavy and 23% severe.

### Range Improvements (Water Developments)

There are multiple springs, seeps and water developments (some of which are historic and predate BLM) within the Antelope and Triple B Complexes. The BLM closely monitors the sources on public land all year. Some sources produce water year-round, but many become depleted in the summer months. High concentrations of wild horses negatively affect these primary water sources and riparian areas.

The BLM has completed range improvement projects to increase and protect water availability for wild horses, all of which have repeatedly been damaged by excess wild horses and repaired multiple times. Rangeland conditions continue to deteriorate due to the chronic overpopulation of excess wild horses within the Complexes. That overpopulation, coupled with a lack of sufficient forage and water, has led to several emergency gathers. Due to lack of forage/water

resources the BLM conducted emergency gathers in 2007, 2012, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 on the Antelope Complex and 2015, 2019, 2020, and 2024 on the Triple B Complex.

**Livestock Grazing**

The Complexes include serval livestock grazing allotments. Permitted livestock grazing use in the HMAs and WHT include both cattle and sheep. Some livestock grazing occurs during all seasons. Permitted livestock grazing use has generally been reduced from historical grazing levels over the past decades in a majority of the allotments. This has been in part due to persistent drought, competition with wild horses for forage, and the needs of livestock operations. The BLM continues to evaluate allotments for achievement of rangeland health standards, and adjustments to livestock grazing are implemented as appropriate, as grazing term permits are renewed or through annual coordination between BLM and grazing permit holders. Livestock grazing is administered through the regulations at 43 C.F.R. Part 4100 and must be consistent with multiple use allocations set forth in RMPs. Changes to livestock grazing cannot be made with a wild horse management decision.

Livestock grazing actual use of permitted use has averaged approximately 44% in the Antelope Complex and 15% in the Triple B Complex since the 2017 Decision. In **Tables 11 and 12** Animal Unit Month (AUM) means the amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one cow or its equivalent for a period of 1 month. 43 C.F.R. § 4100.0-5.

**Table 11. Antelope Complex Grazing Allotments**

| Allotment | Season of Use & Kind of Livestock | % of Allotment in HMA | Permitted Use (AUM) | 2018-2024 Average AUM Use | Percent Actual Use of Permitted Use |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Antelope Valley[1] | 11/1-5/31<br>Cattle | 100% | 5,376 | 1,960 | 37% |
| Badlands[1] | 11/1-3/31<br>Sheep | 100% | 1,018 | 1,040 | 102% |
| Becky Creek | 11/1-3/15<br>11/1-3/15<br>Goats and Sheep | 99% | 671 | 538 | 80% |
| Becky Springs | 11/01-4/30<br>11/15-2/28<br>Cattle and Sheep | 100% | 3,842 | 2,053 | 54% |
| Boone Springs | 11/1-3/31<br>Sheep | 100% | 2,947 | 995 | 34% |
| Chase Springs | 4/1-11/30<br>Cattle | 31% | 2,586 | 1567 | 61% |
| Cherry Creek | 3/1-2/28<br>Cattle | 5% | 9,089 | 3,284 | 36% |
| Chin Creek | 11/1-5/31<br>3/1-2/28<br>Cattle and Sheep | 99% | 13,245 | 4,491 | 34% |
| Currie | 3/1-2/28<br>3/1-2/28<br>Cattle/Domestic horses | 91% | 5,504 | 3,852 | 70% |
| Deep Creek | 11/1-5/15<br>Cattle | 98% | 2,934 | 1,447 | 49% |
| East Big Springs[2] | 3/1-2/28<br>Cattle | 20% | 3,396 | 2233 | 66% |
| Ferber Flat | 11/1-4/20<br>Sheep | 100% | 2,013 | 604 | 30% |
| Goshute Mountain[1] | 11/1-3/31<br><br>Sheep | 100% | 465 | 572 | 123% |
| Lead Hills | 11/1-4/15<br>Sheep | 51% | 5,609 | 1,757 | 31% |
| Leppy Hills | 11/1-4/30<br>Sheep | 53% | 3,351 | 1,361 | 41% |
| Lovell Peak | 7/1-9/30<br>7/1-9/30<br>Goats and Sheep | 94% | 162 | 0 | 0 |
| McDermid Creek[3] | 5/1-7/15<br>Cattle | 100% | -- | -- | -- |
| North Steptoe | 10/1-3/15<br>Sheep | 75% | 1,289 | 386 | 30% |

