

Concerns from
Tim & Karen Lawson
Bitner Allotment, Massacre Rim WSA
February 13, 2020

We would like to see the following recommendation implemented for the Bitner Allotment. This is following the intent of Congress to allow all uses and practices currently allowed now to continue on the allotment if the bill becomes law. This means we need to have all historical management practices and means of access associated with livestock grazing to remain in effect.

We would like to see the WSA be removed and the allotment oversight would be done by the BLM and the Modoc-Washoe Experimental Stewardship Council. This stewardship council has been federally authorized, multi-stakeholder collaborative group that has been functioning for over 35years. We are stewards of this allotment and it is an integral part of our livestock production cycle. We ask that no new restriction be placed on this allotment and that the land remain open for full assess for sustained livestock and resource management. We already operate under an ACEC and BLM oversight.

In terms of fire, we ask that grazing remain at the current AUM level to keep fuel loads in check. We would also want to have mechanical means remain for fire suppression, fire rehabilitation, and juniper removal.

We must be able to have mechanical access to all water sources for maintenance and improvements. Well maintained water sources benefit all wildlife, not just cattle. This includes installation of storage tanks, fencing springs to prevent wild horse damage, replacing and upgrading water troughs, solar systems and necessary plumbing/trenching.

Allow full access for wild horse management to maintain horse population at recommend AML (appropriate management levels). This includes the use of mechanized vehicle, airplanes, helicopters, and construction of temporary traps and maintenance of current traps.

We must have mechanical access to all roads and trails to access all fences, corrals and other infrastructure for maintenance and improvements as well as equipment necessary for fence construction and/or reconstruction. Also, the use of heavy equipment to maintain the roads to ensure access.

Allow access to study sites for research and scientific studies to improve livestock and resource management.

A noxious weed program needs to be implemented to include mechanical and chemical means to suppress and control noxious weeds such as whitetop, fox tail and medusa head. These 3 weeds are very prevalent along 8A and other roads and are encroaching on our allotment. If these weeds are left unchecked they will threaten and take over the allotment and especially the meadow which is critical sage grouse habitat. Currently, there is not much evidence of weeds being suppressed along the county roads.

The Bitner Allotment has a meadow that is critical sage grouse habitat. We do not graze the meadow until mid to late August after the sage grouse have raised their chicks and have move up into the sage brush. The cattle are gathered into the meadow and it is grazed to a specified level so that there is new

regrowth for the birds the next spring. We have been following this management practice for over 20 years.

Predator control need to continue under current practices.

Respectfully submitted by Tim and Karen Lawson