



Churchill County Agenda Report

Date Submitted: July 27, 2021

Agenda Item #: Letters Received -
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Meeting Date Requested: August 5,
2021

To: Board of Churchill County Commissioners
From: Perry Wickham, Field Manager, BLM
Subject Title: Consideration and possible action re: Bureau of Land Management's public consultation for Proposed Temporary Range Improvements for the Willow Creek and Stone Cabin Allotments.

Type of Action Requested: None; Informational Only

Does this action require a Business Impact Statement? No

Recommend Board Action: None; informational only.

Discussion: Bureau of Land Management's public consultation for Proposed Temporary Range Improvements for the Willow Creek and Stone Cabin Allotments in Nye County, Nevada. This action was developed with coordination between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Stone Cabin Ranch, LLC (hereafter, permittee) to improve livestock distribution in response to drought.

The proposed project location in the Willow Creek and Stone Cabin Allotments is located approximately 45 miles northeast of Tonopah, Nevada. The allotments comprise approximately 408,463 total acres in the Stone Cabin Valley, bounded by the Monitor Range to the west and the Hot Creek Range to the east and characterized by steep mountains, salt-desert shrub/perennial grass foothills, and alkali valley bottoms. The major vegetation type in the vicinity of the project area is a mix of salt-desert shrub/perennial grasses and sagebrush shrubland.

The grazing system for the Stone Cabin Allotment was established with the 1982 Stone Cabin Partnership Allotment Management Plan (AMP) and grazing occurs in accordance with the Area Manager's Final Decision issued September 1989. The grazing system for the Willow Creek Allotment was established with the 1986 U.S. Forest Service Monitor Complex C&H Allotment AMP. Stone Cabin Ranch, LLC is permitted year-round grazing of 1,992 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) of cattle in Stone Cabin Allotment, and 341 AUMs of cattle from June 11 to October 10 in Willow Creek Allotment.

Other resources were examined when selecting proposed sites. None of the proposed locations impact riparian areas within either allotment. The entirety of the proposed action occurs within

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the Stone Cabin HMA. All sites are located outside of Wilderness Study Areas (WSA).

This Proposed Action is to authorize the permittee to temporarily place an above-ground pipeline and two water troughs for the purpose of improving distribution of livestock during drought. The temporary pipeline would join a permanent line where it runs beneath a road and be placed along the fence dividing the Willow Creek and Stone Cabin Allotments. The temporary above-ground pipeline would run approximately 6,441 feet, or 1.2 miles on the Willow Creek side of the boundary fence. A terminal trough would be placed on each side of the fence, approximately 100 feet from the fence, to make use of available forage in both allotments.

This action would allow for water to be transported via above ground pipeline to troughs in pastures that currently have few water sources. Under this Proposed Action, the temporary pipeline and two troughs will be approved. These sites have been selected based on previous disturbance along existing roads and fence line. All troughs will be equipped with wildlife escape ladders to prevent wildlife mortality.

Allowing the permittees to utilize temporary water sources would enable them to more effectively control the distribution of their livestock and reduce the risk of overgrazing in a drought-affected environment.

The TFO is intending to issue a Proposed Decision for the implementation of temporary pipeline and troughs. A DNA would be completed prior to the issuance of a Proposed Decision. This Proposed Action is in accordance with 43 CFR § 4120.3 and §4160.1-3, which describe the regulatory process to approve temporary range improvements.

This letter serves as the opportunity for the interested public, partners, and state, local, and tribal governments to provide comments on this Proposed Action within the Willow Creek and Stone Cabin Allotments. Please submit any comments in writing to the above address within 7 days of the date posted on this letter. If you have any questions, please contact Brian Truax, Rangeland Management Specialist at (775) 482-7830 or by email at btruax@blm.gov.

Alternatives: N/A

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Explanation of Impact: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

Prepared By: Renae Paholke, Deputy Clerk

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Reviewed By:

Jim R. Barbee, County Manager

Date: July 27, 2021

Benjamin Shawcroft, Chief Deputy DA

Date: July 28, 2021

Sherry Wideman, Comptroller

Date: July 28, 2021

Board Action Taken:

Motion: _____

1) None Aye: 0
2) None Nay: 0

(Vote Recorded By)

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