| Allotment | Season of Use & Kind of Livestock | % of Allotment in HMA | Permitted Use (AUM) | 2018-2024 Average AUM Use | Percent Actual Use of Permitted Use |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North Steptoe Trail | 9/15-10/15<br>3/1-3/30<br>Sheep | 74% | 253 | 74 | 29% |
| Sampson Creek | 5/1-9/30<br>Sheep | 99% | 1,592 | 500 | 32% |
| Schellbourne | 10/15-5/15<br>Cattle | 16% | 685 | 490 | 72% |
| Spruce | 3/1-2/28<br>Cattle | 67% | 13,423 | 2,931 | 22% |
| Sugarloaf | 11/1-4/20<br>Sheep | 97% | 2,001 | 1214 | 61% |
| Tippett | 3/1-2/28<br>4/16-12/15<br>Cattle and Sheep | 27% | 13,615 | 4,799 | 35% |
| Tippett Pass | 11/1-5/15<br>10/1-6/15<br>Cattle and Sheep | 14% | 8,177 | 1,240 | 15% |
| UT/NV North | 11/1-4/30<br>Sheep | 65% | 3,704 | 798 | 22% |
| UT/NV South | 11/1-4/30<br>Sheep | 100% | 2,646 | 601 | 23% |
| Valley Mountain | 11/1-5/15<br>Cattle | 57% | 5,572 | 1993 | 36% |
| West Big Springs[4] | 3/1-2/28<br>Cattle | <1% | 5,385 | -- | -- |
| West White Horse | 12/1-2/28<br>Sheep | 100% | 465 | 355 | 76% |
| White Horse | 11/1-4/15<br>Sheep | 53% | 3,916 | 2057 | 53% |

[1] Administered by the Bristlecone Field Office as per an interdistrict agreement.

[2] Actual use is for the Shafter Pasture only. The Shafter Pasture is the only pasture of the East Big Springs Allotment is within an HMA.

[3] McDermid Creek is managed and permitted as part of the Currie Allotment. McDermid Creek actual use AUMs are reported as part of the Currie Allotment actual use AUMs summarized above.

[4] That portion of the West Big Springs Allotment within the Spruce-Pequop HMA is not grazed by livestock.

**Table 12. Triple B Grazing Allotments**

| Allotment | Season of Use | % of Allotment in HMA | Permitted Use (AUM) | 2018-2024 Average AUM Use | Percent Actual Use of Permitted Use |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cherry Creek | 5/01 to 2/28 Cattle | 22% | 9,089 | 3,284 | 36% |
| Dry Mountain | 10/01 to 4/01 Cattle and Sheep | 100% | 1,149 | 0 | 0% |
| Goshute Basin | 7/01 to 10/15 Sheep | 97% | 449 | 82 | 18% |
| Gold Canyon | 6/20 to 11/30 Sheep | 59% | 1,068 | 0 | 0% |
| Horse Haven | 5/01 to 7/31 Cattle | 100% | 1,056 | 18 | 2% |
| Indian Creek | 7/01 to 8/31 Cattle | 100% | 177 | 44 | 25% |
| Maverick Springs | 3/01 to 2/28 Cattle | 100% | 1,500 | 1,504 | 100% |
| Medicine Butte | 3/01 to 2/28 Cattle<br>4/15 to 11/15 Sheep | 98% | 7,226 | 2,423 | 34% |
| Moorman Ranch | 3/01 to 2/28 Cattle | 58% | 10,092 | 2,254 | 22% |
| Newark | 11/01 to 4/02 Cattle | 51% | 9,709 | 2,776 | 29% |
| Ruby Valley | 3/01 To 03/31<br>11/01 to 2/28 Cattle | 100% | 467 | 408 | 87% |
| Thirty Mile Spring | 4/15 to 2/28 Cattle and Sheep | 32% | 8,405 | 4,501 | 54% |
| Warm Spring | 3/01 to 2/28 Cattle<br>11/01 to 11/30 Sheep | 95% | 7,709 | 3,340 | 43% |
| Warm Springs Trail | Sheep | 38% | 2,480 | 481 | 19% |
| North Butte | 8/01 to 10/31<br>2/15 to 4/15 Cattle | 100% | 180* | 0 | 0% |
| South Butte | 4/15 to 2/28 Cattle | 91% | 396 | 298 | 75% |
| Steptoe | 11/1 to 6/15 Cattle | 11% | 2,836 | 1,796 | 63% |
| McDermid Creek[1] | 3/1 to 2/28 Cattle | 100% | -- | -- | -- |
| Bald Mountain | 6/15 to 9/15 | 100% | 312 | 230 | 74% |

