



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Tonopah Field Office
P.O. Box 911 (1553 South Main Street)
Tonopah, Nevada 89049
Phone: 775-482-7800 Fax: 775-482-7810
<https://www.blm.gov/nevada>

In Reply Refer To:
4110 (NVB0200)

RECEIVED
JUL 26 2021

pd

CHURCHILL COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR THE WILLOW CREEK AND STONE CABIN ALLOTMENTS PROPOSED TEMPORARY RANGE IMPROVEMENTS TONOPAH FIELD OFFICE

Dear Interested Public:

This public consultation letter proposes an action that would implement temporary range improvements on the Willow Creek and Stone Cabin Allotments, 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 the Stone Cabin HMA. All sites are located outside of Wilderness Study Areas (WSA).

Proposed Actions.

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.

INTERIOR REGION 10 • CALIFORNIA-GREAT BASIN

CALIFORNIA*, NEVADA*, OREGON*

* PARTIAL

To date, the permittee has taken voluntary actions in response to drought including changing season of use, partially reducing Animal Unit Months (AUM) in the allotment, and removing all livestock from other allotments for which they hold permits. The project area has received little to no livestock in previous years due to its distance from water. Drought indicators have been field-verified during visits to the Willow Creek Allotment in April and July 2021 and visits to the Stone Cabin Allotment in April, June, and July 2021.

The BMDO analyzed the use of temporary above ground pipelines as one of several possible DRAs in the Battle Mountain Drought Management Environmental Assessment (EA), DOI-BLM-NV-B000-2012-0005-EA. This proposed action will be evaluated against the referenced EA, and if deemed appropriate, a Determination of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Adequacy (DNA) will be issued. A Decision will be issued by the TFO in accordance with 43 CFR §4160. A Class III Cultural resource inventory was completed for each proposed site, with negative results.

Range Improvement	UTM	Legal Description
Pipeline terminus #1	11S 533668E 4259908N	Township 7N., Range 48E. Sec. 7
Pipeline terminus #2	11S 535268E 4260970N	Township 7N., Range 48E., Sec. 5
Willow Creek trough	11S 535253E 4260989N	Township 7N., Range 48E., Sec. 5
Stone Cabin trough	11S 535300E 4260936N	Township 7N., Range 48E., Sec. 5

Table 1: Locations of pipeline and troughs

Rationale

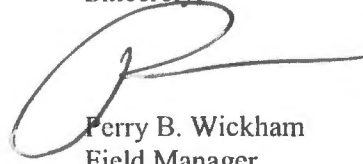
In arid-land pastures, water is the most effective tool for affecting distribution of cattle (Ganskopp, 2001). Water developments can dramatically alter grazing distribution, especially if pastures contain areas that are horizontally or vertically far from water (Bailey, 2010). Cattle are not likely to use areas farther than 2 miles from water and considerations in stocking rate should be made as distance from water increases (Holechek, 1988).

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 fenceline. All troughs will be equipped with wildlife escape ladders to prevent wildlife mortality.

Allowing the permittee 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.

