

Subcommittee Members: Ambur Aten, Bert Ramos,
Chris Jasmine, Jerry Annis, Marcial Evertsen,
Rachelle Peppers, Ted McElvain

Department Representative: Sarah Hale
Jeremy Lutz

**Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners
Mule Deer Enhancement Oversight Committee
Mule Deer Enhancement Program Subcommittee
Lander County; Management Area 15
Lander County Courthouse
Community Meeting Room
50 State Route 305
Battle Mountain, Nevada 89820**

Monday, April 11, 2022 / 4:00 p.m.

DRAFT Minutes

1. Call to Order – Department Representative

Meeting called to order at 4:03pm.

In Attendance:

Subcommittee Member Ambur Aten
Subcommittee Member Bert Ramos
Subcommittee Member Chris Jasmine
Subcommittee Member Jerry Annis
Subcommittee Member Marcial Evertsen
Department Representative Jeremy Lutz
Department Representative Sarah Hale

2. Approval of Agenda – For Possible Action

Chris Jasmine motioned to approve agenda.

Ambur Aten seconded.

Motion passed.

3. *Approval of Minutes (November 30, 2021) – Department Representative – For Possible Action

Chris Jasmine motioned to accept minutes from November 30, 2021.

Jerry Annis seconded.

Motion passed.

4. *Member Announcements and Correspondence – Informational

No announcements.

5. *Area 15 Project Status Update – For Possible Action

Members discussed status of the Strawberry Summit Spring Enclosure project.

Chris Jasmine motioned to close discussion of project.

Bert Ramos seconded.

Motion passed.

6. **Public Comment Period**
No public comment.
7. **Future Subcommittee Meetings – Department Representative – For possible Action**
Members will schedule subsequent meeting to discuss future projects and coordinate with BLM.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:37pm.

Project Title: Strawberry Summit Spring Enclosure

Project Goals and Objectives: To restore a heavily degraded spring for use by wildlife via the exclusion of feral horses and domestic cattle.

Project Location:

The proposed project is located at UTM: 11N 516286, 4424139. This spring is on public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Lander County, NV. The spring can be accessed by traveling east on Carico Lake Road off of NV-305, then traveling east onto an unnamed dirt road off of Carico Lake Road at 11N 510062, 4426543.