| Allotment | Season of Use | % of Allotment in HMA | Permitted Use (AUM) | 2018-2024 Average AUM Use | Percent Actual Use of Permitted Use |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cattle | | | | |
| Currie | 3/1 to 2/28 Cattle | 3% | 5,504 | 3,852 | 70% |
| Harrison[2] | 4/16 to 12/3 Cattle | 55% | 620 | 434 | 70% |
| Maverick/Ruby #9[4] | 7/1 to 11/1 Cattle | 92% | 2,757 | 0 | 0% |
| North Butte Valley | 4/15 to 12/22 Cattle | 92% | 2,420 | 1676 | 69% |
| Odgers[3] | 10/1 to 12/31 Cattle | 100% | 1,596 | 0 | 0% |
| Ruby #8[2] | 4/20 to 9/30 Cattle | < 1% | 1,963 | -- | -- |
| Valley Mountain | 11/1 to 5/1 Cattle | 40% | 5,572 | 1993 | 36% |
| West Cherry Creek | 5/1 to 10/31 Cattle and Sheep | 100% | 2,674 | 1081 | 40% |

[1]The McDermid Creek Allotment is administered as part of the Currie Allotment by the Elko District. Permitted use and average AUM use is combined with the Currie Allotment.

[2] Although technically within the Maverick-Medicine HMA, the Harrison and Ruby #8 Allotments are completely fenced from the remainder of the Maverick-Medicine HMA.

[3] The Odgers Allotment has not had an annually active grazing permit for over 20 years. Grazing use was approved once as Temporary Not Renewable (TNR) for the 2003-04 grazing season.

[4] No use has occurred in the summer range of the Maverick-Ruby #9 Allotment since 2001 and no use has occurred on the winter range since 2009.

**Table 13. Cherry Springs WHT Grazing Allotments**

| Allotment | Season of Use | % of Allotment in HMA | Permitted Use (HMs)[1] | 2018-2024 Average Use (HMs)[1] | Percent Actual Use of Permitted Use |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cherry Springs | 5/16 to 10/31 Cattle | 79% | 2,006 | 536 | 27% |
| Corta S&G | 6/16-10/15 Sheep | 12% | 22,115 | NA | NA |
| Cave Creek | 5/25-8/31 Cattle | 13% | 602 | 286 | 48% |

[1] The USFS uses Head Months (HM) in place of Animal Unit Months (AUM) as a unit of measurement. The conversion rate is 1.25 AUMs=1HM.

**Wild Horses**
Population growth suppression measures include the administration of fertility control measures (i.e. PZP vaccines, GonaCon or newly developed vaccine formulations, IUDs) to released mares and adjustment of sex ratios to achieve a 60 % male to 40% female ratio. In addition to bringing the wild horse population to low AML, up to 200 gelded horses that would otherwise be excess animals permanently removed from the range and sent to off-range corrals for adoption/sales or off-range pastures – may be returned to the range and managed as a non-breeding population of geldings, so long as the geldings do not result in the population exceeding mid-range AML.

The fertility control component will reduce the total number of wild horses that would otherwise be permanently removed from the range. Including some fertility control-treated mares and some geldings in the herd at mid-AML herd size would allow for management of a total wild horse population within the Complexes that would be larger than low AML, while still reducing population growth rates compared to those of an untreated herd and achieving a thriving natural ecological balance.

Primary gather methods include helicopter drive and/or bait and water trapping. While it is the BLM's goal to immediately gather excess wild horses and/or gather wild horses for fertility treatment in a single gather, it is expected that not all horses can be captured because gather efficiencies rarely exceed 80-85% especially in larger Complexes. As a result, a proportion of wild horses (15-20%+) in the Complex may not be captured or treated over the 10-year period of the Proposed Action. During a gather, horses are identified for removal or release based on age, gender, and/or other characteristics. Mares identified for release would be aged, microchipped and freeze-marked for identification prior to being released to help identify the animals for future treatments/boosters and assess the efficacy of fertility control treatments.

