



Part of an antelope herd numbering about 200, which in turn is part of the approximately 4,000 antelope in the Carter Reservoir herd management area.

BLADE part 3—

Wild horse herds can roam on land, *“devoted principally but not exclusively to their welfare in keeping with the multiple-use management concept for the public lands,”* Wild Horse and Burro Act, 1971.

Blade and his 156 Carter Reservoir herd mates were gathered and the herd downsized to 36 head, because according to the BLM, they were destroying the water holes and the environment.

Under the multiple-use concept the wild horses must share their 25,000 acres with other animals.

Steve Surian, wild horse program manager and range management specialist explains how herd size determination is made, *“We consider the size of the herd area, available water, and range conditions. We don’t consider deer or antelope present on the range, there’s not that many. We’ve never measured enough wildlife to make a difference in the range capacity.”*

Yet one BLM document states that there are 4,000 antelope, 2,500 mule deer, 110 big horn sheep and a few elk in this same herd area. The document also states there are 758 head of cattle on the same lands.

BLM’s gather of 157 horses was based on, *“the need to balance wild horse populations with wildlife, livestock, wilderness study areas values, cultural resources, soil and vegetation resources, and to protect the range from the deterioration associated with overpopulation of wild horses.”*

“Water is the main concern. There are few sources of public water. Ranchers can fence their water off from the wild horses,” said Shane DeForest, BLM’s Surprise Resource Area’s manager in Cedarville.

Some ranchers share their water with the wild horses, some fence the wild horses off from water. These same ranchers can, for a permit and fee, graze their cattle on public lands.

Antelope, deer and big horn sheep can get over or through fences, but horses cannot. Fencing off one water source means more impact on the remaining water sources.

The BLM says that 6 antelope/deer equals one cow or horse in determining range capacity. Using BLM's statistics, the antelope and deer sharing the wild horse herd management area, amounts to the equivalent of 1,000 cows or horses.

So the 36 remaining Carter Reservoir wild horses are sharing their range with 758 head of cattle, and the equivalent of another 1,000 cows in big game animals; and the horses are destroying the range.

Perhaps one could ask where the real range damage is coming from.

"....a land devoted principally... to wild horses."

Webster's dictionary defines principally as, "first in order, highest in importance."

There's an old saying that when something doesn't make sense, "follow the money."

Cattle ranching has long been a huge business in the area. Ranchers grazing their cattle on public lands, even after paying the permittee fees, can provide their cattle with economical forage.

What about the antelope, deer, and big horn sheep? Big game hunting is a big business. The Nevada Dept. of Wildlife draws 25,000 hunting tags from among 150,000 applicants. Tags/licenses can range from \$63+fees for a Nev. resident to \$350 +fees for non-residents for a mule deer tag to a big horn sheep or an elk tag at \$1,200 +fees. A Heritage tag for a big horn sheep can go for more than \$100,000.



Wild horses are a growing tourist industry with no monetary value attached to each animal.

"Wild horses have no true natural predators, other than an occasional mountain lion...."

Nev. Dept. of Wildlife issued 103 permits for mountain lions in the same general area. Reports of mountain lions killing young horses, even up to 800 pounds have been reported in Modoc county.

Yet even with the predator kill within the herd, the wild horses are multiplying at the average rate of almost 20% a year. To many, including BLM, the ranchers and the big game hunters, this is an unacceptable rate, the 'range maggot' horses are destroying the range.

758 cattle

4,000 antelope

2,500 mule deer

110 big horn sheep

36 wild horses

All ranging on, "...a land devoted principally... to wild horses."