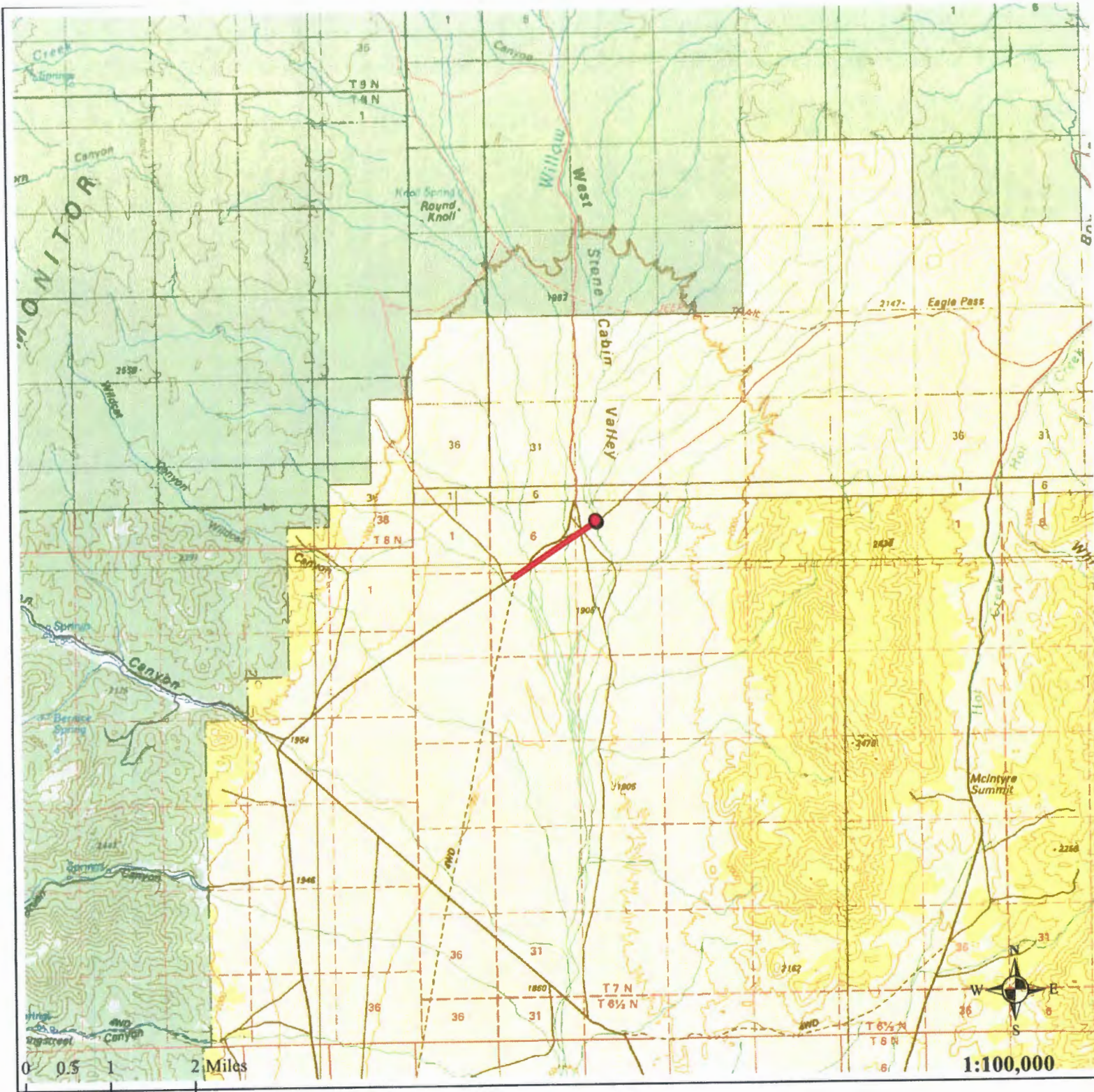
This letter serves as the opportunity for the interested public, partners, and state, local, and tribal governments to provide comments on this Proposed Action within the Willow Creek and Stone Cabin Allotments. Please submit any comments in writing to the above address within 7 days of the date posted 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Perry B. Wickham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Perry B. Wickham
Field Manager

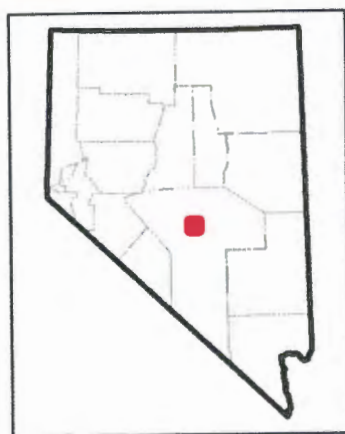
Enclosure
Interested Public
Maps



Temporary Pipeline and Troughs

Willow Creek and Stone Cabin Allotments

- Troughs
- Temporary Pipeline



United States Department of the Interior
 Bureau of Land Management
 Tonopah Field Office
 1553 S. Main St./PO Box 911
 Tonopah, NV 89049

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

NAD83 UTM ZONE 11N
 Map Date: 8/9/2018