Management objectives are to achieve and maintain AML within the Complex. Once AML is achieved, the BLM's goal is to implement population growth suppression fertility control vaccines (PZP, PZP-22, GONACON), manage a portion of the population as non-reproducing geldings, and maintain a sex ratio of 60 % males to 40% females. Gather operations would utilize the helicopter drive trap and/or water/bait trapping were feasible.

## MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The key components for maintaining a healthy wild horse population are forage, water, cover, and space. Cover and space are plentiful for wild horses in the Complexes. Forage and water availability is generally a limiting factor and is particularly limited in preferred wild horse use areas and during extended periods of severe drought coinciding with high wild horse numbers.

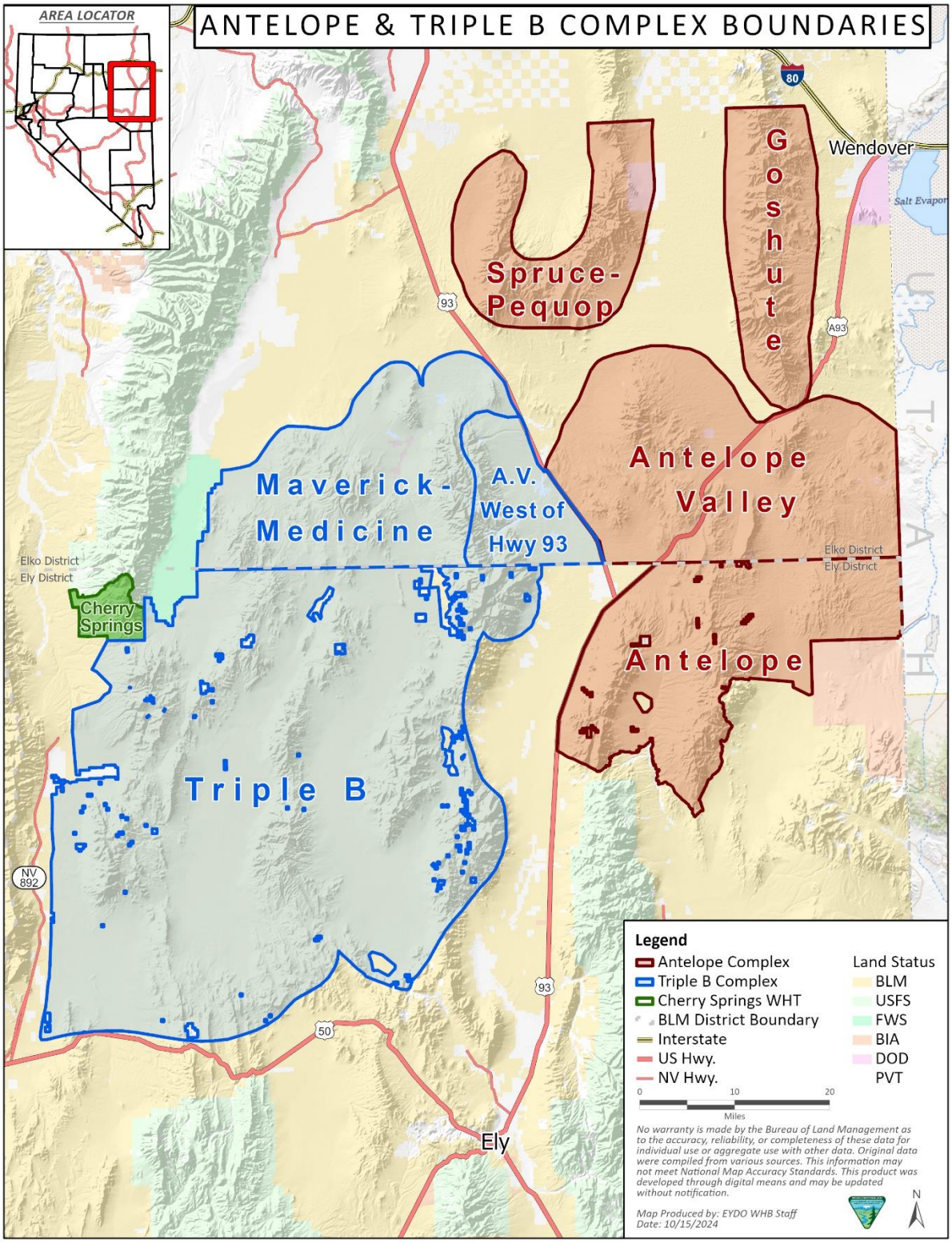
## FUTURE MANAGEMENT

The BLM and USFS intend to prepare the Antelope and Trible B Complexes HMAP to guide management of the wild horses and their habitat into the future. The HMAP will address the following management objectives:

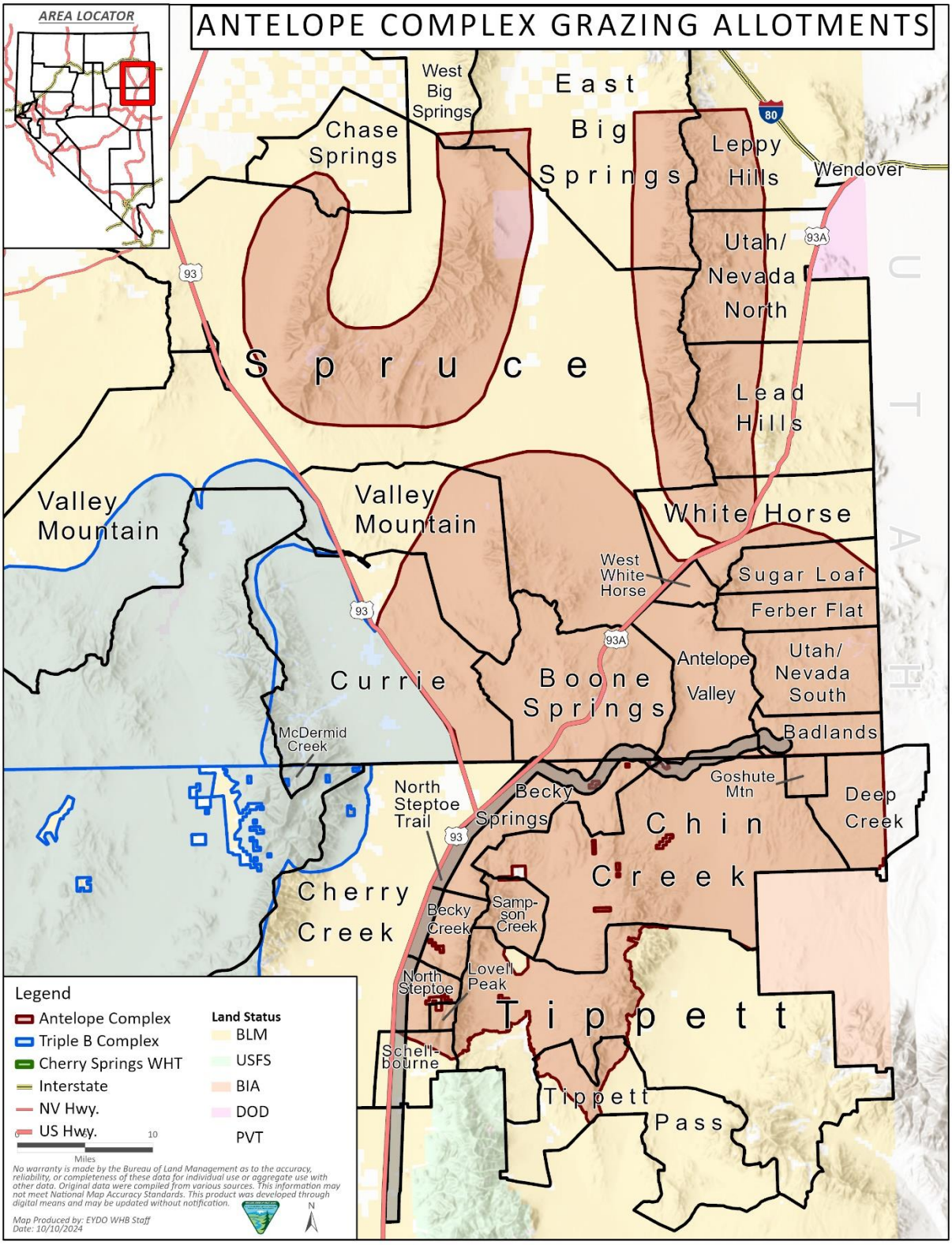
- Manage wild horses within HMAs and WHT at AML