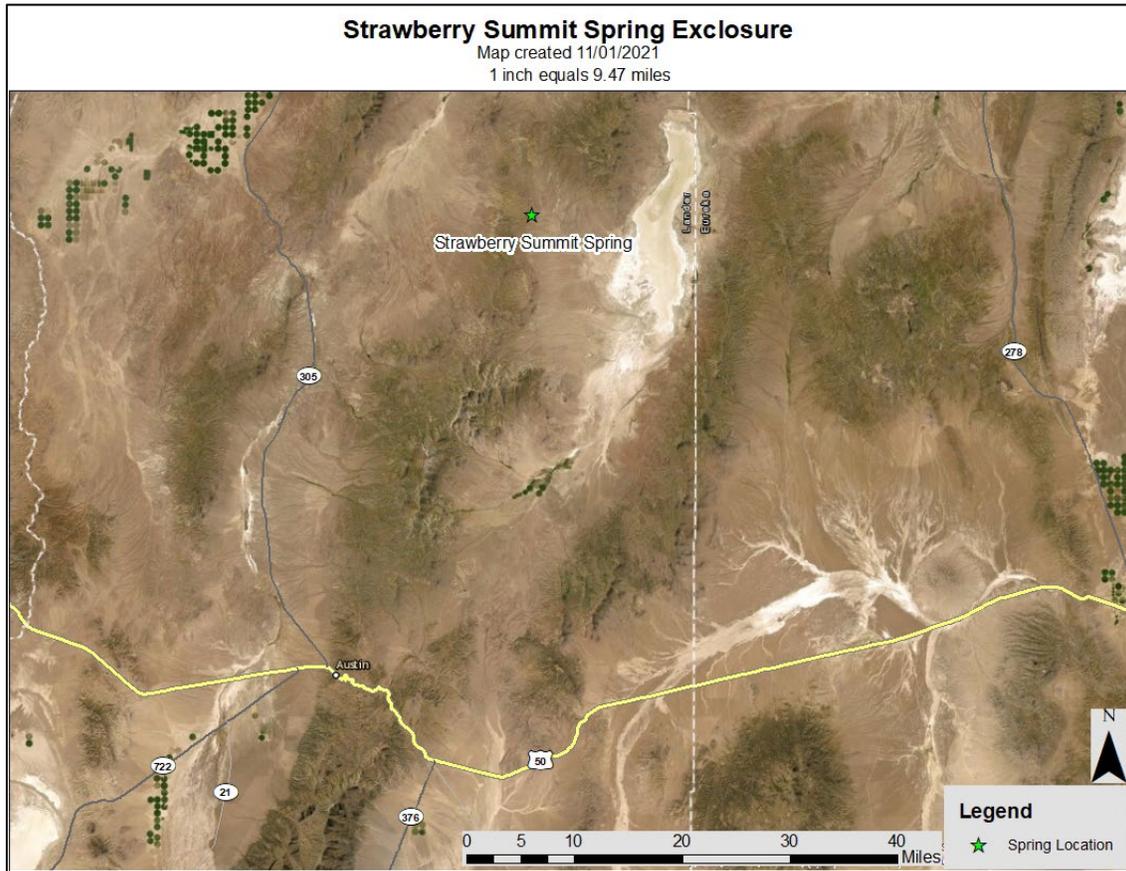


Figure 1: General Location of Project Area.



Figure 2: Detailed Location of Project Area

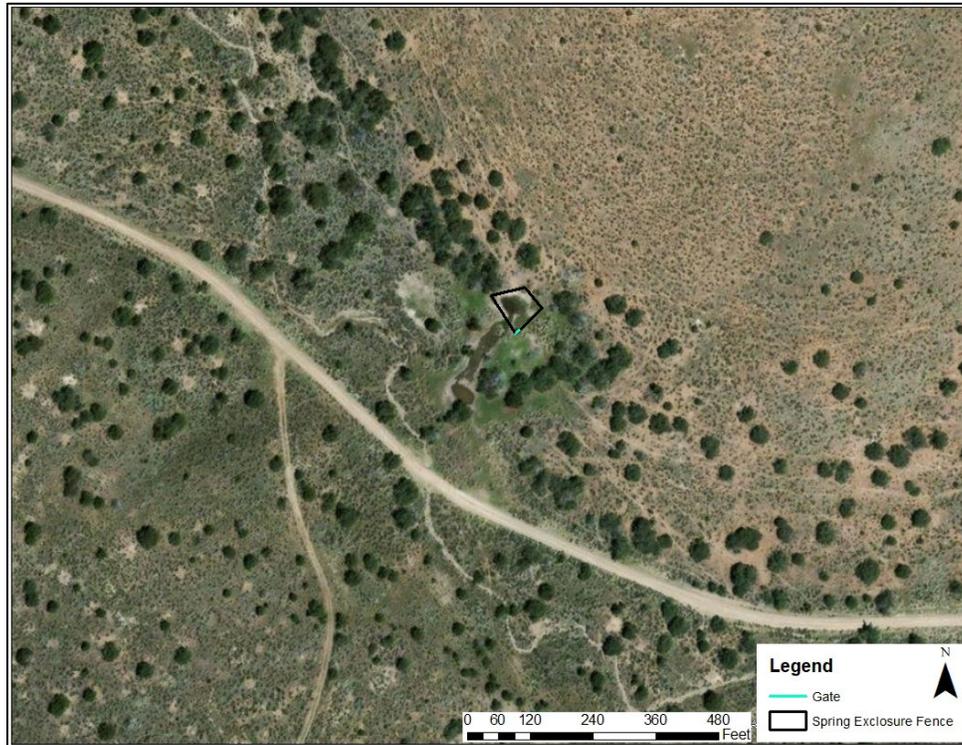


Figure 3: Planned Boundary of Spring Enclosure

Detailed Project Budget:

| Task or Sub-Task | Details | Total Cost |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Contractor Fence Installation (includes labor, materials, and equipment) | \$100/ft x 302.5ft of fencing | \$30,250.00 |
| Maintenance of Enclosure | NGM will assume maintenance responsibilities for this enclosure. | \$0.00; In-Kind Donation |
| Native seed mix | BLM will supply seed for application inside of enclosure. | \$0.00; In-Kind Donation |
| Total Funds Required | | \$30,250.00 |