- Assure rangeland and riparian health
- Utilize all population growth suppression methods
- Maintain and ensure genetic diversity
- Maintain Greater Sage-Grouse habitat
- Other issues as identified

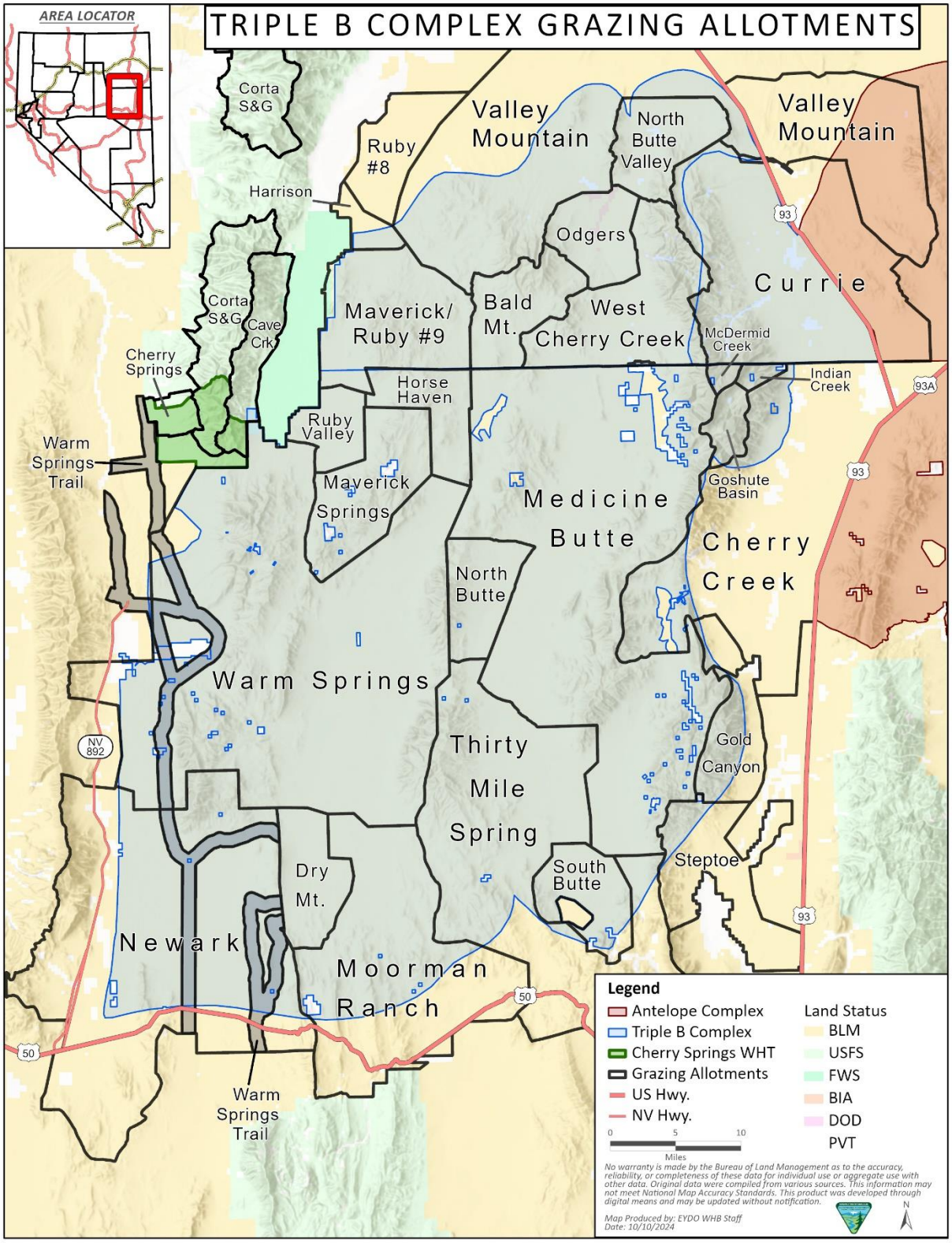
**Map 1. Antelope and Triple Complex Boundaries**



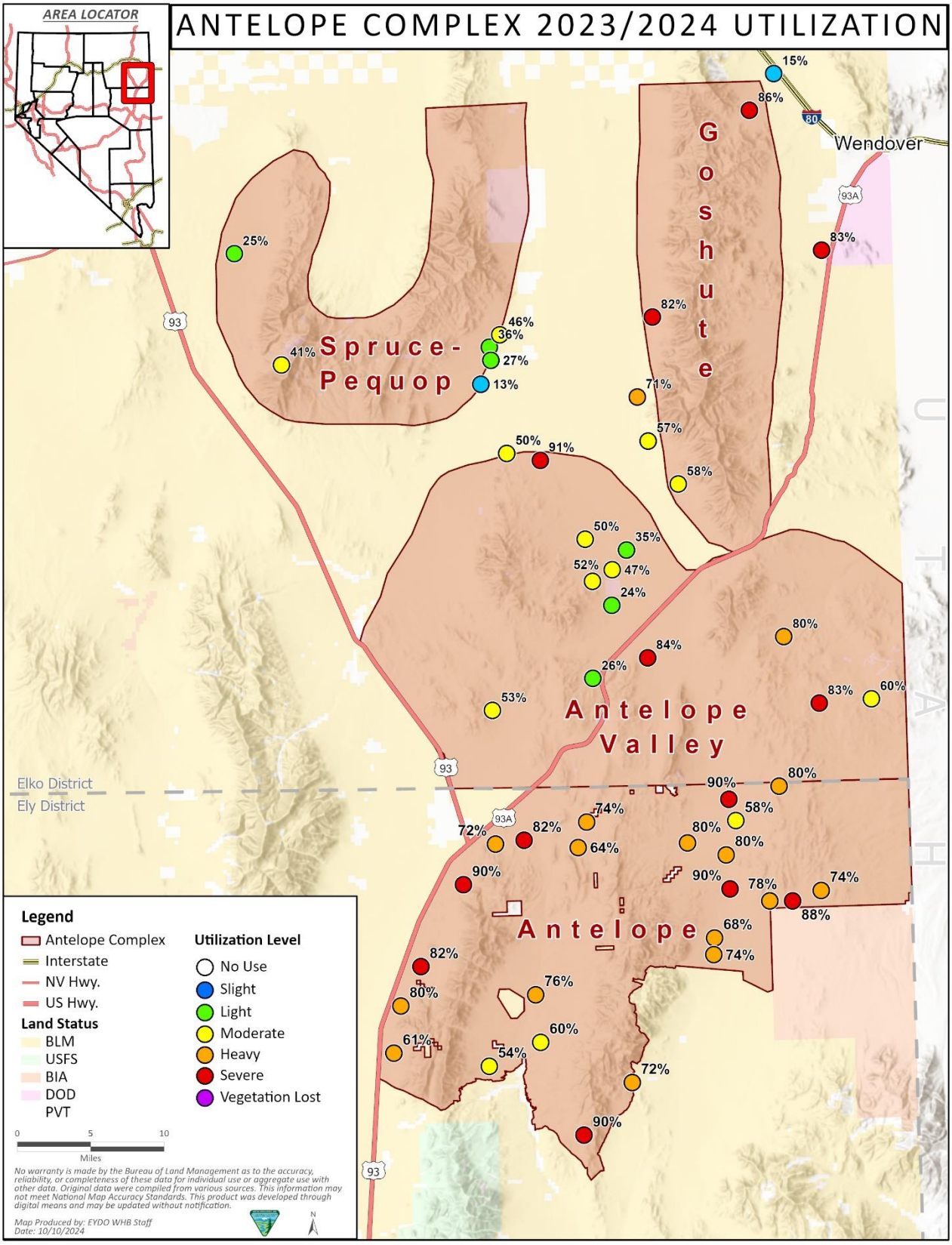
**Map 2. Antelope Complex Grazing Allotments**



**Map 3. Triple B Complex Grazing Allotments**



**Map 4. Antelope Complex Wild Horse Utilization**



**Map 5. Triple B Complex Wild Horse Utilization**