Project Description and Proposed Activities:

Seeps and springs act as critical water sources for wildlife species, especially in dry and drought-prone regions such as the Great Basin; however, the overpopulation of feral horses in this region has resulted in the severe degradation of, and exclusion of wildlife from, many important water sources upon which they rely. One such spring is located on ‘Strawberry Summit’ in Lander County, Nevada. This spring was fenced off with jack-rail fencing in the early 2000s to exclude feral horses and cattle. Jack-rail fencing is most often seated on top of the ground, which can be pushed over, disrupted, and damaged by large ungulates such as horses or cattle. The Horse Management Area in which this spring is located is estimated to be at 311% of appropriate management level. Due to the high pressure this spring receives from horses, the original jack-rail fencing is in a state of disrepair that is allowing unlimited access to the spring. This has resulted in extreme overuse of the spring by both horses and livestock, which is exhibited by trampling, de-vegetation, and severe degradation of the spring site. Trail camera observations have documented daily use of this spring by horses, but minimal use by native wildlife even though the area supports a variety of wildlife species. We would like to replace the jack-rail fencing that is currently in disrepair with sturdier drill-stem-core fencing (seated into the ground) that will ensure horses and cattle are restricted from accessing the spring, which will allow the riparian area to recover and the spring to be used by wildlife. A lower pool will remain accessible to livestock, so the grazing permittee will not be negatively affected by our proposal.

This project will directly benefit a suite of wildlife species in Lander County via the protection of an important water source from feral horses. Our hope is that this project will successfully exclude horses and livestock from the spring and will allow the riparian area to recover and become a reliable resource for wildlife. Continued monitoring of wildlife use and vegetation inside and outside of the enclosure will allow us to evaluate success, and this project may act as a case-study to inform future spring enclosure projects in areas that receive heavy pressure from feral horses.

Partners in this project include Nevada Gold Mines (NGM) and the BLM. NGM is willing to assume maintenance responsibilities for the fencing, ensuring that it will be monitored and repaired as necessary into the future. BLM is willing to provide a native seed mix to apply inside the enclosure after installation.

Existing Habitat and Species Baseline Conditions

The area surrounding the proposed project provides habitat for a variety of game and non-game species, including mule deer, pronghorn, chukar, sage grouse, coyotes, bobcats, rabbits, eagles, raptors, songbirds, and small rodents. However, this area has experienced degradation from several sources

such as wildfire, pinyon-juniper encroachment, overgrazing by feral horses and livestock, and overuse of riparian resources by large, non-native ungulates.

Presence or sign of mule deer, pronghorn, coyotes, bobcats, chukar, eagles, rabbits, and various non-game birds has been detected at the spring, although much less frequently than horses or cattle. Due to the variety of wildlife species that has been detected, we feel that protecting this water source will allow wildlife to resume more frequent use of the spring without exclusion by feral horses. Additionally, restoration of vegetation inside of the enclosure will restore habitat for a variety of small non-game species.

Measuring Results

We will measure results of the project by documenting whether wildlife use of the spring increases after enclosure installation (via trail cameras provided by NDOW), and monitoring changes in vegetation conditions (i.e., species richness, percent cover, and presence of invasive species). We will monitor wildlife use and vegetation conditions both inside the enclosure, and outside of the enclosure at the adjacent lower pool that will remain un-fenced.

Monitoring and Management

We will regularly monitor this project to document changes in wildlife use and vegetation changes (using the methods outlined in the previous section). If invasive species are detected inside of the enclosure, they will be removed when possible. NGM has agreed to assume maintenance responsibilities and will make repairs to fencing when necessary to ensure that the water source and riparian area remain protected.